

The University of the Arts

The College of Art and Design

The Graduate Program in Art Education

ART EDUCATION IN CHINA SINCE 1978: A REPORT CARD

by

XIAOMIN MA

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

April 2014

Copyright 2014  
Xiaomin Ma  
All Rights Reserved

The University of the Arts  
The College of Art and Design  
The Graduate Program in Art Education

ART EDUCATION IN CHINA SINCE 1978: A REPORT CARD

by

XIAOMIN MA

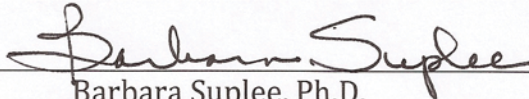
Has been approved for the Department of Design and Art Education

April 2014



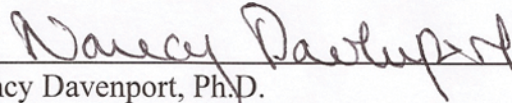
Teresa S. Unseld, Ed.D.  
Chair of Committee, Graduate Art Education  
Director, Graduate Program for Art Education

5-7-14  
Date



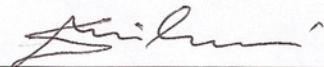
Barbara Suplee, Ph.D.  
Thesis Adviser, Committee Member,  
Graduate Art Education

5/7/14  
Date



Nancy Davenport, Ph.D.  
Committee Member, Graduate Art Education

5/7/14  
Date



Slavko Milekic, M.D., Ph.D.  
Committee Member, Graduate Art Education

5/7/14  
Date

## **Abstract**

This research reveals that art education in elementary and secondary schools in China has changed dramatically since 1978, and those changes have been, for the most part, positive. Chinese art education can be separated into three periods: prior to 1966; 1966-1976; and 1978-present day. During the different dynasties and periods prior to 1966, art education existed in different forms. Art education was nearly terminated during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the most chaotic period in China's history. In 1978, with the Chinese Economic Reform, started by Deng Xiaoping, and the opening of trade with the outside world, which resulted in a rich exchange of ideas, China's position on education changed radically. It began to hold a series of meetings to determine the state of K-12 education and art education in China. As a result of those meetings, documents outlining what should be taught in schools throughout China were published and implemented. Since 1978, the method of art teaching no longer follows the old teaching model that emphasized skill and copying in painting and drawing. This study details the evolution of changes in K-12 art education in China since 1978 up until present day.

## **Acknowledgements**

There are so many people to thank for helping and supporting me during my thesis process.

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to the Dr. Barbara Suplee for her guidance, encouragement, and patience. As my thesis advisor, she gave her valuable time, advice, criticism and correction to help me complete this study, which is so important to me and my future.

I would like to thank Dr. Teresa Unseld, for enlightening me regarding research, her encouragement, and her insightful comments.

I would like to thank my tutor Nicole Dupree. She encouraged me, reviewed my grammar, and gave me suggestions for this paper.

In addition, I would like to thank my parents and my husband Delu for their love, encouragement, and support, both financially and mentally, which made it possible for me to successfully finish my study.

Lastly, I would like to thank the six teachers, Jing Song, Qing Kang, Qingyan Liang, Shufen Zhang, Lingyun, Huo, and Yunfeng Tao, who generously shared their time and personal insights about teaching art in China, many of which are included in this study.

## Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Overview.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Research Question.....	2
Methodology.....	3
General Significant and Personal Interest.....	3
Definition of Terms.....	4
Limitations of the Study.....	6
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	7
Art Education in China prior to 1966.....	7
The first Opium War.....	10
The second Opium War.....	11
Establishment of the People’s Republic of China.....	14
The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).....	15
1978 – Reformation and Opening.....	19
The Chinese Government’s Perspectives on Art Education.....	21

Elementary Art Education in China since 1978.....	26
Art Classroom, Facilities, and Resources at the Elementary Level.....	28
Art Instruction Time at the Elementary Level.....	29
Art Instruction Time at the Secondary Level.....	33
Art Curriculum at the Secondary Level.....	35
Art Curriculum at the Elementary Level.....	36
Methods of Teaching Art at the Elementary Level.....	38
Methods of Teaching Art at the Secondary Level.....	40
Assessment of Students in Art Education in China.....	43
Qualifications and Requirements for Teaching Art Education in China..	43
Art Classroom, Facilities, and Resources at the Secondary Level.....	45
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	48
Research Question.....	48
Research Design.....	48
Research Perspective.....	48
Research Type.....	48
Research Methods.....	49
Population.....	49
Limitations.....	50
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS.....	51
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	61

REFERENCES.....	67
APPENDICES.....	71
Lesson Plan 1.....	71
Lesson Plan 2.....	74



## **List of Figures**

Figure 1: Poster of Red Guard.....	17
Figure 2: Uniform of Red Guard.....	17
Figure 3: Poster promoting Cultural Revolution.....	18
Figure 4: Posters Supporting Mao's Thoughts.....	18
Figure 5: Slogans Advertising Mao's Ideas.....	18

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Overview

Art Education in China since 1978 is the topic of this thesis. China is the world's second largest economy, the world's most populous nation (1.3 billion people), and the world's largest educational system. However, little is known about its educational system, and particularly little about its art education system. That may be in part due to the fact that China has been a closed nation for much of its long history. But that changed in 1978, when Xiaoping Deng, the leader of China at the time, proposed and initiated what is commonly known as the *Reformation and Opening* of China. From that point on, there has been tremendous growth in the Chinese economy, which in turn has brought dramatic changes to all aspects of people's lives, including changes in education.

Many of the changes in education came about because of cross-pollination: Chinese educators, from all disciplines, went to countries around the world to visit and study. And, foreign educators and scholars came to China for symposiums and academic exchanges. This continues, even today. As a result, progressive pedagogies from across the globe have been introduced, adapted and embraced by Chinese educators. The researcher, a product of K-12 Chinese education, experienced some of the changes that had been introduced in her country since the Opening. She has also experienced education in the United States, as a graduate

student pursuing her Masters in Art Education, an experience which was instrumental in her desire to learn how K-12 art education in China has changed, if it has changed, to what extent has it changed, and what progress has it made since 1978, the year of Great Opening.

### **Statement of the problem**

Given the growth and development of China since the Chinese Reformation and Opening of 1978, there is a need to assess the growth and progress of art education in Chinese public schools.

### **Research Question**

What progress has China made in K-12 art education since 1978? To answer this question, other questions must first be answered: What is the history of art education in China prior to 1978? What was the role of the Chinese government in education prior to 1978, and what is its role today? How did art education classes look prior to 1978 versus how they look today? To answer these questions requires that specific topics be addressed. They are: The Chinese Government's Perspective on Art Education; Elementary Art Education Since 1978; Art Classroom, Facilities, and Resources at the Elementary Level; Art Classroom, Facilities, and Resources at the Secondary Level; Art Instruction Time at the Elementary Level; Art Instruction Time at the Secondary Level; Art Curriculum at the Elementary Level; Art Curriculum at the Secondary Level; Methods of Teaching Art at the Elementary Level; Methods of Teaching Art at

the Secondary Level; Assessment of Students in Art Education in China; Qualifications and Requirements for Teaching Art Education in China.

### **Methodology**

This study is historical in nature and employs qualitative research to determine what K-12 Chinese art education consisted of in 1978, the year of China's Opening and Reformation, and to discover what changes were made to art education between 1978 and the present, 2014. Chinese public education is controlled by the government; therefore, documents from the Chinese Ministry of Education were primary sources of information for laws, regulations, requirements, numerical data, and relevant information about K-12 education in China, before and after 1978. The researcher also investigated data from journals, books, articles, websites, and published theses that contained information about Chinese education policies.

Although this study is primarily historical, it also includes field research of an ethnographic nature, as well as the author's personal experience as a student in art classes in China. Six art teachers who are teaching art in Chinese elementary and secondary schools were interviewed to determine if the content they are teaching, their teaching methods, and classroom resources are congruent with current government regulations and requirements.

### **General Significance and Personal Interest (Purpose of the Study)**

Research on K-12 art education in China is of great value because little is

known about what is being taught in art classes in the most populous nation in the world, and less is known about art education's evolution in China since 1978—a pivotal time in Chinese and world history. This gap in the history of art education in China needs to be closed, and in doing so, new and valuable information will be added to research literature in the field. Moreover, as a future Chinese art teacher, this research is important to the author because she wants to understand the status of Chinese art education today and how far it has progressed in her homeland since 1978.

### **Definition of Terms**

**1. Assessment** - The evaluation or estimation of the nature, quality, or ability of someone or something. In this research, the researcher will assess the growth and progress of art education in Chinese public schools since 1978.

**2. Progress** - Gradual improvement or growth or development.

**3. Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)** - Violent mass movement that resulted in social, political, and economic upheaval in China starting in 1966 and ending in 1978.

**4. Red Guards** - They were groups of militant university and high school students who formed into paramilitary units as part of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). These young people often wore green jackets similar to the uniforms of the Chinese army at the time, with red armbands

attached to one of the sleeves. They were formed under the auspices of the Chinese Communist Party in 1966 in order to respond to chairman Mao's thoughts.

**5. Chinese Reformation and Opening (1978)** - The Chinese Reformation and Opening refers to the program of economic reforms called "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" in China. It is started in December 1978 by reformists within the Communist Party of China led by Xiaoping Deng. It was a turning point in China. From that time on, the Chinese economy, education, and the structure of people's lives were transformed. People's life were bringing into a new period.

**6. Public Schools in America** - Free schools provided by the government, usually paid for by taxes in America. Public school curricula, funding, teaching, employment, and other policies are determined by locally elected school boards with jurisdiction over each particular school in their districts. The state governments have control over educational standards and standardized tests for the public school systems.

**7. Public Schools in China** - A state-run system of public education run by the Ministry of Education. All citizens must attend these schools for at education run by the Ministry of Education. All citizens must attend school for at least five years starting at age six or seven, followed by six years of secondary education for ages 12 to 18. Some provinces may have

five years of primary school but four years for middle school. There are three years of middle school and three years of high school.

**8. Curriculum** - Curriculum is defined as the subjects comprising a course of study in a school or college. It includes the content of courses, the methods employed, and other determining requirements, such as norms and values, which relate to the way the school is organized.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited to K-12 art education in Chinese public schools in Mainland China. It does not address art education in private schools, education with private art tutors, or education in Hong Kong or Taiwan.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

Research reveals that art education in China has made significant gains since 1978. Documents from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China set forth in great detail requirements and regulations for art education over this 36-year period—and many of those changes have been dramatic and positive ([www.moe.gov.cn](http://www.moe.gov.cn)). With a population of over 1.35 billion, and more than 200 million students in schools across the country, China has the largest educational system in the world. What is extraordinary is that, unlike the United States and many other countries, the government standardizes and monitors public education throughout China: both in the 280,184 public elementary schools; the 56,167 public middle schools; and the 14,607 public high schools. The most populous country in the world has a national curriculum that includes art education, and teachers and students follow it across China's 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, and 4 municipalities. However, this was not always the case. Therefore, to understand the tremendous strides art education has made in China, one must go back in time—much farther back.

#### **Art Education in China Prior to 1966**

Most of the scholarly literature on the history of Chinese education makes clear that art education has a long history in China (Fay, 1975; Jiang, 2001; Li & Hu, 2009; Morse, 1926; Wan, 2001). It can be divided into three periods: Prior to



1966; 1966: The Cultural Revolution; and 1978: Reformation and Opening.

China's history, for the most part, is divided into dynasties, from the Xia Dynasty (ca. 2100 to 1600 BCE) to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), when it entered the period of the Republic, which ended in 1949, giving way to the People's Republic of China, the government which exists at present. Art education has existed for at least 2000 years in Chinese traditional schools, focusing on calligraphy and aesthetic education (Jiang, 2001). However, during this time only boys were allowed to go to school. In the West Zhou Dynasty (17-11 century BCE), teachers inculcated the Six Skills, which included the following: Li (礼) – politics, history, moral education; Yue (乐) – a comprehensive art course including music, poetry, and dance; She (射) and Yu (御) – training in military skills mainly skills of shooting arrows and driving carriages; Shu (书) – calligraphy and basic cultural knowledge such as reading and writing; Shu (数) – mathematics. “Among those skills, Li, Yue, She, and Yu should be acquired during higher education, while Shu (书) and Shu (数) should be acquired in elementary school” (Jiang, 2001, p. 30). Confucius (551-479 BC), a famous Chinese educator, politician, and ideologist of the Spring and Autumn period of Chinese history, proposed that students should get a well-rounded education in the sixth century BCE (Chang, 2005), and so in the middle of the Western Zhou Dynasty, Confucius reformulated the Six Skills as the ‘six arts’, which include etiquette, music,

archery, chariot driving, calligraphy and mathematics (Chang, 2005). According to Jiang (2001), the Six Arts theory reflected Confucius' idea on aesthetic education, one which required that the arts be brought into every part of the curriculum. Confucius' ideas on this passed from one generation of educators to the next, but stopped when the Imperial Examination System was implemented in 587 AD. During this period, students considered schools merely stepping stones to obtaining official positions. Therefore, in order to help students obtain high scores and obtain those positions, teachers solely focused on calligraphy, which was a required course in both government and private schools in ancient China (Jiang, 2001). Painting was not required in schools other than at Hongdu School (178 AD) during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) and at the Painting School (1104 AD) during the Song Dynasty (Chang, 2005). There is little information available about art education after this period of time until the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). However, important events occurred in China during that time that impacted China's economy, its people, education, and ultimately its government. Throughout history, China had been, for the most part, a closed nation, not open to foreigners or outside influences. In the mid 1500s during the Ming Dynasty, that dramatically changed because maritime trade was established between Europe and China. In 1557, Portugal set up a trading post in Macau, and soon other European nations followed suit. The English East India Company exported British woolens and Indian cotton in exchange for tea and porcelain. This

commercial exchange also led to the exchange of western ideas. Over time, Britain's increased demand for tea led to a serious trade imbalance. "Concerned that the China trade was draining silver out of England, the British searched for a counterpart commodity to trade for tea and porcelain. They found it in opium..." (www.bl.uk).

### **The First Opium War**

Chinese historical books provided information about the first and second opium wars for this researcher. Opium had been used in China since the 7th century primarily for medical purposes, but during the early maritime period in the 1500s, the Chinese were introduced to the mixing of opium with tobacco for pleasure. This was the beginning of a profitable drug trade and opium addiction problems for many Chinese—and the East India Company was responsible for most of its production in India and transport to China (www.bl.uk). In little more than 100 years, the amount of opium shipped from India to China from multiple sources increased 810%, from 1000 chests of opium (approximately 140 pounds) in 1773 to 81,000 chests at its peak in 1884 (Spence, 1992). Although opium was banned as an illegal drug by Imperial edict in 1729, this ban was never enforced until those in power saw the devastation it had caused to all levels of society (Morse, 1926). Consequently, in 1839 the Qing court outlawed its use and trade, confiscated and destroyed large quantities of opium from British ships, and closed Chinese ports to foreign trade (Chang, 1964). This resulted in the Anglo-Chinese

Wars, also known as the Opium Wars (1840-1842 and 1856-1860). The first Opium War was between China and Great Britain; it lasted two years and resulted in a treaty that ceded Hong Kong to Britain for 150 years and opened five Chinese ports—Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai—to foreign trade (Beeching, 1975; Fay, 1975; Greenberg, 1951). Forced to give up sovereign rights and to open its borders to trade with foreign powers. China enjoyed a period of relative peace for fourteen years, until the West wanted greater access to Chinese trade markets, which resulted in the Second Opium War.

### **The Second Opium War**

The second Opium War, which was waged by Britain and France against China, was essentially a continuation of the first Opium War. The two countries wanted full access to China's markets, opium legalized, exemption from duties on foreign imports, control of the Chinese indentured servant trade, the ability of western ambassadors to live in Beijing, and freedom for foreigners to travel throughout China, among other concessions (Greenberg, 1951). Two incidents set the stage for the war: Chinese authorities boarded the *Arrow*, a small ship suspected of smuggling, and arrested 12 crewmembers; the ship was flying a British flag; and a French missionary Father Auguste Chapdelaine was executed by local authorities in Guangxi province (Hurd, 1967). Even though Chinese authorities released the 12 crewmen, the Anglo-French force attacked, destroying four Chinese coastal forts, and sinking 20 naval junks. Moving inland,

British-French troops looted and torched the Emperor's Summer Palace in Chengde. In June 1858, the Treaty of Tientsin was signed, which officially ended the Second Opium War. That and the October 18, 1860 Convention of Peace and Friendship between Great Britain and China (also known as the Convention of Peking) the name for three, different *unequal treaties* allowed the UK, France, Russia, and the US to establish official embassies in Peking [Beijing]; opened 11 additional ports to foreign trade; allowed foreign vessels to freely navigate the Yangtze River; allowed foreigners to travel into interior China; and made China pay war indemnities (Chang, 1964; Hanes & Sanello, 2002). In Chinese history these treaties are known as “unequal treaties” because China was forced by the western powers to forfeit many of its territorial and sovereign rights (Hanes & Sanello, 2002; www.state.gov). The two Opium Wars and subsequent “unequal treaties” set the stage for an uneasy relationship with the West, that is still present today, but they also resulted in a flow of ideas from the western nations that impacted Chinese education in a positive way. In 1902, during the Qing Dynasty, the Qinding Xuetang Zhangcheng policy 《钦定学堂章程》 was issued, calling for art education to be introduced into schools' curriculum (Cheng, 2010). The Qing Dynasty also introduced a new school system that allowed girls to go to schools, a groundbreaking change (Jiang, 2001). In 1904, the *Zouding School Law* introduced drawing and craft into schools (Chang, 2005). From this time on, art education was used to develop skills to benefit Chinese industry. There were two

kinds of drawing courses: free drawing (Chinese painting and western sketching) and technical drawing. In 1906, the first textbook for free drawing was published (Chang, 2005). The Qing Dynasty ended in 1912 and the Republic Period began, during which time the following subjects were taught: Aesthetic Education (Meiyu, 美育); Art Education (Yishujiaoyu, 艺术教育); Fine Art Education (Meishujiaoyu, 美术教育); and Drawing Education (Tuhujiaoyu, 图画教育).

Aesthetic Education (Meiyu) was the first subject taught in China, and Cai Yuanpei (1912), China's first Minister of Education, Chancellor of Beijing University, and the founder of the Academic Sinica (China's National Research Institute) was instrumental in bringing this about. Education in China, Germany, and France, Cai Yuanpei was greatly influenced by the thoughts and ideas of the American educator/philosopher John Dewey (Zhang, 1991). In contrast to the traditional education that was in place in China at that time, he promoted aesthetic education; scientific knowledge, and social action; the development of higher education; and education free from religious and political constraints (Fairbank & Teng, 1954; UNESCO, 2000). As Minister of Education in 1912, Yuanpei, made a cogent proposal on educational policy for the Republic, characterized by the unity of five types of education: military/citizenship, utilitarian, moral, a world view, and aesthetic education.

For national survival, he recommended military/citizenship education so as to defend China itself, to regain its lost rights, and to develop its

industrial civilization (UNESCO, 2000).

Many of his ideas and practices were put into action. A profile writer on education theory and practice, Yuanpei's thoughts and ideas on education and national policy are of great interest to the Chinese today (Zhang, 2000). From 1928 to 1929, the government changed the name of the drawing course to 'fine art'. Chang (2005) states that although the standards of fine art were changed three times over the years, "cultivating aesthetic interest, studying elements of beauty, and improving the ability to beautify life remained constant aims" (p. 232). In 1932, Middle School Regulations were issued with the directive to train students to have an enlightened interest in art (Jiang, 2001). According to Jiang (2001), "The art education curriculum continuously offered art appreciation courses in elementary and middle schools until 1949" (p. 41). From 1912 to 1942, the Curriculum Criteria were revised many times, but the curriculum in art education did not change significantly. Art subjects in elementary school remained the same: drawing, sewing, and handcrafts (Jiang, 2001). However, in 1949, the Republic Period ended and major changes occurred in China that impacted its people and education. This date marked the beginning of the People's Republic of China.

### **Establishment of the People's Republic of China**

Most of the books about Chinese history stated that on October 1, 1949, Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong proclaimed the establishment of the

People's Republic of China, and the country followed the Soviet Union's lead in education. Primary and secondary schools used on the Soviet model for their fine arts curriculum. One fine art class per week was offered to elementary and secondary students for 45 minutes. According to Chang (2005):

The Curriculum content included sketching, watercolor painting, 'suggested drawing' (drawing from assigned topics) pattern work and some art appreciation. In 1958, Chinese painting and craft were added. In the curriculum reforms of the early 1960s, fine art was only included in the first grade of secondary school, for one hour per week. (p. 233)

This meant that students in grades 11-12 in China did not have art classes or art instruction (Ministry of Education). In 1966, radical changes occurred in China that led to a period called the Cultural Revolution, a time that impacted K-12 art education in a negative way.

### **The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)**

For this important historical period in China, most of the professional articles describe only a negative influence of the Cultural Revolution on art education. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, commonly known as the Cultural Revolution, took place in the People's Republic of China from 1966 to 1976. It "was ten years of calamities" during which "China's economy was brought to the brink of collapse" (Gao, 2008, p. 16). During this period, Mao Zedong, author of the Cultural Revolution, asserted total authority over the



Chinese government (Cafarella & Bohan, 2012; Spence, 2001). He removed capitalism to right the wrongs it had imposed upon the Chinese people and purged anyone who did not fully advocate his belief or support for communism and the Chinese Communist Party. Violence, cruelty, suffering and deaths were universal, and the "elite intelligentsia were the political targets of the Cultural Revolution" during the ten years of its existence (Gao, 2008, p. 13). Factories, mines, schools, and businesses were forced to shut down and the buildings were used as detention houses or makeshift courts to persecute those who were perceived as not supportive of the policies of the government (Gao, 2008). Chinese culture and tradition were all but destroyed during this time and artists and cultural professionals were oppressed and stopped from working (Gao, 2008). The Cultural Revolution had a negative impact on art and the arts in general in China. During this time, "music and fine art were combined into a subject called 'Revolutionary Art' and were supposed to serve politics" (Chang, 2005, p. 233). In some places, art courses were canceled because they promoted "old thinking," and did not advance the goals that Mao had put in place for China. One of the goals for urban youth during this time was to eliminate the nation of the "Four Olds": old customs, old culture, old habits and old ideas (Spence, 2001). Students in elementary schools became Little Red Guards and middle school students became Red Guards and wore uniforms, looking like miniature soldiers (Figure 1 & 2). Before the Cultural Revolution, students spent their days in schools and art

was one of their courses. However, during the Cultural Revolution, less than half of their time was spent in school and the rest of their time was spent in public places, such as farms, factories, military camps, hospitals, and communities. When in school, students learned the skills of drawing and painting to create propagandistic artworks for the places they were placed in to work (Qin, 2011). Students were used as “little soldiers” to promote the class struggle and the ideas of Mao-and art was their weapon. They created big-character posters (Figure 3 & Figure 4), wrote slogans (Figure 5), made calligraphy with Chinese brushes, and created signs that were displayed at various sites throughout the country (Jiang, 2001).



Figure 1: Poster of Red Guard



Figure 2: Uniform of Red Guard



Figure 3: Poster promoting Cultural Revolution



Figure 4: Posters Supporting Mao's Thoughts



Figure 5: Slogans Advertising Mao's Ideas

Although art was still taught in schools at this time, it was used to advance the Revolution. It focused on the three great revolutionary movements: Class Struggle, Struggle for Production, and Scientific Experiment. The methods of art teaching usually involved activities such as copying a model of an artwork, drawing nature, drawing from an assigned theme, and artistic calligraphy (Jiang, 2001). Although the Cultural Revolution brought great suffering in China, many

people obtained strong artistic and painting skills (Jiang, 2001). And China's first art education textbook was published during this period (Jiang, 2001). The Cultural Revolution ended when Mao Zedong died in September 1976, but it left deep scars on Chinese history (Spence, 2001). In 1977, Deng Xiaoping became the leader in China (Li & Hu, 2009). At The Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee in Beijing in November 1978, Xiaoping, proposed a "Reformation and Opening" in China.

### **1978 - Reformation and Opening**

In the last few years, numerous texts on the development of Chinese art education since 1978 have appeared. The year 1978 represents a "seismic shift" for China, and Deng Xiaoping was the architect of that shift, known as the Chinese Reformation and Opening in the People's Republic of China (Jiang, 2001; Li & Hu, 2009). It was "the year that Deng Xiaoping introduced his open-door reforms in China, which inaugurated a quarter-century of annual double-digit growth rates, resulting in the economic transformation of China" (Jacques, 2006, para. 2). Instead of emphasizing class struggle, the political aim was now to encourage economic construction and achieve modernization in four areas: agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology. It was also an important turning point for education in general and art education in particular (Jiang, 2001). Schools were reopened for students and art education reappeared in classrooms. "*Curriculum Criteria for Visual Arts Education in Elementary and*

*Middle Schools* were published, and national visual arts textbooks and *Reference Books for Teaching Visual Art Textbooks* were edited on the basis of the ‘Criteria’” (Jiang, 2001, p. 156). Art education appeared in two forms. First, students who liked visual arts and possessed “talent” were channeled into institutions of higher education in art and professional schools of art. Second, for others, art courses were also offered, although they were not considered important parts of their curriculum. In December 1986, the Chinese State Education Commission established the Department of Social Science Research and Art Education (now renamed as the Department of Physical, Health, and Art Education at Ministry of Education). It became the highest executive branch of Chinese government charged with organizing and managing Chinese art education. In November 1, 1987, the Chinese Art Education Research Association (now renamed as the Chinese Art Education Association Professional Education Committee) was established. During this time there was great interest and support for art and art education: in primary and secondary education, higher education, community art schools and art classes, art galleries, and art museums (Jiang, 2001; Perry, 1998; Qin, 2011). Chinese art educators went to countries around the world to visit and study. They also invited foreign art educators and scholars to China for symposiums and academic exchanges. This was repeated in other areas: science, technology, agriculture, and business. China learned much from this rich exchange of ideas, and it adapted what it learned for its own interests and needs,

which resulted in rapid economic growth that brought changes to all aspects of Chinese education. Not surprisingly, the Chinese government's perspective on art education changed dramatically, as did its educational policy (Li & Hu, 2009; Wan, 2001, 2003; Zhang, 2012). By investigating Chinese educational policy, the researcher was able to learn how much growth and progress art education has made in her country, not just from 1978 to the present day, but from earlier times, also, which gave her a much better understanding of how far China has come with respect to art education.

### **The Chinese Government's Perspective on Art Education**

As noted, Chinese scholars in the past had recorded existing regulations, policies, and documents, and the kinds of discussions that were held of topics of art education. Policies of Chinese art education can be traced to the period of the Qing Dynasty (1616-1911); a time when scholars documented regulations, their names, and the times they were implemented, along with art education conferences, symposiums, and meetings. In 1903, the *Zouding Xuetaang Zhangcheng School Regulation* was drafted by the Qing government; and crafts, painting, music, and other art courses were existent but not compulsory. However, In 1912, the Chinese government drafted a policy called the *Provisional Standards for General Education Courses*, which required that elementary schools provide at least one of the following courses: painting, crafts, or choir. In 1952, the Ministry of Education issued three regulations: *Provisional Elementary*

*School Regulations, Provisional Middle School Regulations, and Provisional Kindergarten Regulations.* These regulations required that schools support a comprehensive education with intellectual, moral, physical, and aesthetic components-much like what was promoted by Cai Yuanpei, China's first Minister of Education back in 1912. However, in reality, art education during this time emphasized skill training, ignoring art history, art criticism, and aesthetics (Qin, 2011). As noted earlier, "art education became a victim of vicious political attacks" and nearly disappeared during the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution (Li & Hu, 2009, p. 215). However, when China adopted its reformation policy, the years between 1977 and 1988 were an important time for the restoration and development of art education. Through many years of effort, the Chinese economy made great economic progress that also improved the state of education. In this positive social environment, art education in elementary and secondary schools reappeared. The Chinese government reestablished an educational policy of comprehensive development, reorganized school's management systems, improved teachers' teaching abilities, and restored a positive atmosphere for learning. The primary mission for educational administrators and art educators was to restore the role of the importance of art education in general education (Zhang, 2012). 1978 was a turning point for education in general and art education in particular. The examination system for entering into a university was restored and art was included in the exam, which indicates that the government thought art education

was important enough to be tested. Education regulations, policies, curriculum, textbooks, and teaching methods were updated. In general, all of these changes improved the development of education and art education. At this time, *Curriculum Criteria for Visual Arts Education in Elementary and Middle School* was published, and national visual arts textbooks and reference books for teaching visual arts were updated, according to the newly published criteria (Jiang, 2001, p. 156). This indicates that the government considered art education to be a discipline like science, math, language, etc.; therefore it should have textbooks that set forth the principles that students needed to learn and teachers needed to teach. Between February 27 and March 7, 1979, the Central Education Department sponsored a conference for national music and visual arts education in Beijing, and leading art educators from nine provinces and cities were invited to attend and give their input. The conference focused on revising the *Curriculum Criteria for Music Education and Visual Arts Education in Elementary and Middle Schools*, the first time the curriculum for visual arts education had been analyzed and edited (Jiang, 2001). In 1979, the document was re-issued and named the *Full-Time Ten-Year School System Visual Arts Education Criteria for Elementary Schools and Middle Schools*. The document clearly established what should be taught in art education courses throughout China and how it should be taught. The researcher believes, however, that although the 1979 document stated what elementary and secondary students should learn in art education, that in



reality it might not have happened. From her research she could not tell, but this uncertainty on the researcher's part may explain why the *Decision of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee for Reform of the Educational System*, which mandated art as a required course in education, was issued in 1985 (Li & Hu, 2009). The year 1986 was a banner year for education, because the government issued the following documents: *Report on the Seventh Five-Year Plan* and the *Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China*, which implemented moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic education as integral to a comprehensive education; and *The Overall Principle of Art Education in China*, which set forth the purpose of art classes in schools, requirements for art education in schools, requirements for qualified teachers, and the results of scientific research in art education (Perry, 1998). The Art Education Committee of the State Education Commission was also established in 1986. The State Education Commission organized the first *National Working Conference on Art Education in School* in November 1989. In this conference, the *Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Art Education in Chinese Schools (1989-2000)* was issued, which required that art education be implemented in all Chinese schools. To facilitate that mandate, the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council published and disseminated the *Chinese Educational Reform and Development Outline* in February 1993 (Li & Hu, 2009). June of the following year, The Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and

State Council held the Second National Working Conference on Education. In the agenda of this conference, the importance of aesthetic and art education was emphasized. One month later, in July 1994, the State Education Commission mandated that the exclusion of art courses in middle school curriculums be abolished and that art appreciation courses be initiated in all Chinese middle schools. In July 1996, the State Education Commission required higher education institutions to promote unified planning and make great efforts to introduce art courses to all students. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, national art education conferences and government-issued documents have outlined the necessary components of art education, including quality of teaching, reform, the availability of art education in rural areas, and new technologies (Li & Hu, 2009). In December 2000, the National Symposium on Art Education, held by the Ministry of Education, clarified the tasks required to reform course materials and develop rural art education. In May 2002, The Ministry of Education released the *Development Plan for Art Education in Chinese Schools (2001-2010)* and *Working Regulation for Art Education in Schools* (Wan, 2001, 2003). The Regulations consisted of 22 provisions covering the various requirements for art education, such as extracurricular and after-school art activities and cultural exposure (Wan, 2003). In summary, education in China has been and is presently controlled by the government, and since the *Opening* of China in 1978, the government has implemented many changes to reform art education. It has held

conferences, symposia, and commissions, regarding the path education should take. From the educational policies that it has established and implemented throughout the country, it is clear that China's values on art education in elementary and secondary schools have changed since 1978 (Zhang, 2012).

### **Elementary Art Education in China since 1978**

Most authoritative documents in China depicted art education requirements for Chinese elementary schools and teachers. In 1986, the government of China mandated that nine-years of compulsory education be implemented throughout the country (Perry, 1998). On March 18, 1995, the *Education Law of the People's Republic of China* was adopted at the Third Meeting of the Eighth National People's Congress (Order No. 45 of the President of the People's Republic of China). Effective as of September 1, 1995, this law, a historical mandate for education stated that museums, art galleries, and other public cultural places, historic sites, as well as revolutionary memorial halls, give preferential treatment to teachers and students and provide opportunities for students to receive education ([www.moe.gov.cn](http://www.moe.gov.cn)). The government also adopted *The Laws for Teachers in the People's Republic of china* at the Fourth Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People's Congress on October 31, 1993 (Order No. 15 of the President of the People's Republic of China). This law, which became effective as of January 1, 1994, requires that all individuals who teach have Chinese teacher certification, including those who teach art in Chinese

elementary schools. Licensure to teach in elementary schools requires graduation from a secondary school for teaching or higher education ([www.moe.gov.cn](http://www.moe.gov.cn)). Effective as of September 23, 2000, the Teacher Certification Regulations explicitly state what must be done to get art teacher certification for Chinese elementary schools (Order No. 10 of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China). Firstly, to become art teachers, individuals must graduate from an art college or university. Secondly, they have to pass the state examination to obtain a Certificate of Education and Psychology. Thirdly, they have to pass a test in Mandarin Chinese and obtain a certificate of Mandarin. Fourthly, they have to present a sample lesson that is 15 minutes long and appropriate to an elementary developmental level, and participate in a group interview. Successfully completing these steps will enable them to get elementary art teacher certification or license to teach ([www.moe.gov.cn](http://www.moe.gov.cn)). The establishment of the *Education Law of the People's Republic of China* and the *Laws for Teachers in the People's Republic of China* indicates that China values elementary education and wants to ensure that those who teach at the elementary level are well prepared to do so, including those who teach art education. In the past, this was not the case. Moreover, China also recognizes the role that educational facilities and resources play in providing a beneficial environment for learning in the art classroom.

### **Art Classroom, Facilities, and Resources at the Elementary Level**

Prior to 1978 there is little information specific to art classrooms, facilities, and resources in China. However, after that time, *Outlines* are available and they provide insights in these areas. In 1979, in the *Outline of Art Teaching in Elementary and Middle Schools*, suggestions for teaching are provided, including teaching tools, resources, and the use of technology. In 1988, the *Outline of Art Teaching in Elementary School* was published, calling for the improvement of teaching conditions and facilities, and the availability of quality books and teaching materials. It also stated that teachers and students should create some simple painting tools, basically repurposed materials to be used in the art classroom. Schools that had funds constructed art classrooms. However, in 1992, the *Outline of Art Teaching in Elementary School* required that all elementary schools build art classrooms, improve teaching facilities, and provide books, pictures, and videos for use in art classrooms. Again, it advocated that teachers and students create simple painting tools. In 2000, the *Outline of Art Teaching in Elementary School* called for the application of multimedia in teaching art at the elementary level (Curriculum Materials Institute, 2001). In 2009, the Network of Equipment in Chinese Education stated that every art classroom should be equipped with a drawing board, slide projector, computer, easels, and plaster models. Since 1978, the government has made a concerted effort to improve the facilities and resources in elementary art rooms for teachers and students, but

what about instruction time dedicated to art education? Has that changed significantly since 1978?

### **Art Instruction Time at the Elementary Level**

Government regulations regarding art curriculum revealed much for the researcher (Zhang, 2012). In 1948, the Chinese Ministry of Education published the *Outline of Elementary Curriculum*, the last elementary teaching plan before the founding of New China. It stated how much time should be spent teaching art at various grade levels in Chinese elementary schools. This document stated that first and second grade students were to receive 180 minutes (3 hours) of art per week, basically 4.29% of the time allocated for instruction in all subjects (1,050 minutes). Third to fourth grade students were to receive 1,500 minutes of total instruction time, and fifth and sixth grade students were to receive 1,470 minutes. During this period, art occupied 4.00% of total instruction time for third and fourth graders and 4.10% of total time for fifth and sixth graders. During this time art curriculum focused on appreciation, and how to use different tools for painting (Zhang, 2012). From 1953 to 1957, the Chinese government promulgated three teaching schedules for elementary art teaching. The first schedule was published in 1953, and it called for two art classes per week for students in all grade levels. First and second grade students were to have 48 classes per week and art occupied 4.17% of their total instruction time. Third and fourth graders were to have 52 classes per week and art occupied 3.85% of their total instruction time. Fifth and

sixth grade students were to have 56 classes per week and art occupied 3.57% of their total instruction time. As students advanced in grade level during this schedule they received less art instruction time. In 1955, the second teaching schedule was published, and it only called for one art class per week for students in all grade levels. First and fourth grade students were to receive 24 classes per week and art occupied 4.17% of their total instruction time. Fifth and sixth grade students were to have 26 classes per week, and art occupied 3.85% of their total instruction time. During this time students had fewer and longer classes during the week, and although they only had one art class per week versus two, the total time for art instruction in all grade levels increased. In 1957, the third teaching schedule was published. It also called for one art class per week for students in all grade levels. First and fourth grade students were to receive 24 classes per week and art occupied 4.17% of their total instruction time. Fifth and sixth grade students were to have 28 classes per week, and art occupied 3.57% of their total instruction time. During this time, first to fourth grade students had the same number of classes and art time per week, but the older fifth to sixth graders had two additional classes per week and less art instruction time. In July 1957, the Chinese Ministry of Education published *The Elementary Teaching Plan from 1957 to 1958*. It required 204 classes per week for all grade levels, which included one art class. In July 1963, the Chinese Ministry of Education published *The Notice of New Elementary Teaching Plan*. First and second grade students were to

have 28 classes per week and art occupied 3.57% of their total instruction time. Third and fourth graders were to have 30 classes per week and art occupied 3.33% of their total instruction time. Fifth and sixth grade students were to have 32 classes per week and art occupied 3.13% of their total instruction time. This reflects an increase in the number of classes per week and a decrease in art time for all grade levels. From 1978 to 1988, the Chinese government published 11 teaching plans for elementary and secondary schools. In 1978, the *Teaching Schedule for Elementary Art Teaching* called for two art classes per week for first and second grade students, and one art class per week for third to sixth grade students. First to fifth grade students were to receive 26 classes per week. Art occupied 7.69% of first and second graders' total instruction time; 3.85% for third to fifth graders; and 3.57% of sixth graders' total instruction time per week. The 1981 *Teaching Schedule for Five-year Elementary Education Program* called for two art classes per week for first to third grade students. First grade students were to have 24 classes per week and art occupied 8.33% of their total instruction time. Second graders were to have 25 classes per week and art occupied 8.00% of their total instruction time. Third grade students were to have 26 classes per week and art occupied 7.69% of their total instruction time. Fourth and fifth graders were to have one art class per week out of 27 classes, 3.70% of total instruction time. The 1984 *Teaching Schedule of Art Education for Six-Year Urban/Rural Elementary Education* called for two art classes per week for first to fourth grade students.



First and second grade students were to receive 23 classes per week, and art occupied 8.70% of total instruction time; third and fourth graders were to receive 25 classes per week, and art occupied 8.00% of total instruction. For fifth and sixth grade students, there was one art class per week out of 25 classes, 4.00% of total instruction time. In 1988, the teaching schedule for art education was adjusted, and all elementary students were to have two art classes per week. First grade students were to have 29 classes of instruction per week and art occupied 6/70% of that time. Second graders were to have 31 classes per week and art occupied 6.45% of their total instruction time. Third grade students were to have 32 classes per week and art occupied 6.25% of their total instruction time. Fourth to sixth grade students were scheduled to have 33 classes per week and art occupied 6.06% of their total teaching time. In 1989, the government, teaching schedule called for two art classes per week for all elementary students, and that schedule is being followed today (Zhang, 2012). If one were to look at the time allocated for art instruction in China from the beginning of record keeping, it would show that from 1948 to 1958, elementary students' time in the art room remained fairly constant; was reduced in the 1960s, but not dramatically. Little information is available about art instruction time during the Cultural Revolution, but in 1978, the time of the *Opening*, art instruction time more than doubled for first and second grade and increases a little for grades three to six. From 1981 to 1984, however, students' time in art education increased in all grades levels, but

dramatically so in grades two to six. In 1988 students' time in the art room dropped approximately two percentage points in grades one to three but jumped two percentage points in grades four to six. Overall, from 1978 to present day, art instruction time has been reduced a little for first and second grade but has been increased greatly for grades three to six, and all elementary students now have two art classes a week, which was not always the case. How does this compare with art instruction time at the secondary level?

### **Art Instruction Time at the Secondary Level**

Comparing art class-time prior to 1978, the Chinese journals on art education stated the increase of time for art class in China. In 1948, the Chinese Ministry of Education published the *Outline of Secondary Curriculum Standards*, and according to the Outline, two classes of art per week were required for middle school students, one class per week was required for tenth and eleventh grade students, and no art class was required for twelfth grade students. Art for middle school students constituted 7.40% to 6.25% of overall instruction time, with the amount of art time declining as students advanced in grade level, which was also true for the tenth (3.45%) and eleven (2.94%) grades. In August 1950, the *Temporary Teaching Plan in Secondary Schools* was published and it required that secondary schools include politics, Chinese, mathematics, nature, physical education, art, and music in the curriculum. According to this document, the number of art classes for middle school students (two classes per week) and tenth

grade students (one class per week) remained the same. However, it eliminated art for eleventh grade students. Consequently, students in eleventh and twelfth grade did not have art. Compared to 1948, the total time for art instruction was reduced 40% in middle school, and 50% in high school. In 1952, the *Temporary Regulations for Elementary School* and *Temporary Regulations for Secondary School* were published. They did not change the amount of time dedicated to art instruction for students in elementary and middle school. However, they totally eliminated art for students in high school, grades ten to twelve (Zhang, 2012). From 1953 to 1957, China promulgated five teaching plans for middle school. During this period, students in middle school had one art class per week. In 1953, art classes occupied 3.33% and 3.13% of total instruction time per week. From 1954 to 1955, art classes occupied 3.45% and 3.23% of instruction time per week. From 1955 to 1956, art classes occupied 3.57% and 3.23% of weekly instruction time. From 1956 to 1957, art classes occupied 3.33% to 3.03% of instruction time per week. From 1957 to 1958, art classes occupied 3.44% to 3.23% of weekly instruction time. From 1958 to 1959, art classes occupied 3.44% to 3.33% of total instruction time per week. In 1963, seventh and eighth grade students had one art class per week, occupying 3.03% and 2.94% of weekly instruction time. In July 1964, the *Notice about Adjustment and Reduction of Curriculum in Elementary and Middle School* was issued, canceling art for eighth and ninth grade students, which meant there was no art class in grades eight to twelve (Zhang, 2012). After

the Cultural Revolution, from 1977 to 1988, there were 11 teaching plans that were implemented for elementary and secondary schools in China. In 1981, students in middle school received one art class per week, 3.33% of total instruction time per week. In 1988, middle school students still had one art class per week, but the total time for art instruction increased, from 2.78% to 3.03% (Zhang, 2012). In 1994, the Ministry of Education mandated that high school students, grades ten and eleven, have one art class per week, a policy that continues today. This has been positive change in Chinese art education since 1978, which also suggests that China sees value in having art for all students, not solely for the young, which is a groundbreaking. It also indicates that what secondary level students are learning in art is important.

### **Art Curriculum at the Secondary Level**

Chinese art education policies recorded the development of art curriculum at the secondary level. According to the *Chinese Outline of National Art Education*, which established curriculum standards for the country from 1950 to 2001, the national art curriculum has had several changes over the years. The government published an *Outline of National Art Education for Middle School* in 1956, 1979, and 1992. These Outlines detail what should be taught in art classes at the middle school level. In 1956, the art curriculum for middle school students primarily focused on painting from nature or life, pattern, painting from a theme, and art appreciation. In 1979, the art curriculum emphasized painting from nature

or life, copying, craft, patterns, and art appreciation. In 1992, the art curriculum for middle school focused on painting, craft, and appreciation (Zhang, 2012). From 1952 until 1994, art was not included in the high school curriculum, because it was thought that art at this level provided little value for students' future studies and employment. This mindset and practice changed, however, when the government published the *Notice about Creation of Art Classes in High School* in 1994, which mandated that tenth and eleventh grade students have one art class per week in high school. In 1995, the *Outline of Teaching for Art Appreciation in High School* required an art appreciation course for tenth and eleventh grade students (Zhang, 2012). In 2002, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued the *Standards of Art Curriculum in High School*, which mandated that painting and sculpture, design and craft, calligraphy and seal carving, and modern media arts be taught in art classes, in addition to art appreciation, (Zhang, 2012). Since 1978, the art curriculum, what is taught in art classes in China, has greatly expanded, which is a positive development. It is also a reflection of what is taught in the lower grades in elementary schools across the nation.

### **Art Curriculum at the Elementary Level**

The regulations, which were published by the government, offered more information about art curriculum at the elementary level for the researcher. Art has always been valued for students at the elementary level in China, particularly

for the very young. The researcher thinks this is because art making promotes observation skills, focus, discipline, persistence, and patience—very desirable attributes and habits that are important for the young to learn. In the 1950 Outline, the art curriculum in elementary school emphasized painting from nature or life, pattern, and appreciation. The 1956 Outline also focused on painting from nature or life and pattern, but also included painting from a theme. In 1979, the emphasis of art curriculum was on painting from nature or life and copying; creation; craft; pattern; and appreciation. In 1992, the elementary curriculum focused on painting, craft, and appreciation. In 2001, there was a huge change in the national curriculum for elementary students. Elementary schools throughout China were charged with emphasizing modeling and expression, design and application, appreciation and review, and synthesis and exploration. In summary, before 1978 and even up until 2001, the content of the art curriculum for elementary students was largely driven by traditional culture, essentially skills-based, focusing primarily on painting and copying, but since 1978, “creation” and craft have also been added. In 2001, creative expression and design and its application became important curriculum goals in elementary education, which indicate China has a better understanding of what a quality art education can do for students and the nation’s future (Zhang, 2012). Along with changes in curriculum, teaching methods have also changed in China since 1978.

### **Methods of Teaching Art at the Elementary Level**

Comparing texts prior to 1978, the Chinese literature on art education makes clear the improvement of art teaching methodology at the elementary level in China. As stated earlier, prior to 1978, the focus of art instruction in China was painting, and students were taught painting through imitation. Model pictures, drawn by the teacher or from books, were placed in front of the class, and students copied them. If a student made a mistake in copying, the teacher corrected it according to the model picture. Using this method, students learned drawing skills, and the images they copied were also imprinted on their minds. Again and again, they copied and painted the same images and pictures, never thinking about creatively expressing their own feelings or ideas (Adkins, 1978). However, that changed in the 1990s. In 1992, the State Education Commission promulgated the *Outline of Nine-year Compulsory Education for Elementary Art Education*, which had three aims or goals: 1) Teach students simple artistic knowledge and modeling skills; 2) Cultivate students' personal art aesthetic; and 3) Cultivate students' observation, visual memory, imagination and creativity. To help achieve these goals, art teachers were to take advantage of images, artworks, slideshows, and videos as instructional materials and resources. What is really groundbreaking, however, is the 1998 *Outline of Art Teaching in Elementary Schools* which required art teachers to change their focus and methods of teaching. Art teachers were charged with improving students' aesthetic abilities and artistic

accomplishments by motivating and engaging students in observing, thinking about, and making art. The focus was on observing the beauty of nature, society, and art, and teachers were to use a variety of teaching methods to achieve this: visits to art museums, art exhibitions, and historical sites. On July 1, 2001, the Ministry of Education issued the Standards for Full Time Compulsory Education Art Courses (Experimental Version). It established three guidelines for art education in elementary schools and middle schools: 1) tools and materials that should be used; 2) vocabulary; and 3) design skills. The goals and objectives for first and second grade students were to use simple tools and materials, such as paper and other common materials that are easy to find, and combine those materials with painting to express their thoughts and feelings. This type of activity was to help students learn about and experience design. First and second grade students were expected to use simple vocabulary to express their thoughts and feelings about art. Third and fourth grade students were expected to learn to use more complex tools to express themselves and communicate ideas, using specific art terms, such as shape, color, texture, and so on. Third and fourth grades students were expected to know design composition principles, such as comparison and harmony, symmetry and balance, and to learn some simple concepts and methods for handcrafts, make simple designs and decorations, and experience the difference between design and other art activities. To facilitate students' learning in these areas, the art teachers' charge was to motivate and



engage their students' imagination and creative aspirations. Fifth and sixth grade students were expected to be more reflective, to document their observations, the sounds they heard, and to express the feelings and thoughts they had when making art and using different tools and art media. They were also expected to use more advanced art terms and vocabulary to express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings, e.g., tonal value, perspective, shallow space, etc. Because design was a curriculum focus, students were expected to demonstrate their understanding of design in projects they completed. In addition, interdisciplinary connections were emphasized in art class at this grade level, and students were expected to combine knowledge and skills from other disciplines in activities in schools and their communities to create, perform, and experience the relationship between art, the living environment, and traditional culture. From the researcher's perspective, this is perhaps the most incredible advance in art education since 1978. What is being taught in elementary art classes today is preparing a generation of students to be innovative designers and problem solvers. This raises an important question for the researcher: "Are students in middle school building on what they learned in elementary school?" Essentially, does art education in China exhibit scope and sequence?

### **Methods of Teaching Art at the Secondary Level**

In their literature, Chinese art educators mentioned the method of art teaching in Chinese secondary schools. In 1948, the teaching of art in middle

school focused on the development of drawing skills: geometric drawing, drawing of simple monochrome patterns, pencil or charcoal drawing, and line drawing in traditional ink and brush style. Then, in 1956, the *Outline of Art Teaching in Middle School* required that students gain knowledge and skills in painting. Therefore art teachers focused on teaching students painting techniques. In 1979, the *Outline of Art Teaching in Elementary and Middle School* mandated that students be trained in observation and analysis to advance their skills in painting. Teachers used copying to help students gain those skills. They focused on teaching students to observe, analyze, and capture the basic features and structure of the things they were painting: line, shape, color, proportion, texture, pattern, form, etc. Teachers also taught crafts in art class at this time, and students learned to use paper, clay, wood, bamboo, and other materials as creative mediums. In 1988, the *Outline of Art Teaching in Middle School* introduced new criteria for art education. Students in seventh grade were expected to develop skills in drawing, painting, crafts, art history, aesthetics, and art appreciation. Therefore, teachers introduced students to Chinese and Western art to broaden their horizons and aesthetic sensibilities. They also taught Chinese painting techniques, clay relief sculpture to create flowers and animals, printmaking techniques, and pencil modeling of human form. Students in eighth grade were expected to gain skills in Chinese landscape painting, three-dimensional modeling, using pencil and watercolor to capture nature, and the appreciation of Chinese works of art.

Teachers developed art activities and curricula to teach those skills. Students in ninth grade were expected to gain greater proficiency in the skills they learned in seventh and eighth grade. Teachers, in addition to building upon the knowledge students learned in earlier grades, focused on students using three-dimensional modeling to create designs, and they used images, artwork, slideshows, and videos as teaching resources. In 1992, the *Outline of Art Teaching in Middle Schools* was published, requiring teachers to launch extracurricular art activities. In 1997, the *Outline of Teaching for Art Appreciation in High School* stated that students should be able to describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate the aesthetic qualities of Chinese and foreign works of art (Curriculum Materials Institute, 2001). These are higher order thinking skills, making judgments, and building and supporting an argument or position. Teachers must develop teaching strategies, classroom activities, and resources to meet these goals. Therefore, in reviewing what and how teachers are delivering art education at the secondary level, the researcher believes that major progress have been achieved since 1978. And the answer to the earlier question about scope and sequence, i.e., whether the teaching in secondary art education builds on skills and principles that were taught and learned in elementary school, is Yes. However, it leads the researcher to another question: “How are students’ knowledge and skills being assessed in this new model?”

### **Assessment of Students in Art Education in China**

The *Outlines of Art Teaching* stress that assessment is required at the elementary and secondary level—for students and teachers (1988, 1992, 1997, 2000). The 1965 *Outline of Art Education in China* required teachers to score every art assignment, which is also required of art teachers today (Curriculum Materials Institute, 2001). The grading system used in elementary and secondary schools throughout China is as follows: A is excellent; B is very good; C is good; and D is just passing. Art teachers also use stars as a method of assessment. Four stars are awarded for excellent work, three stars for very good work, two stars for good work, and one star for passing work. Even though schools and art teachers may use different methods to assess and grade students' artwork, a four-point grading system set forth in the government *Outline* is always followed (1965). The government has also established specific requirements and assessments for those who teach in China, including art education.

### **Qualifications and Requirements for Teaching Art Education in China**

Professional papers stated that prior to 1978, there were no requirements for those who taught art. However, that changed in 1994, when the *Laws for Teachers in the People's Republic of China* proclaimed that all individuals who teach in China must have Chinese teacher certification. Therefore, those seeking to teach any subject, including art, must have a degree and obtain a teaching certificate from a vocational college, junior college, college, or university. The

route to obtaining middle school and high school teacher certification is the same as the route to elementary teacher certification. The only difference is the sample lesson portion of the certification test. The focus of the sample lesson for those who want certification to teach art in middle school needs to be on middle school; whereas the focus needs to be on high school for those who want certification to teach art in high school ([www.moe.gov.cn](http://www.moe.gov.cn)). In 2011, the 6<sup>th</sup> *Document of The Ministry of Education* changed the examination for teacher qualification. Starting in 2011, the examination included a computer test, a written test, and an interview. For elementary teachers, a written test was required in two subjects: Comprehensive Quality, and Teaching Knowledge and Ability. For secondary teachers, a written test in four subjects was required: Comprehensive Quality, Educational Knowledge and Ability, Subject Knowledge, and Teaching Ability. The perfect total score for each subject is 100, and 60 is a passing score. After individuals pass these exams, they have to pass a test in Mandarin Chinese and obtain a certificate of Mandarin. Then, they have to present a sample lesson that is 15 minutes long and also participate in a group interview that is 15 minutes long. Again, the sample lesson should focus on a secondary developmental level, if individuals want to be a secondary art teacher ([www.moe.gov.cn](http://www.moe.gov.cn)). The qualifications and requirements for teaching art that were put in place in 1994 are positive changes that have occurred since 1978, because teacher quality directly impacts student behavior and achievement. Good teachers can motivate and

engage students to learn to learn. Since 1978, China has made major strides in improving the quality of those who seek teaching licenses, including those who want to teach art education. Moreover, once teachers are established in their respective disciplines, China evaluates them on their teaching effectiveness. The 2000 *Outline of Art Teaching in Secondary Schools* states the aim of teacher evaluation is to ensure effective art teaching, improve art instruction, and improve student learning. It looks at the curriculum, teaching/learning resources, and classroom structure and learning environment. Teacher assessment focuses on teaching attitude, the process of teaching, and teaching effect. Student assessment focuses on students' attitude of learning, critical thinking, and application of knowledge (Curriculum Materials Institute, 2001). These are all improvements that have been made in art education since 1978, and they are critical to raising the standard of art education in China. Another factor that contributes to the quality of art education is the physical environment in which art is taught. What has China achieved in this area?

### **Art Classroom, Facilities, and Resources at the Secondary Level**

Prior to 1988 there is little information about art classrooms or facilities in China. However, in 1988, the *Outline of Art Teaching in Middle School* states that all middle schools have at least one art classroom. Moreover, every art room should have easels, curtains, chairs, lights, pictures, and plaster models, as well as books and magazines about art for teachers and students. In 1997, the *Outlines of*

*Art Teaching in Secondary Schools* maintains that teachers use projectors and videos in art classrooms (Curriculum Materials Institute, 2001). In 2002, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued a notice about art teaching facilities, which requires that every art classroom has a drawing board, curtains, drawing instruments, clay, rulers, a slide projector, TV, computer, easels, and plaster models for the students' use. Although art classrooms and facilities in China may not have the cutting edge equipment, facilities, and high tech classrooms that other countries may have, it is moving in the right direction. Compared to what was available in art rooms prior to 1978, students at both the elementary and secondary level now have a more favorable environment for studying, learning, and creating art—and teachers have a better setting for teaching art. In conclusion, dramatic changes have occurred in art education China since 1978, and those changes have improved the quality of art education that elementary and secondary students are now receiving. Those changes include: time dedicated to art instruction; what is taught in art education; how art education is taught; who is qualified to teach K-12 art; the government's perspective on art education; assessment of teachers and students; and art classroom and facilities. In addition to traditional Chinese painting, today's students are taught to use a variety of art media including digital technology, art history (Chinese and Western), and art criticism. They are also taught design and to look at the relationship between art and other disciplines; art and the human environment; and art and

multiculturalism (Curriculum Materials Institute, 2001). The biggest change, however, is that students in China today are encouraged to be imaginative, creative, and expressive—and they and their teachers are being assessed according to the goals and objectives set forth by the government in the *Outlines of Art Teaching* (Curriculum Materials Institute, 2001).



## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This chapter outlines the research methodology of the study and presents the question that initiated the research, the research design/type/method, population, and limitations.

#### **Research Question**

What progress has China made in K-12 art education since 1978? To answer that question, other questions must first be answered: What is the history of art education in China prior to 1978? What was the role of the Chinese government in education prior to 1978, and what is its role today? How did art education classes look prior to 1978 vs. how they look today?

#### **Research Design**

##### **1. Research Perspective**

The researcher used an exploratory approach that focused on philosophical and historical inquiry into art education in China prior to 1978 and changes that have been made over time to the present day.

##### **2. Research Type**

Historical research grounded this study. A qualitative, descriptive approach was used to look into the historical background of K-12 Chinese art education prior to 1978 and how it is taught today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Things that were investigated include the art curriculum, teaching methods,

teacher preparation and credentials, length and frequency of art classes, students who took art, student requirements, and the government's role in education. The emphasis is on describing, not judging.

### **3. Research Methods**

The researcher made primary use of data from journals, books, articles, published theses, government documents and policies, her own experience, and interviews with six art teachers who are teaching in Chinese elementary and secondary schools today. She also collected theoretical and numerical data about Chinese art education before and after 1978. The data were analyzed, compared, and categorized to assess the growth and progress of K-12 art education in China since 1978.

#### **Population**

The researcher interviewed six practicing art teachers for this study. They are Jing Song, a head teacher at Dezhou Liming Road Elementary School in Shandong Province; Qing Kang, an art teacher at Lantian Shuangyu Elementary School in Hebei Province; Qingyan Liang, an art teacher at Shiyan Middle School in Shandong Province; Shufen Zhang, an art teacher at Xingtai Wuzhong High School in Hebei Province; Lingyun Huo, an art teacher at Lingxian High School in Shandong Province; and Yunfeng Tao, an art teacher at Guangming High School in Shanghai. These teachers were interviewed to get a sense of what is being taught in art classes in China today to determine whether significant

progress has been made in K-12 art education since 1978.

**Limitations**

This study is limited to K-12 art education in Chinese public schools in Mainland China. It does not address art education in private schools, with private art tutors, or art education in Hong Kong or Taiwan.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Finding and Results**

The primary question that initiated this study was “What progress has China made in K-12 art education since 1978?” To answer that question other questions had to be answered, also. They included, what art education was like prior to 1978, the role of the government in education at that time, and its role today. This required that research be conducted on art education prior to 1978, the date of China’s Opening and Reformation, as well as its evolution from that time until present day. To fully understand changes that occurred in China during this 36-year period of time: The Chinese Government’s Perspective on Art Education; Elementary Art Education Since 1978; Art Classroom, Facilities, and Resources at the Elementary Level; Art Classroom, Facilities, and Resources at the Secondary Level; Art Instruction Time at the Elementary Level; Art Instruction Time at the Secondary Level; Art Curriculum at the Elementary Level; Art Curriculum at the Secondary Level; Methods of Teaching Art at the Elementary Level; Methods of Teaching Art at the Secondary Level; Assessment of Students in Art Education in China; Qualifications and Requirements for Teaching Art Education in China. The author’s investigation and research reveals that art education in elementary and secondary schools in China has changed dramatically since 1978, and those changes have been positive. To gain an understanding of the scope of change that has occurred in art education in China since 1978, one must

go back in time.

Chinese art education can be separated into three periods: prior to 1966; 1966-1976; and 1978-present day. Over the years, during the different dynasties and periods prior to 1966, art education adopted many forms and focuses, but its primary emphasis was the mastery of the traditional forms of painting and calligraphy that were valued by Chinese culture. Art education in elementary and secondary schools existed in some form in China, until the Ministry of Education removed it from high school curriculums from 1952 to 1994. Art was eliminated at the high school level because it was perceived as not being valuable or necessary for preparing students for future careers. In 1994, the Ministry of Education reinstated art for students in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade, but not for students in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, the final year of high school, when students were preparing for exams to give them access to higher education.

Art education even existed during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the most chaotic period in China's history, when the military ruled, terrorism reigned, mass purges were carried out, and schools and universities were shut down. During this time of turmoil, art became a tool to support Mao Zedong's sociopolitical movement, and the art education that existed prior to 1966 changed focus. Instead of mastery of the traditional forms of painting and calligraphy, art emphasized technical skills that could be used to create posters and banners to advance the social and political doctrines of Mao and the Cultural Revolution. A

positive outcome of this was that students gained great technical proficiency in drawing and painting at this time, something that is valued and emphasized in Chinese art education today.

In 1978, with the Chinese Economic Reform, started by Deng Xiaoping, and the opening of trade with the outside world, which resulted in a rich exchange of ideas, China's position on education changed radically. It began to hold a series of meetings to determine the state of K-12 education and art education in China. As a result of those meetings, documents outlining what should be taught in schools throughout China were published and implemented. In 1994, art classes were reinstated in high schools for grades 10 and 11, and certification was required for art teachers in Chinese public schools throughout the country. Therefore, those who teach K-12 art in China today must go through a rigorous professional education program, be tested on their art knowledge and skills, and be licensed to teach art. Much like in the United States and other countries, art teachers in China are observed and evaluated on their teaching and their students are evaluated on what is being learned. Because teaching environments are important in promoting or inhibiting student learning, classrooms have been allocated or dedicated for art education at both the elementary and secondary level, and in many cases new art classrooms have been constructed. Although the number of art classes students have each week has changed little, two classes per week for elementary students, one class per week for students in middle school,

the amount of time allocated for art instruction has changed. Students in both grade levels are receiving more instruction time in art.

In addition, the art curriculum, methods for teaching art, and teaching materials and resources at the elementary and secondary level have also changed dramatically since 1978. Today, art education in China does not solely follow the old, traditional education model, which for much of its history emphasized skill and copying in painting and drawing. The art education curriculum of the 21<sup>st</sup> century includes painting and drawing, but also focuses on craft, appreciation, design, creative expression, and technology. Art teachers' attention is directed to developing students' aesthetic abilities, guiding students to observe, imagine, create, design, and express themselves. To achieve these goals, teaching facilities, books, and teaching materials have greatly improved and expanded. Schools with vital art education programs have been established, and art museums, galleries, historic sites, revolutionary memorial halls, and other public, cultural venues are educational resources that are open to and welcome students.

To gain a better understanding of how much art education in China has changed since 1978, the author of this study also interviewed six art teachers: two at the elementary level, one middle school art teacher, and three high school art teachers. She did this to discern if the information she gained from the documents and data she researched was actually applied or practiced by teachers in their art classrooms. Therefore, on November 5, 2013, the researcher interviewed Song, a

head teacher at Dezhou Liming Road Elementary School in Shandong Province, China, who told her the following: Her school has a dedicated art room, four art teachers, and an average of 65 students in each art class. Students have art twice a week and classes are 40 minutes long. Different schools have different art curriculums. At Dezhou Liming Road Elementary, watercolor painting is the foundational artform, but handcrafts using plasticine and paper to create different shapes and forms are also included. Ceramics, inspired by the local, famous Liangzi Black pottery, is a focal point for students in fourth to sixth grade. There are special classrooms for learning ceramics at the school and students take field trips to the Liangzi Pottery Factory to learn from pottery masters. Copying still exists as a teaching/learning model to help students improve their painting skills, but art teachers spend more time on developing students' observation skills and creativity. Song stated her art room was much like other classrooms in China. She has approximately 60 in a class, with two students sharing one table. She has a computer and projector, and the back wall of the classroom is for exhibiting student artwork. Students' work is graded with an A, B, C, or D. An A is excellent, a B is very good, a C is good, and D is a passing grade. All artwork with a grade of A is exhibited at Dezhou Liming Road Elementary School on Chinese Children's Day (July, 1).

The researcher also interviewed Kang, a Chinese art teacher at Lantian Shuangyu Elementary School in Hebei Province. Kang described the content and



teaching method used in one of her art classes. She stated she pretended to be very hungry in the class and bowed down, saying, “I did not have breakfast today. I am hungry. Could you cook some food for me by using some materials which you have?” The students took the materials in front of them and started working. Soon the students finished their artworks. They made food for their teacher: noodles from colored paper and cookies from plasticine, etc. Kang said many art teachers like to use lesson plans that are published by the People’s Education Press. She described one of those lessons, a lesson titled Shadow Game in which first grade students learn about light and shadow and create silhouettes (See Appendix A).

On December 10, 2013, the researcher interviewed a middle school art teacher and two high school art teachers: Qingyan Liang, an art teacher at Shiyan Middle School in Shandong Province; Lingyun Huo, an art teacher at Lingxian High School in Shandong Province; and Shufen Zhang, an art teacher at Xingtai Wuzhong High School in Hebei Province. The three teachers said they were expected to cultivate their students’ abilities in observation, analysis, and painting through painting from nature or life. Art history and art appreciation, focusing on Chinese and foreign art, were used to develop students’ critical thinking skills, aesthetics, and creative self-expression. Huo said she uses a computer to show her students famous artworks from around the world to help them understand the role of art: in life, science, politics, the economy, in religion, and in history.

The three art teachers stated that art was a required 45-minute weekly

class for students in middle school as well as in high school, and the average number of students in their classes was 40. The high school art teachers stated that most high schools set up particular art classrooms for students who like visual arts. These students are often channeled into institutions of higher education that have art majors/programs or professional schools for art. In China, these students are called “art specialty students,” and Zhang said that the classroom for art specialty students is different from the more traditional art classrooms. Each art specialty student has his or her own easel, chair, and painting materials. Liang and Huo said they evaluate their art specialty students on their studio activity, and they use the Chinese words, excellent (优), good (好), and pass (一般) to assess their art work; whereas, they evaluate students’ art appreciation skills based on the students’ participation in class discussions, written papers, and oral presentations.

On February 17, 2014, the researcher interviewed Yunfeng Tao, an art teacher at Guangming High School in Shanghai, and he shared the following: He is the only art teacher in the school and he has a special classroom set up specifically for art; there are approximately 40 students in each of his classes; and the students at Guangming High School only have one art class that is 40-minutes long each week. When asked about his art curriculum, Tao stated art appreciation was the foundation of art education in his school, which included painting, architecture, sculpture, and fashion. He also said that because his school is the Shanghai Calligraphy Education School, calligraphy is also in the art curriculum.

Tao also said his model of teaching was to guide “students to think, discuss, practice, and create; to develop students’ imagination, teamwork ability, and to integrate art literacy.” He stated that he configured his classroom according to different classroom activities, topics, and teaching goals, and he arranged the students’ seats accordingly. For example, for art appreciation, two students share one table, the traditional way for students to sit in classrooms in China. However, for studio-based activities, Tao has his students work in groups. Students’ grades are based on their activity in class, assignments, and their work in the art exhibition, for which they receive a grade of excellent (优); very good (良); good; (好); pass (及格); or fail (不及格). Tao described one of his lessons, an 11<sup>th</sup> grade art appreciation lesson that focused on Chinese painting and its impact on advertising in television, particularly the Beijing Olympic Opening Ceremony (See Appendix B).

To give a more personal perspective of art education in China today, the researcher is sharing her experience in art education. Born in a small town in Shandong province, she attended elementary school from 1990 to 1996, during which time she had one art class per week. From first to third grade, she and the students were taught painting through imitation; the teacher drew pictures on the blackboard and she and the class copied them. From fourth to sixth grade, the teacher assigned a theme and she created paintings based on that theme. When the class wasn’t creating art, students spent most of their time expressing their

thoughts and ideas about art with the teachers; there was no craft class, From 1996 to 1999, when she was in middle school, she no longer had painting or drawing. Art class consisted of appreciating pictures from art books, and the art teacher spent most of the time narrating what the pictures expressed. From 1999 to 2002, the researcher entered high school and art class was not required for high school students. However, because she was a student who liked art, she was considered an “Art Specialty Student”; therefore, in addition to her regular classes in high school, the school provided time for her to take two art classes per week, classes that were held after dinner. The researcher, the Art Specialty Student, used those two classes to practice painting, drawing, and sketching, which are required elements on college entrance examinations for art in China. During her high school years, the researcher had just one art teacher, but in 2001, she met a teacher who was teaching art in a college in Jinan, the capital of Shandong province. The researcher subsequently went to Jinan to learn art with this teacher, and even today she, the Art Specialty Student, continues her art education with individuals who are teaching art in a college or university...or are recognized experts in art.

In conclusion, art education has changed in China since 1978 and it has changed for the better...and in all areas that were investigated for this study. These changes have been mandated by the Ministry of Education and documented in policies that have been published and implemented since China’s Opening and

Reformation. One need only visit elementary and secondary level art classes in China today to see the progress the world's largest educational system has made in art education.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The question that initiated this study was, “What progress has China made in K-12 art education since 1978?” Why, when China has such a long history and art education has existed in different forms over its many dynasties, did the researcher pick 1978 as a focal point for her research? It is because art education as a K-12 subject or discipline disappeared during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), when China closed its doors to the world, and violence, cruelty, suffering, and death reigned under the leadership of Mao Zedong. Not until 1978, when Deng Xiaoping came into power and initiated the Chinese Economic Reform, did art education again reappear. 1978 is known as the date of the Chinese Reformation and Opening, when China opened its borders to trade with the outside world, which resulted in a rich exchange of ideas and changes in government policies, including education. The researcher, who was educated in China and wants to return to her homeland to teach art education, wanted to learn what progress China has made in K-12 art education during this 36-year period. To fully understand and assess the growth and development of art education during those years, she had to go farther back in time to the year 1902.

Art education first appeared during the Qing Dynasty in 1902, when it was introduced to train students in skills that would benefit Chinese industry. There were two types of drawing courses at that time: one emphasized traditional

Chinese painting and drawing, and the other technical drawing. This continued for a decade until the end of the Qing Dynasty in 1912 and the beginning of the Republic Period, when Cai Yuanpei, China's first Minister of Education, introduced Aesthetic Education, Art Education, Fine Art Education, and Drawing Education. From 1912 to 1949, Art Education consisted of drawing, sewing, and handcrafts for students in elementary school. In 1949, the Republic Period ended when Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China, and the country adopted the Soviet model for education. During this time, elementary and secondary students both had art once a week for 45 minutes, and the art education curriculum included sketching, watercolor painting, drawing from assigned topics, pattern work, and art appreciation (Chang, 2005). From 1948 to 1966, art instruction time steadily increased for elementary students, decreased for middle school students, and technical skills remained primary focus of art education—until the Cultural Revolution.

During the Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976, many schools were closed and students were sent to farms, hospitals, and factories to work. Students in schools that remained open spent more time working in their communities than they did in school, but when the students were in school they were educated in the fundamental principles of Mao "thought." They also received art instruction that focused solely on developing artistic skills to promote and advance the goals of the Revolution. Copying was the model for art instruction, and it enabled students

to gain strong technical skills in drawing and painting, and those skills and artistry were used to create posters and banners promoting Mao's three revolutionary movements: class struggle, struggle for production, and scientific experiment. It was also during this time that the first art textbook was published, a significant accomplishment for the field of art education, although its focus was technique. Mao Zedong died in 1976 and in 1977 Deng Xiaoping became the leader of China, sweeping away the restrictive social and institutional policies of Mao and ushering in reforms that led to China's Industrial Revolution and transformed the nation.

In 1978 Xiaoping initiated what is known as the Chinese Reformation and Opening, which opened relations with the outside world and moved China towards a market economy. During this time schools that were closed were reopened and art education as a subject that was not exclusively directed to propaganda was reestablished. Since 1978 art education has changed significantly. Time allocated for art instruction at the elementary level has steadily increased. Today, elementary students have art classes twice a week and middle school students have art class once a week. Students in high school did not have art instruction until 1994, when the government mandated that students in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade have art once a week, which is the case today. This, too, indicates progress.

Since 1978, government "Outlines" have dictated what and how Chinese



students should be taught in grades K-12, including art education. This allows for quality control in education throughout the country. The Outlines also mandate modes of instruction, classroom facilities, resources, and teacher certification requirements. The method of art teaching has changed since 1978. Although art teachers in elementary and middle schools still used copying to develop students' skills and focused on traditional Chinese painting and nature drawing, they also introduced art appreciation. This continued until 2001, when creation and craft, modeling and expression, design and application, appreciation and review, and synthesis and exploration became important curriculum goals. These new goals required a different model of teaching. Therefore, teachers were no longer solely expected to be *Sages on the Stage*; they were also expected to be *Guides on the Side*. Art teachers began spending more time interacting with students; engaging them in communication; developing their imagination, creativity, and expression; and enhancing their critical thinking skills, and aesthetic and artistic abilities. These are positive developments that the government has mandated for quality art education—and they are in place today.

The art education curriculum in schools throughout China still includes painting and drawing, but now it also focuses on craft, appreciation, design, creative expression, critical thinking, and technology. Assessment is also an important part of art education today. Teachers are assessed and so are students, something that did not occur in earlier years. This is being done to ensure the

quality of art instruction, quality of art teachers, and quality of student learning.

The government recognizes that classroom environment, facilities, resources, and equipment are important in promoting quality teaching and student learning, and over the years it has provided increased support in those areas. As a result, today's art classrooms are specifically designated for art, set up with modern equipment, art materials, instructional resources, books, and digital technology. Because of the limits of this study, this may not be the case for all schools throughout China, particularly those in rural areas. It is, however, the direction in which the country is moving, because the government realizes its future is directly related to the quality of education its citizens receive. Related to that, as of 1994, all individuals teaching in Chinese public schools must complete a professional education program in an institution of higher education, pass a certification test, and present a sample lesson to obtain a teaching certificate (*Laws for Teachers in the People's Republic of China*). This, too, allows for quality control in education.

In conclusion, what is happening in art education in China today is exciting. Historical research, government documents, and interviews with six practicing art teachers clearly indicate that K-12 Chinese art education has developed and improved significantly since 1978. The researcher's own experience in art education is also a testament to the positive changes that have been put in place in schools across China today. Although she has only been out of high school a little more than a decade, what K-12 students are learning in art

education classes today is very different and greatly improved from her experience. Yes, K-12 art education has improved greatly in China since 1978. It has made significant progress in nearly all the areas the researcher investigated—but there is room for additional improvement.

Art education should be available for all students in China, including students in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, the final year of high school. The researcher would also like to see and recommends that aesthetics be included in China's art curriculum, not so much the study of specific philosophers' theories of art, but having students look at art, analyzing and discussing it in terms of: The Nature of Art, Beauty and Aesthetic Experience, Interpretation of Art, Creativity and Fidelity, Conflicts between Art and Other Values, and the Evaluation of Art (Battin, Fisher, Moore, & Silvers, 1989). Such an approach would promote reflection, analysis, critical thinking, and the articulation of students' thoughts, ideas, and positions. Art history (western and non-western) and art criticism should be included in art education at the elementary and secondary and level, as well as a more interdisciplinary, multicultural approach to education in general. With the number of Chinese students who are in graduate education programs all over the globe today, and who are carrying what they have learned back to China, the researcher is optimistic that this, too, will happen.

### References

Adkins, M. K. (1978). Children's drawing in the People's Republic of China.

*China: Education and Society*, 17(5), 401-409.

Battin, M. P., Fisher, J., Moore, R., & Silvers, A. (1989). *Puzzles about art*. Boston,

MA: St. Martin's Press, Inc.

Beeching, J. (1975). *The Chinese opium wars*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace

Jovanovich.

BL is the website for the British Library ([www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)).

Cafarella, L. & Bohan, C. H. (2012). The top five narratives for teaching about

China's Cultural Revolution. *Social Education*, 76(3), 121-124.

Chang, H. (1964). *Commissioner Lin and the opium war*. New York,

NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Chang, R. (2005). Culture and art education in China. *International Journal of*

*Education through Art*, 1(3), 225-236.

Cheng, Y. L. (2010). *Learning from the West: The development of Chinese art*

*education for general education in the first half of 20th century China*

(Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Southern Queensland,

Toowoomba, AU.

Curriculum Materials Institute. (2001). *Curriculum and teaching plan of art and music in Chinese elementary and secondary schools in 20<sup>th</sup> century*.

Beijing, CN: Chinese People's Education press.

Fairbank, J. K., & Teng, S. (1954). *China's response to the west, a documentary survey, 1839-1923*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Fay, P. (1975). *The opium war, 1840–1842*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Gao, M. (2008). *The battle for China's past*. London, England: Pluto Press.

Greenberg, M. (1951). *British trade and the opening of China 1800-42*.  
Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Hanes, W. T., & Sanello, F. (2002). *The opium wars: the addiction of one empire and the corruption of another*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Hurd, D. (1967). *The arrow war*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Jacques, M. (2006). *If the 20<sup>th</sup> century ended in 1989, the 21<sup>st</sup> began in 1978*.  
Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com>.

Jiang, E. L. (2001). *A history of art education in the elementary and middle schools of the People's Republic of China 1949-1989: political currents and influences in visual-arts education* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from [etd.ohiolink.edu](http://etd.ohiolink.edu).

- Li, G. M. & Hu, B. (2009). Art education in China. In D. P. Yang (Eds.), *The China Education Development Yearbook* (pp. 216-222). Beijing, CN: Social Sciences Academic Press.
- Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2010). *The number of schools at all levels, faculty, and full-time teachers*. Beijing, CN: Government Printing Office.
- Moe. Gov is the website for the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China ([www.moe.gov.cn](http://www.moe.gov.cn)).
- Morse, H. B. (1926). *The chronicles of the east India company trading to China, 1635-1834*. London, England: The Clarendon Press.
- Perry, P. (1998). Art in a million schools: Art education in China. *Journal of Art & Design Education*, 17(3), 311-314.
- Qin, H. (2011). The history and development of art education. *Art Education*. Hunan, CN: Hunan Art Press.
- STATE is the website for U.S. Department of State ([www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)).
- Spence, H. (2001). *Introduction to the cultural revolution*. Retrieved from <http://spice.stanford.edu>.
- Spence, J. D. (1992). *Chinese roundabout: essays in history and culture*. 233-35. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Retrieved from: [http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/opium\\_wars\\_01/ow1\\_essay01.html](http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/opium_wars_01/ow1_essay01.html)

UNESCO is the website for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([en.unesco.org](http://en.unesco.org)).

Wan, L. J. (2001). Physical education, hygiene and art education in schools. *China Education Yearbook 2001*, Retrieved from [www.moe.edu.cn](http://www.moe.edu.cn).

Wan, L. J. (2003). Physical education, art education and national defense instruction in schools. *China Education Yearbook 2001*, Retrieved from <http://www.moe.edu.cn>.

Zhang, B. (1991). *My pragmatism: John Dewey in China*. Jiangxi, CN: The University of Jiangxi Press.

Zhang, L. (2000). Cai Yuanpei. *International bureau of education*, 23(1/2), 147-157. Retrieved from <http://www.ibe.unesco.org>.

Zhang, T. (2012). *Development process and its enlightenment of new China art curriculum in primary and secondary school*. Jiangxi, CN: University for Teaching of Jiangxi.

## APPENDICES

### Lesson plan 1

**Title:** Shadow Game

**Grade Level:** Grade 1

**Time:** 80 minutes (Two classes)

**Learning areas:** Expression and Modeling

**Goal:** Through shadow game, students will show their creativity and expression.

Also, they will understand that hands are not only for labor, but also for art activities, helping others as well as emotional expression.

**Objectives:** Students will:

1. feel the beauty of shapes through drawing their own shadow.
2. understand simple graphical beauty.
3. be able to use reasonable composition and rich imagination to add to the drawing and painting.

**Emphasis and Difficulty:** Students will trace the shapes of shadows on the paper with reasonable composition. It will improve the students' artistic sensibilities and comprehension.

**Supply/Materials:** Projector, flashlights, scissors, colored paper, drawing boards, and pencils.

**Teacher Preparation:** Shadow puppets, silhouette works, and videos.



**First class****Activity 1: Observe Shadows**

Students will watch the videos about shadow play. Then, they will go outside, observe their shadows, shadows of trees, and other things under the sun, and play hand shadow games.

**Activity 2: Drawing Shadows**

Students will be separated into several teams. One person will create the hand shadow under the light from the flashlight, and another one will draw the shape of the hand shadow that is projected on the paper.

**Activity 3: Creative Shadows**

One student will pose in the sun; others will draw it on the paper.

**Activity 4: Beautify Shadows**

Students will add more details to the drawing of the traced shadow to create a complete painting.

**Second class****Activity 1: Appreciate Silhouettes**

Students will appreciate folk art silhouette works.

**Activity 2: Make Silhouettes**

One student will draw a shadow of another student on colored paper, and cut it out to make the silhouette.

**Activity 3: Play Shadow Games.**

Students will use the silhouettes that they created with the lighter.

Teacher and students will assess these artworks.

**Time Budget:** First class

10 minute Activity 1

10 minute Activity 2

10 minute Activity 3

10 minute Activity 4

Second class

10 minute Activity 1

10 minute Activity 2

10 minute Activity 3

10 minute Clean the classroom

**Lesson Plan 2**

**Title:** Appreciation of Chinese Painting

**Grade Level:** Grade 11

**Time:** 120 minutes (Three classes)

**Goals:** Students will be able to:

1. Understand the characteristics of skills in Chinese painting.
2. Through combination of appreciation and practice to explore unique skills in Chinese painting.
3. Through appreciation of Chinese Painting to improve students' ability of appreciation, and feel unique charm from national art.

**Emphasis:** 1.Features and functions of Chinese ink painting.

2. Explore the different characteristics of various types of skills in Chinese painting.

**Teaching Process:**

A. Introduction:

Through appreciation of advertising on Zhejiang TV, students think about what elements of traditional Chinese art are in this advertisement.

After watching a clip of “Chinese Painting Show,” students think about what the important techniques of expression are and how the techniques are used in Chinese painting.

B. Instruction:

1. Application of Chinese painting skills.
  - a. The teacher demonstrates techniques of drawing in Chinese painting.
  - b. Students practice different methods of Chinese painting.
  - c. Appreciate famous artworks, learn the application of different methods of Chinese painting.
2. Application of methods using of ink and water in Chinese painting.
  - a. Students practice all types of methods using of ink and water in Chinese painting.
  - b. Appreciate famous artworks, learn application of methods of ink and water painting in Chinese painting.
  - c. Discussion: Comparison of two different famous art works with methods of dry and wet ink: *Youzhugucuo*, and *Shrimp* (a painting from Chinese painting master Qi Baishi). What are the differences between them?
3. Chinese painting is used in different fields.
  - (1) Appreciate elements of Chinese painting in the Beijing Olympic Opening Ceremony.  
  
Discussion: What characteristics of Chinese painting are found in this performance?
  - (2) Understand subject matter and materials found in Chinese painting.
  - (3) Appreciate famous paintings, understand the different methods in Chinese painting and Western painting.

#### 4. Development of contemporary Chinese painting.

Appreciate contemporary famous Chinese painting. Students think about the different methods in contemporary Chinese painting and ancient Chinese painting.

#### C. Conclusion:

Students will watch a video and a film clip.

Discussion: Where is Chinese painting applied in the video and film? What type of Chinese painting did they use? What kind of effect did they express?

Teacher will summarize the characteristics of Chinese painting, and the application of methods of Chinese painting.