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**POLICIES AND STRATEGIES ON ARTS EDUCATION WITH ICTs
IN FINLAND AND CHINA**

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Abstract

In certain countries, media education has made an impact on the educational process. A number of educational scholars and governments have realized and recognized its importance. Arts education has always held importance in Finland and is an integral part of educational policy in China. As a starting point for media education, the Chinese and Finnish governments strongly support the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in arts education. This article analyzes arts education in relation to ICT policy and reveals strategies being imposed in Finland and China. Additionally, the article analyzes the differences and gaps between them. In addition, the article provides recommendations regarding Finnish and Chinese police-making on using ICTs in arts education.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of media education has provided a new avenue for education reform. For example, in the wake of developments in science and technology, media technology in arts education has become a newly orientated area, and holds great potential in the educational field. Marner (2013) studied one case of digital media embedded in Sweden, where digital media was combined with all aspects of arts education; for example, arts education communicative processes and manually-based art. Marner pointed out that digital media plays an important role in arts education, because arts education acquires powerful tools, like digital media for production, presentation, and communication of art. Pepler (2010) found that arts education in the digital age helps youth: 1) learn how to learn; 2) increase their general interest in the learning process; and, 3) sustain their involvement in new, complex subjects. As the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in arts education becomes more significant, more countries may become attracted to the associated possibilities. Trucano (2010) found that eleven countries' governments, including developed countries such as Singapore and developing countries such as Namibia, have established their own projects to develop education with ICTs.

The Chinese and Finnish governments hold education in high regard. In the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Finland is the "ever victorious general", and China achieved first place in PISA in 2009 and 2012. Finland and China are considered strong countries in the field of education, according to their histories and present realities. The Finnish educational system offers free public education and the majority of the educational system in China is public. Government policies on education development and reform play a most important role, and both the education systems and economic foundations affect the formation and implementation of educational policies.

Arts education and a safe digital media environment serve as strategies in Finland. The Finnish government has been committed to promoting arts education with ICTs. Education in China is mainly funded by the government, and private education serves as a supplement. Since the 1990s, the Chinese government has increased investment on quality-oriented education, which includes arts education. As information and communication technology advances in China, it becomes a larger focus and links with the "informatization process." As Zhao Xiaofan, a professor at the Chinese State Council Informatization Office explained, in China, informatization is "the process, progress and duration all the way from the industry society to the information society; or all the means to accelerate the process from the industry society to the information society" (Zhao, X. 2006). In China, informatization benefits all fields, including education with ICTs.

In this article, strategies and policies regarding the use of ICTs in arts education in China and Finland are analyzed. This article may be used to give recommendations to the Chinese and Finnish governments' future policy development. In addition, the article contributes to other countries' arts education efforts and ICT policy development.

Policy On Using ICTs In Arts Education In Finland

Finland is famous for its innovation. Innovation is inseparable from long-term and quality arts education in the country. In the digital era, the Finnish government has increased the attentions and investments in using ICTs in arts education. Finnish educational experts and scholars firmly believe that ICTs are vital to arts education.

In Finland, the use of ICTs in arts education has a strong theoretical and practical basis. Kivela and Minkkinen (1979) pointed out that there must be a societal basis for media instruction, but it also must be geared toward art education. ICTs have been regarded as essential tools in arts education in Finland. Arts education with ICTs retains an important part in media education as well. Kupianinen et al. (2008) stated that the change in media education was driven by students of the arts, specifically when the center for children's film was operated by students at the University of Art and Design at Helsinki in 1968.

The Finnish government established several strategies for arts education with ICTs. In 2003, the Finnish government released its national curriculum framework. In this curriculum, basic education in the arts covers music, literary arts, dance, performing arts and visual arts. In the development plan of education and research (2011-2016), the Finnish government has planned to establish better access to basic education in the arts. In Finland, visual arts teachers complete their master's degrees at arts universities. Education with ICTs is not treated as an independent course in Finland, but rather, as an integral part of arts education development.

In Finland, arts education and cultural education are under scrutiny in basic education. Recently, the Finnish government has paid more attention to arts education and media. For example, the Development Plan for Education and Research adopted for 2007-2012 promotes creativity talents of different kinds and innovativeness from early childhood education onward. The Cultural Policy Strategy 2020 points out that the aim is to improve art, skill, cultural heritage, and media education in general education, in liberal adult education, and in leisure activity. It is also the early childhood education strategy of the Finnish government. According to the analysis from the Ministry of Education and Culture 2010, measures are being taken to improve conditions for children's and young people's cultural activities, arts education, and a safe media environment.

Overall, Finnish polices reflect that Finns think highly of arts education in basic education and ICT roles in arts education. Arts education is an independent part in the education curriculum. Finnish educators firmly believe that the starting-point of media education is to support arts, culture, and societal education.

Policy On Using ICTs In Arts Education In China

In China, arts education with ICTs has developed from media education. Zhao and Xu (2010) described the two stages of education with ICTs in China: firstly, from 1986 to 2000, ICT hardware, such as computers and printers, were ordered by schools and teachers; secondly, from 2000 until the present, the effectiveness of ICTs in education has improved considerably, and teachers' competence with ICTs has been strengthened. Furthermore, traditional education has been refined. ICT education in China has been popular in the last two decades, in both developed and undeveloped areas. This success originated from national and local policies. At the national level, the Ministry of Education has implemented projects, such as the: "School to School

Network Project”, “New Curriculum Standards”, and “Teachers Professional Development for ICT in Education.”

For the sake of educational development and reform in the future, the Chinese government produced a new outline for education: the Outline of China’s National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020). In the outline, information communication technology, as a guaranteed measure in education development, is aimed at speeding up information infrastructure construction, developing and applying more quality education resources, and building state education information management systems. Four projects associated with using ICTs in education are listed in the outline, and include:

- Increasing the number of computers used in primary and secondary schools.
- Making multimedia distance-learning available to rural primary and middle school classes.
- Developing a national database of e-teaching resources and creating a public service platform that covers all levels of education.
- Developing national and provincial basic education databases for monitoring and analyzing education quality, student flow, resource allocation, and employment of graduates.

In 2011, the Ministry of Education in China published “Plans of Educational Informationization (2011-2020”, which illuminates the goals of: 1) using ICTs in Chinese education, 2) establishing a digital learning environment for all, 3) building digital service systems for life-long learning, 4) allowing the wideband network service to flourish, 5) improving digital education management, and 6) effectively combining information communication technology and education development. In this plan, compulsory education is one of the most important areas for using ICTs in education. The aim of digital education in compulsory schools is to improve education quality while helping students gain information, life-long learning skills, and innovation capabilities.

Secondly, during recent years, the Chinese government has established certain policies regarding arts education and ICTs. Quality-oriented education is a long-term national policy in China, and in the outline, it is a measure that builds a moderately prosperous society in all respects to an innovative country. Using ICTs in education would enhance quality-oriented education through strategies such as collaborative learning. Overall, arts education, an important part of quality-oriented education, would be affected by ICTs in education.

Since 2011, the Chinese government has worked to implement a national school arts education development plan. The plan, marked for 2011-2020, is based on past and current experiences in arts education in China. Two previous plans for arts education, implemented from 1989 to 2010, assisted with the current development of arts education in China.

In 1989, the Chinese government released the Basic Plan of China Arts Education in School (1989-2000). The plan promoted the development of arts education in China, and included an emphasis on regulation construction and administration. However, arts education in China was still weak in 2000. Thus, the Chinese government created the Plan of School Arts Education Development in China (2001-2010). This regulation aimed to: 1) promote quality-

oriented education, 2) increase the ranks of teachers, and 3) develop arts education in rural schools.

Considering the importance of information communication technology in arts education, the plan pointed out that arts education should be integrated with information communication technology to expand teachers' and students' information skills and improve arts education quality. In order to complete this goal, three measures were to be taken:

- Applying information communication technology to improve the quality of arts education and computer aid teaching in art classes.
- Carrying out research and development of art educational software to enrich educational environments and learning tools for students.
- Establishing arts education websites based on the domestic education online platform, and establishing a Chinese education database to enhance cooperation with international and domestic arts education programs.

Policies regarding the use of ICTs in arts education in China inherit the principles of using ICTs in Chinese education. The purpose of using ICTs in arts education is to fulfill hardware and software needs.

Policies And Strategies On Using ICT In Arts Education In Shanghai

Shanghai, as the best advert in the Chinese open and reform policy, has improved markedly in many fields, including education with ICTs. The Shanghai government informed that, in the last ten decades, Shanghai has built a platform for kindergarten access in pre-school education, virtual classrooms and virtual labs in basic education, and a life-long learning system for all. But in practice, imperfections remain, with problems ranging from an inadequate infrastructure to limitations in reforming education and teaching.

According to the Shanghai Department of Education, the financial expenditure on computers and web infrastructure in Shanghai has improved by 44.1% - from 88.135 yuan to 126.390 yuan. In 2007, the establishment of the "Shanghai city school administrative management system" represented a big improvement of the educational management platform. These successes explain the leading role of Shanghai media education in China. Therefore, the local policy of using ICTs in arts education in Shanghai differs from general policy in China. The Shanghai policy was set to give more attention to software development, teachers' training, and curriculum design.

In 2010, the Shanghai government released a new educational development outline. The outline of medium and long-term education reform and development (2010-2020) in Shanghai was established to offer students a more open and convenient learning environment. The outline provides a benefit to arts education in Shanghai schools and universities. In 2011, a new plan of educational informationization (2011-2020) in Shanghai stated that the goals are infrastructure establishment, teaching innovation, information literacy improvement, and improving information service quality. In the 10-year plan, there are several core projects: perfecting the Shanghai area network, building the Shanghai learning network, building a service sharing

platform, reforming teaching and learning, and establishing social media for students in Shanghai universities.

Concerning regional variations and special circumstances, in 2006, the Shanghai Department of Education released the Plan of Arts Education in Shanghai. In this plan, one of the goals was to heavily increase the ICT level of arts education, and teachers were to use computers and the Internet for instruction. It was found that in the last ten years, the use of ICTs in arts education in Shanghai has remained at the preliminary stage.

From the national Chinese government to local governments, as with Shanghai, the main goal is to expand ICT education initiatives and arts education, while measuring plans of education development. The governments' arts education plans pay attention to increasing ICT levels, and Shanghai's school arts education has benefitted from it. However, there is an existing gap between practice and policy. The next step will be to investigate the practice of ICT involvement in arts education in Shanghai, and to determine whether a gap between practice and policy exists.

METHODOLOGY

We analyzed arts education with ICTs policies and strategies in Finland and China based on the Finnish and Chinese administrative documents and literature review. Because of the significance of strategies and policies on education, through the document analysis, we developed a clear view of arts education with ICTs development, the current situation, and the blueprint in Finland and China. The data came from formal documents, informal communications, and academic articles.

The qualitative content analysis method was employed to analyze the data. Based on the literature review, we found a large amount of textual information on the Finnish and Chinese governments' policies and strategies on arts education with ICTs.

Comparison and Analysis

Based on the literature review, it was found that for Finnish educators, the starting point of media education is to enhance societal and arts education. In China, ICTs exist as a part of arts education. The similarities and distinctions of arts education with ICTs policies between Finland and China are illustrated below:

	Finland	China
National strategies on arts education with ICTs	The Cultural Policy Strategy 2020 points out that the aim is to improve art, skill, cultural heritage and media education.	The outline of China's national plan for medium and long-term education reform and development (2010-2020). And Plans of Educational Informationization (2011-2020).
Basic idea on using ICTs in arts education	Think highly of arts education and media	Technology is a tool to improve arts education

	development.	quality.
Ages for arts education	Children for basic education.	No clear rules about it.
Media education in arts education policies	No specific chapter or documents for media in arts education.	Specific chapter of informationization in arts education.
Regional policies and strategies on using ICTs in arts education.	No clear regional rules on arts education with ICTs.	Every province and city has its own local policies and strategies. For example, the Shanghai government rules on developing media in arts education.
Priority of policies in arts education with ICTs	Guarantee the development of arts education and a safe media environment.	Improve the quality of arts education; increase research in hardware and software development in arts education; enhance international cooperation based on online platform.
The relationship between arts education with ICTs and media education	Arts education with ICTs benefits from the whole information society in Finland.	Arts education with ICTs is a part of media education (education technology) in China.

Based on the table, we see that the Finnish government does not have a specific rule on arts education with ICTs, but pays attention to both arts education and media education (a safe media environment). In China, the government clears up the informationization development in arts education in the next ten year plan.

As there is economic disparity in China and different circumstances in different regions, local governments make their own rules on using ICTs in arts education. Finland, in comparison, has a balanced development. Therefore, there is no clear regional rules on using ICTs in arts education in Finland.

There are no clear guidelines of arts education with ICTs development in Finland. Finland has highly prioritized arts education and a safe media environment. However, Finland's arts education with ICTs policy focus is not on hardware and software development. China, on the other hand, has very clear and purposeful developmental steps for arts education with ICTs.

CONCLUSION

This article illustrated and analyzed the policies and strategies on using ICTs in arts education in Finland and China. A literature review was employed, and Finnish and Chinese policies and strategies on using ICTs in arts education were analyzed. As this article discussed, the Finnish government thinks highly of a safe media environment and arts education, and guarantees they are at a high academic level. However, in China, the first step for arts education with ICTs is to develop software. Since China is a large country, it is necessary to make local

rules for arts education with ICTs. Arts education with ICTs in China can gain a great deal of enlightenment from the development of Finnish arts education with ICTs policies. The priority of a safe environment in Finland could inspire the development of arts education with ICTs in China. Since this article analyzed policy on arts education with ICTs in Finland and China, policy making on arts education with ICTs in both developed and developing countries was explored. In the future, the project will continue to investigate the practical situation of arts education with ICTs rules in Finland and China.

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