

Developing Macau's junior secondary schools music curriculum

Wong, Marina W Y

Published in:
International Journal of Music Education

DOI:
[10.1177/0255761418774907](https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761418774907)

Published: 01/11/2018

Document Version:
Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Wong, M. W. Y. (2018). Developing Macau's junior secondary schools music curriculum. *International Journal of Music Education*, 36(4), 574-587. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761418774907>

General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent publication URLs

Developing Macau's Junior Secondary Schools Music Curriculum

Developing Macau's junior secondary schools music curriculum

Abstract

For centuries, Macau's schooling has embraced *laissez-faire* market principles, a stasis that from AY2016/17 is being changed by the government offering schools tuition coupons conditional on their adoption of a common school curriculum. A study of part of this new common curriculum, the development of a music curriculum for junior secondary schools in Macau, addresses three research questions: 1) What are music teachers' perceptions and how do these frame the implementation of Macau's common music curriculum? 2) Do participants' expectations align with those of the central-government? 3) Do participants perceive they impact on or are impacted by this innovation? Discussion of the findings highlights a controversy about the role of teachers within curriculum development – should teachers be centre-staged (Lawton (2012 [1980]) or is this view an oversimplification based on false assumptions of a social democratic tradition (Whitty (2012 [1981] & 1985)?

(141 words)

Keywords: curriculum development, school music curriculum, music teachers, Macau, education change.

Developing Macau's junior secondary schools music curriculum

Introduction

Curriculum development has accrued a pantheon of views. Tyler's (1949) four-step model – determine the objectives, identify relevant educational experience, organize these experiences and then evaluate the purposes – has enjoyed a longevity due in part to its clarity. In contrast, Akker (2004) advocates a broader perspective has curriculum development encompassing various levels of curriculum, ranging from the macro level (such as system, society and state), the meso level (such as school and institution) and the micro level (the classroom). Given this broad perspective, it is unsurprising that curriculum development has been shown to encompass differing perspectives and their consequences. Curriculum development can be divisive as it involves choice, such as “choices of cognition, skills and disposition” (Scott, 2016).

Similarly divisive is where curriculum development focuses not on knowledge but product – should this ‘product’ serve the vocational stasis of Bobbitt (1918; 1928) or, alternatively, facilitate Tyler's (1949) social change, ‘the real purpose of education is ... to bring about significant changes in the students’ pattern of behaviour’ (p. 44).

Side-stepping concerns arising from prescriptive behavioural objectives, a dynamic view of curriculum development sees learning as involving both a formal and informal process – the consequence of this view is to transform ‘any educational idea into a hypothesis testable in practice ... (inviting) critical testing rather than acceptance’ (Stenhouse, 1975, p. 142). Investigating the dynamics of Stenhouse's ‘critical testing’ has led curriculum development to be seen not only as a process, but more importantly, as a praxis. According to Gundy (1987), curriculum is “an active process in which planning, acting and evaluating are all reciprocally related and integrated into the process” (p. 115).

This praxis-complex of competing between various levels and perspectives of curriculum, Lawton (2012 [1980]) attempt to centre-stage the role of teachers (p. 5). However, his assumption of teacher-authority has been questioned by Whitty (2012 [1981]): “Lawton’s ... admirable solutions to complex problems are ... based on spurious reasoning. (and) assumptions ... of a social democratic tradition” (p. 46).

The Lawton/Whitty debate of teachers’ role in curriculum development was originally situated within Western democracies like Britain, can be understood as a process of politico-social adaptation. Post war Britain intended to rebuild society based on socio-democratic ideals, an aim that placed teachers as professionals helping build a curriculum that would instill in their students a sense of community building and egalitarianism. However, following Thatcher’s neoliberal reform, central government sought control of education and in particular, of the curriculum, a power-struggle that made teaching an embattled profession (Furlong, 2013). Under these changing circumstances, teachers’ rights to participate in curriculum design became a contest of wills. This contest still reverberates as witnessed by both Lawton’s and Whitty’s original 1980’s books being republished in 2012.

This paper seeks to resolve this recurring theme of Whitty’s challenge to Lawton’s centre-staging teachers within the curriculum development process. The narrative of this resolution considers such challenges as disenfranchisement and stasis within a non-Western case study as reported here in the development of a music curriculum for junior secondary schools in Macau.

Contextual information

Macau, total area 2.78 sq. km, is located on the south-west side of China’s Pearl River delta, and a Portuguese colony from 1557 to 1999 (Cheng, 1999). Its economic fortunes fluctuated as competition intensified for the China and Japan trade, for example,

the establishment of Hong Kong in 1841 negatively impacted almost immediately on Macau's trading-position. In 1844, the legalising of gambling has created a service-industry that still defines and underpins Macau's economy (Cremer, 1987; Wassener, 2014). For centuries, although Macau remained under the influence of Portuguese traders and missionaries, Portuguese was neither a compulsory language to be taught in schools nor a language in people's daily communication. The daily spoken language of the majority (99%) of Macau residents is Cantonese. Following Hong Kong's return to China in 1997, Macau returned to the sovereignty of China in 1999.

Schooling and curriculum development in Macau

Prior to 1999, education was not a priority of the colonial government of Macau as witnessed by the lack of any documented educational planning (Hao, 2011). The colonial Macau government only operated a few public schools to cater to the functional needs of the government, leaving the majority of schools in private hands:

For centuries Macau has experienced extended market principles for schooling, with very limited state intervention in education, and only a recent history of regarding schooling as a public good ... these *laissez-faire* market principles have failed to provide high quality schooling in Macau and ... considerable state intervention is required (Tang & Morrison, 1998, p. 245).

This established non-interventionist policy in Macau has developed a unique but problematic style of schooling:

A dependency culture, a hermetically sealed system in which curricula and testing mutually reinforce each other in producing a low-level, facts-driven curriculum, dangerously didactic pedagogy, rote learning, poor student motivation, and a powerful controlling mechanism on teachers and students. ... this is the very system which many participants in education in Macau seem to want (Morrison & Tang, 2002, p. 289).

Macau's demographics suggest that low educational expectations are not the system's only concern (Table 1). Macau has a small population (< 0.7 million) with the number of students in primary and secondary schools totaling less than 56,000. Within Macau's 68 (primary and secondary) schools, the pupil-teacher ratio is 14.1 and 11.4

pupils per teacher for Primary school and secondary school respectively (SCS, 2016). This high pupil-teacher ratio indicates that the teaching load in Macau schools is generally high.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

The statistics information shown in Table 1 indicated some characteristics of Macau's teachers (DSEJ, 2016a; SCS, 2016).

- The majority are professionally trained teachers – of the 1,914 Primary teachers, 1,868 are professionally trained teachers; of the 2,844 secondary teachers, 2,508 are professionally trained teachers.
- The majority are experienced teachers (as measured by years respectively: <15 years: 1,251 (64.4%) & 2,204 (77.5%); >15yrs: 663 (34.6%) & 640 (22.5%). Significantly, both this experience and professional training were acquired before the implementation of the new 2016/17 curriculum.
- A majority of both primary and secondary teachers are aged less than 40 years, (respectively 1141 (59.61%) and 1989 (69.94%).

Given that this body of professionally trained, experienced teachers may be in situ for another two decades, a challenge facing the successful implementation of the new 2016/17 curriculum lies in converting this grounded-experience via in-service training.

A false start: A new beginning.

In preparation for Macau's return to Chinese sovereignty in 1999, Curriculum reform was initiated by the interim Macau government via the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Juventude [DSEJ]). This initiative offered in 1994, a curriculum framework for kindergarten, primary and junior secondary

(Lo, 1999), followed by syllabi for various subject areas in 1998 (DSEJ, 2000). This initiative failed because private schools remained free to supply the local demand for overseas curriculums that led to recognised overseas qualifications. This local demand was pragmatic for Macau's education sector failed to offer neither a local textbook market-demand that was commercially viable nor a recognised local public examination authority.

In the AY 2007/08, the DSEJ implemented a 15-year free education policy comprising government-funded tuition-coupons. Schools accepting these coupons are obliged to follow a newly introduced curriculum to be implemented as follows: Primary 1-3 in AY 2016/17; Primary 4-6 and junior Secondary in AY 2017/18 (DSEJ, 2016b). It is this new curriculum initiative that provides the site for the curriculum development case study to be reported here.

Music curriculum.

The *Music Syllabus for Junior Secondary Schools [Music syllabus]* (DSEJ, 1999) was the first music syllabus ever published in Macau. Its aims include providing a “systematic and balanced curriculum with content including singing, listening, basic musical knowledge and theory, music creative work” for junior secondary school students to “develop a good foundation of music with appropriate level of skills” (p. 3). This syllabus consists of two parts. The first part outlines overall aims, subject content, pedagogical guide, number of lessons and assessment. The second part provides a set of “Teaching/Learning plans” with prescribed specific subject content and teaching activities for each of the three years of junior secondary schools.

As the *Music Syllabus* (DSEJ, 1999) was published before the implementation of the free education policy, only the six government schools had the obligation to

implement it. Given this context of an education system where 62 out of 68 schools are accustomed to following non-Macau curriculum, it is understandable why the majority of music teachers regard the *Music Curriculum* (DSEJ, 1999) as an ignorable document.

Music teacher education.

An undergraduate music education program is offered by the Macao Polytechnic University [MPU]. This program's objective is to "train students to think independently and to work creatively and intelligently towards their own music field of interest", an objective that does not provide training for music teachers in schools (MPU, 2017). The music education course at the University of Macao [UM] is a minor/elective subject that offers basic pedagogy for teaching music in primary or secondary schools (UM, 2017). This paucity of music teacher training reflects the local perception of music as an unimportant school subject, and accordingly music teachers in Macau may need professional development opportunities in addition to any in-service training for implementing the new 2016/17 music curriculum.

Rationale and purpose of this paper

The rationale for conducting this study is predicated by the 2016/17 initiation of Macau's common music curriculum. Macau's contextual background, such as its historical, social and cultural factors, frames this implementation. This framing is not dissimilar to that which framed and continue to make pertinent the conflicting priorities of Whitty and Lawton - those conflicting priorities of a centralizing-government versus teachers' long held professional autonomy.

The purpose of this paper is to document the process of developing a music curriculum for junior secondary schools in Macau and thereby consider Lawton's (2012 [1980]) view that centre-stages the role of teachers in this process, particularly in terms of

Whitty (2012 [1981] & 1985)'s challenge that Lawton's optimistic analysis of complex sociological phenomenon of curriculum issues suggested unrealistic solutions to complex problems that are false assumptions of a social democratic tradition. To do so, this paper investigates three research questions:

1. What are participants' perceptions and how do these frame the implementation of Macau's *Junior Secondary School Music Curriculum* (DSEJ, 2017a)?
2. Do participants' expectations align with the central-government's development of this junior secondary school music curriculum?
3. Do participants perceive they impact on or are impacted by Macau's *Junior Secondary School Music Curriculum* (DSEJ, 2017a)?

Methodology

Given the long *laissez-faire* independence enjoyed by 62 of Macau's 68 schools, educational research within Macau is very rare, marking this music education research as a first. However, this research landscape is not without its contextual challenges: 'The magnification of sensitivities in (Macau) contributes to its special educational ecology; investigating these is frequently an interpersonal as well as a research matter' (Morrison, 2006, p. 249). Accordingly, this study is designed as a qualitative descriptive case study. Given this subject-area's absence of any prior educational research, a revelatory case-study approach is adopted to explore music teachers' views about music curriculum development in Macau. The significance of this research in part, lies in it being the first into Macau's music education – an unknown context that makes “descriptive information alone ... revelatory” (Yin, 2014, p. 52). Enriching this data capture will involve incorporating a variety of documents into the analysis (Yin, 2014). Of international research significance is this case study's capacity to consider the Whitty/Lawson debate from a non-Western cultural-contextual perspective.

Initiation, Time-line and Data collection schedule.

This project was initiated by DSEJ and charged with generating a new, mandatory *junior secondary school music curriculum* for use across all of Macau's schools. The time-line for this project was set by DSEJ (March to August 2015). During this period, data was collected from bi-weekly project meetings, classroom observations and web-based government sources.

Participants.

Five music teachers from Macau participated in this study. All were key informants of the case (Marshall, 1996). Each participant is given a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. Participants' profiles are displayed in Table 2.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

All participants are female, whose age, years of teaching experience and education align with that of Macau's teachers (Table 1). Reflecting the established view that Macau requires to import educational expertise (Bray & Koo, 2004); the author, competitively selected on relevant curriculum development experience and proven academic leadership, was invited by the DSEJ of Macau to be the sole researcher and leader of the curriculum development project. On appointment, the researcher set criteria for DSEJ's selection of five participants. The selection criteria included (1) being in-service music teachers who were teaching in junior secondary schools; (2) having studied music or music education and experienced in developing school-based curriculum; (3) willing to contribute ideas, share writing tasks, collaborate with other members of the music curriculum development team; (4) permitted being interviewed and observed in their classroom teaching.

Data collection and analysis.

Data were collected through reading archival records on the website of the DSEJ, curriculum documents from the participants' schools, non-participant classroom observations, field notes, record of post-observation meetings, individual face-to-face interviews and record of participants' group meetings. As the project ended, individual face-to-face interviews with each participant recorded participants' reflections on their experience of developing this music curriculum.

Data processing included all recordings being transcribed and then checked by the participants; all interview transcriptions, field notes and meeting records were coded and then analyzed.

Content analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and pattern matching (Yin, 2014) were used as data procedures. Triangulation with other sources of information, such as the information available from the curriculum documents of the participants' schools as

well as the archival records on the website of the DSEJ of Macau, were also explored to enhance a holistic view of the case (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

To protect individual identities, pseudonyms (Amy, Betty, Candy, Diana, Eva) are used throughout. Study findings are presented as a summary description of the case, with supporting quotations extracted from the interview data, research field notes and meeting notes.

Findings

During the first meeting, participants voiced two dominant perceptions which informed the first research question, “*What are participants’ perceptions and how do these frame the implementation of Macau’s Junior Secondary School Music Curriculum (DSEJ, 2017a)?*” Their first dominant perception was that they and their peers have few illusions about the importance of school-based music education.

Amy: There is not much research about music education in Macau. Music education is an unimportant subject here in Macau because nobody cares whether there’s any music curriculum development and nobody is interested to research in this area. The society simply doesn’t care... I know the government has published a music syllabus in 1999. I saw it in the pantry for teachers, but nobody pays attention to it. Music is an unimportant subject.

A second dominant perception, reflecting perhaps their voluntary engagement with this project, was that Macau needed music curriculum reform. This reform need was expressed as practical problem, namely that, although schools in Macau traditionally adopted music textbooks published outside of Macau their curriculum was not totally applicable to Macau. This problem reflects the local absence of a viable text-book market (as shown in Table 1) and that Macau’s socio-cultural context differs from neighboring cities (Bray & Koo, 2004). Participants also had a clear perception of a practical solution, to be effective, music curriculum reform should be developed by local music teachers.

Candy: Music teachers here may like a curriculum developed by Macau music teachers instead of a top-down curriculum document. It would be better if the school music curriculum because we understand the concerns of music teachers

here and we can address their concerns as well as the current situation of music curriculum in Macau.

The impact of these perceptions shaped the role of project team leader as a facilitator to help these Macau teachers to develop their own music curriculum. This facilitator-role had the intention that participants would develop ownership of their work and become curriculum leaders in their city. This intention was readily endorsed.

Candy: I hope music teachers may like this music curriculum because it's developed by music teachers. Although we are invited by the DSEJ to join the curriculum development project, it's not a top-down policy document. We wrote it from a practical perspective. We hope that local music teachers will find it useful.

Subsidiary voiced perceptions include dissatisfaction with how administrators and even their professional peers treat music within schools; restricted access to IT support; diversified age range classes (13-18 year students in one class) and diversity of music-teachers' pedagogy.

Amy: I have only one lesson per week. Other colleagues may take over my music lessons for teaching their subjects.

Candy: Some schools principals and music teachers only focus on music competitions. They may use up all music lessons to prepare for public performance or competitions and ignore other areas of music learning.

Amy: The available resources for supporting music curriculum development are limited, e.g. we lack of IT support for using computers for composing and notating music. ...

Betty: Music teachers who did not study music as their major discipline may find it hard to design school-based music curriculum. Some of them only teach singing and music rudiments. Some of them focus on teaching the facts of music history and ask students to memorize the biographies of music composers.

Diana: Music lessons here usually focus on singing songs from music textbooks. Some teachers may talk a bit about music rudiments as written on the textbooks.

Eva: Music teachers like to have "ready-to-use" teaching materials with "model answer". They may not like to go beyond what's on the music textbooks. ... They may find it difficult to design curriculum because the age range of students here is

very wide. First, there are a lot of students who need to repeat their studies because of poor academic performance and there are a lot of new immigrants in Macau. A junior secondary school class may have students age-ranged from Age 13 to 18. It's difficult to find materials or topics that might be interesting for them.

In summary, and to answer the research question “*What are participants’ perceptions and how do these frame the implementation of Macau’s Junior Secondary School Music Curriculum (DSEJ, 2017a)?*” These Macau music teachers perceive a clear need for music curriculum reform that is not only peer-led, but also specific, supportive and detailed in order to address the realities of the local school context.

While participants are informed, and informing about the strengths and weaknesses of the current, Macau music education, the second research question now investigates “*Do participants’ expectations align with the central-government’s development of this junior secondary school music curriculum ?*”

As reported above, participants voiced two dominant perceptions – the second of which clearly aligns with the central government’s view that Macau needed music curriculum reform. However, participants’ first dominant perception was of the role of school-based music teaching, as summarized by Amy as ‘Music is an unimportant subject’. Although the government of Macau SAR has made an effort to promote arts education in schools over the past years, ‘music’ as a school subject is retained, however its status within the overall school curriculum remains low (Wang, 2010). It is this context which comprises of reform-aspirations operating with low status in schools that underpins the tension between the teachers’ and central government’s expectations.

To illustrate how this underpinning tension plays out, Diana and Eva described (see above) the current music pedagogy as being ‘from music textbooks’ (Diana) ... ‘with “model answer”’ (Eva). As music text-books used in Macau are all imported from neighboring cities, this ‘foreign text-book pedagogy’ remains unchallenged among

Macau music teachers (Wang, 2010). By this 'solution' the inherent tension between the project team's reform aspirations and central government's expectation of static resources is resolved.

Participants' reform aspirations with an aim to embody in their new music curriculum for junior secondary schools include moving away from being teacher-centered with its emphasis on performing for competitions, to being student-centered, school-based curriculum that integrates listening, performing and creating activities in music lessons:

Amy: I wish my students to participate more in performing activities. Music is a performing art; musical knowledge becomes meaningless if students don't have a chance to apply musical knowledge in performance. I wish my students could have listen to music from various cultures and styles, like widening their views through learning music from different cultures, including local musical culture. I wish to have more lesson time for music, e.g. two lessons per week instead of just one lesson.

Betty: I wish the new music curriculum could be more down to earth and practical for music teachers. I hope they will like listening to music, appreciate the beauty of music and become concert goers when they grow up. No matter how and what we teach, it's important to create more opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills in music.

Candy: I wish to arouse students' interests in music learning. I'm certain that learning music rudiments really kills students' interests. They won't listen to us if we don't address their interests of learning. A balanced music curriculum should include performance listening and composing instead of merely focusing on public performance and music competitions.

Diana: They need to know that music-making is a process. They should have choice in music learning. They may like popular music more, but it's important to widen their views in music learning.

Eva: Music lessons should be more than just a singing lesson. Students should experience music of various styles and cultures, including local musical culture. Music is not an isolated subject in the curriculum; students should know the linkage and connection of music with other subjects. Music composing is important for students to express their creativeness.

In summary, the answer to the research question "*Do participants' expectations align with the central-government's development of this junior secondary school music*

curriculum?” Is both yes and no which produces a pragmatic compromise? Yes, both parties seek reform of the current music stasis; no, participant teachers differ from central government in ideally seeking a higher, better resourced school-status for music education. A pragmatic compromise emerges in that a new *junior secondary school music curriculum* which incorporated within a common if flexible music curriculum and enables a broader view of music-education’s potential to be introduced while adhering to the prevailing sense of teacher-autonomy.

The third research question centres on the role of ‘impact’: “*Do participants perceive they impact on or are impacted by Macau’s Junior Secondary School Music Curriculum (DSEJ, 2017a)?*” From the author’s perspective, as project leader, it was the DSEJ who initiated the curriculum development project. Significantly, it was the DSEJ who set the project’s time-line (March to August 2015); provided the defining structure (“Curriculum Framework for Formal Education of Local Education System” and the “Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments of Local Education System”); defined the project’s evaluation (expert-appraisals from Macau and Taiwan) and selected all of the participants. It was the DSEJ who retained key-authority with the participants positioned as having design responsibility. This narrative would suggest a linear impact from DSEJ to the project team and then on to the classroom teachers. However, the evidence to be presented here suggests a more interactive reality.

As noted above, the first project meeting defined the project-leader’s role which mirrored Lawton (2012 [1980]) centre-staging teachers in the curriculum development process. This role was as a ‘facilitator’ and a resource person to help music teachers in Macau to develop their school music curriculum.

The impact of this “resource” role included the project leader providing reading materials, such as Macau’s “Curriculum Framework for Formal Education of Local

Education System” ; “Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments of Local Education System” ; current trends of education reform and music curriculum development, curriculum theories, educational ideologies, theories of cognitive developmental psychology and music learning theories. Peer-led discussions followed in bi-weekly group meetings geared to investigate possible applications in Macau for various theories and ideologies in music curriculum development.

The project-leader's rationale for asking participants to read extensively had the intention of widening their views on the philosophical, cultural, psychological and sociological perspectives on curriculum development, with specific reference to music curriculum development. From the perspective of the participants, such readings and discussion were not 'top-down' but rather a series of opportunities in which, by interrogating these provided texts, to articulate their own curriculum perspectives. It was through this articulation, that the new curriculum content was to emerge.

Participants critiqued their current curriculum – a curriculum of stasis, embedded for generations - and aspired to bring about positive and sustainable changes:

Amy: The impact of this curriculum should be positive to music teachers. Unlike the *Music Curriculum* (1999) which sets rigid content, this curriculum only sets the framework for curriculum development and allows music teachers to design their school-based curriculum. The addition of listening and creating activities require teachers to change. I hope it will change school administration too, if schools recognize the importance of music education for students, they should hire professionally trained music teachers instead. At present, many music teachers did not study music at tertiary level; they may find it difficult to teach listening and creating activities.

Betty: This is a starting point to change, a starting point to work out a meaningful, enjoyable and creative school-based music curriculum with a variety of activities to express their musical abilities and to connect with their daily lives. I hope this teacher-developed music curriculum can bring positive effect to music curriculum in Macau. I'm teaching daily in music classrooms, I know teachers' and students' needs. My role can make music teachers' and students' voices visible in the process of music curriculum development. This curriculum can bring about positive changes in teaching and learning music in Macau schools. ... I know that the context of every school is different; this curriculum allows flexibility in

implementation.

Candy: The impact of this curriculum should be positive. This curriculum can provide support to music teachers so as to convince school principals and parents about the importance of school-based music curriculum. ... This curriculum can also provide a direction for improving music learning in schools ... music learning can be more meaningful to students ... and eventually improve the standard of music learning outcomes.

Diana: I have a bit worry that some teachers are good at only one aspect, e.g. singing performance. This curriculum includes listening and composing activities which they seldom touch upon in daily teaching. It sets a common goal for music learning ... it sets a starting point for teachers to communicate on the directions for music curriculum development. It's a matter of balance and a matter of teacher autonomy in developing school based music curriculum.

Eva: I'm certain that music teachers will have very big reactions on this curriculum – both positive and negative. Positive reaction may be – “At last, there's a junior secondary school music curriculum in Macau!” ... Negative reaction may be – this curriculum includes listening and creating activities that they seldom teach. At present, they only teach singing in music lessons. They may worry about their workload and the time needed for curriculum design. They will have to design more guiding questions for listening activities and set criteria to assess music performance and music composition. Music teachers will need professional development because of this curriculum.

As narrated above, participants voiced mixed feelings, both positive and negative, about having a new curriculum. On one hand, they regarded the junior secondary school music curriculum as a balanced one with a variety of music activities that allowed teachers to select materials of various styles. On the other hand, they were concerned that some Macau music teachers may not be well-prepared to implement the new curriculum.

In summary, the evidence indicates a complex interaction within the third research question “*Do participants perceive they impact on or are impacted by Macau's Junior Secondary School Music Curriculum (DSEJ, 2017a)?*” An initial linear impact from DJES to project leader to team members then classroom teachers abruptly changes at the very first project meeting, changing the project leader's role to that of facilitator that mirrored Lawton' (2012 [1980]) ideology to centre-stage teachers in the curriculum development process. From this centre-staging, these participants learn to articulate their

own curriculum perspectives, their own mixed feelings about the new music curriculum. This latter voiced uncertainty, the above cited sanguine views, brings to the fore Whitty's (2012 [1981] & 1985) challenge that Lawson's centre-staging of teachers in the curriculum process is premised on 'assumptions ... of a social democratic tradition' (Whitty, 2012, p. 46). The implications of these participants' sanguine views are reviewed in the following discussion.

Discussion

The reported findings display that the process of curriculum development casts participants into roles that mirror Lawton's (2012 [1980]) centre-staging of teachers within the curriculum development process. However, control of this process remains not with these participants but ultimately with the DSEJ as representing the government's initiation entitled the "Curriculum Framework for Formal Education of Local Education System". In Macau, the DSEJ has a dual function: to coordinate the curriculum development and to oversee its implementation, which is similar to the two upper levels of Lawton's "co-operative control of the curriculum". According to Lawton's model, the impulse of curriculum development is to support and facilitate teachers, to draw on their professional strengths and, by encouraging a sense of participant-ownership, to make the new curriculum theirs. This impulse is not idealistic. Lawton's analysis of complex issues is grounded in the reality that the success of curriculum implementation stands or fails at the chalk-face. However, as Whitty's challenge to Lawson highlights, there are complex forces at work at this 'chalk-face'.

As illustrated in this study, a key force is that the new curriculum is mandatory for the 83% of school that now accept Macau's 'education-coupons' as tuition payment (DSEJ, 2017b). However, for centuries, Macau's schools have evolved individual

pathways, their own educational priorities and each, their own ethos. Accordingly, there may be a considerable tension between Macau's financial incentive of joining the "free education system" and the educational-adjustments imposed by the new mandatory curriculum (Li, Wang & Fong, 2014). As a research site, this tension offers insights into Lawton's nemesis.

Whitty's (2012 [1981] & 1985) challenge to Lawson is illustrated in the participants' sanguine view of the curriculum reform process: "It's a start ... I hope ... I have a bit of a worry ... they'll have a big reaction". Such responses support Whitty's challenge that Lawton assumes 'a social democratic tradition'. Whitty's specific concern here is that within Lawton's curriculum design process teachers are cast as being responsible despite having no real authority. This study has shown the driving-role of the DSEJ in inception, recruitment, time-line, evaluation and mandating of this new curriculum. The findings have illustrated how participants responded when 'volunteered' to take responsibility in developing this new music curriculum. In Macau, the educational tradition has for generations been guided by '*laissez-faire* market principles' (Tang & Morrison, 1998). However, the Macau education market is small, breeding 'a special educational ecology (which is) interpersonal' (Morrison, 2006). Arguably therefore, Macau offers '*laissez-faire* market principles' within which thrives 'a social democratic tradition' that favours educational stasis (Lo, 1999). Given this social context that allows music teachers to enjoy their autonomy of curriculum decision, the DSEJ's linkage of "free education system" with a mandated new curriculum is a change-strategy whose validity depends on interpretations of curriculum implementation. At the policy-level, the outcomes of this change-strategy may be uncertain for the DSEJ; at a professional and personal level its outcomes are also uncertain, has reflected in these participants' sanguine views. The nature of such uncertainty, of responsibility without authority, of

mandated implementation, is reported to cause implementation failure (Kirk & McDonald, 2001). Tracking this failure the process begins with raising false expectations of education renewal which are resolutely dashed in the face of entrenched educational stasis (Southcott, 2000). Curriculum design is an uncertain responsibility from which Whitty's challenge to Lawton, would seek to protect teachers.

What this study serves to illustrate is that curriculum development can be both nurturing and uncertain in responsibility. Accordingly, Whitty's challenge to Lawton can be read as originating from a common impulse: to benefit teachers within the curriculum development process. Whereas Lawton's 'benefit' offers nurturing; for Whitty, the priority is to offer protection. Both share the same impulse, both are correct, but neither is complete.

As effective curriculum change depends on the involvement of teachers' initiatives that are related to their professional and personal experiences (Kirk & McDonald, 2001), arguably the DSEJ has to provide music subject-specific professional development programs to better equip Macau's music teachers. Otherwise the requirement to teach listening, singing and composition, currently beyond the professional capacity of many Macau music teachers, will become an obstacle to curriculum implementation.

Conclusion

This paper highlights a significant controversy within our understanding of curriculum development – between Lawton's (2012 [1981]) view that centre-stages the role of teachers and Whitty's (1985) challenge to (Lawton's) oversimplified and optimistic "sociological analysis of the context in which they are intended to operate" (p. 62). Findings from a study of developing a music curriculum for junior secondary schools

in Macau illustrate the Janus-like qualities of curriculum development. These opposing qualities place participants as being both nurtured and uncertain in responsibility. It is argued that both Lawton and Whitty share a common impulse to benefit teachers, which both are correct, but neither is complete. As suggested by the participants, providing professional development opportunities for music teachers may be a possible way to bridge the gap between the collaborative model curriculum development and the reality of curriculum implementation which is embedded in the complexity of school contexts.

References

- Akker, J. V. (2004). Curriculum perspectives: An introduction. In J. V. den Akker, W. Kuiper, & U. Hameyer (Eds.), *Curriculum Landscapes and Trends*. (pp. 1-10). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Bobbitt, F. (1918). *The Curriculum*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Bray, M. & Koo, R. (2004). Postcolonial patterns and paradoxes: language and education in Hong Kong and Macao. *Comparative Education*, 40, 215-239.
- Cheng, C. M. B. (1999). *Macau: A Cultural Janus*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Cornbleth, C. (1990). *Curriculum in Context*. Basingstoke: Falmer Press.
- Cornbleth, C. (2000). National standards and curriculum as cultural containment? In C. Cornbleth (Ed.), *Curriculum Politics, Policy, Practice – Cases in Comparative Context*. (pp. 211-238). Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York.
- Cremer, R. (1987). *Macau: City of Commerce and Culture*. Hong Kong: UAE Press.
- Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Juventude (Education and Youth Affairs Bureau of Macau SAR). [DSEJ] (1999). *Music Syllabus for Junior Secondary Schools*. Macao: Department of Education & Youth. [in Chinese].
- Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Juventude (Education and Youth Affairs Bureau of

- Macau SAR). [DSEJ] (2000). Collection of Papers from the Seminar on Curriculum Reform 2000. Macao: Department of Education & Youth. [in Chinese].
- Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Juventude. [DSEJ] (2016a). Educational Statistic (Scholastic year 2015/2016). Retrieved from http://portal.dsej.gov.mo/webdsejspace/internet/Inter_main_page.jsp?id=8525
- Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Juventude. [DSEJ] (2016b). The Curriculum Development Website. Retrieved from <http://www.dsej.gov.mo/crdc/edu/requirements-e.html>
- Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Juventude. [DSEJ] (2017a). *Junior Secondary School Music Curriculum Guide*. Retrieved from http://www.dsej.gov.mo/crdc/guide/data/junior/Music_guide_c.pdf
- Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Juventude. [DSEJ] (2017b). List of schools (free education). Retrieved from <http://appl.dsej.gov.mo/eduenquiry/edu/eduweb/schinf/schlistmain.jsp>
- Furlong, J. (2013). *Education: An Anatomy of the Discipline*. London: Routledge.
- Grundy, S. (1987) *Curriculum: product or praxis?* Lewes: Falmer Press.
- Government of Macao SAR Statistics and Census Service [SCS] (2016). Yearbook of Statistics 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.dsec.gov.mo/Statistic.aspx?lang=en-US&NodeGuid=d45bf8ce-2b35-45d9-ab3a-ed645e8af4bb>
- Kirk, D., & Macdonald, D. (2001). Teacher voice and ownership of curriculum change. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 33(5), 551-567. DOI: 10.1080/00220270010016874
- Hao, Z. (2011) *Macau – History and Society*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Lawn, M. & Barton, L. (Eds.). (2012 [1981]). Critical reappraisal: Introduction. In M. Lawn and L. Barton (Eds.), *Rethinking Curriculum Studies: A Radical Approach*,

- (pp. 45-47). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Lawton, D. (2012 [1980]). *The Politics of the School Curriculum*. London: Routledge.
- Li, H., Wang, D. & Fong, R. W. (2014). Sound bites won't work – Case studies of 15-year free education in Greater China. *International Journal of Chinese Education*, 3(2), 161-170.
- Lo, Y. C. J. (1999). Curriculum Reform. In M. Bray & R. Koo (Eds.), *Education and Society in Hong Kong and Macao – Comparative Perspectives on Continuity and Change, 2nd ed.* (pp. 161-174). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.
- Macao Polytechnic Institute (2017). Bachelor of Arts in Music. Retrieved from http://www.ipm.edu.mo/arts/en/bam_objectives.php
- Marshall, M. N. (1996). Sampling for qualitative research. *Family Practice*, 13, 522-525.
- Merriam, S. B. & Tisdell, E. J. (2016) *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation. 4th ed.* San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
- Morrison, K. (2006). Sensitive educational research in small states and territories: The case of Macau. *Compare*, 36, 249-264.
- Morrison, K. & Tang, F. H. J. (2002). Testing to destruction: a problem in a small state. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, 9, 289-317.
- Scott, D. (2016). *New Perspectives on Curriculum, Learning and Assessment*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Southcott, J. E. (2000). Curriculum stasis: Graton in South Australia. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 14, 50-60.
- Stenhouse, L. (1975). *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*. London: Heinemann.
- Tang, F. H. J. & Morrison, K. (1998). When marketisation does not improve schooling: the case of Macau. *Compare*, 28, 245-262.

Tyler, R. W. (1949). *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

University of Macao (2017). Faculty of Education. Retrieved from http://www.umac.mo/fed/program_bachelor.html

Wang, D. P-C. (2010). An analytical study of music textbooks used at the elementary school in Chinese society. *Research in Higher Education Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.aabri.com/manuscripts/09371.pdf>

Wassener, B. (2014). Macau rides high on new round of casino construction. March 25, 2014, *New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/26/business/international/macau-rides-high-on-new-round-of-casino-construction.html>.

Whitty, G. (1985). *Sociology and School Knowledge*. London: Methuen.

Whitty, G. (2012 [1981]). Curriculum studies: A critique of some recent British orthodoxies. In M. Lawn and L. Barton (Eds.), *Rethinking Curriculum Studies: A Radical Approach*, (pp. 48-70). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Yin, R. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.