

A Report on Proposed Changes to the Art Education Program, Hong Kong Institute of Education. December 2008.

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Individual Modules

Overall, I found the syllabi for the modules to be well conceived. The theory modules are especially sound, though they studio courses also consistently attempt to move beyond mere skills acquisition to consider cultural context. Some, though not all, syllabi make explicit reference to their topic's relevance to students' personal life, which appears consistent with the Master Plan.

Many, though not all, syllabi also explicitly provide some focus on implications for the classroom. This always needs to be explicit as models of practice in higher education are often not at all appropriate to K-12 schools. So, for example, in the Drawing syllabi many media and techniques are mentioned by which I can image teaching strategies are implied that are appropriate to older children, but I see no explicit accommodation for younger children.

A consistent theme is the introduction of postmodernism, although in the Ceramics and Painting syllabi this appears to be at variance with reference to modernist elements and principles. Some of the assessments need to be rewritten to specify the range of specific skills and knowledge that students are expected to draw upon so that operationalizing OBL will be made easier. Some of the readings for some of the modules are a little dated, with no references since 2000. With introductory courses this is not always an issue. I wondered when no text was required but some heavy and extensive reading was recommended, what purpose the recommended lists are intended to serve. How will students use them? Are they for show? Many of the syllabi need proofreading for minor infidelities. There is some reuse of references (eg. Kellner & Best, 1991); is this a problem?

I am most qualified to comment in detail on the methods courses. They seem a little dated in relying in part on DBAE material and specific references to the work of previous visiting professors rather than to Visual Culture and more recent classroom practice. Regarding the latter two points professors may wish to consider my own 2006 text, *Visual Culture in the Art Class: Case Studies*, published by NAEA.

The module Art Management seems very appropriate given the alternative careers some students may pursue.

Drawing is justified in part as "fundamental to all visual art disciplines" which is only true when considering pre-industrial revolution cultural forms; it certainly does not apply in an age of electronic and digital communication.

The Painting module refers to aesthetic scanning, which has been heavily criticized approach as modernist as well as superficial.

Structure

I realize that the mandatory courses are limited to thirteen, and overall the balance between history, theory and studio in specific media appears appropriate. It is good to see the number of required theory courses. However, the inclusion of Ceramics, Painting, and Crafts as required and the relegation of Photography and the Moving Image to the status of electives is clearly problematic. Given the marginalization of the former as cultural forms in the 21st century and the dominance of the later I believe this allocation should be revisited. The inclusion of crafts could be justified given the limited technologies in schools and as a prerequisite to the obvious need for a course on Installation. On the other hand, does Installation need Crafts as a prerequisite. The Textile course appears well justified in term of peer culture, although it appears as an optional module. The inclusion of Ceramics as required is not obvious.

Proposed Modules

I would rename the module called Visual Communication to Visual Culture in order to reflect the contested nature of any form of *communication*, which the word itself does not convey in the way the word *culture* is intended.

Note that the titles of courses listed on the course structure document are sometimes inconsistent with the titles on the syllabi documents.

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