

A comparative examination of after-school art programs in China and the United States

Background of the Study

As the research shows, in 2000, at least 5 million children come home to empty houses because their parents work outside the home in the U.S. Parents worry about their children's safety and whether they are susceptible to drugs and crime. In order to deal with their concerns, many communities have created after-school programs to keep children and youth out of trouble. However, a research shows that there have not been enough quality programs available in order to meet the needs of the many parents and students, so the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice release common elements of high quality after-school programs for school-age students, such as goal setting, quality staff, participant ratios, attention to safety, health and nutrition issues. Afterschool programs are becoming increasingly important part of many students' educational experience nowadays, and the arts are beginning to take a prominent place in after-school learning. Arts-based after-school programs allow for student self-selection based on individual interests, and they allow more opportunities to connect with the community and to provide mentorships with professionals. Meanwhile, art after-school programs provide more opportunities for older students to work with younger students. In the U.S., most of after-school programs are sponsored by the Federal funding and some companies, however, most of after-school programs in China are established and run by private institution. Some surveys show that after-school programs in China have become a supplement of basic k-12 education, while the tuition of after-school programs is more expensive than the tuition of k-12 schools, which has become one of the serious social problems. After-school programs in China has always been seen a common social phenomenon coexisting with the basic education. After entering 21st century, with the competition and the increasingly fierce competition of employment in China, after-school programs have sprung up like bamboo shoots after the rain. Currently, the categories of after-school programs have covered all subjects. Among them, there are not only main subjects, such as language arts (Chinese literature), math, English, but also including visual arts, music, and sports. Some researchers agree that after-school programs play an important role in students' study, while some criticizes that after-school programs have increased students' burden of study as more and more parents push their children to go to after-school programs.

Purpose of the Study

American educational system has been seen as the best educational system from Chinese people's perspective, and this is the reason why more and more Chinese students coming to study abroad in the U.S. Currently, many after-school programs leaders and administrators in China blindly implement some practice with which American after-school programs have done. Some advanced and modern art curricular are introduced and transplanted by some art after-school programs in China, however, they ignore the most important part - reality - how they apply these new things in the real classroom. The purpose of this study is to compare the difference and similarities of after-school programs in the U.S. and China, and to explore how local after-school programs in China improve their management and quality, and how they design their curricular which fit well with needs of Chinese students.

The questions that I want to explore

1. What is the purpose of after-school art programs in the U.S. and in China?
2. What is the position of art in after-school programs in the U.S. and in China?
3. Do arts have effect on students who are taking after-school art classes in the U.S. and in China? And how?
4. What are similarities and differences of art curricular of after-school programs in the U.S. and in China?
5. What do after-school art programs in the U.S. and in China emphasis on?
6. How do art teachers view their programs and their efficacy in the U.S. and in China?

Researches and articles saying about after-school art programs

- ✧ Halpern, R. (2002). A different kind of child development institution: The history of after-school programs for low-income children. *Teachers College Record*, 104(2), 178-211.
- ✧ The Arts Beyond the School Day: Extending the Power retrieved at <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/kcaen/resources/afterschool.pdf>
- ✧ Alliance, A. (2005). Arts and afterschool: A powerful combination. Retrieved February, 17, 2018.

- ✧ Wright, R. (2007). A conceptual and methodological framework for designing and evaluating community-based after-school art programs. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 13(1), 123-132.
- ✧ Little, P., Wimer, C., & Weiss, H. B. (2008). After school programs in the 21st century: Their potential and what it takes to achieve it. *Issues and opportunities in out-of-school time evaluation*, 10(1-12).
- ✧ Shepard, J., & Booth, D. (2009). Heart to heart art. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 18(1), 12.
- ✧ Eckhoff, A., Hallenbeck, A., & Spearman, M. (2011). A Place for the Arts: Lessons Learned from an Afterschool Art Experience with Reclaimed Materials. *Afterschool Matters*, 14, 40-47.
- ✧ Huang, D., & Dietel, R. (2011). Making afterschool programs better. *CRESST Policy Brief*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California.
- ✧ Shin, R., & Kim, J. (2014). A comparative cross-cultural examination of community art education programs in South Korea and the United States. *Studies in Art Education*, 55(3), 227-240.
- ✧ Price, C. A., & Kares, F. R. (2016). Researching Long-Term Impacts of an Out-Of-School Time Program. *Dimensions*, July 2016.

Description of Project and anticipated resources required

Since my strong suit is making videos, I am going to make a video (documentary) to present this topic in motion. The video would define the purpose of after-school art programs in the U.S. and China based on the literature review. Some local after-school art programs would be introduced, for example, Resident Art in Columbia, MO. Certainly, a local after-school art program in China would be introduced as well. Moreover, some important facts and research results would be included in this documentary. Finally, art teachers from America and China would be interviewed and they would share their perspectives towards their programs.

Project plan

1. Present topic proposal and gain some suggestions from peers and professors;
2. Revise the topic proposal;
3. Literature review again and looking for local after-school art programs teachers and leaders;
4. Design the storyboard of documentary and interview questions;

5. Seek suggestions from peers and professors based on the storyboard;
6. Start filming the footages of the local after-school art program;
7. Start interviewing art teachers from America and China;
8. Examine and explore the videos that I have taken and summarize the points that I get and write down the voice over;
9. Start editing the videos by using Adobe Premiere;
10. Generate the draft video and ask for suggestions;
11. Revise and remake the video to get the final one.