A cross-cultural study

of contemporary early childhood arts curricula

by

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My heart is taken over by the four:
Deities and stars in the heaven, arts and children on the earth.

（Zikai Feng, in "Sons and daughters", 1928）

我的心为四事所占据了：
天上的神明与星辰，人间的艺术与儿童

(摘自 丰子恺《儿女》, 1928)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a cross-cultural study of young children's arts education. A comparison of the intended arts curriculum for 5-6 year old children in Beijing and Australia portrays a snapshot of the similarities and differences of these arts curricula. The examination of the contemporary literature revealed a perceived creativity gap between China and some Western countries. Early childhood is particularly important in bringing about change to this situation, as children of 5-6 years of age are believed to be in a critical period for the development of their creative thinking skills. This research seeks to enhance the understanding of the arts education among a cohort of Chinese 5-6 year old children in this era of globalisation; it aims to contribute to current education philosophy and practices of childhood arts education in Beijing.

Underpinned by an overarching social constructivist epistemology and using the theory of governmentality as a critical lens, this thesis investigates the intricate power–knowledge system in relation to curriculum, arts and pedagogy in Chinese Beijing children's arts education. Constructivist grounded theory is the primary research methodology that guides the analysis of sequential qualitative research phases of this study. These phases include a comparative curricula analysis, followed by a survey study involving 88 EC teachers among 12 public kindergartens in Beijing. These first phases of the research inform a collective case study across three kindergartens.

This study reveals that the arts represent a significant learning area both in Chinese Beijing and in Australian ECE. However, evidence from the study demonstrates that in the contemporary Beijing context, the main pedagogical approach to children's arts learning continues to be teacher-directed and teacher-initiated, and collective teaching remains the predominant pedagogical organisation form. The findings of this study reiterate results in the literature reviewed and further confirm a gap between Chinese ECE policies and implementation, and between Chinese EC educators' espoused beliefs and enacted practice.

This thesis challenges and problematises some of the claims and understanding of this research field, for example, the discourse on child-centredness in the contemporary Chinese EC curriculum. The data provided evidence that the participant EC educators possessed a diverse range of knowledge of the potential benefits of globalisation from an EC perspective. It is argued that in this particular field, the forces of globalisation interact and interplay with local powers in the emergent practice of Chinese ECE.

This research highlights the potential for early childhood arts education to cultivate enhanced creative and critical thinking skills for children in Beijing. This study indicates the need for new policy to address the importance of emergent technology in Chinese children's arts education. In addition, Chinese EC educators' professional learning requires further and continuing development, to incorporate the contemporary views of children, the disciplinary knowledge and skills, and a more open understanding of the optimal pedagogy for children's arts learning.

当代学前儿童艺术课程的跨文化比较研究

摘　要

本论文呈现了一个跨文化的儿童艺术教育的研究。该比较研究展示了一帧关于中澳两国之间五至六岁儿童艺术课程异同点的快照。当代文献揭示了中国和一些西方国家之间在创新力方面存在着差距。儿童早期教育对于改变此创新力差距有着重大的意义，因为五至六岁儿童被认为是处于发展创新性思维的关键时期。在全球化的背景下，本研究旨在提升对一群五至六岁中国北京儿童的艺术教育的理解，以促进当代北京儿童艺术教育教学的理念与实践。

在社会建构主义认知理论的支持下，运用治理理论作为一个批判性的视角，本论文探寻在当代北京儿童艺术教育中的课程，艺术和教学法之间的错综复杂的权力和知识体系。使用建构主义实地理论作为该研究的基本方法论促进了一系列连续的定性研究的方法。这些研究方法包含一个跨文化的艺术课程的文本比较，和一个由来自北京地区 12 个公立幼儿园的 88 位学前教师参与的调查问卷。这些初始的研究方法为接下来由三个幼儿园参与的一个集体性的个案研究奠定了基础。

本研究的调查结果显示，艺术学习领域在中国北京和澳大利亚的学前教育中都占有显著的地位。基于本研究的数据采集与分析结果，在当代中国北京的背景下，儿童艺术教育的主要教学法仍处于以教师为主导和引导的局面，集体教学依然是主要的教学组织形式。本论文的调查结果重述并且进一步确认了当代文献中关于中国学前教育领域中政策和实施之间的缺口，以及中国学前教育工作者的教育理念和教育实践之间的差距。

本研究数据分析的结果质疑了该研究领域中现有的一些观点和理解，例如，关于当代中国学前课程以儿童为中心的话语。参与调研的学前教育工作者们从学前的视角对全球化的潜力有着广泛的认知。本论文论证了在这个特定的领域，在当前中国学前教育的实践中，全球化的作用力和其他本地的主要力量相互影响并相互作用。

本研究凸显了通过艺术教育从而提升北京儿童创新能力和批判性思维能力的潜力。新的学前政策需要突出新兴科技在中国儿童艺术教育教学中的重要性。中国学前教育工作者的职业学习也有待进一步持续的发展，从而实现有机地融合儿童艺术教育教学中的几个重要因素，即：当代儿童观，学科的专业知识与技巧，以及更加开放和优化的教育教学法。

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed..

Date: 1st November 2017

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This thesis is dedicated to children, our younger generation; it is also dedicated to parents and grandparents, our elder generations. I feel myself in the middle of an ongoing chain of human civilisation while conceiving and writing this thesis.

I acknowledge the people of my mother country, and I am privileged to be a daughter of China. No matter when or where I am, this cultural sediment of over five thousand years has always been the source of my strength and inspiration.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Names and titles are used in full at their first citation: subsequently, the following acronyms or abbreviations are generally used.

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
APOP	Arts Packages of Practice
BAESECE	Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences Early Childhood Education (Research Institute)
CGTM	constructivist grounded theory methodology
CPC	Communist Party of China
DBAE	discipline-based art education
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (Australian Government)
EC	early childhood
ECE	early childhood education
ECERA	Early Childhood Education Research Association
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework (for Australia)
GDP	gross domestic product
ICT	information and communications technology
IES	imperial examination system
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
NACCCE	National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (UK)
NSW	New South Wales
NZ	New Zealand
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OGTM	objective grounded theory methodology
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PRC	People's Republic of China
RMB	renminbi/Chinese yuan (Chinese currency)
SA	South Australia

ScOT	Schools Online Thesaurus
SES	socio-economic status
SST	sustained shared thinking
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US/USA	United States/United States of America
VCAE	visual culture art education
ZPD	zone of proximal development

TERMINOLOGY

Australian Curriculum	Australian Curriculum: The Arts F-10
Beijing Curriculum	Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum
Convention	United Nations' Convention of the Rights of the Child
Guidance	*Guidance for Kindergarten Education* (Trial version)
Guideline	*Early Learning and Development Guideline of Children aged 3-6*
Plan	*Seventh Five-Year Plan*
techne	Greek: art in its most general sense
telos	Greek: ultimate object or aim

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A cross-cultural study of arts education in early childhood

This thesis presents a cross-cultural study of two contemporary early childhood arts curricula. This research compares the intended arts curriculum of China and Australia. The study of the enacted curriculum takes place in a sample of sites in Beijing, China. This research seeks to enhance the understanding of the arts education among a cohort of Chinese children aged five to six in this era of globalisation. The cross-cultural research presented in this thesis has the potential to provide broadened perspectives, important insights and innovative ideas (Piscitelli, Chi & Chen, 1999), in order to improve "each country's approach to early childhood education" (Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa, 2009, p.3).

1.1 Research context

Globalisation and neoliberalism are dominant influences on education throughout the world (Thomas & Yang, 2012); and the arts curriculum in Chinese early childhood education (ECE) is no exception. Since the beginning of the 1980s, under the overarching Reform and Opening-up policy, and influenced by global theories and paradigms, the Chinese government has issued a series of policies in this field.

However, the implementation of policy reform is complex and it is widely agreed that early childhood (EC) teachers play a crucial role in the success of the ECE reform in China (e.g. Liu & Pan, 2013; Zhu, 2008). There is a difference between the policy requirements and Chinese EC teachers' educational beliefs and behaviours; and even when the beliefs of some kindergarten staff were consistent with the principles of the EC reforms, "there is still a gap between practitioners' ideas and practices" (Pan & Liu, 2008, p. 36). The advocacy for identity transformation among Chinese EC teachers is frequently mentioned in a series of Chinese ECE policy documents beginning from the 1980s (e.g. *Guiding Framework of Kindergarten Education* [Trial Version] [State Education Commission of China, 1999] and *Guidance for Kindergarten Education* [Trial Version] [State Education Commission of China, 2001]).

In this research, all empirical data were collected in the city of Beijing, China. Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and is the political cultural, educational and scientific development centre of the country (*People's*

Republic of China Year Book, 2002). Table 1.1 presents key statistical data regarding Beijing which are embedded in the context of the national background. The research in this thesis is undertaken in order to create a snapshot of children's arts education in one of the most developed areas of China.

Table 1.1 Statistical data of Beijing and China in 2014

Statistical data in 2014

Index	Beijing	China	% of Beijing in China
Population (1,000 persons)	21,516	1,367,820	1.57%
Area (square km)	16,411	9,600,000	0.17%
GDP (billion RMB)	2,133.08	63,613.87	3.35%
GDP per capita (RMB)	99,995	46,629	214.45%
No. of children in kindergarten	364,954	40,507,145	0.90%
No. of full time teachers in kindergarten	31,692	1,844,148	1.72%
No. of kindergartens	1,426	209,881	0.68%

Based on statistical data retrieved from National Bureau of Statistics of China (http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2015/indexch.htm) and Beijing Statistical Net (http://www.bjstats.gov.cn/tjsj/)

Notes: GDP=gross domestic product; RMB=renminbi/Chinese yuan (Chinese currency)

1.2 How are children aged five to six positioned in China and in Australia?

Early childhood education (ECE) is generally defined as "the educational programs, strategies and services for young children from birth to age eight" (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2007, cited in Dong, 2014, p. 7). The nature of ECE in China is described as the "education and care for children between the ages of three and six [that] are primarily provided in kindergartens (full-day programs serving children from age three to age six)" (Zhu & Zhang, 2008, p. 173). Australian early childhood is considered to be the years from birth to age eight (Cameron, 2009), and educators draw from two documents to guide their curriculum decisions—the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for Australia by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR, 2009), and the Australian Curriculum F-10 by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA, 2016). In China, ECE is non-compulsory (Zhu, 2008). In

Australia, ECE for children from birth to five is non-compulsory (Cameron, 2009), whereas it is compulsory for children from age six onwards attend primary education (Government of South Australia, 2016).

The educational institutions for Chinese children from three to six are called kindergartens or preschools (Zhu, 2008). Chinese kindergartens are commonly structured in three levels: nursery class (for children aged 3-4); lower class (for children aged 4-5); and upper class (for children aged 5-6) (Ho, 2015). Throughout this thesis, the term "kindergarten" is used when referring to ECE centres in the Chinese system. In the Australian educational system, children aged five to six are in the first class of primary school. Therefore, the same age band of children in China and Australia are positioned differently in the education systems of the two countries. Consequently, these children aged five to six are situated not only in different types of settings, but also in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and some structural conditions.

In China, at the national level, policy guidelines provide a broad framework for the education of children aged from three to six. As an example, the *Guidance for Kindergarten Education* (Trial version) (hereafter, the Guidance*)* (State Education Commission of China, 2001) integrates learning using five learning areas (comprising health, society, language, science and arts). These policy guidelines are interpreted at the local level across different regions in China, for example, the Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum (Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences Early Childhood Education Research Institute [BAESECE], 2008), which is one of the primary documents analysed in the current research. In contrast, all students in Australia from Foundation to Year 10 (including those aged five to six in their Foundation year) are expected to meet the outcomes of the Australian Curriculum F-10 (ACARA, 2016), which is a national curriculum.

For children aged five to six in China, the curriculum is claimed to have been developed with a focus on child-centred (Wong & Pang, 2002) and play-based (Liu & Feng, 2005) education. For the same age band in Australia, although the curriculum is more segregated (i.e. divided into eight learning areas, namely, English; Mathematics; Science; Health and Physical Education; Humanities and Social Sciences; the Arts; Technologies; and Languages) (ACARA, 2016), there seems to be a balance *"*between child-centred education and discipline-based education" (McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002, p. 13).

Structural quality, such as the teacher to student ratio, appears to be different between China and Australia in education for children aged five to six. For example, a study in 2015 in the Beijing area showed that the average teacher to student ratio for the upper class in kindergarten was 1:15 in their sample (Sha, Wu & Yang, 2015). With regard to the teacher to student ratio of primary students in South Australia (SA), the average ratio was stated as 1:15.4 in 2015 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Although government websites state that the ratio is about 1:15, in reality class sizes for the first year of school in Australia vary across states and systems, and range between 15 and 25. For example, Zyngier (2014) reported that "in 2010 Australia's average public primary class size was 23.2". Similarly, in China, the teacher to student ratio varies between urban and rural areas across different regions. For example, in the Hebei Province, a rural province close to Beijing, the teacher to student ratio for children aged five to six can be as high as 1:30 (Hu et al., 2016).

In China, children aged five to six are in the upper class in kindergarten. Due to the non-compulsory nature of Chinese ECE, educational resources are relatively scarce for young children aged three to six (Zhu, 2008). Huo (2015) states that, "kindergarten education used to be the Cinderella of the education system in China" compared to "her two elder sisters, primary and secondary compulsory education" (p. 14). The result is that "in most rural areas, counties, towns and some cities, many pre-primary classes in primary schools or kindergartens [only] offer early education for children aged five to six for one or more years" (Zhu, 2008, p. 361).

1.3 Arts education

"The arts are important in young children's lives and an integral part of life in a culture" (Pramling Samuelsson et al., 2009, p. 133). One perspective of arts education "aims to pass on cultural heritage to young people, to enable them to create their own artistic language and to contribute to their global development (emotional and cognitive)" (Bamford, 2006, p. 21), whereas another approach to arts education is that it has the potential to challenge and transform the existing culture and social convention (Ewing, 2010).

Arts education is important for two types of values: the value of learning "in" the arts and "through" the arts (Roy, Baker & Hamilton, 2012). Learning "in" the arts leads to intrinsic benefits while learning "through" the arts leads to the instrumental benefits of arts education (Roy et al., 2012). Both play a significant role in children's lives, as the intrinsic benefits of arts education "enable children to enter imaginative spaces, to

express themselves profoundly, to immerse themselves in experiences that are deeply satisfying and enlarge their lives" and the extrinsic benefits of arts education help children to "learn better, socialise better and make better contributions to society" (Dinham, 2013, p. 12).

Arts education is context specific (Bamford, 2006). For example, the arts learning areas for students in Australia from Foundation to Year 10 consist of dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts (ACARA, 2016). On the other hand, in China, arts learning areas for young children aged from three to six consist of drawing, music, dance, drama (Wang & Bian, 2012), craft work and appreciation (Piscitelli et al., 1999).

One of the most significant outcomes of arts education is the facilitation and enhancement of human creativity. As recognised at UNESCO's first World Conference on Arts Education: *Building creative capacities for the 21st century,* which was held in Lisbon in 2006*,* the arts play a major role in the development of human creativity (Dinham, 2013). McClure (2011), using discourse analysis, questioned the notion of young children's inherent creativity, and recommended that children's creativity needs to be cultivated in "early childhood art classrooms" which incorporates children's interests within the curriculum (p.139). As children aged from five to six are "in a critical period" for forming the foundation of creativity for their whole lives (Leggett, 2015, p. 29), arts education appears to be particularly meaningful for young children in this age band.

1.4 Creativity

The word "creativity" first appeared in English in the 1875 text *History of Dramatic English* by Adolphus William Ward (Blessinger, 2014). Creativity is an elusive concept (e.g. Abel, 2013), with more than 225 ways utilised to define and measure creativity (Chang, 2013). However, a broad consensus on the term "creativity" is that it is about "the capacity to produce things that are original and valuable" (Gaut, 2010, p. 1039).

There are three definitions of creativity that are the most relevant to the current research with regard to arts education in early childhood. Firstly, a widely recognised definition from the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE, 1999) of the United Kingdom (UK) is that "creativity is an imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value" (p. 29). Secondly, an artistic perspective provided by Elliot W. Eisner (1960, 1962) is that creativity comprises the "processes that consist of novel actions by an actor upon

a plastic medium in collusion with environment and culture" (cited in McClure, 2011, p. 130). Finally, a definition of creativity in the early childhood years is suggested by Mayesky (1998): "creativity is a way of thinking or acting or making something that is original for the individual and valued by that person or others" (p. 4).

Lin (2011) posits that, the "approaches to [the] scholarly field of creativity studies can be behaviourist, cognitive, social-psychological, or humanistic" (p. 150), and this links with Sawyer's (2012) four-wave framework of the contemporary study of creativity which will be discussed in Chapter Two.

The literature demonstrated a difference of the views on creativity between some Western countries and East Asian countries (e.g. Sawyer, 2011), which a number of scholars label as the "Asian/Western creativity gap" (e.g. Morris & Leung, 2010, p.314). Specifically in this thesis, Eastern reflects Chinese whilst Western reflects Australian.

1.5 Curriculum

The term "curriculum" is derived from the Latin word "*currere*" which means an action or a journey to run the course of a study (Kirylo & Nauman [eds.], 2010). According to Woods, Luke and Weir (2010), "curriculum is the sum total of resources—intellectual, scientific, cognitive, and linguistic—that is brought to bear on the dialog and exchange of teaching and learning" (p. 362).

Marsh and Willis (2007) consider the term "curriculum" to be "something multiple and continuously changing that includes the planned curriculum, the enacted curriculum and the experienced curriculum" (p. 2). They hold that "the planned curriculum is what is intended, the enacted curriculum is what actually happens, and the experienced curriculum means how what happens influences individuals" (March & Willis, 2003, p. xiii). This three-phase categorisation of the phases of curriculum seems to be widely accepted and applied by contemporary scholars (e.g. Krieg, 2008; Kurz et al., 2010; Otten & Soria, 2014).

According to Kemmis, Cole and Suggett (1983), the three orientations to curriculum in modern society are the vocational/neo-classical, the liberal/progressive, and the socially-critical. These different orientations are examined in Chapter Two. Contemporary scholars argue that curriculum is fundamentally influenced by political, social and cultural conditions (e.g. Thomson, 1999; Krieg, 2008; Kirylo & Nauman [eds.], 2010).

Two main ECE curriculum approaches are identified among Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, namely, the social pedagogic approach, which focuses on and works with the whole child and his/her family, and the traditional pre-primary approach, which emphasises learning and skills, especially in areas useful for school readiness (Bennett, 2005). Both approaches seem to be valued "as a dialectical relation" (Fleer, 2011, p. 17) in some Asian societies, including Mainland China. In China, since the enactment of the Reform and Opening-up policy in 1978, the ECE curriculum has gone through a significant reform from the former Soviet Union top-down model, something which was "based on the subject-specific teaching model" and "emphasized the systematic transmission of subject matter through teacher-led group instruction", to a "new bottom-up model" (Pan & Liu, 2008, p. 34).

1.6 Challenges in this research field

Some challenges are identified in the field of Chinese early childhood arts education, including the difference between urban areas and rural and remote areas in China, an imbalance between Chinese curriculum reforms and the professional practice of Chinese EC teachers, and some cultural conflicts in this field. These challenges are further examined in Chapter Two.

1.7 Research significance: The arts and creativity

Contemporary scholars argue that the Chinese/Western creativity gap is evident in different fields, such as: science, in terms of the tally of Nobel laureates and the number of patents (Morris & Leung, 2010); art, whether traditional (Rosenstone, 1980) or modern (Clark, 1998); industry (e.g. Herbig & Palumbo, 1996; Keane, 2006); and education (e.g. Niu & Sternberg, 2003; Zhao, 2012; Wang & Greenwood, 2013).

Arts education in early childhood is important because the "exposure to arts can develop creative potential in young children", and "creative potential in turn enhances problem-solving and critical-thinking skills essential to success in an information and innovation-based economy" (LaMore et al., 2013, p. 222). In today's world, "innovation and creativity [have] become key concepts in Chinese policy" (Pang & Plucker, 2013, p. 249). However, as previously indicated, the "Chinese/Western creativity gap" is perceived from various aspects. In this context, arts education in early childhood is of key importance to enhance Chinese people's creativity and to close the identified creativity gap between China and many Western countries. Pramling Samuelsson et al.

(2009) argue that "early childhood is considered to be a crucial time for the development of creativity and the strong links between creativity and the arts has been put forward" (p. 121). The discussion of the "Chinese/Western creativity gap" in this section also acknowledges that an Eastern/Western binary is limited for the purpose of this research, and any further classification is problematic at this stage.

Influenced by global theories and paradigms, the Chinese arts curriculum in early childhood is claimed to have developed from traditional monotonic, didactic approaches to internationally diversified, interactive approaches in practice (Zhu & Zhang, 2008); from discipline-based to discipline-integrated regarding the learning areas (Cheung-yung & Lai, 2010); and from teacher-centred to child-centred in pedagogical ideology (Wong & Pang, 2002; Tobin et al., 2009). However, more research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of the enacted arts curriculum in Chinese EC education, under global influences. Furthermore, the exploration of Chinese Beijing EC educators' beliefs regarding the key elements in quality EC arts education could contribute to a more nuanced discussion. This research is not only meaningful for children's arts education in China but could also provide a valuable reference for other countries. As Chen (2010) argues, the methods from Asia may prove to be useful to the world. Tobin et al. (2009) also indicate that "one potential source of change in each country's approach to early childhood education is the importing of ideas from abroad" (p. 3). With China's rapid social development, perhaps "other countries will look to Chinese early childhood education for innovative ideas" (Tobin et al., 2009, p. 237).

The purpose of this research is to examine the arts curriculum in Chinese Beijing early childhood education for a cohort of children aged five to six. It is intended that the research findings will contribute to the planning and practice of arts education for Chinese children in order to cultivate their creativity, and thus make a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge on arts education in China. Such an exploration grounded on empirical data has the potential to also contribute to international ECE arts education in terms of self-evaluation and quality assurance processes. Moreover, this study uses grounded theory as its primary methodology. Grounded theory methodology has been extensively used in sociology, nursing and related fields (Charmaz, 2014) but, to date, as shown in the literature, grounded theory is sparsely used in arts education research. Therefore, using grounded theory as the main research methodology in this study constitutes a methodological exploration in a new field.

1.8 Research questions

The general research question explores the features of the contemporary Chinese children's arts education in a particular part of the country (Beijing) in this era of globalisation. The general question leads to a series of specific questions regarding the status quo of children's arts, and regarding Chinese EC educators' beliefs.

The overarching research question is as follows:

To what extent have globalised perspectives influenced quality arts education in contemporary Chinese Beijing early childhood?

A series of specific questions emerge from the overarching question:

1. What place do the arts have in Chinese and Australian early childhood education?

2. What are the features of the Chinese enacted arts education curriculum in a sample of kindergartens in Beijing, China, in terms of:

    •   Underpinning theories, paradigms and approaches

    •   Art forms

    •   Content (skills and knowledge)

    •   Activities and programs (e.g. time allocation, textbooks and materials, community resources), and

    •   Teachers' beliefs

    To answer these research questions, this research draws on Foucault's (1991) theory of governmentality and Holton's (2000) key ideas on globalisation. The following section develops an introduction of the theoretical synopsis.

1.9 Governmentality as a theoretical perspective

This study addresses issues in contemporary Chinese early childhood arts education under globalised perspectives. Drawing from Foucault, a key theoretical idea that runs throughout the research is its examination of why and how a corpus of knowledge in this field "has been shaped into thinkable and manageable ways" (Rose, 1999, p. 20). For example, why have certain international theories and paradigms influenced the ECE policy making in China since 1978? Why were some of these international influences adopted in contemporary Chinese children's arts curriculum? Why have

China and Australia set up different curriculum purposes and taken different curriculum orientations? And how are such curriculum purposes and orientations implemented in the enacted arts curriculum in Beijing?

French post-structuralist Michel Foucault is frequently introduced "as a methodological authority figure" (Fimyar, 2008, p. 4) whose work provides a critical framework to guide in-depth analysis and interpretation of cultural, political, historical and social issues. One of his theoretical legacies is the theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1991). Foucault (1994) generously invited people to use his theories as "a kind of tool-box" (p. 523). In fact, governmentality is a sophisticated theory comprised of a series of important concepts and themes. By deconstructing this term, I find two key concepts of governmentality, namely, government and rationality. Dean (2010) points out that the hybrid term "governmentality" is a connection of government and thought; in citing Miller and Rose (1990), he suggests that the term "governmentality" deals with how we think about governing with different rationalities or with different mentalities of government (Dean, 2010).

Baark (2007) argues that Foucault's "power–knowledge system" is seen as a "ubiquitous framework of government disciplining the population" (p. 341) and that, ultimately, the power–knowledge system gave rise to his theory of governmentality. Ettlinger (2011) endorses this view by stating that Foucault's central interest in governmentality "pertained to the processes underscoring the relation between knowledge and power" (p. 540).

Mitchell Dean (1999, 2010) has further developed the theory of governmentality into a conceptual tool in modern society. During the development of this thesis, Dean's (2010) analytics of government is employed as a guiding framework.

1.10 Holton's Globalization's Cultural Consequences

Discussion of the history of Chinese ECE also includes an appraisal of the evolution of culture under specific historical and geographic contexts within a process of globalisation. It is a common understanding that education is a cultural product. As explained by Stevens (2008), "entries for the word 'culture' in a commonly used dictionary make education a definitive component of the concept" (p. 97): he added that one of the definitions of culture is the "development of the intellect through training or education …" (p. 97).

Robert Holton (2000) puts forward three major theses in relation to "Globalization's Cultural Consequences", namely, homogenisation, polarisation and hybridisation. He argues that homogenisation is the "most widely held belief about globalization and culture" (p. 142); it means "the convergence toward a common set of cultural traits and practices" (p. 142); and it is "equivalent to Westernization or even Americanization" (p. 142). The polarisation thesis is based on the thoughts of Said (1978) and Huntington (1996) who asserted that the globe is "in a dichotomous manner, integrated by conflict or hate rather than peace or love" (Holton, 2000, p. 145). Holton (2000), in citing Said's (1978) work on orientalism, states that the "cultural dichotomies have been constructed between Western and non-Western ways of life" (p. 145). Holton's third thesis is hybridisation or syncretisation: as he explains, "it centers on intercultural exchange and the incorporation of cultural elements from a variety of sources within particular cultural practices" (p. 148). The thesis of hybridisation is often associated with the notion of cosmopolitanism (Holton, 2009). Turner (2009) states that, "it is suggested that the modern experience of diversity resulting from migration, diasporic communities, minority status, multiculturalism, inter-marriage and dual citizenship create conditions that are conducive to cosmopolitanism" (p. 750).

1.10.1 History of modern early childhood education (ECE) in China: A process from homogenisation, through polarisation to hybridisation

Children in contemporary kindergartens in large Chinese cities such as Beijing, can be observed reciting the traditional *Three-Character Scripture* in classical Chinese or acting out the famous European drama *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* in English; children are taught to perform Chinese folk dances or to play Mozart in piano lessons. Such phenomena show a picture of a combination of Eastern and Western cultures in contemporary Chinese ECE, just as Holton (2000) described in his "Globalization's Cultural Consequences"—typifying the hybridisation thesis.

Using a governmentality framework, it is apparent that Chinese traditional culture and Western culture are the two kinds of knowledge that appear to be dominant in this particular field. With globalised perspectives, when looking retrospectively through the developmental history of Chinese modern ECE, I find that it has undergone a process from homogenisation, through polarisation to hybridisation (Holton, 2000).

1.11 Researching from a particular position

My diverse experiences have contributed to a multilingual and cross-boundary background. I was born in Jiaxing, a small city with a history over 2000 years old, located near Shanghai in the south-east of China. I graduated from Beijing Language and Culture University with a Bachelor of Arts specialising in French language, and subsequently worked as an industrial consultant for a French company for eight years. In addition, I had three years' experience in higher education, teaching both French and English languages in an art college in Beijing. During my teaching practice, I completed a Master's Degree in Education (MEd) with Flinders University, Adelaide, South Australia (SA), in collaboration with the Capital Normal University in Beijing. This experience influenced my research trajectory as I started to learn about the cultures of Australia; eventually, I began my doctoral study also at Flinders University.

In 2013, the year before I started my PhD study in Adelaide, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) issued a new national arts curriculum from Foundation to Year 10. I believed that it would be meaningful to undertake a cross-cultural comparative study between China and Australia of two contemporary arts curricula for young children.

In brief, my two intrinsic interests, my passion for the arts and children, combined with my cross-cultural experiences, have provided the impetus for the research presented in this thesis. I adopt a reflexive perspective during the research process in order to enhance its research rigor and credibility: to be aware of bias or preconceptions I may bring to the research.

1.12 Thesis structure

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Following Chapter One, which provides an introduction to the context, significance and research questions, Chapter Two presents the literature review on the seven themes highly relevant to this research. These themes are: creativity; arts and aesthetics; teaching and learning in early childhood; curriculum; the history of Chinese modern ECE; a policy review of Chinese EC arts education since 1978; and lastly an examination of the challenges in this research field. Guided by the theory of governmentality, this chapter not only asks the "what" questions, but also the "why" and "how" questions, thus providing the rationale and impetus for the research presented in this thesis.

Chapter Three introduces the theoretical framework and outlines the research design. Some relevant theories are discussed (e.g. constructivism, social-constructivism, critical constructivism and sociocultural theory) to provide theoretical guidance for this study. The theory of governmentality, which serves as a critical lens in this thesis, is further elaborated. The rationale for adopting a qualitative approach and for using grounded theory methodology is expounded. The research methods and ethics issues, as well as the analysis of data are delineated.

Based on the methodology presented in Chapter Three, Chapter Four presents a comparative document analysis with regard to the two contemporary arts curricula for children aged five to six in China and in Australia—the Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum (the upper class [aged five to six], the arts area) and the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (Foundation year). This phase of the research focuses on the "intended" curriculum and establishes a basis for the subsequent study on the "enacted" curriculum in a sample of kindergartens in Beijing (Marsh & Willis, 2003).

Chapter Five presents the results and analysis of a survey undertaken among 12 kindergartens in Beijing to respond to the research questions regarding ECE educators' beliefs and the features of arts education among participant kindergartens. The endeavour in this research phase was to inform the subsequent case study.

As the third data chapter in this thesis, Chapter Six reports the findings of a collective case study of three kindergartens in Beijing: it includes the results of six interviews with educators, and three upper class observations, which were specifically relevant to teaching and learning in the arts. This phase of the research provided further details with regard to ECE educators' espoused beliefs in the enacted arts curriculum, and served as a triangulation strategy in conjunction with the previous two research phases.

Chapter Seven presents a synthesis of the research findings by weaving together the threads of curriculum, arts and pedagogy, using a governmentality lens. In juxtaposing the intended Australian Curriculum: The Arts, as well as contemporary literature, this chapter demonstrates and discusses the main themes that emerged from this research. It summarises the status quo of children's arts education among the participant kindergartens in Beijing under globalised influences, reveals EC educators' beliefs and concerns in this field. In this conclusive chapter, the research significance is elucidated in four main aspects: researching early childhood arts education from a cross-cultural perspective; comparing the research findings against contemporary discourses; examining the interplay between global and local powers; and exploring

methodological implications. Moreover, the potential limitations of this study are analysed. Suggestions and recommendations are provided for the enhancement of policy making and practice with regard to children's arts education. Directions for future research are discussed within this particular field as well as in other relevant fields.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter introduction

Using a governmentality perspective, this literature review not only asks the "what" questions regarding seven key research themes, but also the "why" and "how" questions, and thus provides the rationale and impetus for the current research. These themes include: creativity, arts in society and in education, aesthetics in the West and in China, teaching and learning in early childhood, curriculum, history of modern ECE in China, policy review of Chinese early childhood arts education since 1978, and challenges in the field of Chinese early childhood arts education. By exploring the perceived creativity gap between China and the West, and analysing some of the main reasons that account for this gap, I propose to explore the possibilities of arts education among young children to close this gap: the ultimate aim of the current research. The discussion regarding the theme of arts illuminates how arts education has the potential to contribute to the promotion of human creativity, especially among young children. Through an overview of the Chinese aesthetic tradition, its strengths and weaknesses are examined, thus building a basis for the subsequent empirical study in the Chinese context. The review of some of the concepts, strategies and models in relation to teaching and learning in the early years, including the discussion regarding the theme of curriculum in EC education provide useful guidance for the study's data collection and analysis. Inspired by Holton's (2000) key ideas of globalisation, a brief history of Chinese modern ECE is teased out, in order to set up a broader historical background for the research presented in this thesis. The Chinese ECE policies since 1978 are mapped using a governmentality framework, with the purpose of better understanding the field of research that is the subject of this thesis. Finally, some challenges in this particular research field are examined, in order to provide guidance for the data analysis and discussion in this study.

As discussed in the introduction chapter, the "power–knowledge system" is of central interest in the theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1991). Using this critical perspective, and drawing on Schulz's (2013) theoretical work on governmentality, I ask the following questions, in order to frame this review of the literature on the development, implementation and evaluation of children's arts curricula in China and Australia:

1.   What and how are the power relations involved here?

2.   What knowledge, beliefs and interests have converged to create this social text?

3.   How is governance being achieved, and to what ends?

4.   What is being framed as "problematic" and which solutions are being offered to solve the "problem"?

5.   What are the implications for the various players involved?

2.2 Creativity

The creativity gap between some East Asian countries and some Western countries, to be more specific, between China and many Western countries, is an issue of relevance in this research. Therefore, a cultural and historical analysis regarding creativity is developed. This section examines the concept of creativity focusing on its philosophical basis. Sawyer's (2012) four-wave framework of the contemporary study of creativity is used to map the variety of theories, models and paradigms in this field. This analytical discussion traces Chinese traditional ontological and epistemological roots, ancient China's social norms and talent selection system, as well as a key foreign policy during the late phase of Chinese feudal society.

2.2.1 Philosophical basis of creativity

The concept of creativity has been arousing interest for many years (Mithen, 1998). Philosophers, theists or atheists, psychologists and sociologists all give their own accounts of what creativity is and how it develops. Yet it seems to be a complex conception (Corcoran, 2011). "Research has shown that creativity is a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon and has been conceptualised through a number of approaches" (Baker, 2013, p. 74). Creativity can be examined from different disciplines such as philosophy, psychology and sociology, or be defined and promoted in a variety of fields such as science, arts, education, politics and business (Prentice, 2000).

Concerning the nature of creativity, Singer (2011) claims that "human preoccupation with what is creative devolves from the biological, psychological, and social bases of our material being" (p. xv). According to this author, the notion of creativity has been changing through different historical stages: in the Middle Ages, the

defining model of creativity was identified as the Supreme Creator; since the end of the 18th century, influenced by Plato, creativity was a kind of madness, whereas, according to Kant, creativity was linked to imagination (Gaut, 2010). The Romantic views in the Western world modified the religious dogmas about creativity: through Hegelian objective idealism, the idea of creativity was related to instances of self-creation and self-determination, thus recalling Nietzsche's writings on the "subject-oriented ontology of art" (Hauver, 2011, p. 23) as well as of creativity. The basic thrust in 20th century philosophy focused on the concept of creativity "as related to ideas about universal freedom, in contrast to any externally imposed determinism" (Singer, 2011, p .3). Singer (2011) emphasises the human agency in creativity by concluding that "human creativity does not originate either outside of nature or as a transcendent power within it, but instead as a recognizable achievement in our biological condition that beings like us cultivate and improve if we can" (p. 13).

This common Western view of creativity is quite different from the Eastern Chinese philosophy of creativity, where "individuals are not responsible for invention, because they are simply following nature and discovering truth" (Sawyer, 2011, p. 2052). Deeply rooted in the metaphysical theories of the "five elements" and the "two forces" (Baum, 1982), in Chinese classical philosophy, creativity appears to be a more abstract and vague concept compared to how it is viewed in Western philosophy. This echoes the statement of Baark (2007): "philosophers in traditional China were ambiguous in their discussion of innovation and creativity" (p. 348).

2.2.2 Imagination, creativity and innovation

The three key notions within the process of creativity are imagination, creativity and innovation, and these notions are reflected in some contemporary Chinese education policies. Baker (2013) argues that creativity is "the ability to construct something new, so imagination and innovation is [sic] an integral part of the process" (p. 74). Davies (2006) concludes that four agencies promote creative work—using imagination, having targets and reasons, being comparatively original, and judging value. Among them "using imagination" is highlighted as the first agency. Robinson (2011) makes a clear statement regarding the interrelationships between these key notions: "imagination is the source of our creativity", and "creativity is a step further on from imagination"; "in a sense, creativity is applied imagination", and "innovation is the process of putting new ideas into practice. Innovation is applied creativity" (pp. 141-142). Currently, at a national level, "imagination" and "creativity" are two major purposes in Chinese EC arts education (Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China [PRC], 2012).

"Innovation" and "creativity" also become key concepts in contemporary Chinese economic, social development and education policies (Pang & Plucker, 2013).

2.2.3 Four waves of the study of creativity

The psychological research on creativity has burgeoned since the 1950s (Gaut, 2010). According to Sawyer (2012), the formal study of creativity is new and has occurred in the four major phases summarised below.

The study of creativity during the first wave (1950s and 1960s) mainly focused on studying personality traits by adopting a personality approach. Under this approach, even during the 1990s, "some researchers … attributed creativity to personal characteristics, including strong motivation, deep commitment, high sensitivity, willingness to take risks, energy, curiosity, a sense of humour, open-mindedness and intuition" (Cheung & Mok, 2013, p.120). This first wave is an initial phase of the modern study of creativity. By focusing on the creative person solely as an isolated individual, this approach neglected the social aspects of the creative mental process as well as the influence of a creative environment.

The second wave of the study of creativity (1970s and 1980s) focused on studying mental processes by using a cognitive approach. Under this approach, some theories, thinking styles and training programs in the study of creativity emerged, for example, Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) flow theory and Sternberg's (1988) different thinking styles. Research during this period appeared to be more systematic and more in depth compared to the first wave. The study foci developed from the creative personality traits of isolated individuals through to people's creative mental processes (Funke, 2009), albeit still focusing on the individual layer, whereas external social experiences and the environmental influence were neglected.

During the third wave (1980s and 1990s), the study of creativity shifted from the individual perspective to the perspective of creative social systems by using a sociocultural approach. Blessinger (2014) discussed two approaches to creativity, from an individual level to a social level. Distinct from the second wave, during this period, the consensus is that creativity not only emerges from individual human mental processes but also emerges from social processes. My reading of the literature leads me to conclude that, since the 1980s, this fundamental shift has been a worldwide trend across many disciplines, especially in the social sciences such as education (e.g. Baker, 2013; Craft, 2005).

The fourth wave of the study of creativity started in the 1990s. Since the beginning of the new millennium, researchers have tended to look at the notion of creativity from wider perspectives. Consequently, they have used an interdisciplinary approach, instead of the previous psychological or social psychological approaches, to respond to the many new challenges emerging during the new historical period, such as cultural conflicts and ecological destruction (Craft, 2012). In this historical context, some researchers have pursued a new kind of creativity study using a humanistic approach, by emphasising moral and ethical values (e.g. Neethling, 2002; Craft, 2006, 2012; Grant & Berry, 2011).

2.2.4 Creativity: East and West

As indicated in the introduction chapter, the viewpoint of "an Asian/Western creativity gap", or to "put it more neutrally, an East/West creativity difference" (Morris & Leung, 2010, p. 314), is shared by international scholars (e.g. Baark, 2007; Morris & Leung, 2010; Wu & Albanese, 2010; Zhao, 2012). Morris and Leung (2010) argue that "the 'creativity problem' is a salient theme in the last decade in several East Asian Societies" such as Singapore, Japan, Taiwan and Mainland China (p. 313). During the 1950s, the famous "Needham Question" asked "why it was, in China specifically, that previous scientific superiority gave way to the west over time" (Wu & Albanese, 2010, p. 561).

In the fields of science, art and industry, Morris and Leung (2010) make comparisons of the creative accomplishments between the West and the East. First, the "tally of Nobel laureates does not look good for Asian creativity, especially in science" (p. 384); second, in the field of art history, they describe Western art history as "a succession of revolutionary inventions", while "the term 'imitative appears all too often in their descriptions of East Asian art', whether traditional (Rosenstone, 1980) or modern (Clark, 1998)" (p. 315); third, in industry, such as the automobile industry and high technology industry fields, they draw from Herbig and Palumbo (1996), and state that "East Asian culture fosters incremental innovation and Western culture, breakthrough innovation" (p. 318).

Keane (2006) similarly identified "a national 'creativity deficit'" (p. 286) that exists in Chinese society, especially in its creative content industries. Since the middle of the 1990s, "driven by the urgency of maintaining sustainable economic development" (Pang & Plucker, 2013, p. 268), Chinese policy makers have enthusiastically embraced innovation and creativity (e.g. Pang & Plucker, 2013; Keane, 2006). In 2011, China's ex-Premier Wen Jiabao expressed the view that China needs creativity and innovation

leaders like (Steve) Jobs in order to "transform its labor-intensive economy to one built on innovation and creativity" (Zhao, 2012, p. 57). According to Zhao (2012), that is one of the reasons why Chinese authorities did not celebrate the high scores of Shanghai middle school students in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2010.

From the title of his paper "Flunking innovation and creativity: East Asia's highly touted test scores in math, science, and reading are masking important failures in developing innovators and entrepreneurs", Zhao's (2012) argument is made explicitly and directly. In terms of the PISA scores, although students from East Asia (especially China) "left American teens in the dust" (Sawyer, 2010, cited in Zhao, 2012, p. 56), they are failing in innovation and creativity. Supported by official statistical data, Zhao's point seems convincing: in 2005, only about 2000 Chinese companies (which represent 0.003% of the sum total) owned the patents for the core technology used in their products: in 2008, "merely 473 innovations from China were recognized by the world's leading patent offices outside China" (p. 57). In striking contrast, the number from the United States (USA) was 30 times higher. Zhao (2012) argues that "despite its astounding economic growth for more than two decades, China's economy remains labor-intensive rather than knowledge-intensive" and "made in China" doesn't mean "made by China" (p. 57). Zhao's paper reveals a mismatch between authentic educational excellence and the scores of some rising massive standardised education platforms. The phenomenal PISA scores achieved by Chinese students cannot disguise the fact that Chinese students achieve lower levels of creativity compared to their Western peers (e.g. Niu & Sternberg, 2003; Wang & Greenwood, 2013). Similarly, according to Wei and Eisenhart's (2011) report, Taiwanese children perform significantly better in PISA than American children, but "later in life, American researchers and scientists achieve far beyond their Taiwanese counterparts in critically important areas such as number of patents and Nobel prizes" (Liss, 2013, p. 566).

The above discussion identifies that the "Asian/Western creativity gap" or, more precisely, the "Chinese/Western creativity gap" is exhibited in different aspects of creativity, such as science, art, industry and education. The following subsection develops an analysis of this gap from cultural and historical perspectives, by drawing on the theory of governmentality as a critical lens through which to view this issue.

2.2.4.1 Cultural and historical analysis

Craft (2005) suggests that the different perspectives on creativity reflect differences in sociocultural circumstances. For example, Western culture places greater values on the role and achievements of the individual, in contrast with the East where the social group stands predominant (Sawyer, 2011). Baker (2013) holds the view that "the product-oriented, originality and problem-solving phenomenon has a Western orientation, whereas some Eastern or traditional cultures conceptualize creativity as a process of individual growth, spiritual journey, or evaluation (rather than revolution) in shared community culture" (p. 75). Sawyer (2011) argues that, in individualist cultures (such as the USA), people utilise a very different cultural model of creativity than people in collectivist cultures (such as China). This author concludes by considering the possibility that the individualist Western cultural model might, in fact, be associated with greater creativity, while Asian cultures which generally fall at the collectivist end of the cultural spectrum are less creative. The following subsection, by implementing a cultural and historical analysis, explores why there is such a creativity gap between China and the West.

2.2.4.2 Cognitive formalism as the ontological rationality in Chinese culture

From a social constructivist perspective, all human capacities, including creativity, are generated in a particular social environment and are influenced by particular cultural backgrounds. Some scholars go further in the investigation of this creativity gap by exploring the cultural roots of Chinese society. Baum (1982), when asking "why China has a retarded modernization" in science and technology compared to its Western counterparts, raises the following five modal characteristics of traditional Chinese culture:

> These are, first, an ongoing intellectual tradition of *cognitive formalism* that has its historical roots in the metaphysical pseudoscience of classical Chinese philosophy; second, a methodological tradition of *narrow empiricism* that has characterized much of Chinese scientific inquiry over the past two millennia; third, a pronounced quality of *dogmatic scientism* in the ethos and epistemology of Chinese communism; fourth, a persistent legacy of *feudal bureaucratism* in the political culture of modern China; and fifth, a dominant behavioral style of *compulsive ritualism* deeply engrained in the process by which Chinese children are socialized to become responsive, compliant adults (Baum, 1982, p. 1167).

Baum considered all five of the "isms" mentioned above "as obstacles to the rationalization—and hence the modernization—[of] Chinese science" (1982, p. 1167). This appears to be an incisive cultural analysis accounting for the Chinese/Western creativity gap, not only in science but also in other fields, especially for cognitive formalism, found among the five "isms".

Baum (1982), in citing Needham and Ronan (1978), explained that "the cognitive formalism can be traced to the organic naturalism of the early Taoists, as manifested in the theories of the 'five elements' [metal, wood, water, fire, earth] and the 'two forces' (yin and yang)" (p. 1168). Taoism is a major indigenous religion in Chinese history: its Huang-Lao thought started to dominate Chinese feudal court politics from the time of the empire of Ch'in (221–206 BC) (Verellen, 1995). Taoism is not only "honored by emperors and members of nobility" (Verellen, 1995, p. 322), but also plays an important role in "the habits of daily life and religious faith of Chinese people" (Liang, 2012, p. 755). Xu (1996, p. 2) argues that "the main thought of Chinese people is Taoism, Confucius is only [a] small part of them" (cited in Liang, 2012, p. 755). In Taoist philosophy, the "five elements" "were assumed to lie behind every natural substance and process", and "the yin/yang theory of cyclical flux" (Baum, 1982, p. 1168) is ubiquitous in nature as well as in human society. Neo-Confucianism later expanded these Taoist theories by emphasising their functions in human relationships (Baum, 1982). Both Taoism and neo-Confucianism tend to divide the human and physical worlds into a number of categories (e.g. the five elements): this ontological feature of Chinese philosophy tends to seek "organicity, order and pattern" rather than probing "into the essence of things" (Baum, 1982, p. 1169). Needham and Ronan (1978) call this cognitive formalism "associative thinking", while Bodde (1981) names it "categorical thinking", and claims that science under such ontology is pseudo-science because it has "distorted and forced natural phenomena into an artificial pattern" (p. 143).

This type of ontological rationality in traditional Chinese society goes against some of the important principles of creativity. Sawyer (2011) argues that creativity tends to occur in a sequence of eight stages, the first stage of which is to "find and formulate the problem" (p. 2031). Baark (2007) believes that a free search for objective truth is the hallmark of the scientific method developed in the West, whereas the "cognitive formalism" in Chinese philosophy fails to "find and formulate the problem" scientifically and objectively, and thus hampers the development of creativity among Chinese people. We cannot deny that China, with a civilisation of over 5000 years, is the origin of many important innovations contributing to the world, the famous four great

inventions being the best examples. But we have to admit that these four great inventions, namely, paper-making, gunpowder, printing and the compass, all belong to ancient China, that is, before the end of the Sung Dynasty (960–1279) of China. The 13th century saw some significant milestones in the history of both East and West: in the East, the rise of Mongol tribes ended the Sung Dynasty late in the 13th century. For many scholars, this marks the turning point of China's destiny. In drawing on Hartwell (1962, 1966), Shiba (1970), Elvin (1973), Gernet (1982) and Jones (1988, 2003), Lin (2008) argues that, in ancient China, "after the Chinese economy reached its peak in the Sung Dynasty, its per capita income has remained stagnant ever since" (p. 63). After the Sung Dynasty ended with the Mongolian cavalry conquering China, the decline of China started as the Mongol conquest represented a significantly outmoded production capacity in comparison to that under the Sung Dynasty, given that in China, "capitalism had sprouted as early as the 14th century" (Lin, 2008, p. 70). Meanwhile, in Europe, since late in the 13th century, the great Renaissance, originating in Italy, had lit up the dark Middle Ages in Europe, declaring a new era in human history.

Based on my reading of the above literature, I argue that the creativity gap between China and the West started at that time. During the following centuries, Europe experienced the scientific revolution, the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, which led to great strides forward in all social aspects including politics, the economy, culture and the progress of human creativity. In contrast, during the same historical period in China, the conservative attitude and approaches to knowledge; the cultural emphasis on social order and conformity; the application of the imperial examination system; and the rigid seclusion policy were the main reasons that accounted for the stagnancy of Chinese social development, and particularly for the creativity gap between China and the West.

2.2.4.3 How do we know what we know? Traditional Chinese epistemology

"An epistemology is a theory of knowledge" (Blaikie, 2007, p. 18). When we discuss the issues of creativity, we cannot evade the issues of knowledge, especially new knowledge. The reason is that creativity always involves something original and valuable, whether it is in the form of activity (NACCCE, 1999), process (Eisner, 1960), human capacity (Prentice, 2000) or product (Mayesky, 1998). It is a widely shared view that creativity is a prerequisite for the construction of new knowledge (e.g. Wu & Albanese, 2010; Plucker, Waitman, & Hartley, 2011). Therefore, new knowledge is not always necessary to give rise to creativity, but creativity always means a breakthrough from old knowledge. In order to compare the creativity between China and the West, it

is meaningful to compare the different attitudes and approaches to knowledge, especially new knowledge, between China and the West.

As one of the four oldest civilisations, China, from ancient times until today, has enjoyed a high reputation in terms of its reverence for knowledge. As stated by Baark (2007), "few civilizations have been as explicit and persistent in professed reverence for knowledge as the Chinese traditional culture" (p. 343). One of the most famous maxims of Confucius regarding knowledge is "to be insatiable in learning" and "to be tireless in teaching". Under the imperial examination system, Chinese boys were taught: "nothing is lofty except reading books": the Emperor Zhenzong of Sung (968–1022) even wrote a poem to encourage learning by saying that "there is fortune and beautiful women in books". From the above accounts, we see an apparent utilitarian propensity in the search for knowledge in ancient China.

Baark (2007) makes an interesting comparison between ancient China and ancient Greece regarding the social epistemology in both civilisations. He argues that unlike the case of the Greek scholars, "the accumulation of knowledge for Chinese intellectuals often provided opportunities for employment in administration or as advisers to the ruling elite" (Baark, 2007, p. 344). It seems that the symbiotic relationship between knowledge and power (Foucault, 1972, 1991) has been established since the time of ancient China. According to Foucault (1980a), "the major mechanisms of power have been accompanied by ideological productions" which involve "the production of effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge—methods of observation, techniques of registration, procedures for investigation and research, apparatuses of control" (p. 102). Based on the power mechanisms in traditional Chinese society, a major concern for most Chinese intellectuals was the practical application of knowledge, especially in ancient times. As a consequence, "there was little room in traditional Chinese culture for knowledge for its own sake" (Baark, 2007, p. 345). Baark (2007) holds that ancient China's approach to knowledge was rooted in totalism based on an ordered structure: in citing Munro (1996), he calls this approach the "imperial style of inquiry" which "did not encourage pluralism and deviance—as Greek society had done" (p. 345). Thus he draws the conclusion that "the social epistemology of ancient Greece and ancient China manifested differences in its focus, investigative approach, perspective on the utility of knowledge, and mode of debate" (p. 344).

Regarding knowledge itself, in ancient China, a clear division existed between "legitimate knowledge" and "the other knowledge". Foucault (1972) believes that the

will to seek knowledge relies upon "institutional support and distribution, [and] tends to exercise a sort of pressure, a power of constraint upon other forms of discourse" (p. 219). That is to say, knowledge, truth and discourses are produced, "controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures" (Foucault, 1972, p. 216) by the power structures of a society. For example, in the prestigious Chinese classic novel *A Dream in the Red Mansions* by Cao Xueqin (1715–1763), throughout the novel, Jia Zheng, father of Jia Baoyu (hero of the novel), has cautioned his son to only study the Confucian Four Books (Cao & Gao, 2005, Chapter 9) and to only focus on the "eight-legged essay" (Cao & Gao, 2005, Chapter 81) in preparing for the imperial examination. It is clear that, in ancient China, the only legitimate knowledge is constrained to the works that represent a "Confucian scale of values" (Baark, 2007, p. 346). The reason is that these values had been selected to serve as the fundamental ideological base to keep "order" and "harmony" for the ruling class of Chinese feudal society. Other knowledge, whether in relation to art, literature or to science and technology, was excluded and repressed by the governing power in ancient China: it was derogated as "cheating", "diabolic tricks and wicked craft" or, at the least, "unimportant".

Under such an epistemology, "knowledge and learning in traditional China tended to be associated with the accumulation, dissemination and refinement of existing knowledge" (Baark, 2007, p. 345). In ancient China, all of the best models and the best knowledge had already been given by wise kings of the past or by antecedent sages: exploring new knowledge which departed from these models was discouraged and repudiated. I agree with Baark's (2007) view that, compared to the more sophisticated Western explorative approaches to knowledge, "Chinese approaches to knowledge ha[ve] been predominantly 'exploitative'" (p. 347). This point of view resonates with the argument of Morris and Leung (2010) that social norms in the West encourage novelty and those in the East prioritise usefulness. Baark (2007) reveals that the Chinese "imperial style of inquiry", in fact, is a pseudo-inquiry that fails to recognise new kinds of knowledge. This type of epistemology typically reflects a symbiotic power–knowledge relationship, according to Foucault's theory of governmentality, which asserts "power is expressed in knowledge, and knowledge contributes to maintaining or upsetting power relationships" (Baark, 2007, p. 342).

In the above discussion, I have explored some characteristics in Chinese traditional epistemology. I now adopt criteria from some Western scholars to examine how their epistemology contributed to creativity. Robinson (2011) argues that "creative cultures are inquiring", "creativity thrives on diversity" and "creative cultures need

creative spaces" (p. 244). According to Csikzentmihalyi's (1975) flow theory, "curiosity and intrinsic interest" are key components for creativity. The traditional Chinese epistemology rejected cultural diversity and failed to enhance people's spirit of inquiry, curiosity and intrinsic interest. The above discussion has identified the epistemological roots of ancient China that helps account for the creativity gap between China and the West.

Following this discussion on the ontological and epistemological characteristics of ancient China, the next subsection examines a predominant feature in traditional Chinese society.

2.2.4.4 A society of "order"

In traditional Chinese culture, "order" is a major value that endured over 2000 years (Baark, 2007). Baum (1982) provided some accurate accounts regarding public order in China, while arguing that "adherence to the moral dictates of propriety (li) rather than positive law (fa) became the essential guarantor of public order" (p. 1177). He explained that, historically, due to the lack of large standing armies and a professional public administration, the Chinese state had to rely on public order to maintain its governance. Baum (1982) depicted that "in such a situation, the secret of effective imperial governance was 'to induce the younger generation to venerate the old, the women to obey their menfolk, and the illiterate to follow the examples set by the emperor's court'" (p. 1178). Has the Chinese state always had a lack of "large standing armies" or "professional public administration"? Baum's argument does not seem incontestable. However, his perspective aligns with the theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1991) in which social norms and cultural values are reflected through the will of power (Foucault, 1991; Dean, 2010).

In Chinese traditional Confucian belief, an ordered structure integrated everything that existed, including human and natural spheres (Baark, 2007). In such an order-based society as China, harmony and conformity were highly valued, and people were expected to think and behave according to the ritual and moral principles. They needed to obey and respect the "emperor, parents and teacher" unconditionally in most cases: obedience was required; critical thinking was not encouraged; and suspecting or challenging authority was immoral and dangerous.

This prominent feature of traditional Chinese culture "involves some sort of attempt to deliberate on and to direct *human* conduct" by the government as, "from the

perspective of those who seek to govern, human conduct is conceived as something that can be regulated, controlled, shaped and turned to specific ends" (Dean, 2010, p. 20). The rationality here is linked with moral ideas, as "government is an intensely moral activity" and "notions of morality and ethics generally rest on an idea of self-government" (Dean, 2010, p. 21). The concept of "order", whether it concerns public order or private (family) order, seems ubiquitous in Chinese society, and thus became an efficient technique to realise self-regulation among Chinese people—it urges everyone to make himself/herself accountable for his/her own actions by maintaining the prevailing moral and ethical standards. From this perspective, it resonates with Dean's (2010) claim that: "government encompasses not only how we exercise authority over others, or how we govern abstract entities such as states and populations, but also how we govern ourselves" (p. 21). The aim of this self-regulation is to achieve ideological and behavioural unification and harmony in a society as large as China with minimum administrative cost.

Indeed, "this imperial order left little space for creativity and innovation" (Baark, 2007, p. 349). This kind of traditional Chinese culture and social norm constrains the flourishing of people's creativity, as neither "diversity" nor an "inquiring" spirit are encouraged, even though both are considered to be necessary conditions and principles of creativity (Robinson, 2011). In addition, many Western scholars highlight the individual's emotional component in the development of creativity (e.g. Gordon, 1961; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Sternberg & Lubart, 1991, 1995; Amabile, 2012). However, in a highly hierarchical society like China, a "self-conscious compartmentalization of feelings and actions" (Baum, 1982, p. 1177) is observed. People tend to suppress their real feelings for the sake of "face" which "has been defined as 'how one looks doing what one has to do'" (Baum, 1982, p. 1177).

This emotional suppression continued to be propagated by the imperial examination system (IES) which functioned as a technique of power during the last five feudal dynasties in ancient China. The next subsection discusses this system in the context of power.

2.2.4.5 Imperial examination system (IES): A technique of power

The Chinese imperial examination system (IES) is regarded as a great invention within ancient China's government administration system (Teng, 1943). In addition to the four great inventions mentioned previously, the IES is another important invention that indeed gained worldwide influence. Dr Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Chinese

Republic, claimed in some of his works that the Chinese examination system was the earliest and the most elaborate system in the world (Teng, 1943). The IES started from the Sui Dynasty (581–618), was regularised in the Tang Dynasty (618–907), and lasted for 13 centuries until the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) (Huang, 1986). The IES "was used to select local and state government officials" (Hu, 2004, p. 637). According to Huang (1986), it "continued to function as an institutional link between the governing and the governed" (p. 27). Since the 16th century, people from the West have highly eulogised this examination system. As an illustration, in Samuel Purchas' Hakluytus Posthumous, it reads, "by reason of this excellent order and harmony of magistrates placed one under another ... for obtaining of any dignity or magistrates, the way is open, without all respect of gentry or blood, unto all men, if they be learned" (cited in Teng, 1943, p. 277). In the 18th century, French philosopher François Quesnay was a great admirer of this system and desired to introduce it to Europe: in 1775, five merits of the IES were specifically listed by an English author (Teng, 1943).

Despite all this praise, I argue that the IES is one of the key elements in Chinese history that resulted in the creativity gap between China and the West. In accordance with this system, "for young men who wished to be a member of the elite, the pathway was to memorize the classics and compose essays according to highly stylized and rigid forms" (Hu, 2004, p. 637). Huang's (1986) criticism was that at the beginning of the system, during the Tang Dynasty, the areas for contest were quite open, including classical literature, mathematics and law. During the Sung Dynasty, the IES started to emphasise the form of the essay but still without neglecting poetry and annotations of classics. During the Ming Dynasty, the form of the examination overwhelmed the substance and at "about the middle of the dynasty, the 'eight-legged essay' turned out to be central" (Huang, 1986, p. 7). Huang (1986) criticised this system as being "unable to handle any pluralistic situation, naturally it would not encourage the growth of a plural society" (p. 7).

Lin (2008) shares a similar opinion regarding the IES (which he called the "civil service examination") and claimed that "the coverage of the tests was limited only to the teaching of the Confucian school, basically, its most fundamental readings: the Four Books and the Five Classics" (p. 69) and "traditionally, being a government official was regarded as the shortest path to the upper class" (Ho, 1962, p. 92, cited in Lin, 2008, p. 69). Lin (2008) more fiercely repudiates the IES by attributing the absence of a scientific revolution in China to this system. He argues the following view:

> I believe the real reason for the absence of a scientific revolution in China was not due to the adverse political environment that prohibited the creativity of Chinese intellectuals, but was due to the special incentives provided by the civil service examination system. Because of this examination system, curious geniuses were diverted from learning mathematics and conducting controllable experiments. Because of this system, China's geniuses could not accumulate the crucial human capital that was essential for a scientific revolution. As a result, the discoveries of natural phenomena could only be based on sporadic observations, and could not be upgraded into a modern science built on mathematics and controlled experiments (Lin, 2008, p. 69).

Lin's argument appears to be insightful. According to ancient China's order-based social organisation, people were categorised from top to bottom into four classes, namely, scholars, farmers, artisans and merchants with this categorisation popular since the Han Dynasty (202 BC–AD 220) (Baark, 2007). In ancient China, all those with talent wanted to join the elite class and become one of the "scholars" serving as a government official in the rigid imperial system. To achieve this goal, it meant passing the IES and thus memorising the tremendous amount of Confucian canonical works.

Foucault's theory of governmentality offers a critical epistemology for us to see that the IES, serving as one of the major techniques of Chinese feudal power, contributed to maintaining and consolidating the governance of the numerous imperial dynasties of China from the Sui Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty. The IES can be deemed as a synthesis of the "art of government", which is "to suggest that governing is an activity that requires craft, imagination, shrewd fashioning, the use of tacit skills and practical know-how, the employment of intuition and so on" (Dean, 2010, p. 26). Indeed, in the IES, we find most of these subtle elements.

The Emperor Taizong of Tang (598–649) once observed some new successful candidates of the IES walking out of his palace, and he was so satisfied that he could not help saying, "all heroes in the world enter into my snare!" (Wang, D., n.d., Vol. 1). By applying the IES, all those with talent in ancient China learnt to stick to the Confucian values stressed by the governing class and became their obedient servants. For over 1300 years, Chinese intellectuals were not encouraged or even allowed to explore new knowledge other than the traditional Confucian doctrines; they could neither develop their own ideas nor could they be comparatively original. Their own interests or emotions were constrained to "keep the natural law and abolish selfishness" (Zhu Zi, cited in Li, 1986, Vol. 11). All these social norms and practices went against the necessary conditions for and principles of creativity proposed by Western scholars, such as "analysis of our own idea" and "search for our own interest"

(Sternberg, 2006); "being comparatively original" (Davies, 2006); and "curiosity" and "intrinsic interest" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). In summary, the IES during Chinese feudal history constitutes a major reason for the creativity gap between China and the West. This gap was further influenced by a strict policy of seclusion during the last two dynasties in Chinese feudal society, which is discussed in the following subsection.

2.2.4.6 China's strict policy of seclusion during the Ming and Qing dynasties

As argued above, the creativity gap between China and the West began at the end of the Sung Dynasty. The decline of ancient China not only manifested in some key economic indicators such as the per capita income mentioned by Lin (2008), but also in a key foreign policy adopted during the last two dynasties of feudal China, namely, the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1909) dynasties.

From the beginning of the Ming Dynasty until the First Anglo-Chinese War (1840–1842) late in the Qing Dynasty, a strict policy of seclusion had been applied in China for over 300 years. Under the seclusion policy, the Chinese people were not allowed to go overseas nor to undertake any trading activities with foreign countries; the governmental Ya Hang and Sup Sum Hang Systems monopolised the very limited foreign trade; the amounts and types of exported commodities were rigorously limited; and the activities of foreign people in China were strictly monitored and constrained (Xu, 1995). Some authors hold the view that the cause of this policy was simply a fear of pirates from Japan (e.g. Zhao, 2014). It is indeed one of the reasons. However, I tend to agree with a more holistic analysis by Xu (1995) who states that: politically, the policy demonstrated a fearful state of mind from the ruling class who were scared of the unification of the forces of local and foreign people; economically, it was a vicious reflection of ancient China's long-term policy of "stress agriculture and limit commerce" and China's self-sufficient feudal economy; ideologically, it was a product of a blind arrogance and an apparent conservatism from the ruling class of the Ming and Qing dynasties. As a consequence, the policy of seclusion inhibited the cultural, ideological, scientific and technological, economic and commercial exchanges between China and the rest of the world, especially during the 14th and 19th centuries when the most significant revolutions of human history had been taking place. It was under this backward and reactionary foreign policy that the creativity gap between China and the West became incrementally enlarged during a specific historical period.

In order to maintain stability and unity in the Chinese empire, the dominant values were intolerant of "creative destruction" and its attendant principles of free competition

(Baark, 2007, p. 349). Dean (2010) argues that "government is an activity that shapes the field of action and thus, in this sense, attempts to shape freedom" (p. 22). It is obvious that under such a policy, the freedom of the Chinese people was significantly limited. Dean (2010) also suggests that "governmentality seeks to enframe the population within what Foucault called *apparatuses of security*" (p. 27). Perhaps we could attribute the seclusion policy as one of the "apparatuses of security" by the ruling class of the Ming and Qing dynasties?

How can creativity thrive in such an isolated and conservative environment? Where is the spirit of risk taking? Where is the cross-cultural collaboration space? Where is the tolerance? Western scholars widely share the view that suitable environments (e.g. Eisner, 1960; Gardner, 1993a; Sternberg & Lubart, 1991, 1995; Amabile, 2012; Trnova, 2014); diversity; collaboration; spaces (Robinson, 2011); acceptance of acceptable risks; toleration and tolerance (Sternberg, 2006) comprise the necessary conditions that give rise to the flourishing of creativity. Under the policy of seclusion during the Ming and Qing dynasties, none of these necessary conditions for creativity were satisfied. Therefore, I draw the conclusion that this policy is another important cause of the creativity gap between China and the West.

This discussion has identified some cultural and historical roots for the creativity gap between China and the West. However, such a gap is not static. As McKern (2016) argues, under the influences of globalisation, during the last few decades, China has been catching up quickly in terms of creativity and innovation, particularly in the field of industry. This reveals that China has potential in the development of creativity and innovation in the world arena.

2.2.4.7 Contemporary influences

Since the late 19th century, China has experienced "colonialism, foreign invasion, and tumultuous political change (with violently anti-intellectualist chapters such as the Cultural Revolution)" (Morris & Leung, 2010, p. 316). We have to bear in mind that today's China is in a more complex situation than it was in ancient times. When we analyse this gap, the influence of the communist culture and the impact of the globalisation process should also be taken into consideration. As argued previously in the introduction chapter, today's China is the result of a hybrid cultural background. Baark (2007) reminds us that "cultural values typically change slowly, incrementally and continuously" (p. 343). If we want to close this creativity gap, we need to have a sound understanding of all of these traditional cultural features. It is also necessary to attempt

to tease out the new situations in the current historical stage, where creativity is increasingly being emphasised by educators, scholars and business leaders, as well as within various government institutions around the world, and especially in China (Wu & Albanese, 2010).

The limitations in Chinese culture discussed above raise the question: how can the move from the ontological "cognitive formalism" to a more objective and scientific one be made? How can the shift be made from an exploitative approach to the explorative in knowledge seeking? How can people be encouraged to step away from rote learning and towards creativity-oriented learning? How can the curiosity and risk-taking spirit be cultivated so people develop their creative thinking ability from a very early age? And how can a more collaborative space be provided for people to enhance their creativity and innovation abilities? As a researcher in education, I offer one proposition for a possible change in this creativity gap: quality education, especially quality arts education in early childhood.

This section has discussed the concept of creativity. It has examined the philosophical basis of creativity, as well as studies of creativity under four different approaches from the 1950s until the present day. Furthermore, the section has introduced a cultural and historical analysis accounting for the creativity gap between China and the West. As one of the solutions, arts education in early childhood is proposed to close the current creativity gap.

2.3 Arts in society and in education, aesthetics in the West and in China

The meaning of art has changed over time, reflecting different historical, social and cultural contexts. In Greek, the word for "art", in its most general sense, was "*techne"* (Shusterman, 2006b, p. 238): in Latin, the word for "art" was "*ars*" or "*artis*" (skill) (Graburn, 2001). Both terms signified "systematic skill or discipline knowledge" instead of the "modern notion of fine art" (Shusterman, 2006b, p. 238). In English, "art" is often twinned with "craft" from the Germanic "*kraft*" (Graburn, 2001) while, in German, the term for "art" is "*Kunst*" (which is derived from "*können*", i.e. "to know") and it is often used to designate fine arts (Shusterman, 2006b). Shusterman (2006b) further states that "the same general notion of art as skill or knowledge can be found in ancient East Asian culture, as in the Confucian notion of the six arts (*yi* 藝) which includes arts such as mathematics, archery and charioteering" (p. 238). After the Norman Conquest and the Renaissance, "art" became associated with the French conquerors and the Church, and formed a higher class compared to "craft" (Graburn, 2001). In Enlightenment

Europe, "art" became a synonym for "*beaux arts*" in the forms of "opera, symphonic music, figurative painting and choreographed dance (and later, ballet)", and was justified as a superior expression of the human soul as it was "detached from 'bread-and butter' issues" (Graburn, 2001, p. 765). In conclusion, "there are many ways of seeing art" (McArdle, 2012, p. 33).

2.3.1 Arts learning forms and their significance in promoting human creativity

The arts predate written history and reflect human effort to tell of experiences, aspirations and fears through visual images, dance, music, poetry, drama and storytelling (Eisner, 1998); Wright (2012) argues that "the arts have always played a significant role in humans' creation and sharing of thoughts and feelings" (p. 195). "Many countries have included the art subjects in their core curriculum" (Cheung-Yung & Lai, 2010, p. 3), thus recognising the unique value of the arts. In Australia, the Arts Learning Area consists of dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts (ACARA, 2016) and, in New Zealand, it includes dance, drama, music (or sound arts) and visual arts (Ministry of Education [NZ], 2007). Most of these art forms can be found in Chinese school curricula. For example, in Hong Kong, music and visual arts are the main art disciplines and, in Taiwan, the main art disciplines are music, visual arts and performing arts (dance and drama are included in performing arts) (Cheung-Yung & Lai, 2010). In Mainland China, arts learning areas cover music, visual arts, performing arts and some forms of craft (e.g. clay sculpture, paper cut, collage, weaving and stitching) (Ministry of Education [PRC], 2012).

As stated by Barrett (2012), music "finds its way into our lives more subtly, shaping the ways we respond to our world and providing us with a means to reflect on our world" (p. 58). Gardner (1996) argues that music can express the "musical ideas" (p. 247) and can share "the logical form of emotion … as language cannot" (pp. 246-247). In some East Asian cultures, especially in the Chinese Confucian aesthetic tradition, music holds a more important position among all art forms, (Li, 2010).

Some people in the West attribute the visual arts as their favourite art form; presumably, the reason is that "paintings represent or depict things both real and imaginary" (Gardner, 1996, p. 242), and visual representation "exploits and cultivates a power that the mind possesses innately: the power to generate visual experiences out of itself" (p. 244). The visual arts involve the creation of objects that are two-, three- and four-dimensional and help children to develop cognitively, emotionally, physically and socially (Roy et al., 2012).

Other art forms, such as dance and drama, also constitute major forms in children's arts education, especially in child-centred learning and education (Roy et al., 2012). Dance as an art form was closely linked to ritual ceremonies in ancient times (e.g. Roy et al., 2012; Li, 2010). "As an integral part of human activity in most cultures", dance "is an important means of expressing inner feelings, experiences and cultural identity" (Schiller & Meiners, 2012, p. 85). Wilder (2002) argues that an important aim of dance education is to "'draw out' the child's creation of movement, skill in moving and response to movement" (p. 39). Drama has been inextricably linked with dance, music and visual arts through rituals and corroborees (Roy et al., 2012). Warren (2002) insists on its importance in children's education as "drama, and in particular process drama, has much to offer as it engages children in authentic problem solving within the safety of the drama experience and within the security of the classroom with a teacher they trust" (p. 118).

Considered to be a new form of art in the 20th century, media arts "usually [refer] to the materials and techniques used to create an artwork" (Roy et al., 2012, p. 99). This form of art involves the creative use of some technologies (e.g. film, television, the internet, games, print and sound) as art forms, but also learning to view all media critically (Roy et al., 2012). The importance of media arts in education is incontestable, as Allen Ginsberg asserts, "whoever controls the media—the images—controls the culture" (cited in Roy et al., 2012, p. 98). Terreni (2010) also argues that "creating access to the internet provides children with more opportunities to find information, ideas and examples of art work that may assist them with their own art making and creative thinking" (p. 75).

Gardner (1996) suggests the benefits of "art's essential connections with pleasure, play and imagination, its freedom from reason and practical purposes" (pp. 250-251). Both in "domain-extrinsic terms" and in "domain-intrinsic knowing" (Pramling Samuelsson et al., 2009, p. 121), the benefits of arts education are shown to comprise a lengthy list. Research shows that arts education impacts positively on children's creativity (Burton, Horowitz & Abeles, 2000). Grierson (2011) argues that "artists and art educators are inheritors of these creative capacities, processes, convictions and possibilities" (p. 343), and that "the power of art is fully regarded as a potent form of creative knowledge" (p. 349).

One of the most significant outcomes of arts education is therefore illuminated— the facilitation and enhancement of human creativity. Contemporary arts curricula contribute to the promotion of children's creativity in unique ways. Whether this is to

express "music ideas" and to understand the "logical form of emotion" (music); to "represent or depict things both real and imaginary" (visual arts); to "draw out the child's creation of movement" (dance); to "engage children in authentic problem solving" (drama); or to assist children "with their own art making and creative thinking" (media arts), it is obvious that all of these art forms cultivate and enhance children's creativity. This echoes Eisner's (1962) argument made 55 years ago: "art education has long been concerned with the development of human creativity" (p. 11). More recently, Pramling Samuelsson et al. (2009) also hold that strong links exist between creativity and the arts, and that early childhood is a crucial time for the development of human creativity.

2.3.2 Arts in society

In tracing the evolvement of the concept of art in Western classical philosophy, it was identified that ancient Greek philosophers gave art a fairly low philosophical status; for example, Plato (1998) defined art as "mimesis"; the Stoics subordinated art to the moral order; art was discussed under theology during the Middle Ages; and art was still considered to be an imitation of nature during the Renaissance (Kockelmans, 1985). Conversely, the somehow "inferior" status of art has been dramatically changed in Western modernity, as some modern philosophers have tended to express a view of the superiority of art. For example, Hegel (1979) gave art an autonomous status by arguing that "art is the product of freedom" (p. 7). Dewey (1987) also privileged art, as he claimed that, "art is the culmination of nature" (cited in Shusterman, 2006a, p. 355).

In addition to the debates concerning the status of art, another philosophical issue is whether or not there is a goal in art. Some people have asserted that art is purposeless—Oscar Wilde's "art for art's sake" is a famous example in support of this view (Gardner, 1996). Hegel expressed the view that art is an end or aim in itself (Kockelmans, 1985). "In the Kantian tradition, functionality is firmly rejected by its contemplative non-instrumentality" (Shusterman, 2006a, p. 354). Similarly, Adorno argued that art's true and vital function is to be functionless, and that this type of ideology helps establish the modernist notion of artistic autonomy (Shusterman, 2006a). Conversely, by saying that art serves life, pragmatist philosophers (e.g. Dewey, 1987; Emerson, 1990; Locke, 1983) embraced art's wide-ranging functionality. In emphasising "the power of art for both personal and social transformation", they asserted that "art's goal is not simply to produce improved art techniques, artworks, and art appreciation … but instead to improve life itself" (Shusterman, 2006a, p. 356). The different understandings of goals in art have developed two types of value within

current arts education: the value of learning "in" the arts and "through" the arts (e.g. Bamford, 2006; Roy et al., 2012), as well as two approaches to arts education: education in art and education through art (Bamford, 2006).

2.3.2.1 Art and craft

Becker (1978) argues that "'art' and 'craft' are two contrasting kinds of aesthetic, work organization, and work ideology, differing in their emphases on the standards of utility, virtuoso skill and beauty" (p. 862). More specifically, he explains that "a craft consists of a body of knowledge and skill which can be used to produce useful objects", for example, "dishes one can eat from, chairs one can sit in" (p. 864). Risatti (2007) also asserts that craft is defined through function. This point of practical utility is fundamentally different from art, as Becker (1978) claims that the only utility of works of art is "to be admired, appreciated, and experienced" (p. 869).

However, sometimes the line blurs between art and craft. As Becker (1978) summarises: "craft generates art, is invaded by it, or is something that art becomes" (p. 887). Certainly, both art and craft are fundamentally social. Graburn (2001) states that "art is created to function in social relations to do something, that is, it has agency" (p. 766) and that "recent works have focused less on the objects and more on the agency of the personnel of the art world" (p. 767).

2.3.2.2 Art in modern sociology

Two contemporary visions in arts education: "Art as Visual Culture" (Duncum, 2001) and "Art as Catalyst" (Ewing, 2010) find their philosophical roots in some modern and post-modern sociologists who adopt a socially-critical approach in arts education (Kemmis et al., 1983). In modern sociology, art is considered to be "an ideological construction" (Kelly, 2008, p. 188). In his *Aesthetic Theory*, Theodor Adorno (1984) argues that art is fundamentally social, when he writes:

> While art is always a social fact because it is a product of the social labour of spirit … [it] is not social only because it is brought about in such a way that it embodies the dialectic of forces and relations of production. Nor is art social only because it derives its material content from society. Rather it is social primarily because it stands opposed to society (Adorno, 1984, p. 82).

Foucault (2011) claims that modern art is "cynicism in culture" because "it is especially in art that the most intense forms of a truth-telling with the courage to take the risk of offending are concentrated" (p. 189). He also argues that "art … establishes

a polemical relationship of reduction, refusal and aggression to culture, social norms, value and aesthetic canons" (Foucault, 2011, p. 188).

2.3.3 Arts in education

"The term 'arts' is used to denote both instruction in the arts and artistic pedagogy used to instigate education" (Bamford, 2006, p. 20). The plural form used for this term is based on "an assumption of unity underpinned by notions of culture, heritage, citizenship and creativity" (Bamford, 2006, p. 20). Arts-based learning is the instrumental use of artistic skills, processes and experiences as educational tools to foster learning in non-artistic disciplines and domains **(**Art of Science Learning (The), 2016, Arts-based learning, para. 1**)**. Quality in arts education is defined as "being those arts education provisions that are of recognized high value and worth in terms of the skills, attitudes and performality engendered" (Bamford, 2006, p. 86). According to Power (2014), "quality arts education is encompassed by educational experiences of recognised value and worth. It is context-specific, with commonly held beacons of quality applicable to method, structure, and environment" (p. 69).

Dinham (2013) considers high-quality arts education to be authentic arts education which provides the following opportunities for children to:

1. explore and develop ideas and designs of their own imaginative invention

2. make and present well-crafted artworks that express their ideas and interpretations

3. reflect on their ideas, their artwork and the artwork of others

4. connect their activity to the wider world of cultural expression by learning about artists and the artworks of various cultures (Dinham, 2013, p. 18).

In the introduction chapter of this thesis, it is argued that arts education is significant for young children for both its intrinsic benefits and extrinsic benefits. Regarding these two essential benefits of arts education, Dinham (2013) explains that intrinsic benefits "are benefits that relate directly to the learning, experiences and outcomes gained in, and about, the subject being studied", whereas extrinsic benefits involve the following: **"**the subject being studied is regarded as an instrument to achieve benefits or results in areas that don't relate particularly to the subject itself"

(p. 12). Regarding the two main approaches to arts education—education in art and education through art—Bamford (2006) explains as follows:

> Education in [art] implies teaching the pupils the practices and principles of the various art disciplines, to stimulate their critical awareness and sensitiveness and to enable them to construct cultural identities. Education through art implies that art is seen as a vehicle for learning other subject content and [as a means] for teaching more general educational outcomes (p. 21).

2.3.3.1 Different visions of arts education

According to European tradition, art is a business for high society (Graburn, 2001). From the 17th to the 19th centuries, the main vision of arts education was that of "Academic Art" where the nature of art was of mimetic aesthetics; the content and methods of arts education was focused basically on copying from artists or from nature; and the values of arts education were found in the accuracy of representations (Efland, 2004).

Efland (2004) summarised the following four dominant visions for arts education that emerged during the 20th century. The vision of "Elements of Design" (early 20th century) represented the formalist aesthetics where art is understood to be a formal order; under the vision of "Creative Self-Expression" (early to mid-20th century), art is an expression of the individual artist; according to the vision of "Art in Daily Living" (1930–1960), art is an instrument for enhancing the individual's surroundings; and based on the vision of "Art as a Discipline" (1960–1990), art is an open concept, a problem for artistic and scholarly inquiry (Efland, 2004). Discipline-based art education (DBAE) challenges the vision of "Creative Self-Expression" by "putting the work of art, rather than the student, at the center of the art lesson" (Dobbs, 2004, p. 705). However, in a DBAE setting, the importance of creation by students themselves is not ignored (Dobbs, 2004). The new millennium saw the shift from DBAE to a contemporary arts education (Gnezda, 2009). Twigg and Garvis (2010) explain such a shift as follows:

> With the dawn of Postmodernism in the 1980s, art was promoted as social reconstruction and viewed as another way to transform society by encouraging diversity in art curriculum (Efland, 1990). Art educators began to build curriculum around concepts such as multiculturalism, feminism and popular culture (Efland, 1990). DBAE eventually gave way to CBAE (community-based art education) for art curriculum in schools (Efland, 1990), linking art to human and cultural experience (Congdon, Bolin, & Blandy, 2001) (p. 194).

The visual culture art education (VCAE) movement originated in the US during the 1960s and today continues to have some influence. "Art as Catalyst for Social Transformation" (Ewing, 2010) is another contemporary vision of arts education, under which art acts as a catalyst for personal and social transformation (Ewing, 2010), and which represents a socially just approach to arts education (e.g. Ewing, 2010; O'Toole, 2010a). The Australian Curriculum F-10: The Arts (ACARA, 2016) typifies this emergent vision in arts education (e.g. Roy, Baker, & Hamilton, 2015; Ewing, 2010; O'Toole, 2010a). More details of these visions of arts education are shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Six important visions of art education since the 20th century

Six important visions of art education since the 20th century			
Movement	**Nature of art**	**Content and methods**	**Value of art**
Elements of Design Early 20th century	Formalist aesthetics Art is formal order	Teach elements and principles through a sequence of exercises	Values are found in the excellence of formal organization and in the resulting aesthetic experience
Creative Self-Expression Early to Mid-20th century	Art is an expression of the individual artist	Free the child's imagination. Eliminate rules. Don't impose adult ideas or standards	Values are found in the originality of personal expression
Art in Daily Living 1930-1960	Art is an instrument for enhancing the individual's surroundings	Apply knowledge of art and design to the home or community	Values are found in the intelligent solutions to problems in daily life
Art as a Discipline 1960-1990	Art is an open concept, a problem for artistic, and scholarly inquiry	Base activities upon modes of inquiry used by artists, critics and art historians	Values are found in the increased understanding of art
			Source: Efland (2004, p.697)
Art as Visual Culture 1960 -	Art is of viusal imagery (Duncum, 2002)	Art education should be socially relevant (Eisner, 2001), interdisciplinary, substantial, and phenomenological (Tavin, 2003)	Values are found in an ethic of care, for participants to positively transform themselves, their communities and the worlds in which they live (Darts, 2006)
Art as Catalyst 2010 -	Art acts as a catalyst for personal and social transformation (Ewing, 2010)	All children are equally entitled to the arts (O'Toole, 2010)	Values are found in the positive changes of the direcion of people's lives, as well as the inclusion of all children in the arts (Ewing, 2010)

2.3.3.2 Brief history of arts education in China

Although in ancient China, equivalent terms did not exist for arts education or aesthetic education, in reality, art education had existed for over 2000 years in traditional Chinese schools (Evans, 2001). For example, calligraphy, which is considered to be the highest form of artistic expression in Chinese tradition (Hsia & Perlmutter, 1990), is "a special type of art that arose in China" and "an independent course in traditional schools" that existed over 2000 years ago (Evans, 2001, pp. 28-29). Chinese

educators in ancient China strongly emphasised that "students should be taught and trained in an all-round way, including a large component of what would now be called aesthetic education" (Evans, 2001, pp. 29-30).

Table 2.2 Arts education in China at different historic stage

Arts education in China at different historic stage				
Historical background	**Time**	**Model or approach**	**Content and methods**	**Value and aim**
In feudal school system	**Before 1906**	**The education of Calligraphy**	Main script forms: seal script, clerical script, regular script, running script and cursive script. Imitation of masterpieces and the works of the teachers is one of the key methods for learners (Cheng, 2010)	One of the criteria to select government officials (Evans, 2001)
		Aesthetic education	Six skills theory: student should be taught and trained in an all-round way. Main methods: imitation of masterpieces and learning from nature (Evans, 2001)	The cultivation of human morality (Li, 2010); the teaching of human relations and ethics (Cheng, 2010)
Westernisation Movement	**1840 - early 20th Century**	**Closely related to science and industry**	New courses related to art emerged such as: drawing, drafting, embriodery, painting, craft patterns, and pottery painting (Evans, 2001). Main methods: emphasizing skills and abilities to make practical or functional objects (Cheng, 2010)	A way to acquire Western technical skills and to produce skilled artists (Evans, 2001)
Introduction of Western AE	**First Half of the 20th Century**	**Drawing on Western ideas (e.g. Dewey, German Aesthetic education) by using Japan as a bridge; Chinese cultural tradition was in a way being neglected (Cheng, 2010)**	Interchaning terms of 'drawing subject', 'formative art' and 'fine art' in the arts curriculum. The main methods of learning and teaching evolved from copying to free expression and individual creation (Cheng, 2010)	The aims of arts education developed from training artists for the future to fostering children's aesthetic judgement and artistic expression (Cheng, 2010)
PRC before the Cultural Revolution	**1949 - 1966**	**The Soviet Union Model (Evans, 2001)**	Indiscrimination copying of ex-Soviet model (Evans, 2001); teacher-centred, knowledge-centred and classroom-centred (Huang, 2010)	The aims of arts education is to train technical skilled persons and to promote communist ideology (Evans, 2001)
Cultural Revolution	**1966 - 1976**	**The Model of Red Base Areas (Evans, 2001)**	Visual arts was combined with music into revolutionnary arts. Education should centre on political education and ideology, should be combined with production and pratical work (Evans, 2001)	Art acts as a weapon in polical struggles (Evans, 2001)
Recovery from the Cultural Revolution	**1978-1987**	**Political struggles were no longer emphasised (Evans, 2001)**	A dichotomy approach of training 'arts professionals' and becoming 'unimportant courses' for the rest of students (Evans, 2001)	One of the key goals: preparing students for higher levels of schooling (Evans, 2001)
Under the influence of globalisation	**1987-**	**Aesthetic education was reestablished (He, 2009); alignment with contemporary trends in international arts education (Ma, 2014; Wang, 2012)**	The influences of international arts education theories, models and experiences are evident (Wang, 2012); in the meantime, indigenous traditions and cultures are honored (e.g. BAESECE, 2008)	One of the five key aspects (moral, intellectual, physics, AESTHETICS and practical working education) in order to realise 'education with full development' (Evans, 2001); children's lifelong development

"Art education was employed as a way to acquire Western technical skills" in China from the early 19th century, through the influence of Western arts and culture, and

especially during the Westernisation movement (Evans, 2001, p. 32). In the first half of the 20th century, arts education in China drew on Western ideas such as Dewey's "child-centered approach" and "education is life", as well as some valuable elements from European aesthetic education, especially from Germany (Cheng, 2010).

The year of 1949 saw a radical change in the power relations in Chinese society, as the Communist Party of China (CPC) won the civil war and established the People's Republic of China (PRC). Arts education in China has experienced major change. Evans (2001) mentioned the two most influential educational models of arts education in the PRC from 1949 to 1978—the Soviet Union Model and the Model of Red Base Areas. From 1949 to 1966, the Soviet Union Model was adopted in Chinese arts education (Evans, 2001): the work of Soviet education theorist I. A. Kairov was considered to be "an authoritative model for national education policy" (Ryan et al., 2013, p. 80), of which the main educational principles were characterised as "teacher-centred, knowledge-centred and classroom-centred" (Huang, 2010, p. 47). During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the Model of Red Base Areas was widely adopted in China, and arts education functioned "as a powerful weapon in the class struggle and in the political infighting among different groups" (Evans, 2001, p. 140).

After the key policy of Reform and Opening-up issued in 1978, arts education in China developed into a new historical stage under the process of globalisation, and since then has attempted to align with contemporary trends in international arts education (e.g. Ma, 2014; Wang, 2012). The empirical data emerged in this study also reveals that children's lifelong development is of main concern according to the participant Chinese EC educators.

Table 2.2 demonstrates a brief summary of the arts education in China at different historic stage, in order to provide a general view of this section.

2.3.3.3 Brief history of arts education in Australia

Art is central to Australian indigenous culture and traditions, and "Australian Aboriginal art traditions are commonly collaborative, conveying both the religious and cultural knowledges of a whole community" (Ewing, 2010, p. 20). However, the central place in which art was situated in Australian society was greatly diminished with the arrival of the Europeans over two centuries ago (Ewing, 2010). Since the first government curriculum was published in Victoria in 1872, the arts have long been excluded from any formal or compulsory curricula (O'Toole, 2010a; Ewing, 2010). In terms of art

forms, music has been well established since the 1930s under the British influence, and visual arts (including drawing, sketching and painting) have been developed since the 1960s, whereas drama and dance were not included in the curricula of some states (e.g. Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania) until the 1980s (Ewing, 2010). O'Toole (2009) points out three approaches to Australian arts curricula: appreciation of arts heritage, cultivation of future arts professionals, and arts provisions available to every student (cited in Ewing, 2010). The Australian Curriculum: The Arts is an epoch-making arts curriculum and, for the first time in Australian history, is a national curriculum that combined five art forms, adopting a socially just approach to ensure that all children have the right and access to the arts.

2.3.4 Quality in arts education

Regarding quality in arts education, Bamford (2010) argues the following:

> "Art education takes place in a temporal, social, historical, political, geographical, and ecological context. This means that quality is never an absolute, but rather interplays between:
> - people (children, teachers, parents, and school directors)
> - situations (schools, informal learning settings)" (p. 57).

In her thesis *Portraits of Quality Arts Education in Australian Primary School Classrooms,* Power (2014) argues for "the dearth of literature on the concept of quality in education" (p. 63) to be addressed, especially in the arts. With respect to understanding what constitutes quality in arts education, Power (2014) mentions two key documents cited in the Australian and international literature (e.g. D. Davis, 2008; Ewing, 2010; President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011). These two documents are: *The wow factor: Global research compendium on the impact of the arts in education* (Bamford, 2006), and *The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education* (Seidel et al., 2009). In *The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education,* Seidel et al. (2009), by drawing on their extensive interviews and, in particular, the responses to their questions about "what quality looks like when one is 'in the room'" (p. 29), conclude that four lenses as most useful in researching quality arts education. These lenses are student learning, pedagogy, community dynamics and the environment. In the Australian context, Power (2014) introduces a third document in this field: *The National Review of School Music Education* (Pascoe et al., 2005), which considers that the following four indicators

underpin quality in music education: teacher issues, professional learning, resources and curriculum. These elements regarding the quality in arts education inform the data analysis in this study.

2.3.5 Aesthetics

This study is underpinned by the belief that "humans are an aesthetic species" (Rusch & Voland, 2013, p. 113). Aesthetics play a crucial role for human beings, and Gardner (1996) states that, "a world without aesthetic qualities would be an inferior … world, and a person without any capacity for aesthetic response … would not qualify as a fully developed human being" (p. 232). The concept of aesthetics is highly contested. The above statement made by Rusch and Voland (2013) contrasts with the perspective taken by McGregor (1974), who, 40 years ago, argued that "the term of 'aesthetic' is indefinable and vacuous and ought to be purged from the language of [the] philosophy of art" (p. 549). However, it is widely agreed that aesthetics is the philosophy of art, especially after Hegel (e.g. Kockelmans, 1985; Shusterman, 2006b).

The term "aesthetics" appeared three centuries ago, and was originally referred to as "the 'science of beauty' as a field on its own right" (Acer & Omerodlu, 2008, p. 335). In the middle of the 18th century, German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten (1714–1762) defined aesthetics as "a science of sensory perception (asthesis)" (Shusterman, 2006b, p. 237).

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) is considered to be a key figure in the history of aesthetics. Hegel believes that "Kant spoke the first rational words on aesthetics" (cited in Kockelmans, 1985, p. 29). In his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, Kant holds that aesthetic experience is subjective with this able to be divided into two different feelings, namely, the beautiful and the sublime. In his *Critique of Judgment*, Kant (1779) defines another very important notion in aesthetic appreciation—disinterestedness—which is seen as the "quality" in beauty, and which might involve a detached objectivity in aesthetic appreciation (cited in Xie, 2008). For Kant, the beautiful is a disinterested delight—"a delight which we cognize—a priori as a law for every one without being able to ground it upon proofs" (Kant, 2007, p. 301).

As stated by Shusterman (2006b), this sense of "freedom from practical purpose was carried over into Hegel, who thus defined fine art as distinct from entertainment and applied arts" (p. 241). Art has very important social, political and religious functions, and these roles have greatly contributed to art's meaning and aesthetic

power (Shusterman, 2006b). The Kantian concepts of aesthetic disinterestedness and functionlessness present some challenges. For example, Nietzsche (1956) contested the dogma of disinterestedness by contrasting it to the "creative, hands-on view of the artist", arguing that the power of art and beauty derives from the excitement of the will, of interest rather from disinterest; in the 20th century, Bourdieu (1979) offered a complex critique of the Kantian disinterestedness, arguing that this notion "serves undeniable social interests of affirming hierarchical distinction" (cited in Shusterman, 2006b, p. 242).

More recently, beauty is deemed to be a notion that is socially constructed. Mascia-Lees (2011) argues that "for many producers and consumers of Arts and Crafts today, 'beauty' is an expression of an aesthetic philosophy embedded in these political and ethical commitments; and beauty is constituted through experiences connecting mind, body, individuals, and community" (p. 8). Current trends also affirm the art of living, the idea of "living beauty" and in Foucault's (1984) term, the "aesthetics of existence" which, according to Shusterman (2006b), "sought both to compartmentalize art and the aesthetic from ethics, politics and scientific thought" (p. 240).

Shusterman (2006b) summarises the history and contested ideas of aesthetics:

The genealogy of aesthetics thus provides at least three different (though sometimes overlapping) defining themes for this discipline: sensory perception, beauty and similar concepts of taste such as the sublime, and art. The first of these themes has been the least influential in modern aesthetics, and the final topic—art—has, since Hegel, been the most dominant, especially when the 20th century began to display a positive disregard for, or rejection of, beauty (p. 240).

Based on this statement by Shusterman (2006b), the scope of aesthetics covers three different themes—sensory perceptions, beauty and art—although the emphasis in aesthetics differs under different historical contexts. Pramling Samuelsson et al. (2009) echo this point in saying that "the concept of the aesthetic has now changed from sensory experience to knowledge about beauty, sublimity and art" (p. 119).

Pratt (1961) holds the view that "aesthetics has no clearly defined boundaries or directions" because "the subject falls in no man's land": "philosophers, psychologists, historians, critics, and artists" can wander into and out of this field oddly (p. 71). Despite the "ambiguity, complexity and contestation" of the concept of aesthetics (Shusterman, 2006b, p. 237), its importance, especially its pivotal significance in

children's education, has never been contested. As Pramling Samuelsson et al. (2009) state:

> With a background in the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, in the romantic pedagogical movement starting with Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel, the aesthetic was found to be just as important as logic and ethics as a base for learning … the aesthetic subjects as we know them found their way into the very first attempts to establish formal education for children in the pre- and primary school age. Song, music, painting, modeling, rhyme, verse, play and dance were as much part of the everyday routine as prayer, kitchen tasks and storytelling (p. 119).

In contemporary society, aesthetics is considered to be a powerful educational means particularly for young people (e.g. BAESECE, 2008; Liebau, 2013; ACARA, 2016), and new connotations are found within this old term. For example, aesthetics can be defined as "critical reflection on art, culture and nature" (Kelly, 1998, p. ix).

According to the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (ACARA, 2016), aesthetics is defined as "specific artistic awareness, or a deep appreciation of the meaning of an artistic experience through intellectual, emotional and sensual response to a work of art" (ACARA, 2016, The Arts/Glossary, "aesthetic", para. 1). The meaning of aesthetics is also specified in each art form of the Australian Curriculum:

> In Dance, standards of appropriateness and competency relevant to the genre/style/time/place.

> In Drama, involves subjective responses to non-verbal, affective and verbal devices which can be representative of genre/style/time/place.

> In Media Arts, involves engagement with and increasing understanding of how images, sounds and texts can be used to provoke responses.

> In Music, involves the subjective responses by which music is perceived and judged, which can be relevant to genre/style/time/place.

> In Visual Arts, the philosophical theory or set of principles governing the idea of beauty at a given time and place. (ACARA, 2016, The Arts/Glossary, "aesthetic", para. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

2.3.6 Overview of the Chinese aesthetic tradition

As discussed above, aesthetics provides at least three themes: sensory perception, beauty and art (Shusterman, 2006b). This section, in introducing an overview of the Chinese aesthetic tradition, discusses these themes with a focus on the concepts of beauty and art, in articulating how "Chinese aesthetics goes beyond literature and art to encompass the 'art of living'" (Samei, 2010, p. x).

2.3.6.1 Concept of beauty in Chinese traditional culture

In his book, *The Chinese Aesthetic Tradition*, Chinese philosopher and aesthetician Li Zehou (1930–) holds that "there has to date [been] no clear explication of the origins and original meaning of the Chinese character for 'beauty' or 'beautiful'" (Li, 2010, p. 1). The composition of the Chinese character "beauty" (美) combines "ram" (羊) on top and "large" (大) on the bottom. Drawing on the late Han lexicographer Xu Shen's (55–149) dictionary *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*, Li (2010) tries to explain the meaning of "beauty" in a pictographic way: "when a ram is large, it is beautiful (equating beauty with the natural or sensuous)" (p. 2). Another possible explanation of the etymology of "美", supported by the earliest Chinese written evidence from oracle bones and bronze vessels, is composed by "ram" (羊) on top and "men" (人) on the bottom (Li, 2010). This means, "'man with ram is beautiful' (equating beauty with goodness)" (Li, 2010, p. 2). The logic for this explanation, according to Li (2010), is that "man with ram" is a man practising shamanistic ritual, and the crucial socialising role of these magical rites is deemed good in Chinese ancient tradition. Although Li (2010) admits that both the above explanations of "beauty" are speculative, especially the second one, this etymological exploration of the character of "beauty" offers an amazing prism through which to understand two key terms in Chinese traditional aesthetics, namely, *nature* and *goodness*.

According to Confucianism, beauty "is embodied in the inner moral power of the sage, in whom heaven and humanity are unified" (Samei, 2010, p. xii). Indeed, this statement, with "heaven" and "inner moral power", strongly summarises the essence of traditional Chinese aesthetics, which are closely connected to nature and morality.

2.3.6.2 Beauty is nature

The enduring affinity between humans and nature goes beyond the aesthetic realm and has been immersed in all Chinese philosophical issues (Tang, 1983). The worship

of nature is deeply rooted in Chinese culture, and can be traced to the organic naturalism of early Taoism (Baum, 1982). Historically, most of the influential Chinese philosophers have embraced humans and nature as one complementary unit, although their theories may differ in the emphasis on different aspects. For instance, Confucius (551–479 BC) and his disciples tended to hold the view of the "humanization of nature" in Chinese philosophy and aesthetics which, according to Li (2010), means that "a person's naturalness must be conformed to and permeated with sociality in order to attain true humanity" (p. 79). On the other hand, Taoists like Laozi (571–471 BC) and Zhuangzi (369–286 BC) asserted the "naturalization of humans", arguing that "to become truly human one must shed sociality, allowing one's naturalness to remain unpolluted and to expand to achieve unity with the universe" (Li, 2010, p. 79). As expressed in his essay *Zhibeiyou (Zhi Travelled to the North),* Zhuangzi believes that "heaven and earth have great beauty but do not speak of it" (cited in Li, 2010). Hence, I simply draw the conclusion that, according to Chinese tradition, "beauty is nature". This intra-active relationship between human and nature resonates with "the 'new' material turn" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2010, p. xv) proposed by some Western post-humanists, for example, Lenz Taguchi (2010), who argues that "all matter consists of the same substances, whether it is human or non-human matter", and there is "a constant flow of mutual intra-action and diffractions with each other" (p.43).

2.3.6.3 Beauty is morality

In *Guoyu* (the first Chinese historical work that recorded the histories of different kingdoms from 990 BC–453 BC), it says that "music entails harmony", which implies not only the harmony of "human relations", "but also the harmony between the gods and spirits of the universe and the human world (harmony between heaven and earth)" (Li, 2010, p. 19). An old Chinese proverb also says that "a man without virtue, what has he to do with music?" This would mean that music is "not merely of drum and bell, of psaltery and flute, but also of harmonious thought and word and deed" (Moule, 1907, p. 163). Tang (1983) argues that "in the traditional thinking in China, what is beautiful has always been linked to what is good" (pp. 20-21). Li (2010) also argues that, in Chinese aesthetics, "'beauty' is synonymous with 'good'" (p. 2), and only by being "beautiful" and "good" at the same time can we achieve the highest realm of Chinese aesthetics.

In the *Analects*, Confucius (2006) put forward his famous educational approach as "poetry makes a person, rites develop a person, and music fully matures a person"

(Part 2, 8.8). Indeed, Chinese traditional aesthetics is a process of human cultivation in order to achieve moral perfection.

This aesthetic focus on "becoming" rather than on "being" is fundamentally different from any Western version of the issue. As highlighted by Karl (2010), Western philosophers, such as Hegel, Bergson and Heidegger, take the "transcendence of being as the object of philosophical aesthetics" (p. 1015). Mattice (2013) contends that aesthetics has been, to some extent, marginalised in Western philosophy but that, within the Chinese philosophical tradition, aesthetics play a key role. Li (2010) posits that the life-affirming view of humanity in Chinese aesthetics results in an Apollonian style of art rather than a Dionysian one that could be widely found in the West. The distinction between Apollonian and Dionysian concepts of art is expressed in classical Greek writings, and in modern philosophy, Nietzsche gives new definitions to these concepts as they apply to art (Field, 2012). Drummond (1980) distinguishes these two styles of art by stating that Apollonian art is concerned with moderation in behaviour, self-control and plans, while Dionysian art is concerned with extreme behaviour, self-liberation and impulses.

Serving as a major means of government by ancient Chinese kings (Li, 2010), the Chinese aesthetic tradition had both its strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, its emphasis on "harmony" and "unity" (Li, 2010), its "non-Dionysian cultural character, with its preference for calm consideration and self-control over sensual revelry" (Li, 2010, p. 25), and its "use of 'quietude' and 'cultivation' to restrain people's instinctual animal impulses in order to regulate their emotions and actions" have contributed to the fact that "Chinese civilization reached maturity so early" compared to its Western counterparts (Li, 2010, p. 26). Hsia and Perlmutter (1990) even argued that "no culture [other than Chinese traditional culture] ever placed a higher value on education" (p. 2), especially the aesthetic education which, according to Mattice (2013), is somehow marginalised in the West. It certainly served as a powerful means to retain the political unification of the "Celestial Empire" (Hsia & Perlmutter, 1990) and, for thousands of years, it served as a sacred realm of belonging, being and becoming for Chinese people. That is why Chinese culture has its tenacious vitality despite all kinds of misfortunes and disasters in history.

On the other hand, this aesthetic tradition has some immanent weaknesses that are deemed to be barriers in ideological and scientific development, as well as in human creative and emotional flourishing throughout the history of China. Firstly, art and politics seem to have been directly connected since the time of ancient China, and

an "exaggeration of the political content and function of art" (Li, 2010, p. 30) seems to exist. Using a governmentality lens, I conclude that art serves as one of the major techniques to achieve governmental ends in Chinese society, not only in tradition times, but also in today's world. Secondly, the aesthetics of Confucian orthodoxy also result in a lack of "scientific intent" (Rowland, 1954, p. 105) in the artistic domain due to the specific epistemology in traditional China, as discussed under the theme of creativity. Thirdly, according to Chinese aesthetic tradition, the emphasis on "self-control", "temper moulding", "moderation and conformity", "order and the norm", and "hierarchy and class" have considerably restricted Chinese people's artistic freedom, and has therefore constrained their creative ability (e.g. Li, 2010; Zong, 2011). This view that traditional Chinese society was a society of order is aligned with what I have previously analysed regarding the creativity gap between China and the West.

This section has reviewed the broad concepts of art and aesthetics. I undertook an investigation of art in society as well as in education, and developed an overview of Chinese aesthetic tradition, in order to inform the empirical study on children's arts education in contemporary Beijing, China.

2.4 Teaching and learning in early childhood

This section develops a discussion regarding teaching and learning in the early years. Under the overarching social constructivism in this study and drawing on contemporary literature, I illuminate my understanding regarding the constructivist ways of teaching and learning among young children. Some concepts, strategies and models are also introduced regarding the pedagogical issues in the early years.

2.4.1 How do I understand the constructivist ways of teaching?

Bell's (1993) description of the four forms of constructivist teacher–student relationship inspired me to gain an understanding of different ways of teaching. These forms are "teacher and student power-on, power-off, power-for and power-with" (Watts, Jofili & Bezerra, 1997, p. 310). As Watts et al. (1997) explain, both "power-on" and "power-off" are traditional ways of teaching that "reinforce the expert-novice dichotomy" (Bell, 1993, cited in Watts et al., 1997, p. 310), whereas "power-for" and "power-with" enable teaching "where the teacher works alongside the student either guiding and structuring or (better) democratically learning together with the student" (Watts et al., 1997, p. 310). Bell's metaphor for the teacher–student relationship suggests that teachers

have the choice to undertake empowering constructivist teaching. According to Watts et al. (1997),

> in order to conduct such processes within education, teachers must possess critical awareness", which implies "an understanding of themselves, their perspectives, their approaches to the construction of knowledge, and ways in which their own consciousness has been shaped by society (and schools) (p. 312).

Early childhood (EC) scholars today argue for a balanced pedagogical approach between the teacher-directed and the child-initiated (e.g. Siraj-Blatchford, 2008; Krieg, 2011; Grieshaber, 2016) in which the "sustained shared thinking" (SST) between educators and children is proved to be an effective pedagogical interaction by recent large-scale research, such as "the Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) and Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY) projects" in the United Kingdom (UK) (Hammer & He, 2016, p. 452). Sustained shared thinking (SST) appears to be one of the current trends in ECE that best interprets "constructivist teaching and learning", where the intellectual gains in children are promoted through conversation, and "in which the adult and child co-construct an idea or activity" (Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004, p. 724). Sylva et al. (2010) argue for the important role that the teacher plays in children's learning. The EYLF for Australia (DEEWR, 2009) highlights the aspect of "intentional teaching" by educators, and Leggett (2015) also reveals the aspect of "intentional learning" by children. These contemporary pedagogical trends in ECE provide insightful guidance to the current research.

2.4.2 How do I understand children's learning?

My understanding of children's learning is informed by Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, where the child's cultural development appears on two planes: the social plane and the psychological plane (Vygotsky, 1986). Vygotsky's influences are both reflected in the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) and the Australia F-10 Curriculum (ACARA, 2016), as both curricula emphasise the interactions between children and society during the learning process. Rogoff (1998, 2003) expanded this theory by adding a third plane—the broad sociocultural context—based on Vygotsky's first inter-psychological plane and second intra-psychological plane; also, these three planes are highly interactive during children's cognitive development. Miller Marsh (2002) echoes the importance of this sociocultural plane in children's learning by stating that "children appropriate historically, socially, and culturally specific ways of thinking, speaking, and interacting

from those contexts in which they are situated" (p .457, cited in Krieg, 2008, p. 46). Moreover, inspired by Karl Marx's idea that "individuals, culture, meaning and power are intimately connected and inseparable" (MacNaughton, 2004, p. 46), critical constructivist MacNaughton (2004) claims that "children make their own meanings but not under conditions of their own choosing" (p. 46). Exploring this more deeply in the broader sociocultural context, she argues that four conditions of power impact upon children's learning, namely: the power of pre-existing cultural imagery and cultural meanings; the power of expectations; the power of positions; and the power of the marketplace (MacNaughton, 2004).

Children today appear to take a more active role in their learning as they are understood to be "capable and competent in taking ownership of their own learning" (Leggett, 2015, p. 134). According to the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, children are considered to be the cultural code-breakers (ACARA, 2016, "Introduction to the Australian Curriculum: The Arts"). This is also reflected in the Chinese context where children are regarded as the "subjects of learning and development" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 2). These ideas inform my current research in children's arts learning.

Highly relevant to the current research with regard to children's creative art education, in *The Psychology of Art*, Vygotsky formulates the principle that creative work in the arts is profoundly social:

> Art is the social within us, and even if its action is performed by a single individual it does not mean that its essence is individual ... art is the social technique of emotion, a tool for society which brings the most intimate and personal aspects of our being into the circle of social life ... it would be more correct to say that emotion becomes personal when every one of us experiences a work of art; it becomes personal without ceasing to be social (1925, 1971, p. 249).

Faulkner et al. (2006) more recently suggest using a social constructivist approach for the development of children's creativity. I concur with Faulkner et al.'s (2006) argument that "culture and creativity should be regarded as socially constructed", and that "dynamic dimensions of children's activities and socialization" "emerge through interaction with other people and with the environment …" (p. 191). Indeed, the social constructivist approach emphasises the importance of social processes, as well the interaction between individual processes and social processes, and, for children, "development is an active process whereby children co-construct knowledge through socially situated action" (Faulkner et al., 2006, p. 198).

2.4.3 Some concepts, strategies and models in ECE

As discussed above, contemporary EC scholars argue for a balanced pedagogical approach between the teacher-directed and child-initiated where the "sustained shared thinking" (SST) of educators and children as well as the "intentional teaching" of educators are advocated.

Sustained shared thinking (SST) is defined as "an effective pedagogic interaction, where two or more individuals work (often playfully) together in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, or extend a narrative" (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2003, cited in Siraj-Blatchford, 2008, p. 7).

More specifically, Purdon (2016) suggests that the attributes of SST include: the teacher and the child seeking opportunities to make meaning together; the teacher listening carefully to the child and approaching all interactions with sensitivity; the teacher honouring the child's voice and interests in learning, which includes providing meaningful contexts, using scaffolding, developing the best environment and providing the child with love, warmth and support; the teacher making connections between different episodes of SST; and the teacher seeking training opportunities to enhance the skills required for sustained shared thinking (SST). These suggestions regarding SST are referred to during the analysis and discussion in Chapter Six, the case study chapter of this research.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1989) introduce the term "intentional learning" to refer to "cognitive processes that have learning as a goal rather than an incidental outcome" (p. 363); coherent with the contemporary balanced pedagogical approach as discussed above, they argue that "intentional learning" occur in both self-directed and teacher-directed learning situations. Drawing on Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1989) work and using CGTM based on empirical data, Leggett (2015) puts forward some "intentional learning" strategies of children, with this considered to be another key aspect in quality EC learning. These strategies include:

> Asking questions (seeking approval/confirmation, asking permission or requesting, suggesting ideas, theorising/wondering, finding out information), being independent and making own choices, children co-constructing knowledge together, clues from their environment, demonstrating, describing, explaining, imagining, inviting others, making connections to home, making connections to prior learning, making requests, modelling, personifying, pretending, problem solving, recalling, requesting assistance, suggesting

ideas, using rules, using gestures and actions, using humour, and seeking the use of technology (Leggett, 2015, p .314).

Drawing from both Epstein's (2007) definition and Australian EYLF's (DEEWR, 2009) statement on "intentional teaching", Leggett (2015) also proposes two categorisations regarding the "intentional teaching" strategies of educators: explicit strategies and mediating strategies. The former are used "when educators have a goal or purpose in mind for children's learning", with examples such as to "clarify, show concern, explain, extend thinking and introduce new information" (p. 313). The latter are used "when educators act with the intention to promote children's social interactions, collaborative problem solving and independent learning", with examples such as "respects children's ideas/choices, scaffolds skills and abilities, shows interest, speculates and supports peer interactions" (p. 313).

Weikart (2000) proposed a typology of the most commonly applied pedagogical models in the field of ECE, with these having been proved to be the "ideal types" in the UK's Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) project (Siraj-Blatchford, 2008, p. 10). This typology is shown in Figure 2.1. Focusing on the initiatives of both the teacher and child in pedagogical activities, this typology provides another perspective regarding SST, and is also used during the pedagogical analysis of the empirical study in this research.
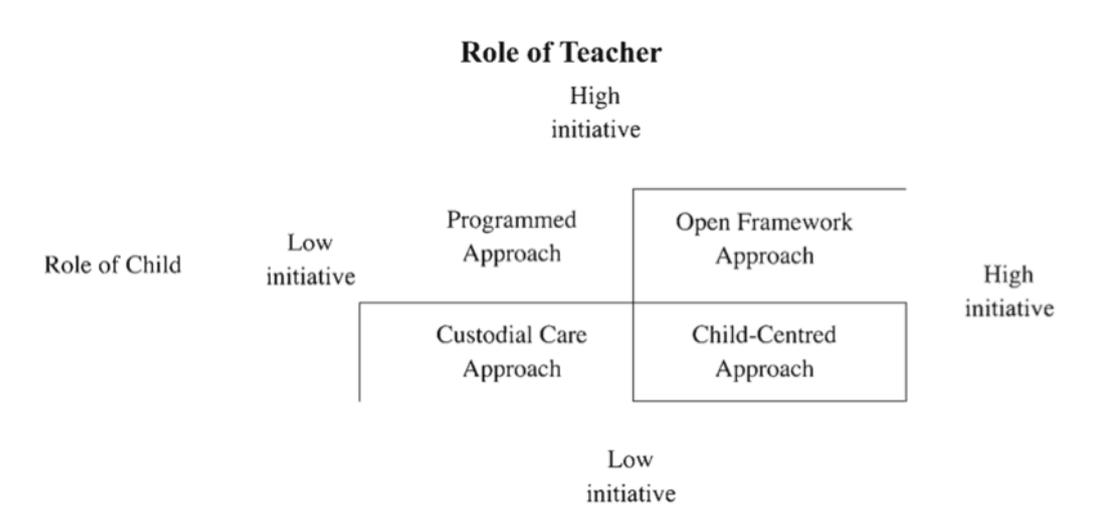
Figure 2.1 Weikart's (2000) typology of the pedagogical model in ECE
Source: Siraj-Blatchford (2008, p. 11)

In summary, the ideas regarding teaching and learning in the early years, as presented in this section, provide guidance in the development of this thesis. In

particular, the analysis and discussion regarding the empirical data in this study are informed by these useful concepts, strategies and models in contemporary international research, particularly in relation to the EC pedagogy.

2.4.4 "Play" in early learning

A well-established consensus is apparent among EC researchers that play is fundamental in young children's learning (e.g. Dockett & Fleer, 1999; Jones & Cooper, 2006; Elkind, 2007) "because it drives young children's development" (Van Hoorn et al., 2007, p. 5). Play-based EC curricula are adopted in many Western countries (Wood & Attfield, 2005). For example, as stated in the EYLF for Australia (DEEWR, 2009), "play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine" (p. 15). In addition, Van Hoorn et al. (2011) explained that "the match between the characteristics of play and the characteristics of the young child provides a synergy that drives development as no teacher-directed activity can" (p.4). Dockett and Fleer (1999) listed a variety of genres of play among young children, such as role study, power study, physical study, language study, spatial study, construction study and music study. Some of these genres involve symbolic play, which "can be understood as a very complex system of 'speech' through gestures that communicate and indicate the meaning of the playthings" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 108), and which contributes to building the foundation for children's later symbolic and abstract thinking (Wu, 2016). Based on research evidence, play is significant in young children's cognitive, social, emotional and communicative development (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2016). Children engaged in free-flow play are "intrinsically motivated"; they are enabled to be "imaginative, creative, original and innovative", and they get a sense of being in control (Bruce, 1994, 2014, cited in Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2016, p. 21).

Van Hoorn et al.'s (2011) continuum of play comprises spontaneous play, guided play and teacher-directed play, depending on whether the play is child initiated or teacher initiated, or whether it is between these two ends, as demonstrated in Figure 2.2.

Figure 1.2
The Play Continuum

Spontaneous Play	Guided Play	Teacher-Directed Play

Child-Initiated ◄- - - - - - - - ► Teacher-Initiated
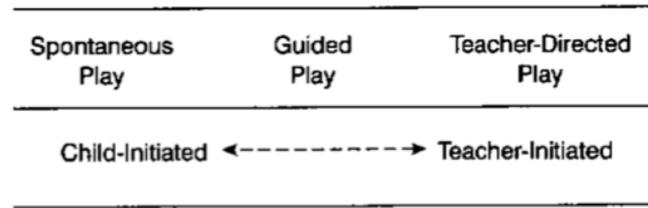
Figure 2.2 The Play Continuum
Source: Van Hoorn et al. (2011, p. 11)

Alongside these three types of play, two types of "work" activities are carried out by children, namely, "work disguised as play" and "work" (Wing, 1995). The former refers to the tasks that are transformed to provide some control or motivation for children, and the latter is actively defined by the tasks.

Learning through play is "closely aligned to the conceptual roots of child-centredness, dating back to Rousseau and Pestalozzi in the 1700s" (Burman, 1994, cited in Widger & Schofield, 2012, p. 32). In Chinese traditional culture, differing from this Western tradition, the construct of the concept of play appeared to be different. Confucius proposed to provide education for all children without discrimination, to teach children in accordance with their aptitude, and to apply heuristic teaching (Hao, 2015); however, the concept of play is not explicitly articulated within the Confucian approaches to child education. Another ancient Chinese philosopher Han Yu claimed, "'*ye jing yu qin, huang yu xi*', [which] places little importance on play, suggesting that only hard work would lead to achievements" (Wu & Rao, 2011, cited in Vong, 2012, p. 37). As argued by Vong (2012), "evidence … shows that the [Western] play concept has influenced Chinese educational ideas and pedagogy at certain levels but without changing the fundamental Chinese ideas of a play and learning relationship" (p. 35).

2.5 Curriculum

The word curriculum was first officially used in the US in about 1920 (Wiles & Bondi, 2007). Krieg (2008) posits that curriculum is an elusive concept. Smith and Lovat (2003) argue that "any complete, useful and effective definition of curriculum" must include the perspectives of curriculum as "product", "process", "intention" and "reality" (p. 21). This definition seems to connect with the three-phase categorisation of the phases of curriculum suggested by Marsh and Willis (2007), as discussed in the introduction chapter. The reason is that the perspectives of curriculum as "product" or

"intention" might refer to the "intended" curriculum, whereas the perspectives of curriculum as "process" and "reality" might involve the "enacted" and "experienced" curriculum.

2.5.1 Curriculum orientations and perspective

Kemmis et al. (1983) identify three orientations to curriculum in modern society: the vocational/neo-classical, the liberal/progressive and the socially-critical. They explain that "the vocational/neo-classical orientation is one in which education is understood as a preparation for work"; "the liberal/progressive orientation sees education as a preparation for life rather than work"; and "the socially-critical orientation is less sanguine about the improvement of society" with the view that social changes "must be brought about by collective action capable of confronting unjust and irrational social structures" (Kemmis et al., 1983, p. 9).

Thomson (1999) argues that curriculum is a highly contested political struggle, because "it is a political arrangement of included and excluded knowledge and narrative" which is always about "political compromises, not inclusivity or coherence" (p. 34). Based on this statement, we conclude that curriculum decisions in any country embody the political rationalisation of the respective government authority. Under the perspective of governmentality, curriculum can be deemed as a political discourse or a major technique for achieving educational governance.

Social constructivism is an epistemology that emphasises social contexts and interaction during the process of knowledge building (Charmaz, 2014). Viewing curriculum from a social constructivist perspective means that curriculum is a concept that is socially constructed (Krieg, 2008). Drawing on French sociologist Durkheim, Young (2014) holds that "curricula are 'social facts'" (p. 7). According to Thomson (1999), the curriculum decision is a highly selective process during which some "social facts" are included whereas some others are excluded. This resonates with Kirylo and Nauman ([eds.], 2010) in that this social constructive process of curriculum is "filtered through a blending of complex political, religious, and cultural influences" (p. 15). Using Foucault's (1991) theory of governmentality, the curriculum decision reflects a synthesis of power relations, through which the "proper" truth and knowledge regarding the curriculum is defined. This view of curriculum, which is embedded in the complex power relations in society, provides meaningful guidance in the development of this study.

2.5.2 Early childhood curriculum approaches and issues

The significance of curriculum-based childhood education has been acknowledged worldwide (Turunen, Uusiautti & Määttä, 2014). Many countries have issued official national documents to guide ECE in their countries. According to Turja, Endepohls-Ulpe and Chatoney (2013), the labels for these kinds of documents vary and include terms such as "curriculum guidelines, frame curriculum, or educational framework" (p. 354) to all of which the term "curriculum" can refer. Bennett (2005) holds that a curriculum framework in ECE generally includes key elements, such as a statement of the principles and values; a summary of program standards; a short outline of content and outputs; and the pedagogical guidelines.

Among OECD countries, two broad curricular and pedagogical groups are identified. The social pedagogic approach to curriculum is found in the Nordic and central European countries, focusing on and working with the whole child and his/her family. On the other hand, the traditional pre-primary approach is found in some European countries, such as Belgium, France, Ireland, Netherlands and the UK, focusing on learning and skills, especially in areas useful for school readiness (Bennett, 2005). In comparison with Kemmis et al.'s (1983) three orientations in curriculum, the social pedagogic approach shares some features with the socially-critical orientation (e.g. ECE centres as life place, the child as co-learner). Conversely, the traditional pre-primary approach finds some common features both in the vocational/neo-classical orientation (e.g. mainly teacher-directed, learning outcomes and assessment often required) and the liberal-progressive orientation (e.g. child-initiated activities and thematic work encouraged). Although little research has been conducted to evaluate the above two approaches, Bennett (2005) argues that "experienced curriculum authors in the early childhood field today tend to see curriculum for young children in the broad terms favoured by the social pedagogic tradition" (p. 14) as it is "open", "emergent", "broad and comprehensive", "in touch with [the] vital interests of children and their families" and as it focuses on "the well-being and involvement of each child …" (p. 14).

Early childhood years in Australia include from birth to age eight with educators drawing from two documents to guide their curriculum decisions—the EYLF for Australia and the Australian Curriculum F-10. The Australian Curriculum F-10 is for children aged five and over, whereas the EYLF is used for those aged from birth to five. Both Australian documents are about social pedagogy (Krieg, 2011; Ewing, 2010). The

social pedagogic tradition of children's curriculum echoes the social-constructivist approach to curriculum research.

Fleer (2011) listed other curriculum approaches identified in non-OECD countries. For example, in Russia, the Golden Key programs use cultural historical theory, while in Hong Kong, Mainland China and Singapore, "there is a movement towards valuing both pre-primary and social pedagogy approaches as a dialectical relation" in ECE curriculum models (Fleer, 2011, p. 17). Papatheodorou's (2010) research reminds us of the significance of "the view of the child" which is often used as a key premise in contemporary early childhood curriculum study.

In terms of the main obstacles to quality, Bennett (2005) highlights that the first is the absence of structural supports that allow the implementation of a quality curriculum, and the second is inadequate pedagogical theory and practice. Structural quality means adequate investment in the system, favourable child/staff ratios, the level of certification and professional development of educators, and the adequacy of buildings, resources and learning environments (European Commission Childcare Network, 1996, cited in Bennett, 2005).

2.5.3 Early childhood curriculum development in Mainland China

Being one of the four great ancient civilisations in the world (Li & Yang, 2016), China enjoys a high reputation for its professed reverence for knowledge and education from ancient times through to today (Baark, 2007). Traditional Chinese education prioritised Confucian doctrines and ranked men over women as the main objects of instruction. Luo and Arndt (2010) argue that, since the establishment of the PRC in 1949, tremendous changes have taken place in the fields of education and curriculum, based on four different stages of history. The first stage from 1949–1965 was characterised by its overemphasis on political development; during the second stage, known as the Cultural Revolution, from 1966–1976, ideological concerns saw the decline of education provision across the nation; the third stage from 1977–2000 was a period of recovery in the whole education system; and the fourth stage from 2001 to the present is a period seeing dramatic development in education and curriculum, with China endeavouring to conform to the education trends of the modern world.

Chinese ECE has changed significantly over the past 30 years compared to ECE in some other countries, such as Japan and the United States (US) (e.g. Tobin et al., 2009). Zhu and Zhang (2008) argue that, since the 1980s, the Chinese EC curriculum

has undergone reform: "curriculum approaches are becoming more diverse and aligned with the increasingly open and diversified society" (p. 175). In this context, it is claimed that the Chinese EC curriculum has eventually developed from teacher-centred to child-centred (e.g. Wong & Pang, 2002; Tobin et al., 2009).

2.6 History of modern ECE in China

Holton's (2000) key ideas of globalisation inform the following analysis of the history of modern ECE in China. In addition, this historical retrospective utilises a governmentality perspective, drawing on one of its key concepts—the impacts and consequences instigated by various power relations under different circumstances.

2.6.1 Process of colonisation, Westernisation or homogenisation from 1904–1949

The first modern Chinese kindergarten was established in 1904 in the later stage of the Westernisation movement of the Qing Dynasty (Hsueh, Tobin & Karasawa, 2004). Located in Wuhan City, it was "based on a Japanese model inspired by Froebelian principles and practices" (Hsueh et al., 2004, p. 458). At that time, educational reform came mainly from Japan, with Japan located close to China and being an Asian country that had successfully adopted elements of Western society and had, as a result, become a strong nation (Lau, 2012). The first modern kindergarten in China had the deep imprint of Japanese colonisation. However, Lau (2012) states that "after World War I, [the] Chinese looked to America and Europe for cultural influences rather than Japan" (p. 4) and that "China adopted an American-style school system in 1922" (Gao, 1985, cited in Deng & Treiman, 1997, p. 393). As Foucault (2000) pointed out, "power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus" (p. 343). Using the lens of governmentality theory, we see the decline of Japanese colonisation and the rise of Western influences upon Chinese EC education, as a consequence of World War I. In brief, I propose that the development of Chinese ECE from 1904–1949 involved the process of colonisation, Westernisation or homogenisation.

2.6.2 Chinese ECE from 1949–1978, under the status of polarisation, and the chaotic 10 years

After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, major change was evident in Chinese foreign policy. As Chen (2003) argues, "Mao and the Party leadership decided to break with the legacies of the old China, to 'make a fresh start' in China's foreign affairs, and to lean to the side of the Soviet-led socialist camp" (pp. 138-139). During the early

years of the global Cold War, the world split into two camps characterised by a "'one or the other' bipolarized division" (Chen, 2003, p. 140). During that epoch, the PRC pursued an alliance with the Soviet Union, applied a confrontational attitude toward the US and, consequently, was isolated from the capitalist Western world (Chen, 2003). As a result, Chinese educational models during this period came from the former Soviet Union, and "a socialistic perspective [was applied] to early childhood education" (Wong & Pang, 2002, p.64). The confrontational power relations during the post-World War II period, between socialism and capitalism, can explain this phenomenon. The Soviet model was strongly based on academic subjects (Lau, 2012).

Since the 1950s, kindergarten education has expanded throughout China, in rural areas as well as urban areas, in factories and in other work units (Lau, 2012). From 1966–1976, China with its closed borders experienced a period of political upheaval known as the Cultural Revolution which was "a decade-long mass movement, unleashed and, at least initially, orchestrated by Mao Zedong and his agents" (Deng & Treiman, 1997, p. 394). Losses in education were one of its disastrous consequences—"[t]he Cultural Revolution resulted in a massive disruption of education in China" (Deng & Treiman, 1997, p. 400). As cited by Sidel (1982) from a speech of the former Chinese Minister of Education: "the sabotage to education during the chaotic ten years (1966–1976) was tremendous. The equipment and installation of many schools were wrecked and … the losses in manpower were even greater" (p. 79). During that period, the ECE system in China was disrupted, and qualified teachers were scarce. The arts curriculum in early childhood had been politicised and adultified; for example, children were taught to sing revolutionary songs, which they rarely understood and which was inappropriate for their age (Wang, 2012). One interesting phenomenon was that during the Cultural Revolution, despite the decline of education in other art forms, music education received a large amount of attention. The reason was its utilitarian function as it was used as a political tool to advocate revolution (Chen-Haftech & Xu, 2008). Through using a governmentality lens, the arts were considered to be a kind of *techne* for achieving the governmental *telos* (ultimate aim) during the Cultural Revolution (Dean, 2010).

2.6.3 Turning point to cultural hybridisation: 1978

The notion of hybridisation is often associated with cosmopolitanism (Holton, 2009). According to Hannerz (1992), "its defining features include an orientation toward a plurality of cultural centers, preparedness to engage with others, and competence to function across cultural divides" (cited in Holton, 2000, p. 150).

In the post-Mao era, as the result of a radical mutation of political power relations in China, Deng Xiaoping took supreme authority. For the Chinese people, the year of 1978 is of extraordinary significance. As argued by Harvey (2005):

Future historians may well look upon the years 1978–80 as a revolutionary turning-point in the world's social and economic history. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping took the first momentous steps towards the liberalization of a communist-ruled economy in a country that accounted for a fifth of the world's population (p. 1).

Since then, political struggle has no longer been the main feature of Chinese society: instead, the outmoded production capacity was identified as the major "problem" in China. Against this historical background, China committed itself to economic development and "the 'four modernizations', namely, modern science and technology as the foundation for modern agriculture, industry and national defense" (Culliton, 1978, p. 512). Consequently, "the Chinese educational pendulum … has swung from an emphasis on political ideology to an emphasis on technical skills or, as the Chinese would say, from 'red' to 'expert'" (Sidel, 1982, p. 79).

The Reform and Opening-up policy initiated in 1978 not only enabled the rapid development of the Chinese economy and foreign trade, but also revitalised Chinese cultural exchanges with Western countries. As stated by Tang (2011), "elements of Western culture have thoroughly penetrated all strata of Chinese society, bringing about sweeping changes in beliefs, values, behavior, and habits" (p. 269). Liu and Pan (2013) argue that

the Reform and Open Door policy announced by Deng Xiaoping in December 1978 set in motion the transformation of every area of Chinese society and communication with foreign countries … The economic growth has brought enormous advances in the development of the early childhood education in Mainland China (p. 142).

Traditional educational concepts have been greatly affected. Zhu and Zhang (2008) state the following:

Foreign educational theories, such as those of Dewey, Montessori, Bronfenbrenner, Bruner and especially Piaget and Vygotsky, began to spread widely in China, and the thoughts of recent modern Chinese educationists were brought to the fore again. These ideas challenged the early childhood education system that had existed for more than 30 years (p. 174).

Since 1978, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, China has been committed to building socialism with Chinese characteristics. China has now opened its door to the world; meanwhile, Chinese traditional cultural values and particularly Confucianism have returned to people's lives (Zhu & Wang, 2005). As a result, we see a hybridisation of traditional Confucian culture, communist culture and Western culture (Zhu & Zhang, 2008) each of which has co-played a part in the development of Chinese ECE since 1978. The Australian F-10 curriculum can also be deemed as a hybridisation of "disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding; general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities" (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Overview/Structure, "The whole curriculum", para. 1). In particular, ACARA (2011) recognises that "The Arts provide an especially rich platform for understanding **cultural diversity** and being sensitive to it" (p.21).

2.7 Policy review of Chinese early childhood arts education since 1978

China has undergone significant reform during the past three decades, politically (Baum & Shevchenko, 1999), economically (Cheung, Chug & Lin, 1998), socially (Solinger, 1999) and culturally (Guo, 2004). Chien (2008) argues that "China's reforms opened its doors to globalization" (p. 502). The reforms in China have been predominantly connected with "global processes" (Guthrie, 2008, p. xiv) with the forces of globalisation impacting upon public institutions, such as education (Xu, 2005). For example, arts education in early childhood has been differentiated from its previous experiences and has specialised during the last three decades (Wang, 2012).

Since the Reform and Opening-up policy announced by the former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping in 1978, with Chinese society's rapid development and deeply influenced by the globalisation process, the arts curriculum in Chinese ECE has achieved significant progress in a variety of aspects (Wang, 2012).

Pang and Plucker (2013) explain the policies in China as follows:

> In practice, the most important policy documents are often the presidential reports delivered to the CPC's [Communist Party of China] National Congress, which represent de facto national policies and strategies. Other important documents are the Five-year Plans sponsored by the Central Committee of the CPC, created by the State Council, and ratified by the People's Congress (p. 249).

Using a governmentality framework, this section aims to draw a picture of why and how global educational theories and paradigms since 1978 have affected and continue to affect the educational policies in Chinese EC education.

From a positivist view, policy can be deemed as a product of governmental action yet, whether conceptually or methodologically, this seems to be a limited view (Fimyar, 2014). Alternatively, Ozga (2000) provides a definition of policy from a post-structuralist view: "education policy is not confined to the formal relationships and processes of government … the broad definition requires that we understand it in its political, social and economic contexts" (p. 113). In the same vein, Ball (1994, p. 21) argues that policy is not only a text, but also a power relation, whereby power is exercised through "a production of truth and knowledge, as discourses" (cited in Fimyar, 2014, p. 9). As seen in the studies of governmentality, "discourse refers to statements that bind around a particular topic and provide a way of talking about and responding to it" (Blood, 2005, p. 49; Foucault, 1971). Therefore, discourses shape our thoughts and actions, and some will always be more dominant than others.

2.7.1 What and how are the power relations impacting upon this policy making?

As previously discussed, in the post-Mao era, the outmoded production capacity replaced political struggles as China's major "problem". Using a governmentality perspective, Ettlinger (2011) argues that "an examination of problems posed by the existing system … can inform strategies to develop a transformational mentality" (p. 542). As a result, "the economic stagnation [before the reform] forced the post-Mao leadership to rethink its development strategy and search for a new base of political legitimacy" (Zheng, 2014, p. 63). Against this background, China's reforms and openness to the world were inaugurated, and China's globalisation process started in a variety of aspects including education.

Globalisation can be understood as an increasing trend of greater connectivity among different regions and different cultures in the world, and it presents unprecedented opportunities as well as challenges to humanity (Kashima et al., 2011). Educational globalisation is manifested as the "adoption by many nations of similar educational practices, curricula, school organizations, and pedagogies" (Thomas & Yang, 2013, p. 113).

Some scholars mention the effects of globalisation on national educational systems (e.g. Dale, 1999), and "many commentators [see] globalisation as a web of

influences shaping the educational agenda around the world" (Fimyar, 2014, p. 12). In the current research, the forces of globalisation are defined as a predominant power which interconnects, interplays and hybridises with the national and local involvements and has shaped Chinese ECE policy making since 1978.

The predominant power of globalisation is reflected in a series of policies in this field. For example, according to the *Kindergarten Work Regulations and Procedures (Trial version)* (State Education Commission of China, 1989b), "early childhood education should face the world, face the future and face modernization" and, "through administrative policies, the reform content [in this policy] was implemented to each level of administrative organizations and each kindergarten" (Zhu & Zhang, 2008, p. 174). In 1990, China signed the United Nations' *Convention of the Rights of the Child* (hereafter, the Convention) which regulated children's rights to be able to participate in the cultural and artistic life of their communities. China's signature on the Convention showed the determination of the Chinese government to shoulder its responsibilities for children's rights in the global arena. From that point, Chinese arts education for children found its international legitimacy and benchmark.

A three-category typology of reform is implemented in some Western countries; these categories comprise competitiveness-driven, finance-driven and equity-driven reforms (Carnoy, 1999). Competitiveness-driven reforms aim at "increasing economic productivity by improving the quality of labour and the quality and efficiency of [the] education system as a whole" (Fimyar, 2014, p. 14). This category of reform can be identified among some of the Chinese EC policies. For example, "quality education" was advocated both in the *Educational Master Plan of National Art (2001-2010)* (Ministry of Education [PRC], 2002) and in the *Early Learning and Development Guideline of Children aged 3-6* (the Guideline) (Ministry of Education [PRC], 2012). Equity-driven reforms aim at "increasing the equality of educational opportunity. Examples of these include [a move toward] education for all, distance learning and various other initiatives aimed at the disadvantaged" (Fimyar, 2014, p. 14). This type of reform is exemplified by the *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)* (State Council of China, 2010), of which the key themes are to promote educational equity and quality, with this stated as "educational equity is an important foundation for social justice" (State Council of China, 2010, p. 1). This point of view aligns with global educational concerns. As stated by Gottfried and Johnson (2012), "educational equity is an ongoing concern among practitioners and researchers" (p. 18). Some Western countries have elaborated laws to ensure educational equity (e.g. the US *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and the

Australian Curriculum F-10). Under these global influences, since 2010, "the Chinese government has launched a comprehensive set of education policies designed to promote equitable access to early childhood [education] and improvement in the quality" (Qian, 2013, p. 1). Furthermore, in order to "fully implement a Promotion Programme on ECE in Rural Areas and to speed up the construction of rural kindergartens in central and Western China" (Liu & Pan, 2013, p. 144), in 2011, the National Meeting on Education decided to launch the implementation of a three-year action plan on ECE which is to be implemented by local governments based on each county.

Some of China's policies in the field of EC arts education reveal that global influences work together with national political and cultural rationalities in order to achieve a certain governmental end. For example, in the *Educational Master Plan of National Art (1989-2000)* (State Education Commission of China, 1989a), arts education was announced as the main content and approach to the application of aesthetic education in China. The announcement added that it was a powerful means to consolidate the construction of a socialist spiritual civilisation, to improve students' morality and to promote students' intelligence and healthy development both in mind and body. Here we clearly see a Western re-constructionist view of arts rooted in progressivist philosophy (e.g. Dewey, 1987; Greene, 1996). According to Wong and Piscitelli (2009), the expressionists' mantra is "art for art's sake", while re-constructionists recognise "art for life's sake" as a means of acquiring important life skills (p. 7), as well as the knowledge learned through art being of benefit to human understanding. However, the intent of this policy was to "consolidate the construction of socialist spiritual civilisation" which represents a communist discourse, as well as to "improve students' morality" which seems to pertain to one of the Chinese aesthetic traditions (as discussed in Section 2.3.6). This typical example demonstrates the cultural hybridisation implemented in contemporary Chinese ECE, which is a combination of Western, communist and traditional Chinese discursive influences, as previously discussed.

It is possible to identify some kind of resistance in this kind of discursive hybridisation. Foucault (1998) reminds us that "discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (p. 101). Wong and Pang's (2002) argument appears to be relevant here: "under the Open Door Policy, Western ideologies gradually became a point of reference, but traces of the 1950s Russian framework remained" (p. 65). This continues to be true today as the "teacher-centred,

textbook-focused, and classroom-based" (Pan & Liu, 2008, p. 34) ex-Soviet model still exists in some Chinese EC settings (e.g. Ho, 2015), even though the Western idea of "child-centredness" first entered China in the 1980s (Wong & Pang, 2002).

2.7.2 What knowledge, beliefs and interests have converged to create these policies?

As argued previously, Foucault's "power–knowledge system" is considered to be a central axis within the governmentality theory (e.g. Baark, 2007; Ettlinger, 2011) in which a cyclical relationship exists between knowledge and power. Foucault (1980b) argues that "knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates effects of power" (p. 69). Dean (2010) further explains that "the forms of knowledge … arise from and inform the activity of governing" (p. 35): he called these forms of knowledge "the *episteme* of government" (Dean, 1995, cited in Dean, 2010, p. 35). In this section, through using a governmentality perspective, it is possible to explore: "what knowledge, beliefs and interests have converged to underpin and give rise to these policies in Chinese ECE since 1978"? In answering this question, I have previously identified that, influenced by the power of globalisation, various international notions, theories and approaches have been adopted and endorsed in these policy documents.

For example, in the initial ECE policy after 1978—*Kindergarten Education Summary* (Trial version) (Ministry of Education [PRC], 1981)—the notion of "games" and "fun" was emphasised when it stated that "teaching goes together with fun" and "avoiding the tendency of Early Childhood Education 'Primary'". This has a connection with the worldwide notion in ECE that "children learn through play" (e.g. McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002), whereas such a notion has certainly not been an original Chinese concept (Ho, 2015).

The *Seventh Five-Year Plan* (hereafter the Plan) (National People's Congress, 1986) advocated an "all-round development" of "moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labour education". This was the first government document in which the status of aesthetic education in China was recognised. The frame of the Plan reflected Gardner's (1983) "multiple intelligences" theory which has become "an accepted conceptual framework for some teachers' work and many believe art should hold a privileged position within the curriculum" (McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002, p. 13).

In the *Kindergarten Work Regulations and Procedures* (Trial version) (State Education Commission of China, 1989b), Western notions of child-centred, hands-on learning and freedom for the individual were adopted. This document, considered to be

the most influential measure of Chinese EC curriculum reform since the 1980s (Zhu & Zhang, 2008), was guided by an expressionism orientation in accordance with Efland's (1990) framework, for it encouraged aesthetic awareness and expression among children. It also suggested that children should understand more about their environment through arts and language, thus we see some influences of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory.

The Educational Master Plan of National Art (1989-2000) (State Education Commission of China, 1989a) proposed the notion of the integrated curriculum. According to this document, arts education could be found in school education in different forms, such as "project-based, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary" (Wong & Piscitelli, 2009, p. 7). As it advocated strengthening arts practices, the "hands-on" notion in Dewey's progressivism (McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002) was also reflected here. The advocacy to respect students' mind–body characteristics in different age bands revealed a developmentally appropriate approach (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992) which is influential in the implementation of many international EC programs (Wong & Piscitelli, 2009). Similarly, the "mind-body developmental rules" and the "age characteristics" were endorsed in another policy—the *Kindergarten Education Summary* (State Education Commission of China, 1996)—which appeared to be influenced by Lowenfeld's (1947) "age-based stages" from a systematic framework of art development (Wong & Piscitelli, 2009).

In the *Guiding Framework of Kindergarten Education* (Trial version) (State Education Commission of China, 1999), the notion of "lifelong learning" was articulated. This conformed to the same global educational concept which was advocated, promoted and popularised by UNESCO as well as other international organisations from the middle of the 1960s. As this framework stipulated that children should be given opportunities to interact with peers and teachers, some influences are identified of Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism which proposed the view of "looking at the dynamic interaction of children with adults" in education (McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002, p. 13).

Influences of both Piaget's constructivism (1969) and Vygotsky's social constructivism were found in the *Guidance for Kindergarten Education* (Trial version) (State Education Commission of China, 2001), as it not only emphasised the constructivist and procedural features with regard to the nature of knowledge, but it also promoted interactive activities in children's arts learning. In addition, this guidance document expressed a keen interest in developing children's creativity through the arts,

and suggested avoidance of overemphasis on technique, skill and standardisation. Chen-Hafteck and Xu (2008) argue that "the influence of global culture in this policy document is evident" (p. 13), as it was developed after extensive consultation with educational experts who had studied in the US or Europe.

Finally, the notion of applying modern educational techniques and methods was reflected in the *Educational Master Plan of National Art (1989-2000)* (State Education Commission of China, 1989a). This was in line with the global megatrend to develop education with information and communications technology (ICT), a trend which has been rapidly growing since the 1980s (Lemke, 2010).

2.7.3 What is being framed as "problematic" and which solutions are being offered to solve the "problem"?

Dean (2010) argues that in order to analyse the regimes of government, the key starting point is to examine and identify a "problematisation". It is therefore meaningful in the current research to observe and analyse how "policy 'problems' and policy 'solutions' float in a … policy space" (Fimyar, 2014, p. 11).

In this section, a policy problem is concluded to be implementation. For example, Zhu and Zhang (2008) hold that the *Kindergarten Work Regulations and Procedures* (Trial version) issued in 1989 adopted Western progressive ideas and practices. However, it was difficult for practitioners to fully embrace this progressive ideology due to the resistance of powerful traditional values; furthermore, it lacked practical implementation guidelines for educators. In order to solve this problem, the State Education Commission of China issued the *Guidance for Kindergarten Education (*Trial version) in 2001. The guiding ideology of the Guidance comprised a "continuative development education idea", "people first in education", "multi-disciplinary integration and ecological education" and "all-around dynamic assessment". Thus, the construction and implementation of this policy document sought to effectively deepen the ECE reform in China.

The *Early Learning and Development Guideline of Children aged 3-6* issued by the Ministry of Education (PRC) in 2012 were a second example of the problem of implementation. These gave "instructions of micro-level based on the Guidance"; furthermore, the Guideline was considered to be a key document "to achieve the strategic goals of the Outline [*Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)*]" (Ge, 2014, p. 95).

Another prominent problem highly relevant to arts learning in Chinese ECE appears to be the "national 'creativity deficit'" (Keane, 2006, p. 286), as discussed previously under the theme of "creativity". To tackle this problem, solutions were provided by the two key policies in this field, the Guidance and the Guideline. Both policy documents expressed keen interest in and high expectations for developing children's creativity through the arts.

2.7.4 What are the implications for the various players involved?

Dean (2010) reminds us to pay attention to the formation of identities which is deemed to be an important dimension of the regimes of practices within an analytics of government framework. Under this theoretical guidance, in this section, I attempt to analyse the implications of the Chinese ECE policies for one group of key players involved, namely, the early childhood (EC) teachers.

As previously indicated, one of the challenges in Chinese EC arts education is an imbalance between curriculum reforms and EC teachers' professional practice, with it argued that a gap exists between the policy requirements and EC teachers' educational beliefs and behaviours. Therefore, a fundamental identity transformation among Chinese EC teachers appears to be imperative, with this reflected in a number of policies in this field.

For example, the *Guiding Framework of Kindergarten Education* (Trial version) (State Education Commission of China, 1999) stipulated the "role of preschool teacher as collaborator, supporter, and guide to the child". Similarly, according to the Guidance (State Education Commission of China, 2001), the teacher in the ECE setting should act not only as a knowledge transmitter, but also as a supporter, collaborator and guide. This aligns with some of the Western perspectives. For instance, American arts educator Nancy Smith believed that teachers had important roles to guide and enable children's capabilities of creativity through arts education: she advocated "a dynamic interactive approach to early childhood art education", which was "a process where children and adults interchange skills, knowledge and ideas in a climate of cooperative learning (Smith, 1982, cited in McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002, p. 12).

To facilitate such an identity transformation, Zhu (2008) proposed the development of "an effective mechanism for early childhood teacher education" that would "prioritise in-service professional development and [promote] teachers' engagement in critically reflective activities" (p. 366). This proposition is also echoed by some of the policy

documents. For example, as one of the key factors for children's artistic learning, teachers' professional learning was highlighted in the *Educational Master Plan of National Art (1989-2000)* (State Education Commission of China, 1989a).

2.8 Challenges in the field of Chinese early childhood arts education

Since the 1980s, under global influences and with rapid social, political and economic development, significant progress has been made in Chinese early childhood arts education (Wang, 2012). However, several challenges remain in this field.

The first challenge is the difference between urban areas and rural and remote areas. Ngok (2007) asserts that, since the 1980s, "decentralization and marketization have become the main strategies of educational reform in China" (p. 146). Despite its positive impacts, "the financial decentralization policy has led to the remarkable disparity and inequality of educational development in China" (Ngok, 2007, p. 146). This author claims that "educational disparity between rural and urban regions has widened since the late 1970s" (p. 152). In addition, Zhu and Zhang (2008) point out that, "since the enactment of the market economy and open-door policy in the early 1980s, the gap between these areas and developed areas has been widening" (p. 180).

The second challenge concerns an imbalance between curriculum reforms and the professional practice of Chinese EC teachers. Zhu (2008) argues that due to the "unevenness in development in different areas and regions, and [the] disparity in resources and programming among teacher education programmes at different levels, teacher education [in Chinese ECE] is confronted with great challenges" (p. 361). Zhu's (2008) explanation for the gap between policy and teaching practices is that "the structuralisation, systematisation, centralisation, uniformity, standardisation" implicit in teacher education, ignores "complexity, contradiction, multiplicity, historical and contextual peculiarity, especially cultural appropriateness" (p.365). This author also states that, "the old teacher education paradigm [in China] that required teachers to be 'faithful technical executors' has met profound challenges" in the 21st century; and the power of globalisation "requires the educators to change their role [as] knowledge transmitters" (p.363).

The third challenge to be addressed in this field relates to cultural conflicts. Many scholars share the view that Chinese ECE has been utilising a hybrid cultural mix (e.g. Wang & Spodek, 2000; Zhu & Wang, 2005; Tobin & Hsueh, 2007; Chen-Haftech & Xu,

2008; Zhu & Zhang, 2008). In the field of Chinese EC arts education, this hybridisation appears as the co-existence of three distinct cultural threads: traditional culture, communist culture and Western culture (Zhu & Zhang, 2008), and the different ideologies and values implicated by different cultures. Zhu and Zhang (2008) argue that "sometimes one cultural thread counteracted another" (p. 176).

2.9 Chapter summary

Informed by the theory of governmentality, this literature review has developed a discussion on seven key themes highly relevant to the research field of this thesis. These themes are: creativity; art and aesthetics; curriculum; teaching and learning in early childhood; the history of Chinese modern ECE; a policy review on Chinese EC arts education since 1978; and some challenges in this research field. Given that the current research involves a cross-cultural comparative study between the intended and enacted arts curriculum in Beijing and the intended arts curriculum in Australia, this chapter has used some of these themes to compare Chinese and Western perspectives.

By weaving a power-knowledge nexus under the lens of governmentality, this chapter draws on both academic literature and historical documents, in order to discuss and examine the political, social, cultural and critical elements relevant to the research presented in this thesis. This literature review has revealed some limitations, such as the creativity gap between China and the West and the gaps between the policies and their implementation, as well as the gaps between EC educators' espoused beliefs and their enacted practices in the field of Chinese early childhood education (ECE). These gaps support the need for further study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter details the study's theoretical framework and outlines the research design. Several theories, including the different types of constructivism and sociocultural theory, are compared and discussed in seeking theoretical guidance for this study. The chapter presents a discussion regarding the theory of governmentality which provides a critical theoretical lens in this study, that is to "ask questions about government, authority and power" (Dean, 2010, p.38) in order to examine the features of children's arts education both in China and Australia. The rationale for adopting a qualitative approach and for using grounded theory methodology is expounded. The chapter also delineates the research methods and ethics issues, as well as providing details of the data analysis process and the strategies used to meet a series of quality criteria in this research.

3.2 Underlying principles in this research

3.2.1 How do I understand being?

"Ontology is the study of being" (Crotty, 1998, p. 10): it is also "the worldviews and assumptions in which researchers operate in their search for new knowledge" (Schwandt, 2007, p. 190). Prior to my doctoral study in Australia, this seemed to be an "axiomatic" matter to me: as with the majority of Mainland Chinese students born in the 1970s, I was educated to endorse the "proletariat materialism" and to reject the "capitalist idealism". In fact, I did not personally engage in the understanding and differentiation of such distinct world views. Neither did I go further in exploring the "nature of reality" (Creswell, 2007) and find my own ontological standpoint. Retrospectively when undertaking a self-reflexivity practice regarding this fundamental issue, I realise that I have been constantly shaped by the cultural and educational contexts in which I am situated. As revealed in my analysis in the literature review, one of the reasons accounting for the creativity gap between China and the West is an ontological feature in Chinese traditional culture which tended to seek "organicity, order and pattern" rather than probing "into the essence of things" (Baum, 1982, p. 1169). During my schooling in China, I was unconsciously influenced by the traditional Chinese pedagogy that was "teacher-directed", "content-based" and "achievement-

oriented" (Li, Rao & Tse, 2012, p. 605). In these cultural and educational contexts, I rarely had any opportunities to independently probe the ontological inquiry.

It was at the beginning of my study in Australia that I started thinking seriously of this issue in a systematic way. My literature research in relation to this field informed me of the three distinct ontological views: (1) the view that there is a "'real' reality" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108) that exists without a mind and is "made up of atomistic, discrete and observable events" (Blaikie, 1993, p. 94), with this view called "naïve realism" (Crotty, 1998, p. 10); (2) the view that there is a "'real' reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendible", with this view called "critical realism" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 98); and (3) the view that "reality is only knowable through the human mind and through socially constructed meaning", with this view called "idealism" (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 11) or "relativism" (Lincoln & Guba, 2016).

Although I agree with Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty in terms of a "world always already there" (cited in Crotty, 1998, p. 10), I also resonate with them that without human beings, the world is not "an intelligible world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 10). Based on my education received in both China and Australia, together with my professional practices accumulated in the fields of industry and education, I am reminded of the crucial role that the human mind plays in the "definition and convention" of entities (Lincoln & Guba, 2016, p. 39). I concur with Lincoln and Guba (2016) that realities "only exist in the minds of the persons contemplating them", especially in the human sciences (p. 39). I also agree that there exists "a relativist world of multiple realities that are constructed and co-constructed by the mind(s) and required to be studied as a whole" (Demps, 2008, p. 65). Therefore, my world view and my assumptions regarding the realities in my research represent the relativist ontology.

3.2.2 How do I understand knowledge?

"Epistemology is the philosophical grounding of 'how we know what we know'" (Crotty, 1998, p. 8) and is concerned with "the truths we seek and believe as researchers" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 103). Following my relativist ontological standpoint that the "realities are constructed and co-constructed by the mind(s)" (Demps, 2008, p. 65), I see knowledge as socially constructed in a broader cultural, political and historical background. I believe that knowledge is created by people, between the researcher and the researched. Therefore, my epistemological standpoint certainly aligns with the essence of social constructivism which emphasises "social contexts, interaction, sharing viewpoints, and interpretive understandings" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14). Social

constructivism is among a range of epistemologies listed by Crotty (1998) including objectivism, constructionism, subjectivism and their variants. To me, social constructivism is a variant of constructionism, which implies that meaning "come[s] out of an interplay between subject and object" (Crotty, 1998, p. 9). This represents an epistemology in opposition to objectivism but which is compatible with realist ontology and also different from subjectivism, according to which "meaning is imposed on the object by the subject" (Crotty, 1998, p. 9), rather than "interplayed" or "constructed" between the two.

Based on my personal ontological and epistemological position, it seems worthwhile to attempt to explore and understand the meaning of constructivism, as well as its different types. Figure 3.1 is based on Phillip's (1995) third dimension of comparing the types of constructivism which flows from individual cognition to active constructivism, then to social constructivism, after which I have added critical constructivism.
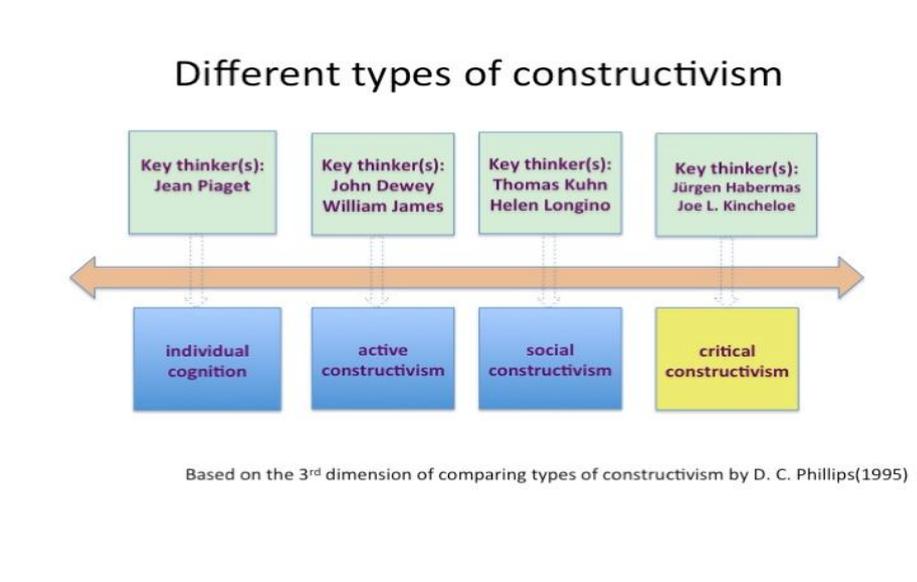
Figure 3.1 Different types of constructivism

As shown in this continuum, Piaget (1980) depicts the child as "a lone, inventive young scientist, struggling to make independent sense of the surrounding world" (cited in Phillips, 1995, p. 9). For James (1920) and Dewey (1960), a knower is an active player rather than a passive spectator during the learning process. Thomas Kuhn, being the key figure of social constructivism, emphasises the importance of "community" in scientific knowledge construction (Kuhn, 1962). His view is further developed by feminist epistemologist Helen Longino who argues that knowledge is actively constructed by "an interactive dialogic community" (Longino, 1993, cited in

Phillips, 1995, p. 10). Phillips (1995) states that, for social constructivists, the development of knowledge is "essentially social in nature" and that these social processes are influenced by "power relations, partisan interests, and so forth" (p. 9). From this perspective, social constructivism goes well beyond the mental process of the individual mind, and shares some social constructionist features, for it incorporates the social process in knowledge construction.

Critical constructivism has further expanded constructivism to a new horizon. Critical constructivist Kincheloe (2005) argues that "humans are inherently social beings, everything we do, including learning, occurs in the highly political terrain of society" (cited in Malott, 2010, p. 387). Hence, "learning cannot be separated from an individual's identity and the social, historical, political context in which it exists" (Malott, 2010, p. 386). In addition to this social, historical and political context, MacNaughton (2004) articulates the cultural influences acting upon the learning process, as she believes that critical constructivists "have the capacity to construct meaning but those meanings are bounded by our culture" (p. 46).

These contextual and cultural factors of critical constructivism seem to resonate with some of the key explanatory constructs in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) "including the ZPD [Zone of Proximal Development], inter-subjectivity, scaffolding and the nature of the inter-relationship between the interpersonal, intrapersonal and community/institutional planes of development" (Edwards, 2005, p. 46). Using sociocultural theory, in the research presented in this thesis, I argue that cognitive development involves children's artistic cognitive development which occurs through social interactions between children and the more experienced partners, such as their teachers, parents, exterior arts experts and the less experienced partners—their peers. However, critical constructivism differs from Vygotsky's social constructionism particularly in its critical perspective, under which knowledge, as well as the process of learning and teaching, is "contingently constructed, contextualized, and value-oriented" (Bentley, Fleury & Garrison, 2007, p. 10).

According to social constructivism, knowledge building is an interactive process between the social, historical, political and cultural contexts and the human cognitive development. Critical constructivism, based on such a dynamic process, highlights the aspect that human agency is the key to challenging and changing the imperfect existing structures in knowledge building.

To summarise, in the research presented in this thesis, my overarching epistemology is social constructivism. I also draw on critical constructivism as its critical

lens contributes to the democratic development of our society. As Bentley et al. (2007) point out, in education, "it serves as a constitutive means to the democratic ends of teaching and learning (p. 10). Malott (2010) further believes that critical pedagogy serves "the best interest of humanity to be united around democratic principles, such as an appreciation of diverse epistemologies, paving the way for universal self-actualization" (p. 387). Along the same line, Milutinović (2012) argues that:

> Critical perspectives in education is [sic] especially important in terms of preparing students for an active role of a citizen who participates in the further democratization of his own community, as well as in terms of preparation for life in the world full of uncertainties and diversities (p. 594).

3.3 Theory of governmentality as a critical lens

Foucault (1982) believes that knowledge is always social and always embodies ethics, values and politics. MacNaughton (2004) resonates with this claim by stating that "whilst meaning construction is something we do as individuals, this process is 'inseparable from our culture and the power relations embedded in our culture'" (p. 46). As stated in the introductory chapter, a critical theoretical perspective that flows throughout this thesis is Foucault's (1991) theory of governmentality. I believe that in my study, this theory is compatible and complementary with social constructivism and the sociocultural theory by which the current research is underpinned, as discussed previously in this chapter. They are compatible as these theories hold that knowledge is socially constructed. They are complementary as they see the process of knowledge construction from different disciplinary perspectives: constructivism from a psychological perspective where the psychological process is the key; sociocultural theory from the child's cultural development perspective where the societal and cultural practices, as well as the important role of language, are emphasised; and the theory of governmentality from a sociological perspective where social relations are the foci of attention during the study of this process. Under the co-guidance of these theories, this study not only attempts to explore "what" is happening regarding children's arts education in the contemporary Chinese Beijing context, which is embedded in the global scenario, but also tries to probe "why" children's arts education in the Beijing context is happening in such a fashion through tracing its historical, cultural, political and economic origins; and furthermore, "how" this can be developed in a different fashion towards a better future.

Since the 1990s, French post-structuralist Michel Foucault's works have influenced diverse studies in history, psychology, criminology, politics, sociology, education, policy research (Fimyar, 2008) and geography (e.g. Ettlinger, 2011). Regarding Foucault's (1991) theory of governmentality, Fimyar (2008) states that "in its broad meaning governmentality identifies an approach towards thinking about the state and different mentalities of government" (p. 4) and recent studies focused on "language, power, discourses and locality show the powerful explanatory force of post-structuralism in general, and governmentality in particular" (p. 7). For instance, in the field of education, Jennifer Gore (1995) has used Foucault's concept of power relations in her pedagogical analysis and has drawn out terms such as "surveillance", "normalization", "exclusion", "classification", "distribution", "individualization", "totalisation" and "regulation", as techniques of power in educational research.

According to Foucault (1982), government means the "conduct of conduct" (pp. 220-221). Dean (2002) offered a detailed explanation about this phrase initiated by Foucault by stating the following:

> Conduct is used here as a noun and a verb. As a verb, to conduct means to lead, to guide, and to direct. As a noun, conduct equals roughly behavior, action, comportment, or the embodied repertoire of that which sociologists call "habitus". Government is given the very broad definition of shaping the way we act (p. 119).

Dean (2010) further illuminated this by adding that "rationality is simply any form of thinking … about how things are or how they ought to be" (p. 20). He mentioned that "since Max Weber, we have known there is no single Reason or universal standard", and "after Foucault … there is a multiplicity of rationalities, of different ways of thinking in a fairly systematic manner, of making calculations, of defining purposes and employing knowledge" (p. 19).

This perspective of a multiplicity of rationalities in the "aspects of 'external' or 'internal' existence" (Dean, 2010, p. 20) reveals a post-structuralist stance that I believe is powerful in the general cultural, historical, social and political analysis. In the research presented in this thesis, such a lens seems to be useful in enhancing the rigour of the policy and curriculum analysis of Chinese ECE: it appears to be helpful in discussions regarding the themes highly relevant to the current research (e.g. the creativity gap between China and the West, and the Chinese aesthetic tradition) and provides a particular perspective in viewing and analysing the data that emerged in this

research. The theory of governmentality is therefore applied to each phase of the research, and is thus developed throughout the thesis.

As indicated in the introduction chapter, Dean's (2010) analytics of government is used as a framework to analyse some of the key issues in this thesis. This analytics framework consists of four dimensions, namely, visibilities, knowledge, techniques and practices, and identities (Dean, 2010). This framework "takes as its central concern *how* we govern and are governed within different regimes, and the conditions under which such regimes emerge, continue to operate, and are transformed" (Dean, 2010, p. 29). Dean (2010) explains the reasons to use such a toolbox as follows:

> An analytics of government removes the 'naturalness' and 'taken-for-granted' character of how things are done. In so doing, it renders practices of government problematic and shows that things might be different from the way they are. Rather than prescribing a general stance against forms of domination … it allows us to reveal domination as a contingent, historical product, and hence to be questioned (p. 39).

Dean's (2010) analytics of government framework is utilised in this research as a critical lens through which to "ask questions about government, authority and power"; "to practice a form of criticism"; and, as a result, to "open the space in which to think about how it is possible to do things in a different fashion" (p. 38).

3.4 My theoretical framework

The research presented in this thesis is a qualitative study aiming to answer a series of "what" questions. Based on my ontological and epistemological position described earlier this chapter and shown in Figure 3.2, this research is underpinned by its relativist ontology which asserts the "local and specific constructed and co-constructed realities" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 98); and that social constructivism is the guiding epistemology which "treats research as a construction but acknowledges that it occurs under specific [social] conditions" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 13). According to Lincoln (2005), paradigms are "overarching philosophical systems" (p. 230). Coherent with its ontological and epistemological premises, the theoretical paradigm in the current research adopts the theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1991; Dean, 2010) which provides a critical lens through which to explain the social organisation and social production of knowledge. Under the social constructivist epistemology and using a governmentality paradigm, the researcher and the researched are able to co-develop a multiplicity of understandings and interpretations in relation to various issues regarding

children's arts education and, therefore, to co-construct new meanings and co-create new knowledge in this field.

Figure 3.2 Theoretical framework of this research

Regarding the grounded theory methodology, Punch (2014) explains the following:

Grounded theory is a research strategy whose purpose is to generate theory from data. 'Grounded' means that the theory will be generated on the basis of data; the theory will therefore be grounded in data. 'Theory' means that the objective of collecting and analyzing the research data is to generate theory to explain the data (p. 132).

This methodology shares the same philosophical grounds as social constructivist epistemology in that "knowledge is socially constructed and constantly emerging from the data" (Leggett, 2015, p. 57). It is also aligned with the governmentality paradigm in that the researcher's subjectivity and the human agency are both embraced (Charmaz, 2014; Dean, 2010). Therefore, grounded theory (Strauss & Glaser, 1967) or, to be more precise, constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) is adopted in this research to guide the methodological inquiries and to answer the research questions.

Under constructivist grounded theory, a "constellation" of qualitative research methods (Charmaz, 2014) are implemented in this research, comprising document analysis, a survey and a case study (including interviews and observation).

3.5 Grounded theory methodology

This study uses "constructivist grounded theory" methodology (CGTM) that is epistemologically different from the earlier "objectivist grounded theory" methodology (OGTM). The latter follows a positivist tradition, while the former represents an interpretive paradigm (Charmaz, 2014). Objectivist grounded theory methodology (OGTM) does not fit the theoretical framing of my research as it "erases the social context from which data emerge, the influence of the researcher, and often the interactions between grounded theorists and their research participants" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 237). On the other hand, CGTM entails "the relativism of multiple social realities, recognises the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive understanding of subjects' meanings" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 250). An essential quality of CGTM is that "it is derived from social situations, is about real people and the developed theory comes from data rather than a pre-existing framework" (Leggett, 2015, p. 61). In this way, CGTM is compatible with my research paradigm as previously described. Several features of grounded theory make it an appropriate methodology for the research presented in this thesis.

Firstly, grounded theory is a creative yet rigorous methodology. A typical grounded theory strategy is to "seek data, describe observed events, answer fundamental questions about what is happening, and then develop theoretical categories to understand it" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 44). This research methodology involves three principal research strategies: deductive, inductive and abductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning is adopted to "draw on frameworks from prior research and theories" (Klitzman, 2011, p. 3) in order to generate broad guiding questions during the initial stage of the inquiry; inductive reasoning is important in gathering data "to construct abstract analytic categories" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 15); and abductive reasoning is highly creative as "the researcher makes inferences as to how to account for the surprising finding and these inferences rely on imaginative ways of reasoning" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 201).

Secondly, in this study, grounded theory is an adequate methodology for generating explanatory frameworks based on the rich data collected in relation to children's arts education. The logic for adopting this methodology, as pointed out by contemporary EC researcher Leggett (2015), is that "there is a rational organisation of facts, knowledge and relationships that explains and predicts phenomena sourced from the data" (p. 58).

Finally, under the grounded theory approach, the researcher's agency is efficiently stimulated and activated. As stated by Charmaz (2014), "the bottom-up approach of grounded theory gives the method its strength ... The researcher's subjectivity provides a way of viewing, engaging, and interrogating data" (p. 247). In brief, my methodological choice reveals the stance I have taken to highlight the researcher's subjectivity and agency, as well as the dynamic interaction between the researcher and the researched, during the process of knowledge construction.

3.6 Scope of research

The scope of this research involves:

1.　Two contemporary EC arts curricula during the first phase of document analysis;

2.　Twelve (12) kindergartens in Beijing, with 88 EC teachers as participants during the second phase of survey;

3.　Three kindergartens in Beijing with six EC educators as interview participants, and three upper classes of children aged from 5-6 years, together with their teachers, as site observation participants (in total, about 90 children and 10 teachers) during the third phase of the collective case study.

3.7 Three sequential phases of qualitative methods

Framed in the governmentality paradigm and using the constructivist grounded theory methodology, this research is a qualitative study that "involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). In terms of the methods of data collection, Charmaz (2008) aptly observes that "grounded theory has evolved into a constellation of methods rather than an orthodox unitary approach" (p. 161). Charmaz (2014) suggests that the view of mixed qualitative methods as part of the growing mixed-methods trend "is wholly consistent with a grounded theory approach" (p. 323). She explains the following:

> An emerging grounded theory can indicate needing more than one type of data and can incorporate more than one type of analysis … Their goal is to demonstrate integration of the methods and to create a finished product that shows the whole is greater than would have been gained by only using separate methods (Barbour, 1999; Bryman, 2007) (Charmaz, 2014, p. 323).

Based on the advantages of the mixed qualitative methods presented above, in this sequential study, qualitative methods are used in order to collect rich data regarding children's arts education. These methods form the three research phases listed below:

1.   Phase one: Document analysis

2.   Phase two: Qualitative survey

3.   Phase three: Case study

3.7.1 Phase one: Document analysis

As indicated by Punch (2014), documents "are a rich source of data for social science research" (p. 158). In the first phase of this research, document analysis contains a comparative analysis of two intended contemporary EC arts curricula: the Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum (hereafter the Beijing Curriculum) (BAESECE, 2008) and the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (hereafter the Australian Curriculum) (ACARA, 2016).

The document analysis comprises three sections, the first of which examines the Beijing Curriculum, investigating its historical background, guiding policies, theoretical and practical basis, its five main characteristics and its curriculum orientation. The second section develops a similar analysis of the Australian Curriculum, based on its three structural dimensions, namely, the disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding; general capabilities; and cross-cultural priorities. In the third section, a comparative analysis is undertaken between these two curricula. By using Dean's (2010) analytics of governmentality as a theoretical framework, it is possible to conduct an in-depth investigation regarding some key themes in the current study. To compare the differences of the contextual considerations between these two intended arts curricula, the study also refers to Stokrocki's (2004) framework of contextual research in arts education.

Denzin (1989) holds that document analysis can be important in triangulation in conjunction with other research methods within a single project. A thorough comparative analysis of these two "intended" curricula (Marsh & Willis, 2003, 2007) allows me to acquire a sound understanding regarding several key concepts in the current research, as well as the main content of children's arts education in both the Chinese and Australian contexts. Furthermore, some of the themes and questions that

emerged during this phase assisted me to develop a more targeted data collection process during the subsequent two phases of this research.

3.7.2 Phase two: Qualitative survey

Survey research designs can be used to explore people's "attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics" (Creswell, 2012, p. 376). Jansen (2010) indicates two types of survey studies—qualitative and statistical surveys—and he suggests that "the qualitative survey studies the diversity of a topic within a given population" (p. 7). In the second phase of the research, I adopted a qualitative survey design to collect initial data regarding the features of children's arts education, as well as EC teachers' beliefs and concerns in this field, in the contemporary Chinese Beijing context. Punch (2014) highlights that today it is increasingly common to see surveys being used in conjunction with other research methods, such as interviews. Sometimes interviews are used after a survey to "'flesh out' views and information on topics surveyed" (Punch, 2014, p. 147). Regarding the survey method in grounded theory studies, Jansen (2010) suggests that "one or more qualitative surveys may be part of a GT [grounded theory] project, especially in the first stages" (p. 17). The results from this phase not only contributed to answering most of the research questions in this thesis, but also provided useful references and information for the interviews and site observations during the subsequent case study.

3.7.2.1 Survey participants

Convenience sampling was used to select the 12 kindergartens from among the numerous public kindergartens in Beijing, given the practicalities of access to these EC sites. However, during the identification of the participant kindergartens, I attempted to align some of the principles of a maximum variation sampling approach (Patton, 2002), in terms of different levels of socio-economic status (SES), to "identify central themes which cut across the variety of cases or people" (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 79). In 2013, the average disposable income per capita in Beijing was 40,321 RMB (Beijing Statistical Information Net, 2016). These participant kindergartens are located in four different districts in Beijing; half are located in districts where people's disposable income per capita is above the average level (i.e. Xicheng and Chaoyang), while half are under the average level (i.e. Fengtai and Changping). In particular, Changping District, now categorised as a New Urban Development Zone of Beijing, was a rural county before 1999. This district represents the lowest level of SES among all four

districts, with a disposable income per capita level of 32,495 RMB in 2013 which was only 74.7% of the disposable income per capita level of Xicheng District (Beijing Statistical Information Net, 2016).

3.7.2.2 Pilot testing the survey questionnaire

"A pilot test of a questionnaire or interview survey is a procedure in which a researcher makes changes in an instrument based on feedback from a small number of individuals who complete and evaluate the instrument" (Creswell, 2012, p. 390). In the survey investigation, a pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted among a group of EC researchers in the Early Childhood Education Research Association (ECERA) of the Beijing Education Society of China. After examining the Chinese version of the questionnaire, the local researchers provided several suggestions for amendments. These suggestions included courtesy formalities and language polishing. However, the 10 questions on the survey questionnaire did not require any changes. Before distributing the survey questionnaires to all participant kindergartens, the questionnaire was also tested in one of the participant kindergartens (Kindergarten No. 1). After receiving positive feedback from this kindergarten, I distributed the questionnaires to the remaining 11 participant kindergartens in Beijing.

3.7.2.3 Data collection in the survey

After being introduced by ECERA, I met with the principals of all participant kindergartens, and explained the purpose, procedures, confidentiality and anonymity of the questionnaires. After obtaining the principals' consent, and after the pilot test described above, the survey questionnaire (Appendices 1 and 2), together with the Information Sheet (Appendices 3 and 4) and the Letter of Introduction to this PhD research (Appendices 5 and 6) (all documents provided in the Chinese version, translated from the English version) were sent via email to each of the principals. The principals organised some teachers of the upper classes in their respective kindergartens to complete the survey questionnaires. Completion of the questionnaire indicated each EC teacher's consent to participate. The questionnaires were anonymous; I did not have access to teachers' names, with the exception of EC teachers from two kindergartens who voluntarily provided their names and their education background on the questionnaires to support me in my subsequent case study. However, the case study interviewees were nominated by their principals. All the completed questionnaires in each kindergarten were sealed in an envelope sent to my

address in Beijing by express post. The collection of the survey data spanned a timeline of five months between November 2015 and March 2016. As shown in Table 5.1, 88 completed questionnaires were received from 12 kindergartens in Beijing, and in each kindergarten the number of participant EC teachers varied from four to 13. The participant EC teachers were nominated by their directors, and all nominated teachers completed the survey questionnaire.

3.7.3 Phase three: Case study

"A combined grounded theory—case study research design" (Rastogi et al., 2014, p. 914) is currently adopted by researchers across different disciplines, and has achieved fruitful outcomes, for example: Rastogi et al. (2014) and Canova and Hickey (2012) in environmental management; Outhwaite, Black and Laycock (2008) in agricultural health regulation; Kamarudin et al. (2014) in organisational management; Bonner and Adams (2012) in mathematical education; and Bissaker (2009) in teachers' professional learning. Eisenhardt (1989) listed earlier examples of "grounded case studies" (p. 547) that resulted in the modest theories described below.

For example, Gersick (1988) developed a model of group development for teams with project deadlines; Eisenhardt and Bourgeois (1988) developed a mid-range theory of politics in high velocity environments; and Burgelman (1983) proposed a model of new product ventures in large corporations (all cited in Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 535).

According to Eisenhardt (1989), "the case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings" (p. 534), and this research method "can be used to accomplish various aims: to provide description (Kidder, 1982), test theory (Pinfield, 1986; Anderson, 1983), or generate theory (e.g., Gersick, 1988; Harris & Sutton, 1986)". In this research, the case study method is used principally in order to "provide description" about children's arts education.

Yin (1984) holds that case studies can involve either single or multiple cases and numerous levels of analysis: furthermore, he points out that "a multiple case study enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases" (Yin, 2003, cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 548). Stake (1998) suggests two types of interest in the case studies, namely, intrinsic and instrumental interests. In the intrinsic case study, the "particularity and ordinariness [of] this case itself is of interest" (Stake, 1998, p. 88), so this often correlates to the single case study. On the other hand, in the instrumental case study, "a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement

of theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else" (Stake, 1998, p. 88). In the current research, it is apparent that the instrumental interest of the cases is a main concern, as my overall purpose is to explore the features of children's arts education as well as educators' beliefs in this field, in the Chinese Beijing context. For this purpose, I decided to conduct a "collective case study"—as Stake (1998) clarified, "it is not the study of a collective but instrumental study extended to several cases"—"in order to inquire into the phenomenon, population, or general conditions" (p. 88) related to my research topic. The "case" in this study refers to the all participant kindergartens.

Using grounded theory methodology, the third and last phase of this research adopted a collective case study of three kindergartens in Beijing. The rationale for the adoption of this research design was to collect rich data across various EC settings, in order to provide thick description of the status quo of arts teaching and learning among a cohort of children aged five to six in the Beijing area.

3.7.3.1 Two methods of data collection: Interviews and observation

"Case studies typically combine data collection methods, such as archives, interviews, questionnaires and observations" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534). In the current research, the two main data collection methods adopted comprised interviews and observations.

As indicated by Charmaz (2014), "grounded theorists often embark on their research journeys with plans to interview people whose experiences can illuminate the topic they wish to study" (p. 55). She continues by arguing that "intensive qualitative interviewing fits grounded theory methods particularly well" as "both grounded theory methods and intensive interviewing are open-ended yet directed, shaped yet emergent, and paced yet unrestricted" (p. 5). In each case study kindergarten, I conducted two interviews, one with an upper-class teacher who had substantial pedagogical experiences in arts teaching, and the other with the principal who had a thorough understanding of her institutional culture, as well as a holistic view about children's arts education. The EC teachers in each kindergarten were nominated by their directors. The research questions guided the data gathering during the interviewing process: notes were taken and conversations were recorded for further transcription and analysis. The interviews allowed me to "ask for an in-depth description", "request more details or explanation" and "ask about the participant's thoughts, feelings, and actions" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 69) in relation to children's arts education. In addition, this method provides "the interactive space and time to enable the research participants' views and

insights to emerge" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 85). Underpinned by the social constructivist epistemology, this was considered to be an effective way for me (as the researcher) and the participants to co-construct meaning and co-create knowledge in this particular field.

Site observation with regard to children's arts activities was implemented in this research to "seek data, describe observed events, answer fundamental questions about what is happening, and then develop theoretical categories to understand it" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 44). This method, combined with the interviews and the survey, served as a triangulation strategy in this research involving human subjects. As Eisenhardt (1989) writes, "the triangulation made possible by multiple data collection methods provides stronger substantiation of constructs and hypotheses" (p. 545). In each case study kindergarten, an upper class was observed during two full kindergarten days; the observation was focused on the pedagogical interactions in relation to children's arts. Field notes were recorded, and photos and videos were taken for further comparison and analysis.

3.7.3.2 Case study participants

Three kindergartens from the 12 survey participant kindergartens were selected as participants in a collective grounded theory case study. As highlighted in bold font in Table 5.1, the selected kindergartens were kindergartens No. 1, No. 3 and No. 6. Purposive sampling using the criterion of different levels of SES among the 12 survey participant kindergartens guided the selection of these three kindergartens. Based on this criterion, two urban kindergartens (Kindergarten No. 1 with a higher SES and No. 6 with a relatively lower SES), and one rural kindergarten (Kindergarten No. 3 with the lowest SES) were selected among the 12 kindergartens. This sampling method aimed to collect data that was both as rich and as representational as possible in the Beijing area.

To protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participant kindergartens as well as of the EC educators, pseudonyms were used in this research. According to their different educational features, Kindergarten No. 1's pseudonym is the Harmonious Kindergarten; Kindergarten No. 3 is the Beautiful Kindergarten, and Kindergarten No. 6 is the Thematic Kindergarten. More information regarding the educational features of the respective kindergartens is described in Chapter Six, the case study chapter.

As previously mentioned, this collective case study is comprised of two research methods: interviews and site observation. In each kindergarten, I conducted one interview with the principal and another with one EC teacher of an upper class. In total, six interviews were therefore conducted across the three kindergartens.

The interview participants' pseudonyms are: Yolanda and Hermione (from the Thematic Kindergarten), Rosy and Festival (from the Beautiful Kindergarten), and Laura and Zenia (from the Harmonious Kindergarten). It was apparent that these interviewees had extensive work experience in EC settings, as all of them had over 16 years' work experience in this field, with the exception of one young teacher with five years' work experience. As is a general characteristic in Chinese public EC institutions, all interviewees were full-time educators. More participant information can be found in Table 6.1.

The site observations involved the observation of one upper class in each kindergarten, which comprised 30-35 children aged from 5-6 years, together with their teachers. In total, about 90 children and 10 teachers were involved (including two interviewees, Hermione and Zenia, among the teachers) across the three kindergartens in the collective case study. Neither the children nor the teachers were required to do anything different to their normal routine in their kindergartens. They were not to be identified individually, neither from the description of the pedagogical interactions, nor from the photos taken during the observation, to ensure that their anonymity was well protected, in accordance with the ethical principles of this research.

3.7.3.3 Data collection in case study

A semi-structured questionnaire consisting of 15 questions, audited prior to the interviews by ECERA researchers, guided the data collection from the interviews. These questions were designed through a critical analysis of the literature and identification of gaps in current research. More details regarding this questionnaire are presented in Chapter Six, the case study chapter. During the interviews, I asked the questions listed on the questionnaire and noted interviewees' responses. Sometimes the interviewees mentioned broader issues that went beyond the scope of my questionnaire: this was especially the case with the participant principals of these three kindergartens, all of whom had extensive knowledge and experience, as well as wide perspectives in the EC field. Being a constructivist grounded theory researcher, I welcomed these unexpected data which were recorded both by note taking and audio recording.

During the site observations, while focusing on the pedagogical interactions and pedagogical framing (Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004) in relation to children's arts education, I took a series of field notes, photos and videos in each kindergarten. Teachers were not required to submit lesson plans in advance, therefore this process captured the natural process of interactions throughout a class.

3.7.4 Data analysis

3.7.4.1 Data translation and transcription

The data collected from the 88 completed survey questionnaires were in the Chinese language. Therefore, the data needed to be translated into English before being entered into an electronic spreadsheet. To ensure the credibility of the data processing, an internal audit of the Chinese language data was undertaken by a Chinese-speaking academic in the School of Education at Flinders University.

The data collected from the interviews were also translated and transcribed into a combined electronic spreadsheet which enabled me to conduct a comparative analysis between different interviewees with regard to the same topics. The data collected from the site observations were translated and organised for further analysis. I selected some data from the "raw materials" and sent the relevant data, including the translated interview transcriptions, together with some photos, and audio and video recordings to the internal auditor at Flinders University for the data audit.

3.7.4.2 Grounded theory analysis in different research phases

The first phase of the document analysis analysed and compared the content of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (ACARA, 2016) and the Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum (BAESECE, 2008). The data analysis was guided by a series of analytical questions proposed by Punch (2014) which included: "How are documents written? How are they read? Who writes them? Who reads them? For what purposes? On what occasions? ... " (p. 159). With the underpinning of the overarching social constructivist epistemology in this study, I examined with special care the "social production" and "social organization" (Punch, 2014, p. 159) of these documents, using Foucault's (1991) governmentality theory as a critical perspective.

During phase two and phase three, this research used grounded theory analysis, an approach aiming to "generate abstract theory to explain what is central to the data" (Punch, 2014, p. 179). Informed by the work of Charmaz (2014), three coding methods

occurred in turn: initial coding, focused coding and theoretical coding. Charmaz (2014) points out that "coding is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data" and that "grounded theory coding generates the bones of your analysis" (p. 113). Initial coding occurs in "an initial phase involving naming each word, line, or segment of data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113). It is also called "line-to-line coding" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 121) or "open coding", as it "constitutes a first level of conceptual analysis with the data" (Punch, 2014, p. 180). Focused coding is "a focused, selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113) which "also can involve coding your initial codes" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 138). The last phase of the coding process is called theoretical coding which, according to Glaser (1978, 2005), refers to how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory.

Memos are written down as records of analysis in order to "elaborate relationships between codes and categories in an early attempt to organize the data into an emergent theoretical network of relationships" (Floersch et al., 2010, p. 410).

As "diagrams can offer concrete images of our ideas" and "they provide a visual representation of categories and their relationships" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 218), they are conceived and developed during the data analysis, from free-hand sketches to computer-designed diagrams. In the current study, I particularly enjoyed the process of categorising and visualising the emerging ideas by conceiving and elaborating a variety of diagrams in Chapter Five, the survey chapter, based on the rich data obtained during this research phase.

Informed by the "constant comparative method" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 18) used during the whole data analysis process of grounded theory, a comparative analysis between the collected data and the wide literature, between the different research phases, and across different cultures was applied throughout this study.

In addition, NVivo computer software was used to assist the data organisation, categorisation and analysis, particularly for the survey data. In this regard, I concur with Fielding, Fielding and Hughes (2013) that, for survey researchers who wish to derive more analytical value from open-ended question data, qualitative software such as NVivo can be a useful resource.

3.8 Ethics issues in cross-cultural research

Given that this study is cross-cultural PhD research, ethics approvals were required and, subsequently, obtained from both the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC) at Flinders University in Australia (refer to Appendix 9), and the Early Childhood Education Research Association (ECERA) of the Beijing Education Society of China (refer to Appendices 10 and 11). Having authority conferred by the Beijing Education Society to carry out research in schools and EC institutions, ECERA managed the ethical processes of this project regarding informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. On the basis of this authority, I was authorised to collect survey questionnaires and to conduct case studies in this research. In this research, I followed the local convention regarding child participation which is that, in Beijing, kindergartens advise parents/caregivers that educational research studies involving their children may be conducted throughout each kindergarten year. In practice, very few parents withhold consent for their child's involvement in kindergarten-based research projects. During the data collection, I decided to respect the rights of children and their teachers by keeping their daily pedagogical activities as normal as possible, in order to reduce the disturbance caused by my presence to a minimum level. Participant information about the children and the adults in this research is safeguarded and treated in a way that protects their confidentiality and anonymity.

3.9 Researcher's stance and self-reflexivity

Blaikie (2010) argues for the importance of all social researchers clarifying their own stance "towards the research process and participants" (p. 50). He suggests six different stances that a researcher can take, guided by different research paradigms. For example, under the positivist paradigm, the researcher can be a "detached observer" or an "empathetic observer" to ensure the objectivity of the research; under the constructivist paradigm, the researcher becomes a "faithful reporter" or a "mediator of languages" in order to actively construct meaning together with the participants; under the critical paradigm, the researcher turns into a "reflective partner" and a "dialogic facilitator", and therefore, is viewed as an active partner "who is committed to the emancipation of the participants from whatever kind of oppression they are experiencing" (Blaikie, 2010, p. 52).

With the underpinning of the constructivist paradigm in this research, I am both a "faithful reporter" and a "mediator of languages" during the research process. Being a "faithful reporter", my aim is to "report a way of life by allowing the research participants

to 'speak for themselves'" and "this position is commonly referred to as 'naturalism'" (Blaikie, 2010, p. 51). This aligns to the "naturalistic approach to the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3) in qualitative research, as discussed previously, and also the "bottom-up approach" of grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014, p. 247). Being a "mediator of languages", I not only report the data faithfully, but also make sense of the data and interpret the data that emerged from the research, for "studying social life is akin to studying a text, and this involves interpretation on the part of the reader" (Blaikie, 2010, p. 51). This position is also coherent with the "interpretative" approach in qualitative research, as indicated by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), as well as the "interpretive work" highlighted in constructivist grounded theory (Leggett, 2015, p. 60). During this process of "the mediation of languages", as indicated by Blaikie (2010), "researchers have to invest something of themselves into their account" (p. 51). In this way, my own cultural context and my "personal professional interests, experiences" (Krieg, 2008, p. 65), as well as my "intuition, and scepticism work together in refining theories" (Leggett, 2015, p. 61).

This research process might raise questions regarding its rigour and credibility, as my own data interpretation might be biased due to the influence of "something" of myself, as the researcher, as listed in the above paragraph, and which often happens unconsciously. Furthermore, "we exist in a world that is acted upon and interpreted—by our research participants and by us—as well as being affected by other people and circumstances" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 241) which might bring other bias into the research. To avoid any kind of preconception or bias, and to enhance the research rigour and credibility, a key strategy is to implement the researcher's self-reflexivity throughout the research process.

The researcher's self-reflexivity is "one of the most celebrated practices of qualitative research" and is "considered to be honesty and authenticity with one's self, one's research, and one's audience" (Tracy, 2010, p. 842). Mason (2002) argues, that "qualitative research should involve critical self-scrutiny by the researcher, or active reflexivity" (p. 7). For grounded theorists, reflexivity is "the researcher's scrutiny of the research experience, decision, and interpretations in ways that bring him or her into the process" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 344). Charmaz (2014) recommends "keeping a journal to engage in reflexivity and to avoid preconceiving … data" (p. 165): she believes it particularly significant to "engage in reflexivity" during the "focused coding because these codes shape our analyses" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 155). Using CGTM as the main methodology in this research, I took these suggestions into consideration during the whole research process.

Berger (2015) argues that for researchers who are "strangers" in their research territory, both advantages and traps are evident. One of the advantages is that "studying the unfamiliar … is an empowering [learning] experience"; however, in such cases, "a related trap may be the absence of language sensitivity" (Berger, 2015, p. 227). I concur with this opinion as I am not an EC teacher, so I am actually a "stranger" in this research. I felt a powerful learning experience while listening to and communicating with the research participants, the various EC educators in Beijing, who were the ones "in the expert position", as indicated by Berger (2015, p. 227). At the same time, I felt a kind of insufficiency regarding the language sensitivity in terms of the conventionalised concepts and idioms in this particular research field, in the Beijing context. For example, as I study at an Australian university, most of my literature research is in English, and not in Chinese. This language issue led to some confusion during my data collection and thesis writing. To address this issue, I asked local Chinese researchers to audit my research instruments in the Chinese language, and I consulted with them regarding some ECE idioms in the Chinese language so I could speak and write appropriately. Furthermore, I spent more time researching local Chinese literature in this field. As I did not have formal professional experience in children's arts education, I undertook an extensive process in the literature review and research planning for my PhD project, with this process spanning almost two years before I actually commenced the fieldwork. In addition, I believe that "being reflexive in doing research is part of being honest and ethically mature in research practice" (Ruby, 1980, p. 154). As this is cross-cultural research involving young children, throughout its different stages, I paid special attention to the issues of research ethics and cultural understandings, as well as the objectivity of data interpretation and analysis. Berger (2015) suggests that "reflexivity in the absence of [the] researcher's personal experience must focus on the researcher avoiding a patronizing stance and maximizing the opportunity for participants to impact the process and outcome of research" (p. 230). In line with this guideline, I have "amplified" the voices of the participants by adopting many direct quotes in this thesis, and by implementing member checking measures as discussed in the following section.

3.10 Trustworthiness in this research

Given that this research uses a qualitative constructivist paradigm, "the concept of 'validity' as it sits within an empiricist orthodoxy is at odds with the notion of qualitative research" (Bissaker, 2009, p. 80). Mishler (1990), while attempting to reformulate the concept of validation for inquiry-guided qualitative research, proposes the criterion of

"trustworthiness" to be the "grounds for belief and action" (p. 419) in the research process. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), "trustworthiness" refers to the quality value in naturalistic inquiries: in this regard, they asked, "how can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" (p. 290). This question appears to be helpful in comprehending this key criterion in qualitative research.

Khalifa (1993) suggests that trustworthiness in qualitative research consists of four aspects: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. The strategies used in the current research to address these four aspects of trustworthiness are presented in the following paragraphs.

"Credibility is defined as the truthfulness of the data and its subsequent interpretation" (Prion & Adamson, 2014, p. e107). The credibility of this research starts with the data: by using three research methods (i.e. survey, interviews and observations) in relation to the human subjects, together with one method (i.e. document analysis) of desktop research, rich and abundant data are collected to "provide depth and scope for this investigation" (Leggett, 2015, p. 89). This is a triangulation strategy in terms of the "methods of data collection", in which the "inquirer examines each information source and finds evidence to support a theme" (Creswell, 2012, p. 259).

"Triangulation involves a combination of different methods, settings and theoretical perspectives in dealing with phenomena" (Leggett, 2015, p. 90). In the current research, when dealing with the phenomenon of children's arts education in Beijing, not only were data collected via different methods but also across different settings and from different people (i.e. 12 kindergartens, six interviewees and three classes), and were then analysed and compared. The purposive sampling method adopted in selecting the case study participant kindergartens in Beijing also demonstrates good intent to ensure the credibility of this research.

After the data collection, in order to ensure its accuracy, I also double-checked some of the data by contacting the interviewees via phone calls, text messages and/or WeChat messages.

During the analysis, using CGTM, data were consistently coded and associated with the results. I also took care to ensure that the findings of this research would "ring true" among other EC educators. In this regard, during the case study phase, the introduction and analysis of four real stories by the interviewees in relation to their experiences in children's arts education provided evidence for the test of

"verisimilitude" which poses the question: "does the work represent human experiences with sufficient details so that the portrayals can be recognisable as 'truly conceivable experience'?" (Piantanida & Garman, 1999, cited in Bissaker, 2009, p. 85).

"Member checking" (Punch, 2014, p. 350) was applied at the point when the conclusion of the thesis was being drawn. A summary of this research was sent to each of the case study kindergartens for their checking and confirmation.

In addition, as discussed previously in this section, the researcher's self-reflexivity was applied throughout all stages of this research, including the reflection of my own ontological standpoint, as recounted at the beginning of this chapter.

"Dependability is also known as auditability" (Prion & Adamson, 2014, p. e108). In this research, one internal audit trail was conducted by a Chinese-speaking academic at Flinders University who checked the attained conclusion, comments and suggestions by comparing them with the raw data in the Chinese language. The external auditors were the ECERA researchers who audited my research instruments (e.g. the survey and interview questionnaires) and proposed some valuable suggestions to better adapt these instruments to the local context. In addition, the director of ECERA audited the content and conclusion of some chapters in this thesis (especially the various data chapters), has read the summary of the thesis, and has made some helpful comments and suggestions.

Transferability is "the applicability of the study findings to one context or different contexts" (Khalifa, 1993, p. 275). My goal in this research is not to generalise the findings to other contexts, but to provide sufficient descriptive detail, through the use of CGTM, "about the research findings in order to have the potential for transferability to other contexts" (Leggett, 2015, p. 90). For this purpose, as well as for the purpose of dependability, "a thorough description of the research methodology" (Prion & Adamson, 2014, pp. e107-e108) is provided in this chapter.

Confirmability is "concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer's imagination, but are clearly derived from the data" (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392). Cope (2014) suggests that "this can be exhibited by providing rich quotes from the participants that depict each emerging theme" (p. 89). My writing in relation to data reporting and analysis (i.e. all data chapters) resonates particularly with this suggestion, as a plethora of direct quotes from the curriculum documents, from the survey responses and interview participants, together with a

series of imagery data collected from the case study kindergartens, are provided across these chapters.

3.11 Considerations of ethics and rigour

In addition to Piantanida and Garman's (1999) list of criteria for the evaluation of qualitative research, other criteria have been taken into consideration in this research, such as ethics and rigour.

Ethical consideration is another key issue in this research. On top of the ethical process in a cross-cultural context as previously presented in this chapter, during each phase of the research, "privacy and dignity have been afforded all participants"; the inquiry is "conducted in a careful and honest way"; and has a high degree of "ethical sensibility" throughout the whole research process (Bissaker, 2009, p. 85). For instance, all the kindergartens, as well as the interview participants, have pseudonyms and all photos are presented in such a way that any individual is not recognisable, in order to protect the participants' anonymity. In brief, I constantly showed respect to my research participants, whether they were adults or children. For example, I openly answered relevant questions during the interviews and site observations, as many of the research participants were interested in asking me questions in relation to the cultures in general, and the EC issues in particular in the Australian context, given that I am a PhD candidate from an Australian university.

Finally, as explained previously in this section, the rigour of this research was enhanced by constantly applying self-reflexivity during the research process. Furthermore, as indicated in the introduction chapter as well as in this chapter, a critical perspective, the theory of governmentality, has been utilised throughout the preparation, analysis and writing of the thesis, in order to add rigour and depth to this research.

3.12 Chapter summary

This chapter contributes to setting up the theoretical foundation of the research presented in this thesis, as well as to delineating its methodological rationale and process. Underpinned by an overarching social constructivist epistemology, guided by a governmentality theoretical paradigm, and adopting a constructive grounded theory methodology, the design of this research embraces the belief that "knowledge is

socially constructed", and honours the human agency of both the researcher and the researched.

A sequential qualitative research methods comprising document analysis, survey and case study are organised and implemented in this research, in order to collect and triangulate the data regarding children's arts education both in China and Australia, and thus to answer the relevant research questions. This chapter emphasises the researcher's self-reflexivity, and presents various strategies used throughout the research process to ensure that this PhD research project was ethical, trustworthy and rigorous. The following chapter introduces the comparative curricula analysis which builds on the data foundation of the current research.

CHAPTER FOUR: CURRICULA ANALYSIS

4.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter presents the initial research phase of the current PhD project, which involves a comparative document analysis of two contemporary arts curricula for children aged 5-6 years—the Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum in the arts learning area (upper class in kindergarten), and the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (Foundation level).

As discussed in the introduction and literature review chapters, Marsh and Willis (2003, 2007) categorised curriculum into three phases, comprising the intended curriculum, the enacted curriculum and the experienced curriculum. This chapter focuses on the first phase: the intended curriculum. The following three sections constitute the current chapter. The first section is an overall introduction and analysis of the Beijing Curriculum, followed by a discussion of its five curriculum characteristics. It is argued that the Beijing Curriculum is a child-oriented curriculum, reflecting some of the tenets of a liberal/progressive orientation. The second section is focused on the Australian Curriculum, starting with an introduction of its historical and social contexts, with this then followed by a deconstruction of its three structural dimensions, namely, disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding; general capabilities; and cross-cultural priorities. It is argued that this is a contemporary arts curriculum, which is not only based on disciplinary knowledge and skills, and aesthetic understandings, but also highlights social justice, equity and human agency. The third section develops a comparative discussion, analysing both the similarities and the differences of the two curricula.

4.2 Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum

As the result of many years of research and practice in the field of early childhood education and care, the Early Childhood Research Institute of Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences (BAESECE) developed the Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum in 2008 which aims to foster children's abilities in five learning areas, namely, health, language, society, science and the arts. This curriculum has been widely adopted across China in regions such as Beijing and north-west China, and has been positively recognised by many early childhood education institutions and early childhood teachers across China (Zhang, R., 2011). According to

the Beijing Curriculum, children from 2-6 years are divided into different age bands, and children of different age bands have different forms of activities in kindergarten (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 9). For example, children aged 2-3 years are classified as Care Class and the main activity form is "natural penetration through daily life"; children aged 3-4 years are classified as Bottom Class and the main activity form is "natural penetration through play"; children aged 4-5 years are classified as Middle Class and the main activity form is "targeted activities in activity zone" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 9). This PhD study focuses on children aged 5-6 years, who are classified as Upper Class in kindergarten, for whom the main activity form is "collective learning through activities" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 9). The Beijing Curriculum (Upper Class) was the result of collaboration among a group of 90 people, including EC teachers from 19 kindergartens in the area of Beijing (for children aged 5-6 years). The development of this curriculum was carried out in consultation with a group of EC experts mainly based in Beijing, guided by a series of national and regional EC policies, and based on theories in the fields of psychology and education (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 2).

4.2.1 Historical background of Chinese ECE arts curriculum

As discussed in the introduction chapter, before the establishment of the PRC in 1949, Chinese ECE had been under Western influences, whether direct or indirect, due to historical reasons, and particularly due to the changing international power relations at that time. Since the establishment of the first modern Chinese kindergarten in 1904, "a progressive, child-centered approach with an integrated curriculum across content areas" has emerged under the influences of Western educators, such as Froebel, Montessori and Dewey (Fees, Hoover, & Zheng, 2014, p. 234). Specifically in the field of children's arts education, Cheng (2010) echoes this point of view by stating that "it is evident that the development of Chinese art education in the first half of the 20th century depended on Western ideas" (p. 150), and that children's arts education had been influenced by "Dewey's pedagogy notions of the 'Child-Centred Approach' and 'Education is Life'" (p. 151). Aesthetic education in Europe, especially in Germany, also provided valuable ideas for Chinese arts education (Cheng, 2010). After 1949, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), "a content-driven, teacher-directed approach drawn from the Soviet Union" was implemented to educate Chinese children (Fees et al., 2014, p. 234). During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), ideological concerns saw the decline of education, including ECE, throughout the country (Luo & Arndt, 2010). Since the enactment of the Reform and Opening-up policy

from 1978, China's ECE has been experiencing a fundamental curriculum reform (e.g. Liu & Feng, 2005; Zhu & Zhang, 2008). The aim of this reform is that "early childhood education should face the world, face the future and face modernization" (Zhu & Zhang, 2008, p. 174). Since the 1980s, Chinese ECE curriculum standards have been initiated by the central government, while local and regional government have been, and continue to be, responsible for the localisation and supervision of programs (Fees et al., 2014). As a regional EC curriculum, the Beijing Curriculum has been formed and developed in this historical context.

4.2.2 Guiding policies

The Beijing Curriculum was an attempt to represent and practise the ideas and concepts of a key national policy in this field: *Guidance for Kindergarten Education* (Trial version) (State Education Commission of China, 2001). Using a governmentality lens, this policy document was forwarded as a technique to achieve the ECE governance in China. As argued in the literature review chapter, the forces of globalisation exert a predominant power in this field. This policy document was deeply influenced by global perspectives as it was developed after extensive consultation with educational experts who had studied in the US or Europe (Chen-Haftech & Xu, 2008). For example, Piaget's constructivism and Vygotsky's social-constructivism are reflected in this *Guidance* policy. Key notions found in this *Guidance* policy include: the idea of continuative development education; people first in education; multi-disciplinary integration and ecological education; holistic dynamic assessment; empirical aesthetic experiences; teacher's role as a supporter, collaborator and guide (not only a knowledge transmitter); and creative self-expression. This policy document gives explicit instructions to avoid the overemphasis on technique, skill and standardisation.

Being a local curriculum, the Beijing Curriculum is also under the guidance of a local policy: *Guidance Implementation Rules of Beijing City* (Beijing Municipal Commission of Education, 2007). This local policy emphasises respect for the rules of children's mental and physical development as well as for the characteristics of children's ages and children's learning. It states that the basic activities should be based on play, individual distinctions should be addressed, and the personal development of each child should be promoted. In this document, the role and importance of parents are highlighted, with EC teachers regarded as the main practitioners of quality teaching and an important element during the ECE process. To guide their professional practice, some principles are mentioned for EC teachers.

4.2.3 Theoretical foundations and practical basis

According to Ms Ming Xu (2007), Chief Editor of the Beijing Curriculum, the development of this curriculum is underpinned by a series of theoretical foundations as well as by the practical experiences of EC teachers. Western theories have influenced different aspects of this curriculum, with these theories including Piaget's (1929) cognitive development theory; Maslow's (1998) hierarchy of needs; Erikson's (1950) theory of personality development; Vygotsky's (1986) zone of proximal development (ZPD) theory; Gardner's (1993b) multiple intelligences theory; and Sternberg's (1985) triarchic theory of intelligence. For example, based on cognitive development theory, it is recognised in the Beijing Curriculum that "activities" are the best approaches for children's development, with this based on the ZPD theory which is considered to be a sociocultural paradigm where children and teachers "co-construct meanings in activities that involve higher order thinking" (Jordan, 2004, p. 32); it is believed that "play" is the best pedagogical activity for preschool children; and following the principles of multiple intelligences theory, it is suggested that multiple forms of assessment be adopted in children's learning.

Local theoretical influences by Chinese educators such as Chen Heqin and Tao Xingzhi have also been adopted. Chen Heqin (1892–1982) was considered to be the forefather of the Chinese kindergarten (Tang, 2006). Having graduated in 1919 from Columbia University, Chen was deeply influenced by Dewey's progressive educational philosophy (Tao, 2015). In 1923, Chen Heqin established the very first family kindergarten in China and he called for more attention on the role of family education to cultivate young children (Zou, 2010). Chen Heqin's educational ideas have gained immense influence in the Chinese ECE field since the 1920s (Tao, 2015). Tao (2015) summarised the four principles of Chen Heqin's educational ideas as follows: pursuing ideas but not deviating from Chinese realities; learning from the West but not imitating blindly; emphasising theories but not neglecting practices; and providing a holistic education without neglecting ecological improvement. Tao Xingzhi (1891–1946) was one of the foremost purveyors of Progressivism in China and "an outstanding educator of the Republican period who is still deeply revered in China today" (Brown, 1990, p. 21). Tao Xingzhi "successfully sinicized Dewey's educational thought, including 'Life is Education', 'Education serves as a School' and 'Combination of Teaching, Learning and Working'" (Wang, 2014, p. 3). Some socialist and communist principles also provide guidance to this curriculum, for example, the articulation of collectivism and collaboration throughout the design of this curriculum.

In addition, the Beijing Curriculum draws on educational practices from a number of experienced and front-line EC teachers, in combination with the results of curriculum research organised by BAESECE, providing support for the claim that the Beijing Curriculum provides an integration of both theories and practices. In conclusion, this document reflects a hybridisation of global and local powers, as well as a synergy of theory and practice in this particular field.

4.2.4 Principal educational approach: Activities

The emphasis of the Beijing Curriculum is on diversity, flexibility and developmental features of children's activity. It states that "activity is the bridge connecting subject and object" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 4,). Here the "subject" refers to children, and the "object", presumably, refers to their learning environment, or the focus (e.g. concept, content, etc.) of learning. Activity is the process in which children actively construct their own cognitive structure and achieve development through interactions with their environment and with other people. It is the principal approach to children's development. The two levels of children's activity are: exterior activity (movement, language, etc.) and interior activity (thinking activity). In addition, different forms in children's activity include "life activity, play activity and learning activity", and "sometimes a variety of activities are mixed" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, pp. 2-3). In this curriculum, activity is in accordance with the characteristics of children's nature, and also provides an approach to their development. From a governmentality perspective, activities here can be deemed as a technique to achieve the educational ends. Flexible adaptations could be made among different organisational forms, such as individual activities, group activities, and whole class activities. Children's activity ambiance should be independent, attentive and natural.

4.2.5 Curriculum organisation

The Beijing Curriculum is organised according to a monthly schedule—another technique to realise the implementation of this curriculum. For example, in March, the first month of the first semester for children aged 5-6 years, learning targets, which could also be called "development targets", are settled in all five of the learning areas of health, language, society, science and the arts. The curriculum provides two themes per month, and all activities in different learning areas are developed around these two themes. For example, "Magic tools" and "Changing world" are the two themes in March (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 16). In the arts learning area, one of the songs that children

are taught in March is called "Maiden of Spring" (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 17) which shows the change of seasons during the year: in the north of China (including the Beijing area), at the beginning of March, winter passes and spring arrives.

Activity is the main thread of children's learning in this curriculum, and the arts, being one of the five learning areas, is no exception. The "key area" activities are the "art designing area", "music area" (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 19) and "performance" area (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 147). In the curriculum, it is suggested that 10 collective activities, in accordance with the thematic activities of each month, are organised each week in kindergartens (Monday to Friday, one activity in the morning and one in the afternoon) (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 12). Among the 10 collective activities, we find two activities related to learning in the arts (e.g. BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 41).

4.2.6 Five characteristics of the Beijing Curriculum

In the arts learning area, five characteristics are identified in the Beijing Curriculum. In brief, this curriculum focuses on learning "through" the arts. It is an integrated arts curriculum where there are abundant craft-making activities. This curriculum also aims to promote the national culture through arts learning, and the learning process appears to be highly structured.

4.2.6.1 Characteristic one: Learning "through" the arts

Roy et al. (2012) argue that the two main types of benefits of arts education among young children are intrinsic benefits and instrumental benefits. The arts learning in the Beijing Curriculum seems to be overwhelmingly focused on a "learning 'through' the Arts" approach (Roy et al., 2012, p. 39), of which the targets lie in a series of instrumental benefits instead of intrinsic benefits.

In order to support children's cognitive development, a series of new concepts are introduced via arts activities. For example, when children are taught to sing the Chinese National Anthem, they will have an idea of the country (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, pp. 74-75); and when they are taught to draw or to craft dolls in national costumes, they encounter the concept of different nations in China (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, pp. 86-87).

The arts can be linked to language: in the music activity "Where is the Spring?", children are encouraged to create and edit new lyrics (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 96); when learning another song "The Small Sun is Not Me", children are required to understand the connotation of the lyrics (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 135). Thus,

children's language capacity is developed through the arts. The arts can promote the development of children's multiple literacies: during the music activity "Carpet Dancing", the map-reading capacity among children is developed (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 192).

The arts are linked to science: when children sing the song "Spring", they also start to know seasonal characteristics and changes during a year (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 83). In the "Amazing Invisible Painting", children perceive the amazing reaction between iodine, lemon juice and paper, thus arousing their interest in chemistry (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 267). Through the theme drawing "the place where I want to go", children have "a sense of the symmetry and regular order of patterns" and explore the geometrical world (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 216).

The arts are also connected to health: during the percussion performance of "Big Rain, Small Rain", children's physical coordination ability is developed (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, pp. 183-184). Likewise, during the musical game "Chickens Eat", children are required to react quickly (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 272). During the kindergarten sports meeting, the children's "Cheerleading Dance" also helps to promote their physical development (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 100).

As previously identified, a close link exists between the arts and society in this curriculum, as seen in the presence of social constructivist influences on children's learning. For example, before the traditional Chinese New Year, children are asked to make a thematic drawing "New Year Market". They are asked to note down what they have seen and what they have heard from the market, using the method of drawing (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 252). From this example, we clearly see an interaction between children's arts learning and the opportunities provided by their environment. Arts can also be linked to social rites and morality. For example, when children are taught to perform the collective dance "Greeting Dance", they learn social greeting rites; when they sing the song "Diligent and Lazy Men", they understand that they need to learn from the former not the latter (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 130); when children are taught to sing the song "The Lively Boulevard", they will understand the need to obey the traffic rules and to have a basic social moral consciousness (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 55); when they sing the song "Going Home Safely", they will learn to improve their safety awareness and to establish relevant rules (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 144).

The arts can be linked to issues of sustainability, for example, nature and environment protection. For example, when children draw their theme picture "Happy Autumn Excursion", they learn to appreciate nature (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 99);

when they are taught to sing the song "Caring for the Sapling" (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 158), they understand the need to protect our environment. One of the learning targets in the arts area for December is to "be able to initiatively find out and use multiple methods such as cutting, sticking, folding and drawing to decorate the items of daily life and to beautify our environment" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 160). In the arts designing area, recycled materials, such as clay, paper, plastic bottles and colourful beads, are used by children during their artistic creation (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 135). This characteristic demonstrates that the Beijing Curriculum also adopts the vision of Art in Daily Living which advocates "the application of art knowledge in the life of the common man" (Efland, 2004, p. 695).

While emphasising the effects of "learning 'through' the Arts", to a lesser extent, this curriculum also covers some essential elements about "learning 'in' the Arts" (Roy et al., 2012, p. 39), such as aesthetics, joy and free expression. For example, one of the development targets in the arts learning area during November is to "acquire aesthetic feelings by experiencing, perceiving, and discovering different types of music such as March and Berceuse" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 105). Here are some concrete examples: when children perform the dance "I am a Happy Tiny Droplet", children are taught to express the beauty of the music through their movements (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 229). In the drawing activity named "creative thinking activity of knife, fork and spoon", children are encouraged to freely express their unique thinking, and to gain the joy of success through the game. Juxtaposed against the target of children's "development", "happiness" is another key target of the Beijing Curriculum. For instance, in the music activity "Looking for Happiness", the main target is for children to find happiness (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 239). In the music game "Small Rubber Ball", the main target is to experience the joy of free creation as well as co-playing with peers (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 259). In learning the new song "Labour is the most Glorious", children can experience a joyful mood (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 223). Both approaches —learning "through" and learning "in" the arts reveal the significant powers of arts education in the early years.

4.2.6.2 Characteristic two: An integrated arts curriculum

Russell and Zembylas (2007) argue that, "by bringing together various areas of knowledge, experiences, and beliefs", integrated curricula encourage "open-endedness, spaces for exploration, connection, discovery, and collaboration" (p. 298). More precisely, they hold that arts integration involves combinations or connections

between two or more disciplines or subjects. Australian arts educators Roy et al. (2015) state that "'the integrated learning approach' is one way in which the curriculum can be organised to provide unifying learning experiences" (p. 262); they believe that "the arts can allow access for children to communicate understandings or enhance learning in all areas: numeracy, literacy, history and science" (p. 271). They suggest that, in regard to the different subjects in the Australian Curriculum, "it is therefore perhaps better to integrate teaching of various outcomes concurrently" (Roy et al., 2015, p. 262).

Such knowledge, beliefs and interests have converged to create this social text, namely, the Beijing Curriculum to be an integrated curriculum. Above all, this curriculum is integral to children's lives. All kinds of activities, all aspects of the curriculum constitute its organic composite parts, including life activity, play activity, inside and outside environment, and teachers. All areas are interpenetrated and form an integral body, whether based on the four targets of education, namely, morals, intelligence, physics and aesthetics (which is in line with the *Seventh Five-Year Plan* issued by the National People's Congress in 1986 which advocates an "all-around development" as presented in the literature review chapter), or based on the five learning areas, namely, health, society, language, science and the arts. According to this curriculum, the educational process and children's development should be integrated and holistic. Some concrete examples are outlined below.

In this curriculum, it is clearly indicated in the development targets for January and February that children are asked to use their favourite means, such as language, drawing, movement or performance, to daringly express their feelings for music (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 212). This development target shows that the curriculum adopts an integrated learning pedagogy where the arts and other learning areas are integrated. In this statement, the arts are integrated with language, health and society. The same statement also shows that learning of different art forms is integrated with music, drawing and dance. One concrete example in this curriculum is that children are asked to draw a poem named "Crescent Moon" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 46). In this activity, the arts learning is integrated into language learning—in drawing the poem, children might be learning about how artists use drawing to express poetic ideas. In this way, children will deepen their understanding of the poem while, at the same time, they will have aesthetic experiences.

This pedagogical tendency can be found not only in the Beijing Curriculum, but also in many other curricula across Great China (e.g. Cheung-yung & Lai, 2010; Wang, 2012). Based on the analysis of curricula in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China, it

is evident that the ECE arts curricula in China have a tendency toward integration—not only among different disciplines in the arts (e.g. in Hong Kong and Taiwan) (Cheung-Yung & Lai, 2010), but also between the arts and other key learning areas (e.g. Mainland China) (Wang, 2012).

4.2.6.3 Characteristic three: Craft making

"The concept of 'craft' has many connotations and its definition depends on the social and cultural contexts" (Kokko & Dillon, 2011, p. 488). In this section, Kokko and Dillon's (2011) definition of "crafts" is used: "crafts are artefacts made by people typically, but not exclusively, from the primary resources of their local environment (e.g. minerals, plant materials, animal materials)" (p. 488). Many scholars argue for the significance of craft making in children's learning. For example, Finnish researchers Rönkkö and Aerila (2013) point out that "craft making educate[s] children by requiring them to design, build, create and problem-solv[e]. Craft making and its processes affect many significant areas of child development, including bodily perception, motor coordination, visual perception and concentration" (p. 294).

In the Beijing Curriculum, the third remarkable feature is that craft-making activities are abundant throughout, which constitute an effective technique to achieve the educational ends in this document. As previously mentioned, the "arts designing" area is one of the key learning areas where different types of craft-making activities are organised among children. Children use natural materials and recycled materials to realise their artistic creation. For example, children are asked to chat with their younger brothers and sisters, and to use different materials to make toys according to their brothers' and sisters' needs (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 41). Similarly, before the Chinese New Year, children make decorative drawings to create "head scarves" as New Year presents for their mothers (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 223). This curriculum is indeed hands-on as it emphasises children's capacity in making all kinds of art works. This is evident in other examples: children are asked to collect different kinds of name cards, and to use different kinds of papers and colourful pencils to design their own name cards (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 110); during the Moon Festival, children make the clay sculpture "Chang'e (the Moon Lady) Flying to the Moon" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 53); using papers, colourful pencils, scissors, woods, cartons or boxes, sticks and remnants, they also craft different kinds of Uyghur, Tibetan, Mongolian, Korean, Dai and Hui minority dolls (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 86); and for the kindergarten sports meeting, children design and draw their own posters (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 1142).

Echoing Rönkkö and Aerila's (2013) opinions regarding the significance of craft in pre-school education, based on the above craft-making activities, I conclude that craft making serves as a means of children's self-expression, a means to carry on Chinese tradition, and a means to build children's well-being in the Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum. Under a governmentality perspective, craft-making activities appear to be an important technique in the Beijing Curriculum to achieve its educational ends.

4.2.6.4 Characteristic four: Arts learning and the national culture

As indicated by Duchesne and McMaugh (2016), "culture refers to the systems of knowledge, beliefs, values and behaviour shared by a group of people. It is shared by members of a group because of their shared history" (p.407). In this curriculum, there is the potential for a strong focus on arts learning to raise national pride, and a connection between the arts and the national culture. Thus enabling Chinese young children to share the history, and to get a sense of the systems of knowledge, beliefs, values and behaviour of their country. For example, based on the traditional Chinese fairy tale, children make the clay sculpture "Chang'e (the Moon Lady) Flying to the Moon" (BAESECE, 2008, v.1, p. 53). By making the clay sculpture, children get a sense of the traditional Chinese Moon Festival, and know about the related legendary figures. In the activity of art appreciation under the topic of "Chinese Treasures" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 195), the learning targets are, firstly, to know, to understand and to discover the aesthetics of Chinese folk art. A second target is to arouse children's interest in Chinese traditional culture so they are motivated to appreciate and to collect folk art, and to participate in artistic creation. Another example is that during the Chinese New Year, children are asked to prepare an exhibition of Chinese folk customs, for which they are asked to make festive lanterns, to do the Yangko dance and/or to appreciate the folk song "Celebrating Gongs and Drums" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, pp. 135-136). According to Pudsey, Wadham and Boyd (2007), "culture is the ongoing process of interpreting, valuing and making the world" (p.6); it is also "learned, transmitted and constructed by each of us" (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2016, p. 407). Inheriting the traditional culture and knowing about the indigenous folk customs through the arts learning as highlighted in this curriculum document contributes to the transmission and construction of this ongoing process. The process provides rich implications for the various players involved, in particular, the young children, who are responsible to keep this culture "dynamic and continually being reconstructed" (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2016, p. 407) in this new historical era of globalisation.

Through learning the arts, children understand the culture of their motherland, not only contemporary culture, but also historical culture. In the Beijing Curriculum, one intention identified is to preserve the traditional Chinese cultural heritage among children via their arts learning. Roy et al. (2015) believe that "making connections between the past and the present benefits children" (p. 57). There is no doubt that through learning traditional Chinese arts, children gain a sense of belonging to their nation, and will be overtaken by a special pride as China has such a long history and such a deep culture. This, in turn, will enhance children's arts learning: as Roy et al. (2015) argue, when "their sense of belonging is valued, they feel confident in their artistic endeavours" (p. 215).

4.2.6.5 Characteristic five: Teacher's role and the learning process

Under the influence of some key national policies, the teacher's role in this curriculum is as a leader, initiator, supporter, collaborator, guide and co-constructor, and not only as a knowledge transmitter. Examples are presented in this curriculum where teachers co-play with children during artistic activities, such as in the drama performance "Seven Dwarfs", where a teacher plays the role of Snow White, and her students act as the seven dwarves (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 163). According to Stevenson and Hedberg (2011), co-constructive learning involves groups of learners learning collaboratively which is "in contrast to more traditional notions of learning based largely or solely on the delivery and transmission of information" (p. 324). This example shows a co-constructive learning approach in children's arts, where the teacher's roles are as supporter and collaborator instead of the traditional role of knowledge transmitter. At the same time, the teacher is a guide who introduces, leads and facilitates the whole learning process which seems to be highly structured and explicit in this curriculum. Figure 4.1 is a demonstration of the arts learning process in this curriculum:
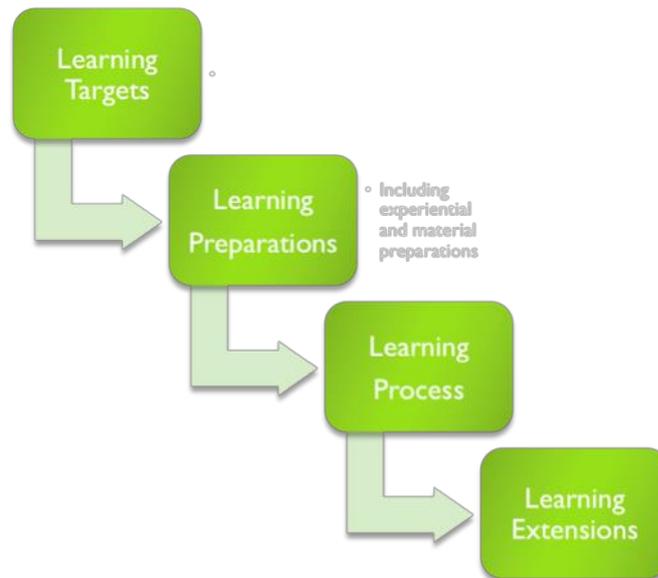
Figure 4.1 Arts learning process in the Beijing Curriculum
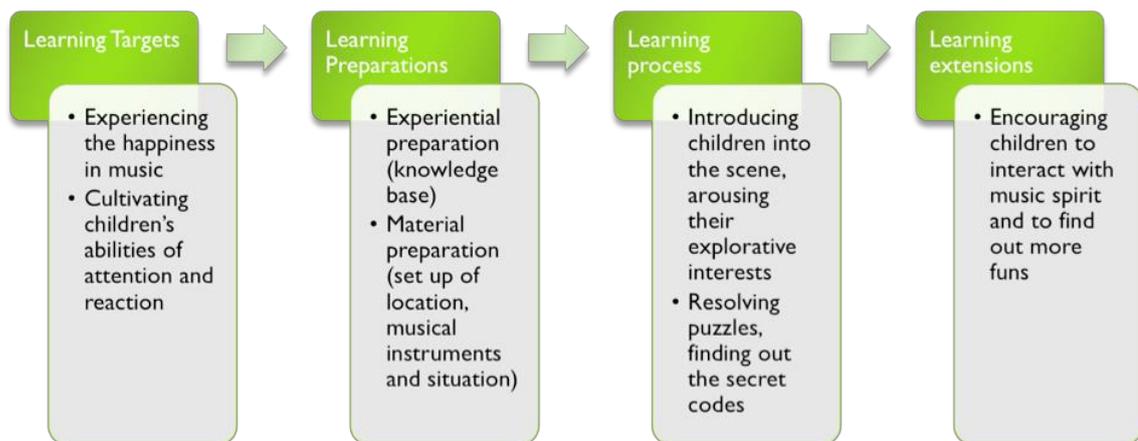
Figure 4.2 Learning process of "Looking for Happiness" in the Beijing Curriculum

This kind of highly structured process flow can be found in almost all children's activities in the Beijing Curriculum, not only in the arts, but also in other learning areas such as language, science, health and society. Although throughout this learning process, the teacher is deemed to be a facilitator or a guide, she/he, in fact, is more like a leader during the whole process. This predominant feature in the organisation of children's learning exhibits some characteristics of the former Soviet Union top-down model (Pan & Liu, 2008), and implies an imbalanced power relationship between teacher and child. Although the Chinese ECE curriculum has undergone significant reform and has developed towards a new bottom-up model since the 1980s, (Pan &

Liu, 2008), some "traces of the 1950s Russian framework remained" (Wong & Pang, 2002, p. 65). Analysis of the persistence of the Russian influence under a governmentality framework, demonstrates one kind of "counter-conducts" (Foucault, 2007, p. 201), or resistance, to the 1980s curriculum reform in Chinese ECE, which advocates a child-centred curriculum approach (e.g. Zhu & Zhang, 2008). This type of standardised learning process also seems to lack some of the necessary flexibility which, therefore, impedes EC teachers' creative teaching as well as young children's creative learning.

4.2.7 Four key terms in this curriculum

Under the guidance of the two previously discussed policy documents, the rationale of the Beijing Curriculum can be described by four key terms, namely, respect, appropriateness, happiness and development. Based on this curriculum document, these terms are explained below:

Respect requires that teachers should respect children's personality and rights, the characteristics of their mental and physical development as well as their learning, and individual differences in aspects, such as developmental level, ability, experience and learning methods. **Appropriateness** means teachers should consider children's age characteristics, learning characteristics, developmental level and emotional needs during the process of setting educational targets, defining educational content, setting up educational environments and implementing education. The curriculum states that it is important to overcome the "primary" and "teacher-centred" curriculum model. "Respect" and "appropriateness" come mutually and co-exist, as "respect" refers to the guiding ideas on the curriculum, the child, the teacher, the learning, the activity, the development, the educational environment and resources (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, pp. 2-3), whereas "appropriateness" refers to the concrete behaviours in practice.

The key terms of "respect" and "appropriateness" in this curriculum correspond to the need for child-centred education. As Heary and Guerin (2006) indicate, being child-centred "implies the need to respect each individual child and his/her capacities or abilities" (p. 1), and a child-centred pedagogy relies on "a respect for each individual child" (Winter, 2014, p. 415).

The Beijing Curriculum uses two levels with regard to the term "**happiness**": the surface level refers to the good mood and delight that children feel when they are in kindergarten; the in-depth level means the sense of success, fulfilment and self-

confidence when children successfully experience a variety of activities; these two levels of "happiness" supplement each other and construct children's happy life through kindergarten experiences. However, "happiness" is not the sole meaning of education in early childhood; when children feel happy, they are empowered to have a holistic, sufficient experience (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, pp. 2-3). **Development** also consists of two connotations: first, the development of present everyday progress; second, the present development contributes to children's long-term development, referring to children's future education and their lifelong learning and sustainable development. Their development not only includes the improvement of children's knowledge and ability, but also the progress of children's attitudes, interests, learning motivation and aesthetics, as well as the formation of good behavioural habits (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, pp. 2-3). "Happiness" and "development" are mutually built. Only when children are happy, will they actively take part in activities and learning and enable good development; and when children make progress, they are certainly happy and find their own values.

Similarly, these four key terms also applies to EC educators: it is expected that practitioners of the Beijing Curriculum, the EC teachers, are happy and experiencing development, devoting themselves with happiness in their work and achieving ample progress and development through their work. For example, in a drama performance called "How small animals pass the winter"*,* teachers use their language and actions to inspire children and this leads to the joy of success among both children and teachers (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 159).

Therefore, the curriculum system constructed is appropriate to children's age and developmental features; in this way, teachers are able to enhance their pedagogical practice and to improve the quality of education.

4.2.8 Influences of a child-centred ideology in this curriculum

As one of the outcomes of educational globalisation, the Beijing Curriculum embraces several key principles in a child-centred educational ideology. The construct of child-centred ECE can be traced to the writings of French Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 18th century, and is influenced by major thinkers such as Dewey, Piaget, Malaguzzi and Freire during the 20th century (Sak, Erden & Morrison, 2015). Chung and Walsh (2000) argue that child-centredness "remains central to the contemporary discourse of early childhood education" (p. 229), and they propose the following three major meanings to this notion: "Froebel's putting the child at the centre";

"the developmentalist notion that the child *is* the centre of schooling, and finally, the progressive notion that the children should direct their activities" (p. 229).

No consensus is apparent on the definition of "child-centred education" (e.g. Chung & Walsh, 2000; Hempel-Jorgensen, 2015). However, agreement exists that education being child-centred involves "placing the child at the centre of our inquiries" (Heary & Guerin, 2006, p. 1). As stated by Sak et al. (2015), it draws from constructivist theory, in which the interaction between children's learning and their environment is crucial. Based on the literature, a child-centred approach honours children's "choice and readiness" (Burman, 1994); it respects children's individual differences and their individual needs; and it endorses the central role of the teacher as facilitator (Sak et al., 2015). However, contemporary EC researchers have challenged the idea of "child-centredness" as it positions the teacher in a rather passive, "guide on the side" role; and they advocate a balance between intentional teaching and child-initiated activities (e.g. Krieg, 2011; Grieshaber, 2016).

The Beijing Curriculum takes place in a prepared kindergarten environment; it requires teachers to sufficiently recognise the value of each day on each child's development. Views on children and on teachers are made explicit. For example,

> Children are distinct individuals who have the equal personality as adults; they are subjects of learning and development; they enjoy four basic rights such as right-to-life, right-to-be-protected, right-to-development, and right-to-participation … Teachers are supporters, facilitators, collaborators and guides of children's learning and development. They are the people who protect and realize children's four basic rights (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 2).

In this statement, the Beijing Curriculum puts children at the centre of learning and development, and defines the role of teachers as "facilitators", which is in accordance with the ideology of child-centred education. At the same time, teachers are deemed to be "supporters" and "guides" of children's learning and development; this would suggest a certain aspect of intentional teaching in the EC context (e.g. Leggett, 2015).

According to this curriculum, learning means the long-lasting changes in children's psychology, ability and behaviour led by experiences. Some social constructivist principles are found in this curriculum, for example, the interactions between educational environment and children's development are highlighted. Children are also expected to interact directly and indirectly with educators through a variety of activities such as "life activity, play activity, activity-zone activity, wall-decoration activity, singing activity, storytelling activity, outdoor activity and other activities" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1

& V.2, p. 6). Furthermore, children are encouraged to interact with their peers and families as well as their communities through various means including the delivery of artistic performances by children (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 7). It is explained that the educational environment consists of multiple dimensions, such as the mental environment, material environment, class system and human behaviour. The curriculum states that children's learning is imbued in the process of naturalised, multiplied, delightful and meaningful daily life and play, and is realised by interactions with their environment: children also actively participate in the creation and design of the environment (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 6). These social constructivist principles signal a child-centred approach where dynamic interactions are emphasised in children's learning.

4.2.9 Curriculum rationale: A child-oriented curriculum

Despite all the evidence of a child-centred rationale in this curriculum, it is also identified that the Beijing Curriculum is a highly structured curriculum, for example, in terms of the learning process as demonstrated previously. Based on this process, it seems that children's learning activities are teacher-directed rather than children-initiated. In addition, the organisation of this curriculum, as previously discussed, is based on a monthly schedule with a number of themes and activities already set up, with this exhibiting a highly prescriptive nature within the curriculum. In addition, many of the activities appear to be initiated by the teacher instead of the child (e.g. the craft and festival activities).

As a result, instead of arguing that it typifies a child-centred ideology, I conclude that the Beijing Curriculum is a child-oriented curriculum. Regarding the child-oriented perspective, Engdahl (2015) argues:

> Within a child-oriented perspective, the adults direct their attention towards an understanding of the children's perceptions, experiences and actions in the world (Pramling and Pramling Samuelsson 2011; Sommer et al. 2010) by positioning themselves close to the children to gain insight into their worlds (Engdahl 2011). A careful listening, observing and analysing may promote a better understanding of how children make sense of their lives (Farrell 2005) (p. 350).

As previously discussed, from the four key terms of the Beijing Curriculum, namely, "respect", "appropriateness", "happiness" and "development", we clearly see a child-oriented perspective. Furthermore, as Monkevičienė, Stankevičienė and Glebuvienė

(2013) point out, child-oriented pedagogical approaches include play pedagogy, pedagogy based on listening to a child, dialogue pedagogy and interpretational-creativity stimulating pedagogy. These pedagogies are evident in the intended Beijing Curriculum, in particular, the pedagogy that encourages children's creativity.

The term "creativity" is mentioned frequently in the Beijing Curriculum; "creativity" is highlighted as one of the major outcomes of arts learning. For example, regarding the development targets of September, in the arts learning area, it states, "in musical activities", the learning targets are for children to "experience actively and express creatively beautiful emotions" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 15). Another example is that in the drawing activity of the same month, children are encouraged to "express their creativity daringly" and to compose the pictures of "playing on the slide" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 37). A drawing activity during the summer holidays (July and August) is a good example of promoting children's creativity and imagination: in this activity, children are encouraged to think creatively about how to use a knife, fork and spoon to draw a unique picture (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, pp. 229-230,). Based on these features, I conclude that the Beijing Curriculum represents one of the dominant visions of art education of the 20th century—the vision of Creative Self-Expression—which advocates for "creative growth" for children (Efland, 2004, p. 695).

In summary, the pursuit of creativity is evident throughout the Beijing Curriculum. This resonates with what Cheung and Mok (2013) argue: "creativity has been ascribed great importance in recent years by Western and Asian countries alike, as reflected in policy statements issued in these countries for the inclusion of creativity development in the formal curriculum" (p.119). As discussed previously in the literature review chapter, international scholars deemed the lack of creativity as a major problem among Chinese students compared to their Western peers. In order to tackle this problem in the ECE field, Chinese government has issued various policies, such as the Guidance (2001) and the Guideline (2012). For instance, according to the Guideline (Ministry of Education [PRC], 2012), one of the key targets in the arts learning area for Chinese children aged 3-6 years is to "enrich their imagination and creativity" (p. 41).

4.2.10 Curriculum orientation: Some tenets of a progressive curriculum

Kemmis et al. (1983) argue that a liberal/progressive orientation to curriculum "sees education as for the 'whole person'", and that "education must develop a sense of the good, true and beautiful in every child, and can do this by recognizing these virtues in children and building on them through creative and engaging tasks" (p. 9).

Based on the description of the two key terms "happiness" and "development", the Beijing Curriculum reflects some of the tenets of the liberal/progressive orientation to curriculum. As discussed previously, the two levels of "happiness" and the two connotations of "development" suggest the following: "education as a preparation for life rather than work" and "education as for the 'whole person' rather than instrumental", which, according to Kemmis et al. (1983, p. 9), is the liberal/progressive orientation to curriculum.

The Network of Progressive Educators (1987) proposed a number of founding principles for progressive education as follows:

• Curriculum tailored to individual learning styles, developmental needs and intellectual interests

• The student as an active partner in learning

• Arts, sciences and humanities equally valued in an interdisciplinary curriculum

• Learning through direct experience and primary material (cited in Little, 2013, p. 87).

These principles are reflected in the Beijing Curriculum. As previously quoted from the curriculum document, the Beijing Curriculum considers children to be the "subjects of learning and development" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 2), and adopts a developmentally appropriate educational approach activity. For example, in the musical rhythm exercise named "Small Mouse" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 35), children are invited to take initiative and lead the exercise in class; they are invited to choose freely the rhythms that they like; and teachers try to increase the difficulty of the exercise based on children's capacities.

In the statement of these two key terms "happiness", and "development", we also see a mixture of social-pedagogy and pre-primary orientation in this curriculum. Bennett (2005) reveals that in ECE among OECD countries, the social pedagogic approach focuses on and works with the whole child and his/her family (which is underscored by the term "happiness" in the Beijing Curriculum); whereas the traditional pre-primary approach focuses on learning and skills, especially in areas useful for school readiness (which is underscored by the term "development" in this curriculum).

Chung and Walsh (2000) indicate that, according to a progressive education notion, children should direct their activities. Given the highly structured and prescriptive nature in the Beijing Curriculum, it is inappropriate to assume that this curriculum typifies a progressive education orientation. However, based on the discussion in this section, I argue that the Beijing Curriculum reflects some of the tenets of a progressive education orientation; it also represents a mixture of the social-pedagogy and pre-primary orientation in the ECE field, based on Bennett's (2005) typology.

4.3 Australian Curriculum: The Arts

Piscitelli et al. (1999) suggest that cross-cultural study in early childhood arts education may lead to a cross fertilisation of ideas and pedagogical approaches: here, a new arts curriculum—the Australian Curriculum: The Arts—is introduced as a contemporary international reference for the Beijing Curriculum.

In 2013, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) issued a new arts curriculum from Foundation to Year 10. The Australian Curriculum F-10 is the first national curriculum in Australia, and "builds on the key learning outcomes of the national Early Years Learning Framework" designed for children aged from birth to five (e.g. the social pedagogic approach) (ACARA, 2016, "Learning F-2", para. 2).

The implementation of these two important national documents has occurred "during a period of time when significant forces across the world have been at work" (Dinham, 2013, p. 6). These forces include:

> more sophisticated understandings and debates in education, developing globalisation, shifting economic power and increasing international mobility, the shift to a knowledge society, increasing engagement with different cultures, the growing significance of the digital world, a concern for disenfranchised youth and fragmenting society, the changing nature of work, new fields of research along with environmental and sustainability issues (Dinham, 2013, p. 6).

Dinham (2013) indicates that these forces have led to a reassessment of the value, purpose and role of the arts in contemporary society and education. As she argues, "there has been a growing interest in the special contribution the arts can make in an education program designed to prepare children for the emerging future" (p. 6).

Four decades ago, Jacques Barzun (1974) considered the role of art to be redeeming, and claimed that art could be "a social force, revolutionary, therapeutic, or

simply popular" (p. 131). This assertion seemed to be precocious during the 1970s. However, with rapid societal development, the significance of the arts, especially arts education for children, has been recognised worldwide. Many countries, including Australia, China, the USA, the UK and New Zealand, have included art subjects in their core curriculum (Cheung-Yung & Lai, 2010). Using a governmentality perspective, arts education functions as an effective technique in order to achieve educational ends in the contemporary world.

The issue of the new arts curriculum is an exciting event for Australian arts educators and young students. As Gattenhof argues, "this is a historic moment because such an arts curriculum including five art forms (i.e. dance, drama, music, visual arts and media arts) has never happened before, even internationally" (ACARA, 2016, "Introduction to the Australian Curriculum: The Arts"). Many international researchers have endorsed this new arts curriculum as it is a socially-critical curriculum that connects making and critical analysis, and considers students to be cultural code-breakers (ACARA, 2016, "Introduction to the Australian Curriculum: The Arts"). The New York-based College Board for the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (2011) claims that the Australian Curriculum: The Arts is unique among 16 studied countries including the US, Canada, the UK, Sweden, China, Japan, Singapore and Venezuela:

> The Australian Arts Curriculum could be considered as exemplary in the breadth of its scope, the considerable attention to defining its own language, and the lengths it goes to in recognizing the differences in abilities and learning opportunities at the different age/grade levels (p. 13).

Therefore, it could be meaningful for Chinese arts educators and policy makers to draw on some of the elements of this innovative curriculum as contemporary international experience. For Chinese ECE arts educators and scholars in particular, it will be of value to engage with a comparative study between the intended and enacted Chinese arts curriculum and the intended Australian Arts Curriculum for the age group of children aged 5-6 years, which is both the age of the Chinese upper kindergarten class and the Foundation year of Australian children, as previously indicated.

4.3.1 Curriculum context and history

One of the remarkable features of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts lies in its broad scope across the whole country—for the first time in history, it is a national curriculum

"aiming to create uniformity of educational opportunity across the country" (Dinham, 2013, p. 3). O'Toole (2010a) points out that "arts in Australia have made themselves increasingly significant down the years, especially in the last two or three decades, and now more than ever" (p. v). Cosatis (2011) shares this view by stating that, in Australia, over the last two decades, several attempts have been made by successive federal governments to issue some form of national arts curriculum. However, the journey has not been plain sailing all the way. In 1989, the Hobart Declaration on Schooling, which is considered to be the predecessor of the Australian Curriculum (Dinham, 2013), clearly stated that all Australian students should develop "an appreciation and understanding of, and confidence to participate in, the creative arts"; and the arts were among the eight key learning areas at that time (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 1989). Yet in the early 1990s, the arts were excluded in deference to the priority placed upon other key learning areas such as literacy and numeracy (Cosatis, 2011). Based on a market-orientated economy, the Australian government's 1994 cultural policy Creative Nation positioned the arts as a market commodity with the "creative industries" (Dinham, 2013), thus recognising the importance of arts education. At the turn of the 21st century, the environment (MCEETYA, 1999) and sustainability (Department of Environment and Heritage, 2005) were the two main educational goals in Australia. Researchers such as Tarr (2008) and Littledyke, Taylor and Eames (2009) argued that the arts played an effective role in sustainability education (cited in Dinham, 2013). Guided by the Melbourne Declaration on educational goals for young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008), the Australian Curriculum was announced by the Australian government in 2009. Eventually, "in May 2009, it was decided by the ministers from state, territory and federal levels that The Arts would also be included in the National Curriculum formulation (Education Today, 2009)" (Cosatis, 2011, p. 21). Under a governmentality framework, arts education has been considered to be a solution to solve a series of problems in different historic stage.

As demonstrated in Figure 4.3, the preparation of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts consisted of two phases: the Shaping (from September 2009 to January 2011) and the Writing (from February 2011 to June 2013) before its official implementation in July 2013. The development of both its draft shape paper and draft curriculum document was in consultation with three major stakeholders, namely, individuals, education and arts organisations, and authorities of curriculum and systems at state/territory level (Cosatis, 2011). According to O'Toole (2010a), the birth of this national arts curriculum would suggest a mutual understanding and a shared responsibility among different

stakeholders, for example, between researchers and practitioners, as well as between practitioners and policy makers. This national arts curriculum appears to be an outcome of democratic participation and negotiation, which not only reflects the political aspirations of authority figures but also is rich in disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical resources. Through a governmentality lens, this document can be deemed as a convergence of various knowledge, beliefs and interests among different players and different powers, in order for the educational governance being achieved, such as the uniformity of educational opportunity across the country.

Two versions of the Australian Curriculum are now available: versions 8.3 and 7.5. This chapter is based on the latest version of the Australian Curriculum, in the arts learning area.

Shaping Foundation to Year 10 The Arts involves the development of a shape paper that will assist writers to prepare learning area content

Writing Foundation to Year 10 The Arts involves the preparation of draft curriculum, which is made available for comment during consultation. The curriculum is then revised before being endorsed by Federal, state and territory Education Ministers.

SHAPING
September 2009 – January 2011

WRITING
February 2011 – June 2013

Available for use; Endorsed in July 2013

Sept 2009 Project Commences

Jan 2010 Advice paper developed

May 2010 National Forum

Aug 2010 Draft Shape Paper consultation

Aug 2011 Shape Paper published

Oct 2011 Draft Curriculum work commences

Jul – Sep 2012 Draft Curriculum consultation

Feb 2013 Achievement Standards Validation

Available for implementation. Implementation timing is a decision made by the relevant school authorities.

Figure 4.3. Schedule of shaping and writing the Australian Arts Curriculum
Source: ACARA, n.d.

4.3.2 Curriculum rationale and structure

According to ACARA (2016, F-10 Overview/Structure, "The whole curriculum", para. 3), the Australian Curriculum aims to "equip young Australians with knowledge, understanding and skills that will enable them to engage effectively and prosper in our society, compete in a globalized world and thrive in the information-rich workplaces of the future". This curriculum, including the new arts curriculum, typifies a socially-critical orientation (Kemmis et al., 1983), as its rationale is for students to "acquire knowledge, skills and understanding specific to The Arts subjects and develop critical understanding that informs decision-making and aesthetic choices"; and that "the arts entertain, challenge, provoke responses and enrich our knowledge of self, communities, world cultures and histories" (ACARA, 2016, "Rationale", para. 2). This rationale implies that education through the arts can be "civically challenging and result in social action" (Christensen & Aldridge, 2012, p. ix). This seems very different from the rationale in the Beijing Curriculum, given that critical thinking skills are emphasised as one of the key learning outcomes in the Australian Curriculum. An in-depth analysis regarding this curriculum difference is developed in Section 4.4 of this chapter.

As stated previously, this new arts curriculum can be deemed as a socially constructed work as it has passed an extensive consultation process with teachers, experts and practitioners from across Australia. Furthermore, "issues of empowerment, representation, and social consciousness" (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004, p. 825) are discussed and highlighted throughout the whole curriculum.

Figure 4.4 demonstrates the three-dimensional structure of the Foundation–Year 10 Australian Curriculum "that recognises the central importance of disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding; general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities" (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Overview/Structure, "The whole curriculum", para. 1). This structure applies to all eight of the learning areas of the Australian Curriculum, comprising English, mathematics, science, health and physical education, humanities and social sciences, the arts, technologies and languages.

Three-dimensional structure of the Australian Curriculum F-10

Cross-curriculum priorities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia

Sustainability

Content
of learning area or subject

Content Descriptions

Content Elaborations

Achievement Standards
(with work sample of each learning area or subject)

Understanding

Knowledge and Skills

General Capabilities

Literacy

Numeracy

ICT

Critical and Creative Thinking

Personal and Social Capability

Ethical Understanding

Intercultural Understanding

Disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding

Based on ACARA (2017, F-10 overview/Structure, "The whole curriculum")

Figure 4.4 Three-dimensional structure of the Australian Curriculum F-10

4.3.3 First dimension: Disciplinary knowledge, skills and understanding

4.3.4.1 Curriculum organisation

In this curriculum, we find two principal organising strands: making and responding. Roy et al. (2015) write as follows:

> 'Making' is defined as the way in which art makers use Arts elements to imagine, invent or design an idea or expression and then make that artwork 'real' and tangible for an audience to experience. 'Responding' refers to the ability to recognise one's perceptive response to the artwork and the ability to experience the work in a critically reflective manner (p. 79).

In the bands of Foundation to Year 6, these two strands are developed into four sub-strands to organise the teaching and learning in the arts:

1. Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas

2. Developing understanding of practices

3. Sharing artworks through performance, presentation and display

4. Responding to and interpreting artworks (ACARA, 2016, Structure, "Content descriptions")

4.3.4.2 A developmentally appropriate curriculum

The Australian Curriculum, like the Beijing Curriculum can also be considered as a developmentally appropriate curriculum based on the age bands of students. It is a sequential curriculum with five bands in total from Foundation to Year 10: F-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10. In this study, I focus on the first band—from Foundation to Year 2—as this age band matches the age of the upper kindergarten class level in the Beijing curriculum.

4.3.4.3 Key elements of the learning area

As demonstrated in Figure 4.4, the achievement standards and the content descriptions are two key elements sitting at the centre of each learning area including the arts (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Overview/Structure). Details of the achievement standards are as following:

> The achievement standards provide a clear description of student learning and are, therefore, a useful starting point or driver for the development of teaching and learning programs. The achievement standard also allows teachers to monitor student learning and to make judgments about student progress and achievement. For each learning area or subject, the achievement standards are accompanied by portfolios of annotated work samples that illustrate the expected learning for each year level or band (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Overview/Structure, "Achievement standards and work samples", para. 2)

From the above statement, we understand that in each band a description is provided of what students should be able to achieve according to their level of development. An example of the achievement standard in dance for children of F-2 is as follows:

> By the end of Year 2, students describe the effect of the elements in dance they make, perform and view and where and why people dance.

> Students use the elements of dance to make and perform dance sequences that demonstrate fundamental movement skills to represent

ideas. Students demonstrate safe practice (ACARA, 2016, Dance, "Foundation to Year 2 Achievement Standard").

Such standards are especially meaningful for teachers, as a kind of assessment benchmark for students' learning. In line with the achievement standards, learning aims and outcomes are also included. Roy et al. (2015) suggest that once these are established, teachers will have a clear description of successful learning in the arts; and the assessment criteria can also be based on this description. ACARA is currently working on establishing work sample portfolios to give teachers a better idea regarding what works at a particular standard, and what this might look like, with a focus on the thinking that occurs while learning in the arts, in the two strands of making and responding. Some work sample portfolios are already available for the age band of F-2 in the arts, which indicate the types of work that are at standards of "satisfactory", "above satisfactory" and "below satisfactory" (ACARA, 2016, Visual Arts, "Foundation to Year 2 Work Sample Portfolios").

4.3.4.4 Content descriptions and content elaborations

In the Australian Curriculum, content descriptions are provided for each art subject, which describe what the students should do and what they can learn, together with content elaborations, which provide examples for each content description.

For example, the first content description of Foundation to Year 2 in dance, coded as ACADAM001, is to "explore, improvise and organise ideas to make dance sequences using the elements of dance" (ACARA, 2016, Dance, "Foundation to Year 2 Content Descriptions"). The corresponding content elaborations provide detailed examples such as:

1. exploring fundamental movements safely to improvise dance ideas, for example, running in a race, jumping like a frog, stomping like a giant, rolling like a log, falling like an autumn leaf, floating like a cloud, gliding like a bird

2. considering viewpoints—forms and elements: For example—which levels are you using in your dance? What sort of movements did the dancers perform? What are they wearing? What kind of music are they dancing to?

3. exploring movement possibilities in response to a stimulus, such as imagery, music and shared stories

4. experimenting with the elements of space, time, dynamics and relationships through movement, for example, considering levels, tempo and dynamics (ACARA, 2016, Dance, "Foundation to Year 2/ACADAM001").

Through websites such as Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT) and SCOOTLE, the Australian Curriculum provides abundant online resources to explain subject terminologies as well as to demonstrate pedagogical examples for teachers or other educators. For example, regarding the content description "ACADAM001", ScOT provides alternative labels to "Movement sequences" (e.g. "Dance moves, Dance sequences, Dance steps and Dance structure"), and gives more information about its broader and narrower concepts (Schools Online Thesaurus [ScOT], n.d., "Movement sequences").

For this same content, SCOOTLE provides 24 free resources under various types, including image, audio, video, collection, teacher resource, assessment resource, data set and text. These pedagogical resources are not limited to Australian experiences, but are drawn from worldwide examples. For example, among the 24 resources, an online module called "Chinese New Year" consists of teacher notes, three stimulus resources and student activities that explore Chinese New Year. In addition, an image named "Polish dance costume, 1970s" shows a traditional Polish dance costume made in the 1970s, which is richly decorated with embroidery, beading, sequins, braids and ribbons typical of the region near the city of Krakow in Poland (SCOOTLE, n.d.a, search results in dance). These kinds of resources provide children with international perspectives, curiosity and excitement while learning in the arts.

4.3.4.5 Five subjects in the arts with integrated learning approaches

For the first time in the world, the Australian Curriculum: The Arts explicitly comprises five subjects in the area of the arts, namely, dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts, as "related but distinct art forms" (ACARA, 2016, "Introduction", para. 1). The distinction of such different art forms is described in the rationale of each subject: through dance, students represent, question and celebrate human experience, **using the body as the instrument and movement as the medium** for personal, social, emotional, spiritual and physical

communication (ACARA, 2016, Dance/Rationale, para. 2). Drama is the expression and exploration of personal, cultural and social worlds through the medium of **role and situation** that engages, entertains and challenges students (ACARA, 2016, Drama/Rationale, para. 2). Media arts involves creating representations of the world and telling stories through **communications technologies** such as television, film, video, newspapers, radio, video games, the internet and mobile media (ACARA, 2016, Media arts/Rationale, para. 2). Music is uniquely **an aural art form**. The essential nature of music is **abstract**. Music encompasses existing sounds that are selected and shaped, new sounds created by composers and performers, and the placement of sounds in time and space (ACARA, 2016, Music/Rationale, para. 2). Visual arts include the fields of **art, craft and design**. Learning in and through these fields, students create **visual representations** that communicate, challenge and express their own and others' ideas as artist and audience (ACARA, 2016, Visual arts/Rationale, para. 2).

Critique of the Australian Curriculum points out the segmentation of the five subjects within this curriculum. For instance, in his article in *The Australian* newspaper titled "Report argues for arts across the curriculum", Trounson (2011) mentioned that different art forms in the curriculum "should be embedded and funded across the syllabus to boost learning and social skills for all children, rather than limiting it to a separate subject". Ewing also claims that the Australian Curriculum is "too laden with subject specific content when it needs to go further" (cited in Trounson, 2011). However, the Australian Curriculum provides plenty of opportunities for integration of learning between different art subjects, as well as between arts and other learning areas (ACARA, 2016, Structure, "Relationship between the strands of making and responding", para. 2). According to the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations (1994), arts integration is "the use of two or more disciplines in ways that are mutually reinforcing, often demonstrating an underlying unity" (p. 13). In the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, "integrated Arts experiences" are encouraged (Ewing, 2010, p. 28). "Each subject focuses on its own practices, terminology and unique ways of looking at the world", and "each involves different approaches to arts practices and critical and creative thinking that reflect distinct bodies of knowledge, understanding and skills" (ACARA, 2016, Structure, para. 6).

For example, among the 24 free online resources of the content description "ACADAM001" in dance, a resource named "Sing, scat and scoo be doo" is available which is about making music and scatting through singing, speaking,

moving, dancing, playing and creating. This is a good example showing the integrated learning in the arts between the subjects of dance and music. Under the same content description "ACADAM001" in dance, a dance program with the theme of "metamorphosis" is provided with which the teacher guides children to explore and develop knowledge and ideas about the life cycle of a butterfly, and to develop and refine their movement skills (refer to Figure 4.5). In this program, the learning between the areas of the arts and science (biology) is integrated organically.

This integrated learning approach appears to be a significant strength in the Australian Curriculum, as Freedman and Stuhr (2004) argue that the adoption of integrated approaches to curriculum contributes to "[teaching] students the conceptual connections they need to succeed in contemporary life" (p. 823): it promotes learning and creativity among students (Russell & Zembylas, 2007).

Figure 4.5 Teacher guide of "Arts-POP: dance"
(SCOOTLE, n.d.b)

4.3.4.6 Curriculum aims

Among the aims of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts are the "understanding of Australia's histories and traditions through the arts" and the "understanding of local, regional and global cultures, and their arts histories and traditions" (ACARA, 2016, "Aims"). These curriculum aims urge students to have broad and rich experiences through learning in the arts, not only what is contemporary, but also historically; not only what is local, but also globally.

4.3.4.7 Viewpoints

Among the key ideas of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, some viewpoints are developed for students to consider and investigate in regard to making and responding to artworks. A framework composed of key questions related to the contexts, knowledge and evaluations of arts learning is developed in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2016, Key ideas, Table 1: Examples of viewpoints and questions through which artworks can be explored and interpreted) which adopts an inquiry-based learning style. In this framework, we find questions relating to art making (e.g. "How is the work structured/organized arranged?"); art history (e.g. "What historical forces and influences are evident in the artwork?"); and many questions regarding art criticism (e.g. "How effective is the artwork in meeting the artist's intentions?" or "What interpretations will the audience have?"). At the end of the framework, some of the philosophical and ideological questions about the viewpoints of artistic evaluation lead students naturally from criticism to aesthetics. For example, "What philosophical, ideological and/or political perspectives does the artwork represent" (viewpoint as the artist)? "What philosophical, ideological and/or political perspectives evident in the artwork affect the audience's interpretation of it" (viewpoint as the audience)?

4.3.4.8 Disciplinary structure in this curriculum

In the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, a distinctive structure for learning is depicted and explained in each subject of the arts, in terms of knowledge, elements, viewpoints, types, forms, practices, skills, techniques and processes, and materials. These elements build up the disciplinary foundation of each art subject, which offers opportunities of meaningful arts learning experiences among young children. The key elements of each art subject are listed as below:

1. Elements of Dance: space, time, dynamics, relationships (ACARA, 2016, Dance)

2. Elements of Drama: role, character and relationships, situation, voice and movement, space and time, focus, tension, language, ideas and dramatic meaning, mood and atmosphere and symbol (ACARA, 2016, Drama)

3. Elements of Media Arts: composition, space, time, movement, sound and lighting (ACARA, 2016, Media Arts)

4. Elements of Music: rhythm, pitch, dynamics and expression, form and structure, timbre and texture (ACARA, 2016, Music)

5. Conventions in Visual Arts: line, shape, colour, texture, space, time, tone and value (ACARA, 2016, Visual Arts)

Parsons (2004) argues that "the focus on conceptual structure … would ensure that the curriculum is meaningful to students" and would ensure a higher level learning "as contrasted with low level learning such as remembering particular facts and practicing specific skills" (p. 785). According to Neuman, Bredekamp and Copple (2000), meaningful experiences are especially important for young children in supporting their learning in literacy and numeracy: in the same spirit, meaningful curriculum is powerful in promoting children's learning in the arts.

4.3.4.9 An ICT-enriched arts curriculum

The Australian Curriculum: The Arts is an ICT-enriched arts curriculum. Firstly, in terms of the curriculum form, this is an online curriculum—every detail can be found via the internet, not in traditional printed materials. With a clear online organisation of different categories such as curriculum version, learning area, learning subject, age band, structure and resources, teachers, educators, students and parents can download their targeted curriculum content with ease. In particular, the "curriculum filter" is an effective online tool. Secondly, in terms of the curriculum content, media arts are listed among the five subjects, with this area one which "involves creating representations of the world and telling stories through communications technologies such as television, film, video, newspapers, radio, video games, the internet and mobile media" (ACARA, 2016, Media Arts Rationale, para. 2). Thirdly, the use of digital technology is found in different arts subjects: visual arts reference contemporary artwork made using ICT; music uses online resources such as apps on the iPad for making music; drama and dance similarly use internet resources.

4.3.4.10 A curriculum of a contemporary arts education

Being a socially-critical arts curriculum, the Australian Curriculum: The Arts also typifies a socially just approach to ensure that all children have the right and access to the arts (Ewing, 2010; Roy et al., 2015). This approach represents a new

vision in arts education, which is deemed to be an important part of the "equity-driven reform" (Carnoy, 1999) in the agenda of contemporary education, on a global scale. As discussed in the literature review chapter, under this new vision, the arts act as a catalyst for personal and social transformation; the values of the arts are found in positive changes in the direction of people's lives (Ewing, 2010); and, most importantly, in the fact that all children are equally entitled to access to the arts (O'Toole, 2010a).

4.3.4 Second dimension: Cross-curriculum priorities

The cross-curriculum priorities are the second dimension of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts in which it is stated that "the curriculum examines past, current and emerging arts practices in each art form across a range of cultures and places" (ACARA, 2016, "Introduction", para. 1). In this curriculum, three cross-curriculum priorities are identified. These priorities are: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and sustainability (ACARA, 2016). Through the first two priorities, the new Australian Curriculum shifts its focus from the previous European examples of the arts to current cultural diversities and "provide[s] an opportunity to foster cross-cultural understanding and respect" (Roy et al., 2015, p. 56). In this way it avoids being "conservative and Eurocentric" which is considered to be one of the limitations of discipline-based art education (DBAE) (Brown, 2009).

The third cross-curriculum priority "sustainability" is described as:

1. Understanding the ways social, economic and environmental systems interact to support and maintain human life

2. Appreciating and respecting the diversity of views and values that influence sustainable development

3. Participating critically and acting creatively in determining more sustainable ways of living. (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Curriculum/Cross-curriculum priorities/Sustainability/Overview)

Through this description, we see an interdisciplinary learning orientation where the arts are incorporated into other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, economics, science and politics.

4.3.5 Third dimension: General capabilities

"General capabilities" is one of the key structural dimensions in the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, which comprise "an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that apply across subject-based content and equip students to be lifelong learners and be able to operate with confidence in a complex, information-rich, globalised world" (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Overview/Structure, para. 5). In the Australian Curriculum, general capabilities are addressed through the content of the learning areas, and are identified where they are developed or applied in content descriptions (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Overview/Structure, para. 6).

Figure 4.6 General capabilities in the Australian Curriculum
Source: ACARA (2016, F-10 Curriculum/General capabilities/Introduction)

As shown in Figure 4.6, the aim of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts is to develop among students seven general capabilities, namely, literacy, numeracy, ICT capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding. Among them, the capability of "critical and creative thinking" is spelled out in this curriculum (Roy et al., 2015). In fact, not only the arts learning area, but the entire Australian Curriculum F-10 advocates that "the explicit teaching and embedding of critical and creative thinking throughout the learning areas encourages students to engage in higher

order thinking" (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Curriculum/General capabilities/Critical and Creative Thinking/In the learning areas, para. 1).

Why is the capability of critical and creative thinking so important? ACARA explains as follows:

> Responding to the challenges of the twenty-first century—with its complex environmental, social and economic pressures—requires young people to be creative, innovative, enterprising and adaptable, with the motivation, confidence and skills to use critical and creative thinking purposefully (ACARA, 2016. F-10 Curriculum/General capabilities/Critical and Creative Thinking/In the learning areas, para. 3).

Eisner (2002) holds that, "artistic activity is a form of inquiry that depends on qualitative intelligence. Learning to paint, to draw, to compose music, or to dance requires learning to think" (p. 232). Indeed, learning in the arts not only involves sensory experiences but also engages cognitive processes. According to the Australian Curriculum, each of the five forms in the arts learning area "involves different approaches to arts practices and **critical and creative thinking**" (ACARA, 2016, "Introduction", para. 1). More specifically, each art form of the Australian Curriculum offers opportunities to develop particular skills in the two main learning strands—making and responding. For instance, skills of choreographing in the dance form, skills of improvising and devising in the drama form, skills of designing and producing in the media arts form, skills of composing and conducting in the music form, and, finally, learning in the visual arts form all involve specific skills, such as problem solving, making decisions, developing, manipulating, and developing practical and critical understanding. These skills are closely linked to critical and creative thinking.

Overall, "design thinking" appears to be a fundamental strategy guiding students to explore, experiment, refine and create during their artistic learning, and typifying the focus of both creative and critical thinking skills among the educational aims of the Australian Curriculum, as it "[provides] possibilities for students to create innovative and hybrid forms of art" (ACARA, 2016, Structure, para. 13). Freedman and Stuhr (2004) argue that, in a modern democratic society, one principle aim of education is to "promote the development of responsible citizens who think critically, act constructively" (p. 824). As a result of this analysis of the dimensions of general capabilities, the Australian Curriculum: The Arts can

be deemed exemplary in its promotion of both creative and critical thinking skills among future citizens in modern society.

Despite the strengths already discussed of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, some criticisms have been made regarding its earlier versions. For instance, Barry McGaw, chairman of ACARA, stated that this curriculum is about setting out what needed to be taught, rather than how (Trounson, 2011). This statement needs to be examined in authentic teaching and learning contexts, in other words, in the "enacted" curriculum. On the other hand, another criticism in relation to the overly crammed learning content seems to be more a consensus than the alleged pedagogical insufficiency in this curriculum. In quoting Ferrari (2010), Cosaitis (2011) argued that the overly crammed subject matter in the Australian Curriculum "does not allow enough time for deeper and more extensive study" (p. 28). In addition, she indicated that the flexibility of the curriculum delivery, which is determined by "each and every school's own particular policy, rather than stipulating a central uniform approach", is deemed to be "less practicable in delivering quality arts education at all schools on a national basis" (p. 28). Ewing urged the necessity of improved funding for school arts programs for an equal learning opportunity as well a better curriculum delivery for all children (cited in Trounson, 2011). Arts educators in different subjects have also posed questions on the setting of the curriculum content. For example, Maras (2013) expressed the opinion that the curriculum content in visual arts lacks conceptual coherence.

Australian Curriculum is still undergoing improvements during its implementation across the Commonwealth of Australia, while under the scrutiny of all its stakeholders. As argued in the introduction chapter, ideas and experiences from other countries possess the potential stimulus for change and improvement in each country's ECE setting (e.g. Tobin et al., 2009). With the rapid societal development in China, it is my hope to provide innovative ideas from the empirical curriculum study in Beijing, China, to aid in the enhancement of the Australian Curriculum.

4.4 Comparison between the Beijing Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum

The Beijing Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum: The Arts share some similarities but also differ significantly in various aspects in the arts learning area. As shown in Table 4.1, both curricula share similarities in terms of the place of the

child and the teacher in arts education, the key pedagogical approaches, the key educational aims (e.g. creative thinking and design thinking skills), and the adherence to aesthetic qualities. At the same time, the two curricula differ in the following aspects: curriculum scope, organisation, curriculum orientation, vision of arts education, and a series of contextual considerations.

Table 4.1 Comparative table between intended Beijing Curriculum and Australian Curriculum

A Comparative Table between the Beijing Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum									
	Similarities				**Differences**				
Curriculum	**Place of child and teacher**	**Key pedagogical approaches**	**Aims**	**Aesthetic qualities**	**Curriculum scope**	**Curriculum organisation**	**Curriculum orientation**	**Vision of art education**	**Contextual considerations**
Beijing Curriculum	**Child-oriented educational perspective; Teachers are supporters, facilitators, collaorators and guiders**	**Integrated learning; activity as main approach; inquiry-based learning; learning through play**	**Creativity thinking skills and design thinking skills are emphasised**	**Aesthetics, free expression, beauty, enjoyment, etc.**	**Regional**	**by monthly activities integrated with other learning areas**	**Liberal/ progressive (partly)**	**Creative/Self-expression and Art in Daily Life**	**School, community, intercultural and electronic contexts considerations are not clear in the intended curriculum**
Australian Curriculum					**National**	**by two strands: making and responding in five art subjects**	**Socially-critical**	**Interrelated disciplinary bodies of knowledge; cross-cultural, emergent technology, and Socially-Just Art Education**	**These contextual considerations are elaborated in the curriculum document**

4.4.1 Curricula similarities

4.4.1.1 Place of the child and the teacher

Both curricula apply a child-oriented educational perspective, considering the child to be the subject of learning, and adopting a developmentally appropriate pedagogical approach. As stated previously, in the Beijing Curriculum, children's personality and rights are respected; children's voices are carefully listened to; the ultimate educational goals lie in children's happiness and development; and teacher's roles are defined as supporter and collaborator. In the Australian Curriculum, although disciplinary knowledge is emphasised, children's agency appears overwhelming with children acting as "cultural code-breakers" (ACARA, 2016, "Introduction to the Australian Curriculum: The Arts"). This would signify that by active participation in the arts, children learn about the world; they inherit the human culture from the past, and also "explore new ideas and [participate] in scientific and cultural activities" (Piscitelli, 2012, p. 168), therefore making their own unique contribution to the world. Similarly, in the Australian Curriculum, the teacher's roles are defined as leader and collaborator. For example, the Content Description of Foundation to Year 2 in Drama, coded as ACADRM027, is about "exploring possibilities for role and situation when participating in whole group teacher-led process drama and roleplay" (ACARA, 2016, Drama/Foundation to Year 2/ACADRM027, "Elaboration", para. 3); and the Curriculum Band of Years 3 and 4 in Drama involves students making and responding to artworks independently and collaboratively with their classmates and teachers (ACARA, 2016, "Years 3 and 4 Band Description", para. 1). Although the two curricula share a child-oriented perspective, the curriculum content and organisation of the Australian Curriculum appear to be less structured and less prescriptive in comparison to the Beijing Curriculum.

The two curricula also share some key **pedagogical approaches** as below:

1. Active learning: in both curricula, children actively take part in artistic activities to achieve learning outcomes. In the Beijing Curriculum, each week there are two art-relevant group activities, while in the Australian Curriculum, many artistic activities are demonstrated as pedagogical examples among the online resources. Furthermore, most of these activities are developed under certain topics or themes, and within a certain procedural structure (as previously exemplified in the analysis of the Beijing Curriculum and the

Australian Curriculum). Therefore, these "learning activities" can sometimes be called "learning projects". The project approach is powerful in promoting children's hands-on and problem-solving abilities, and also provides teachers with opportunities to identify a child's "teachable moment (when the child shows interest and wants to explore the topic more fully)" (Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2007, p. 16).

2. Integrated learning: between the arts and other learning areas, as well as learning across different art forms, integrated learning is found both in the Beijing Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum. Art educators advocate this approach as the concept of integration "has appeared in [the] constructivist approach in teaching and learning" (Chrysostomou, 2004, cited in Russell & Zembylas, 2007, p. 287), and responds to contemporary changes (Parsons, 2004). Ewing (2010) holds that "deep learning and understanding is more likely when integration is carefully planned to reflect real world learning experiences" (p. 29). Above all, "a good integrated curriculum aims at an understanding of [a child's] lifeworld" (Habermas, 1981, cited in Parsons, 2004, p. 776).

3. Inquiry-based learning: in the Beijing Curriculum, as shown in Figure 4.2 on the "arts learning process", the music activity example "Looking for Happiness" is typically an inquiry-based learning form, while the viewpoint questions in the Australian Curriculum provide an inquiry framework for learning in the arts with a basis of disciplinary knowledge. Regarding the significance of inquiry-based learning, Klefstad (2015) argues that the development of children's thinking skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making, "cannot be taught like reading or math, but can be fostered through an engaging environment such as inquiry-based learning" (p. 147).

4. Learning through play: Based on the consensus that play is fundamental in young children's learning, as discussed in the literature review, both curricula recognise the vital role of play in children's arts learning. According to the Beijing Curriculum, "children's learning is imbued in the process of naturalised, multiplied, delightful and meaningful daily life and play" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 6); and in the Australian Curriculum, "in Foundation to Year 2, learning in The Arts builds on the Early Years Learning Framework. Students are engaged through purposeful and creative play in

structured activities" (ACARA, 2017, "Foundation to Year 2 Band Description", para.1). The lead author of the Shape paper of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (ACARA, 2011) John O'Toole (2010b) affirms, "play is one of the foundational pillars of the National Curriculum in the Arts"; for him there is an inextricable relationship between play and art, for play is "the wellspring of art", as "play asks the question 'What if...'" whilst "Art seeks to answer and communicate 'As if ...' "(p.28).

4.4.1.2 Creative thinking and design thinking skills

Both curricula aim to develop children's higher-order thinking skills, for example, creative thinking and design thinking. The aspiration to promote children's creativity appears evident in the Beijing Curriculum, when it encourages children to "express their creativity daringly" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 37). As indicated in the introduction chapter, innovation and creativity are key concepts in contemporary Chinese policy making (Pang & Plucker, 2013). This key target in the Beijing Curriculum to cultivate children's creative thinking skills through arts learning appears to be a direct response to Chinese President Xi Jinping's (Xi, 2016) newest appeal that "creativity is the first driving force leading to development". It is also an effective way to change the "Chinese/Western creativity gap" that is demonstrated in different aspects, according to international scholars (e.g. Morris & Leung, 2010; Zhao, 2012), as discussed in previous chapters. The same endeavour is found in the Australian Curriculum, as Ewing (2010) asserts that "the realisation of the potential for the Arts" is "to foster the development of creativity and imagination and to facilitate social change" (p. 5). As an example, design thinking, the fundamental learning strategy in the Australian Curriculum, is basically to facilitate children's creative thinking skills through learning in the arts. Similarly, as previously described in the Beijing Curriculum, children actively take part in craft-making activities in their "arts designing" area. The ambitious pursuit of creativity both in the Beijing Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum is especially suitable and meaningful for children aged 5-6 years as it is believed that children of this age band "are in a critical period for creative thinking forming the foundations for later creative potential" (Leggett, 2015, p. 29).

4.4.1.3 Aesthetic qualities

The literature review chapter explores multiple perspectives on aesthetics. In the 18th century, German rationalist philosopher Baumgarten defined aesthetics as "a science of sensory perception (asthesis)" (Shusterman, 2006b, p. 237), whereas contemporary aesthetics cover three main themes: sensory perceptions, beauty and art (Shusterman, 2006b). Regarding aesthetic knowledge in the Australian Curriculum, O'Toole (2010a) suggests that students can come to a special understanding of the three worlds of perception: "the world of themselves ('me'); their world of relationships and their society ('us' and 'you'); and the world beyond ('it' and 'them')" (p. v). This understanding expands on the concept of aesthetics, and brings about a new perspective by situating aesthetics in a three-dimensional social world.

In both the Beijing Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum, the pursuit of aesthetic qualities is evident. As previously explained, in the Beijing Curriculum, despite a strong focus on learning "through" the arts, it covers an aspect of learning "in" the arts, where aesthetic qualities such as beauty, enjoyment, free expression and aesthetic feelings are highlighted. In the Australian Curriculum, as O'Toole (2010a) argues, "aesthetic knowledge is central to learning, understanding and enabling in our society" (p. vi), and the exploration and insistence of aesthetic qualities deeply penetrate throughout the whole curriculum. According to the Australian Curriculum, the term "aesthetic" means "specific artistic awareness, or a deep appreciation of the meaning of an artistic experience through intellectual, emotional and sensual response to a work of art" (ACARA, 2016, Music/Glossary, "aesthetic", para. 1). Based on this definition, I use the following as an example to show the aesthetic qualities that children experience during their learning: "as students' progress through studying Music, they learn to value and appreciate the power of music to transform the heart, soul, mind and spirit of the individual" (ACARA, 2016, Music/Rationale, "Rationale", para. 5).

4.4.2 Curricula differences

As demonstrated in the comparative Table 4.1, the Beijing Curriculum is a regional curriculum that has been implemented in part of China, namely, the Beijing area and Gansu Province, while the Australian Curriculum is a national curriculum across six states and two territories in the Commonwealth of Australia. The implementation of both curricula has certain flexibilities: as stated in the Beijing

Curriculum, "teachers should make use of the curriculum flexibly while observing the developmental level of the children in her/his own class" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 12) and "more autonomous space should be accorded to [the] teacher" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 10,). Being a national curriculum, "the Australian Curriculum can be used flexibly by schools, according to jurisdictional and system policies and schedules" (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Overview/Implications for teaching, assessing and reporting, "Implications for teaching, assessing and reporting", para. 1).

In terms of curriculum organisation, the Beijing Curriculum is organised by monthly activities in which learning in the arts is integrated with other areas. On the other hand, the Australian Curriculum is organised by two main strands—making and responding in five arts subjects. Early childhood (EC) educators across Australia can flexibly use the curriculum resources, including the abundant online pedagogical and content materials.

4.4.2.1 Critical thinking

The Beijing Curriculum reflects on some of the tenets of a progressive curriculum orientation where children's "happiness" and "development" appear to be the main concerns, while the Australian Curriculum typifies a socially-critical orientation where children's "critical thinking" disposition and skill are prioritised. According to ACARA (2016, F-10 Curriculum/General capabilities/Critical and Creative Thinking, "Introduction", para. 5), critical thinking skills include "interpreting, analysing, evaluating, explaining, sequencing, reasoning, comparing, questioning, inferring, hypothesising, appraising, testing and generalizing". As a result, the most significant difference between these two curriculum orientations lies in whether or not children's critical thinking is highlighted.

Western scholars argue that the central goal of education is to teach students to think critically (e.g. Holmes, Wieman, & Bonn, 2015). Davis-Seaver (2000) further claims that "critical thinking is at the heart of the teaching and learning process" (p. 6). Although in many Western countries, critical thinking is commonly considered to be a key ability needed to succeed in the 21st century (e.g. Saadé, Morin & Thomas, 2012; Klefstad, 2015), this skill is not explicitly embraced in the Beijing Curriculum, and a lack of "critical thinking" spirit seems to be evident throughout the curriculum. The Australian Curriculum: The Arts states that "critical and creative thinking is integral to making and responding to artworks"; children

are encouraged to "pose questions and explore ideas, spaces, materials and technologies", and to "take risks and express their ideas, concepts, thoughts and feelings creatively" (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Curriculum/General capabilities/Critical and Creative Thinking/In the learning areas, "the Arts", para. 1). Conversely, in the Beijing Curriculum, children are rarely asked to "pose questions" and to "take risks".

Under the overarching social-constructivist epistemology, in order to understand more deeply the "social production" and "social organization" (Punch, 2014, p. 159) of these curriculum documents, a critical document analysis was adopted by drawing on Foucault's (1991) theory of governmentality. Regarding this theory, Ettlinger (2011) explains as follows:

> Disassembling the term into govern and mentality, governmentality refers to the governance of a mentality (a collectively held view that is communicated through a variety of discourses) by way of 'techniques of power'—calculated tactics that guide everyday citizen-subjects to act in accordance with societal norms (p. 538).

Merlingen (2006) suggests that "governmentality theory offers researchers a toolbox—containing, in particular, the concept of political rationalities and a complex notion of power" (p. 192). It appears that such a theory is suitable for a discussion regarding the "political rationalities" of curriculum which, according to Thomson (1999), is a highly contested political struggle. As presented in the literature review chapter, Mitchell Dean has further developed the theory of governmentality as a conceptual tool in modern society. Here I draw on Dean's (2010) analytics of governmentality as a framework to undertake a comparative curricula analysis in terms of "critical thinking". Under the analytics of governmentality framework emerge the following four key questions on which I consulted while conducting the curriculum analysis.

According to Dean (2010), the identification of a problematisation is "a key starting point of an analytics of government" (p. 32) approach. So the first question asks, "What are the problematisations"? Following this, the second and the third questions ask, "What are the rationalities"? And "what is the *techne*"? As claimed by Dean (2010), an analytics of government approach gives priority to the "how" questions. The second and third questions above concern the "how" questions which "lead us to problems of the techniques and practices, rationalities and forms of knowledge, and identities and agencies by which governing operates" (Dean,

2010, p. 33). The analysis of government also entails teleology which is "concerned with why we govern or are governed, the ends or goal sought, what we hope to become or the world we hope to create" (Dean, 2010, p. 25). Therefore, in the fourth question, I ask, "What is the *telos*"?

Using this analytic framework, it is observed that in the Beijing Curriculum, the problematisation seems to be the "unhappy" young children in this rapidly developing modern society, and the "undeveloped" preschoolers who have difficulties in meeting the qualifications pertaining to mainstream schools of Chinese society amidst globalised competition. Therefore, the rationalities of this curriculum are to emphasise both children's lifelong "happiness" and their "development" during future schooling. The *techne* that the Beijing Curriculum adopts is a mixture of social-pedagogy and pre-primary approaches. It utilises a progressive curriculum orientation, as it is child-oriented, emphasising children's happiness over their lifetime while, at the same time, focusing on children's holistic development, especially their readiness for future schooling (BAESECE, 2008, V.1 & V.2, p. 1). The *telos* therefore seems to be self-evident in the Beijing Curriculum—it is children's happiness and development side by side. That is to say, the purpose of the Beijing Curriculum is to ensure a happy life for Chinese children, and to make them adaptive to social development. We need to be aware that the *telos* here of "be adaptive to" the society does not mean to "challenge" or to "change" the society. This offers an explanation of why "critical thinking" is not evident in this curriculum.

As introduced in the literature review chapter, a socially-critical orientation to curriculum means facilitating "collective actions capable of confronting unjust and irrational social structures" (Kemmis et al., 1983, p. 9): it is basically about actions to "change" and to "improve" the imperfect society. According to this point, I argue that the Australian Curriculum: The Arts typifies a socially-critical orientation, for which

> critical thinking is at the core of most intellectual activity that involves students learning, in order to recognise or develop an argument, use evidence in support of that argument, draw reasoned conclusions, and use information to solve problems (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Curriculum/General capabilities/Critical and Creative Thinking, "Introduction", para. 5).

Using Dean's (2010) analytic framework, the problematisation for the Australian Curriculum seems to be the improvement of the society; the rationalities lie in using people's agency to change "the unjust and irrational social structures"

(Kemmis et al., 1983, p. 9); the *techne* is to adopt a socially-critical curriculum approach to cultivate children's critical and creative thinking, in order to realise the *telos*—an empowered agency to change and improve our society.

In addition, as discussed earlier in this chapter, one of the purposes of children's arts learning in the intended Beijing Curriculum is to preserve the heritage of traditional Chinese culture whereas, according to the Australian Curriculum, children are considered to be the "cultural code-breakers"—revealing a more revolutionary purpose in arts education. This fundamental difference in the Australian Curriculum's *telos* demonstrates that both curricula adopt distinctive rationalities and *techne* during their conceptualisation as well as their implementation.

Based on this comparative analysis, it is of significant interest to observe and investigate in the enacted Beijing Curriculum, to identify whether or not a certain kind of critical thinking orientation is apparent in children's arts learning. As stated by Ku and Hu (2010), "critical thinking has received significant attention among Chinese communities only in the last decade" (p. 55).

4.4.2.2 Art as catalyst for social transformation: A contemporary vision of art education

Educational equity is an ongoing concern among practitioners, researchers and governmental institutions across the world (e.g. Gottfried & Johnson, 2012; Ewing, 2010; State Education Commission of China, 2001; Department of Education [US], 2001; ACARA, 2016). Ewing (2010) argues that "the Arts … by transforming learning in formal educational contexts, can ensure that the curriculum engages and has relevance for all children (p. 1)". According to a socially just arts curriculum, the values of the arts are found in the positive changes in the direction of people's lives, as well as the inclusion of all children in the arts (Ewing, 2010; O'Toole, 2010a).

I attempt to distinguish the different visions of art education represented by the Beijing Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum. Based on the previously discussed key features of the Beijing Curriculum, for example, respect of children's ideas and voices, and the focus on children's creativity and expression, together with the close link between artistic activities and children's daily life, I tend to argue that the Beijing Curriculum represents a mixed vision of Creative Self-expression and Art in Daily Living. Conversely, the Australian Curriculum draws on a variety of

elements from the visions of Art as a Discipline, Art as Visual Culture and Art as Catalyst. With the Australian Curriculum's concern about disciplinary knowledge and understanding, it has "an upper concept containing both fine arts and popular culture" (Duncum, 2009, p. 65), as well as an emphasis on human agency and social relevance. It also uses an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach, uses emergent technology, and has adopted a socially just approach that ensures the equal rights and access of all children to the arts.

Guided by social constructivism, I tend to attribute this difference to the different social contexts of the two curricula. As indicated in the previous chapters, the former Soviet Union top-down model had fundamentally influenced China's education from the 1950s until the 1980s (Pan & Liu, 2008), and children's arts education was no exception. Under these influences, Chinese children's artistic creation and their free self-expression were replaced by rote learning of theoretical knowledge and hard drilling of disciplinary technical skills—an orientation of professionalism in arts education (Zhang, 2003). This approach has proved to be ineffective and even harmful for the development of students (Zhang, 2003; Deng, 2014; Xu & Wang, 2015). In addition, prior to the Reform and Opening-up policy announced in 1978, politics had been overemphasised in every aspect of Chinese society (Luo & Arndt, 2010). As a result, Chinese children's arts curriculum had been politicised and adultified (Wang, 2012). Against these social and political contexts, the mixed vision of Creative Self-expression and Art in Daily Living embraced by the Beijing Curriculum can be deemed as a correction of the previous educational bias in children's arts learning.

Interestingly, the situation in Australian society seems quite the opposite. Since the 1960s, children's arts education was "usually of the laissez-faire style where the old slogan 'the process is more important than the product' dominates teachers' philosophies and classroom practices" (McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002, p. 12). This laissez-faire style, overwhelmingly in pursuit of children's freedom and spontaneous self-expression, has been challenged due to the lack of meaningful ideas and academic rigour during the learning process (Piscitelli, 1994), especially by advocates of "quality Arts education" (e.g. Roy et al., 2015) and "authentic Arts education" (e.g. Dinham, 2013). The development of DBAE since the 1960s in the US was a reaction to this as, under the DBAE approach, arts educators promoted the idea of art as a discipline "instead of teaching art as a form of creative self-expression as in the past" (Twigg & Garvis, 2010, p. 194). Being an innovative national curriculum of the 21st century, and drawing from successful experiences in

arts education across different countries, the Australian Curriculum: The Arts attempts to achieve a balance "between freedom and structure, between child-centred education and discipline-based education, between developmentally appropriate programs and outcomes-based curricula" (McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002, p. 13).

By examining the social construction of the different visions that the two arts curricula represent, I gain a deeper understanding of their historical and contemporary contextual situations, which enables me to project a better outlook for the future.

4.4.3 Contextual considerations

"Context is germane to an understanding of arts education" (Bamford, 2006, p. 26). Stokrocki (2004) proposed a framework that is relevant to contextual research in arts education. She argues that "contextual considerations that include the physical environment, sociocultural factors, and economic and political challenges are salient factors to consider with respect to teaching art" (p. 439). Congdon (1996) suggests that contextual considerations in arts education are related to its "history, values, culture, environment, instructional settings, collaborations, and policy" (cited in Stokrocki, 2004, p. 439). Based on Lieberman's (1992) study, Stokrocki (2004) developed the following categories as a framework in her contextual research of arts education:

1. **School contexts**: These include school culture, school as tribes, inservice programs, and effective and ineffective teaching.

2. **Community contexts**: These include community-centered education, folk art sites, diverse population adaptations (lifelong learning and gender issues), and museum-enrichment programs.

3. **Intercultural contexts:** These include multicultural clarifications, indigenous cultural understandings, cross-cultural comparisons, international summer schools, intercultural education, and globalization of popular culture.

4. **Electronic contexts**: These include electronic environments such as videodiscs and hypertext, interactive Web sites, teleconferencing, and distance education courses. Selections occasionally may overlap (Stokrocki, 2004, p. 440).

Although Stokrocki's (2004) contextual categories seem to be a reduced version, or even a small part, of the all-embracing contextual web of contemporary arts education as proposed by Duncum (2002) and Carter (2008), her work provides adequate guidance to the current curriculum study. From a governmentality perspective, these school, community, intercultural and electronic contexts can be deemed as the different salient forces that interplay in and impact on the field of arts education—another vivid example of the symbiotic power–knowledge system within the governmentality theory, as discussed previously in the literature review chapter. Furthermore, in the *Australian Educational Review: The Arts and Australian Education: Realising Potential*, Ewing (2010) asserts that arts can be a catalyst for both social and personal transformation. She argues that "arts processes can provide the potential to reshape the way learning is conceived and organised in schools and other educational contexts" (p. 2). In addition, she mentions the broader cultural and social contexts that can "shape and sustain and, conversely, inhibit the Arts" (p. 2). It appears that all these contextual aspects indicated by Ewing (2010) are well embedded within Stokrocki's (2004) above framework.

In endorsing the significance of these "salient factors" in arts education, the following discussion develops by drawing on Stokrocki's (2004) categories as a framework, where each category is exemplified by one concrete factor.

The Beijing Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum differ significantly in a series of contextual categories, and it seems that both curricula have some space for further development.

4.4.3.1 School contexts, for example, the teacher's reflective practice

Stokrocki (2004) holds that teaching, effective or ineffective, is a vital factor in school contexts. From this perspective, in both curricula, the theme of the teacher's reflective practice, which has been proven as empowering among EC educators (e.g. Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2007), is compared and discussed.

According to Keay and Lloyd (2011), reflective practice has a central role in work-based professional development among EC teachers. Drawing on a series of recent studies, Roy et al. (2015) argue that high levels of teaching quality can lead to strong achievement outcomes for children. To enhance children's learning, they recommend that teachers embrace a pedagogical reflective tool in conjunction with

the development of their curriculum knowledge. Quality teaching is one such tool: as stated by the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education and Training (2003a, 2003b), quality teaching is "a tool or framework that enables direct reflection and allows teachers to engage in conversations about pedagogy and to codify elements of practice" (cited in Roy et al., 2015, pp. 315-316). The Australian Curriculum supports teachers' critical and reflective thinking during their pedagogical practices. Guided by the Achievement Standard, teachers are able to reflectively evaluate their teaching outcome. During lesson planning, with a plethora of online resources, for example, Arts Packages of Practice (APOP), teachers are able to develop their ideas of lesson organisation and extension, "based on the teacher's evaluation and reflection, which in turn informed the next stage of the planning" (APOP, n.d., "Dance planning", para. 6). This recursive process echoes the strategies that Carter (2006) claims to be powerful in EC teachers' professional learning, which "help teachers 'look inside' and feel safe to put out what they discover as an invitation for further reflection" (p. 15).

In the Beijing Curriculum, the teacher acts as a supporter and collaborator, and also as a guide who leads and facilitates a kind of highly structured and explicit learning process. Nevertheless, throughout the intended Beijing Curriculum documents, it is hard to identify indicators of teachers' reflective practice, which help to inspire EC teachers to develop self-reflective questions in order to improve their pedagogical practices.

Redman and Rodrigues (2014) argue that, "internationally, engaging in reflective practice is considered a core standard and benchmark within the teaching profession" (p. 6). Ng et al. (2014) suggest that action research and co-teaching are two effective strategies which help teachers to develop their reflective practice. In fact, some evidence is available that EC teachers in Beijing have recently been actively engaged in educational research to promote the holistic ECE development in Beijing, and "action research" is one of the main methodologies in their research (BAESECE, 2015).

4.4.3.2 Community contexts, for example, connectedness with wider society

Intellectual quality, a quality learning environment and the significance of children's work are considered to be the three dimensions of quality teaching (Roy et al., 2015). The issue of "connectedness" pertains to the dimension of the significance

of children's work, and in Stokrocki's (2004) categorical framework, "connectedness with the wider society" finds its place among community contexts.

Regarding the notion of "connectedness", the NSW Department of Education and Training (2003a) explains this as follows:

To what extent do lesson activities rely on the application of school knowledge in real-life contexts or problems? To what extent do lesson activities provide opportunities for students to share their work with audiences beyond the classroom and school? (p. 46)

According to the above explanation, two aspects of the "connectedness" of children's arts learning are found: applying school knowledge in real-life contexts and sharing children's work with wider society. The Beijing Curriculum, as mentioned, is a hands-on curriculum where children actively apply their school knowledge in real-life contexts and in solving authentic problems. For example, they design their own name cards (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 110); they create toys for their brothers and sisters (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 41); they craft scarves for their mothers as New Year gifts (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, p. 223); and they design and draw posters to prepare for the kindergarten sports meeting (BAESECE, 2008, V2, p. 114,). Based on such examples, the Beijing Curriculum is strong in applying school knowledge in real-life contexts and in solving problems. However, the second aspect of connectedness, which refers to the sharing of children's artwork with wider society, seems unclear in this curriculum document. Therefore, it is worthwhile to observe and understand how connectedness with wider society is established in the enacted arts curriculum. For example, do children deliver art performances and display their artworks beyond their classrooms? Do they go to museums, art galleries or art exhibitions outside their kindergartens, as advocated by some Australian and New Zealand arts educators (e.g. Griffin, 2010; Bell, 2010)? Are there any opportunities for practising artists to guide children's arts learning? Are there any extensions of children's arts activities from kindergartens to local communities?

In the Australian Curriculum, one of the aims of arts learning is to gain an "understanding of local, regional and global cultures, and their arts histories and traditions, through engaging with the worlds of artists, artworks, audiences and arts professions" (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Curriculum/The Arts/Introduction/Aims, para. 6). From this statement, we can clearly see vivid interaction and a close

connectedness between students and the concept of audience that extends beyond students' classrooms and schools.

In relation to the concept of "connectedness", another aspect of the Australian Curriculum is the concept of audience—children as audience and others as audience for children. This aspect is reflected by one of the two organisational threads—"responding" in the Australian Curriculum. In the Beijing Curriculum, some of the arts performance activities also involve this aspect.

In this concrete example, the Content Description of Foundation to Year 2 in the visual arts, coded as ACAVAM108, includes this activity: "Create and display artworks to communicate ideas to an audience" (ACARA, 2016, "Foundation to Year 2 Content Descriptions", para. 3). One of its elaborations is "talking about ideas such as themes when displaying artworks, for example, at the local gallery or in their classroom" (ACARA, 2016, Foundation to Year 2/ACAVAM108, "Elaborations", para. 2). Under this content elaboration, an online resource is provided named "Sharing stories: community" (n.d.) which is about "the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' communities and identities". This is an example which indicates the strong intention in the Australian Curriculum to build connectedness between children's arts learning and wider society.

Bamford (2006) argues that the role of the community is critical in achieving effective arts education. The connectedness between children's arts learning and wider society, as well as between performer(s) and audience, therefore, seems to be critical for a better "social construction" of children's arts learning.

4.4.3.3 Intercultural contexts, for example, international perspectives

International perspectives are a key factor among the intercultural contexts in this era of globalisation. It is obvious that the Australian Curriculum exemplifies a contemporary curriculum with international perspectives, with these embodied in its three-dimensional structure. As previously stated, three cross-curriculum priorities are identified in the arts learning area of the Australian Curriculum. Concerning the previously discussed disciplinary knowledge, skill and understanding, among the online pedagogical examples, a good deal of international experience has been adopted. More significantly, relating to the general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum, intercultural understanding appears to be articulated when it states that:

Intercultural understanding is an essential part of living with others in the diverse world of the twenty-first century. It assists young people to become responsible local and global citizens, equipped through their education for living and working together in an interconnected world …

Intercultural understanding combines personal, interpersonal and social knowledge and skills. It involves students learning to value and view critically their own cultural perspectives and practices and those of others through their interactions with people, texts and contexts across the curriculum (ACARA, 2016, F-10 Curriculum/General capabilities/ Intercultural understanding, paras. 2, 3).

As previously stated, the Beijing Curriculum emphasises gaining an understanding of and learning about Chinese folk art, traditional Chinese cultural heritage, and cross-cultural learning among different nations in China. However, limited international elements are found in terms of curriculum contents or pedagogical examples. The few content examples introduced from other countries include a music game where children are asked to perform the Radetzky March (the most famous work of Johann Strauss, Sr.) by skipping rope (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 259); another example is that children co-play the drama "Seven Dwarves" (based on Hans Christian Andersen's "Snow Queen") with their teacher (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 163).

According to Roy et al. (2015), in order to "develop into a global outlook: 'Think global – act local'" (p. 72), we need to have "respect for and value the traditions, histories and beliefs of other cultures" (p. 75). Therefore, the importance of adopting international perspectives in contemporary EC curricula is obvious. However, it seems challenging to embed international perspectives into local curricula. As Ladwig (2010) points out, although the above-mentioned three curriculum priorities are embedded within the Australian Curriculum, the cultural knowledge, not to mention the knowledge of international cultures, are poorly engaged with inside the classrooms.

4.4.3.4 Electronic contexts, for example, the media arts

Yelland (2014) argues that "children in the Information Age are multimodal learners and become multiliterate by experiencing and using new technologies in diverse ways" (p. 152). In particular, "technology and interactive media may be used as a vehicle for nurturing children's creativity and as a means for arts-based teaching

and learning" (Laverick, 2014, p. 61). Here, media arts are taken as an example to analyse the situation of electronic contexts between the two curricula.

Firstly, we find that in the Beijing Curriculum, the arts subjects for children's learning are not as clearly identified as in the Australian Curriculum. In the Beijing Curriculum, the different art forms to be learnt include music, dance, drama, visual arts and some kinds of craft making. However, media arts are almost invisible both in the learning content and as an effective pedagogical approach. This situation appears to occur not only in the arts, but also in other learning areas of this curriculum.

In the Australian Curriculum, learning in media arts means "creating representations of the world and telling stories through communications technologies such as television, film, video, newspapers, radio, video games, the Internet and mobile media" (ACARA, 2016, Media Arts/Rationale, para. 2). In particular, children are taught to critically and creatively use the media in their arts learning. For example, the Band Description for students of Foundation to Year 2 in media arts is to:

1. become aware of structure, intent, character and settings in ideas and stories

2. explore ideas and learn about composition, sound and technologies to construct stories

3. learn how their ideas can be communicated through selecting and organising the elements of media arts (ACARA, 2016, "Foundation to Year 2 Band Description", para. 8).

The "media" not only constitute one of the five arts learning subjects in the Australian Curriculum, but also serve as an effective pedagogical and disseminating method for the whole F-10 curriculum. As previously indicated, media are integrated into all art subjects. The Australian Curriculum can be found via the internet, and no printed materials are available unless people print the web materials themselves as per their individual needs. In the Beijing Curriculum, all the pedagogical examples are described and explained in hard-copy text while, in the Australian Curriculum, various examples are vividly demonstrated online and are easily accessible.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the results of a comparative document analysis regarding two contemporary arts curricula for children aged 5-6 years from China and Australia. Some of the key characteristics discussed based on the respective curriculum texts, included child/teacher relationship, key pedagogical approaches, curriculum aims, organisation and orientation. In addition, the similarities and differences in terms of the aesthetic qualities and the visions of arts education in these curriculum documents were examined. The use of Foucault's theory of governmentality enabled the articulation of some key curriculum issues. More specifically, Dean's analytics of governmentality is adopted as a framework to guide the discussion on the topic of children's critical thinking. Stokrocki's (2004) categorical framework has been used for an in-depth discussion of the contextual considerations between the Beijing Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum.

This cross-cultural comparative analysis revealed a potential for sharing ideas and enhancing practice in both curricula. The endeavour in this initial research phase also serves to enable me to gain a deeper understanding of the curricula contexts and contents, in order to inform the subsequent two research phases in the enacted curriculum study of this PhD project—the qualitative survey and the collective case study in the Beijing context.

CHAPTER FIVE: SURVEY RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Chapter introduction

Following the curricula analysis presented in the previous chapter, this chapter presents the results of the survey investigation which is the second phase of this research. This phase used a qualitative questionnaire comprising 10 questions to collect data on EC educators' beliefs and the features of arts education among 12 kindergartens in Beijing. The survey data were organised and categorised using NVivo computer software, and were analysed using a grounded theory approach. Following the presentation of each finding, the related literature was used as data but incorporated into the discussion of the results, which is a process consistent with grounded theory (Punch, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This assisted with further elucidating the meaning of the results. The goal of this survey study was to ascertain more specific aspects of the status quo of children's arts education in a sample of kindergartens in Beijing, China, and serves as one component of the triangulation strategy in this study, in order to explore the gaps and inconsistencies compared with the other two research methods. The data regarding teachers' beliefs and concerns informed the data collection process in the subsequent case study. Each question of the survey is presented in this chapter followed by a discussion of the literature relevant to the associated finding.

5.2 Questionnaire with two types of questions

A questionnaire is a form of research instrument that participants in a survey study complete and return to the researcher (Creswell, 2012). In this survey, 10 questions were designed in order to investigate the features of arts education for a cohort of children aged 5-6 years in Beijing (refer to Appendices 1 and 2). Questions from one to four are designed to elicit information about daily teaching routine, whilst questions from five to ten aim to extricate EC educators' beliefs and understandings regarding children's arts education. Some of the questions were relatively closed-ended and included examples: these comprised questions No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4, No. 5 and No. 6. The rest of the questions were relatively more open-ended without any examples or prompts, and comprised questions No. 7, No. 8, No. 9 and No. 10. Following these questions, the participant EC teachers were asked to indicate their gender, age, and the size of their classes and kindergartens.

5.3 Participants

With the support of ECERA, 12 public kindergartens, as listed in Table 5.1, within the institutional system of the Beijing Municipal Education Commission were identified from four different districts of Beijing. The participant kindergartens use several different curricula to guide their daily pedagogical activities including the Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum. Table 5.1 shows a total of 4676 children attended the 12 participant kindergartens in this survey investigation, which represents 1.28% of the total number of children in kindergarten in Beijing, and 1.15‰ of the total number in China (based on Table 1.1 and Table 5.1). A qualitative survey questionnaire was distributed to 88 EC teachers of children aged 5-6 years from the participant kindergartens.

Table 5.1 Participant kindergartens in the survey investigation

Kindergartens	No. of Completed Questionnaires	District Name	No. of Children	No. of Children 5-6 Years Old
Kindergarten No.1	**8**	**Xicheng**	**430**	**140**
Kindergarten No.2	6	Chaoyang	370	90
Kindergarten No.3	**8**	**Changping**	**870**	**290**
Kindergarten No.4	8	Chaoyang	295	76
Kindergarten No.5	10	Fengtai	260	60
Kindergarten No.6	**6**	**Chaoyang**	**161**	**71**
Kindergarten No.7	7	Chaoyang	540	180
Kindergarten No.8	5	Fengtai	500	90
Kindergarten No.9	4	Fengtai	200	60
Kindergarten No.10	6	Fengtai	200	90
Kindergarten No.11	7	Fengtai	500	120
Kindergarten No.12	13	Fengtai	350	100
12 Kindergartens	**88 Qs**	**4 districts**	**4676**	**1367**

5.4 Demographic information

On the survey questionnaire, the participant EC teachers were asked to indicate their gender, age, and the size of their classes and kindergartens. Some of their demographic information, such as their age and gender, is reported and discussed in this section.

5.4.1 Early childhood teachers' age structure

Using the "filter" function on the column "age" on the electronic data spreadsheet, the 87 EC teachers were categorised into five age bands (one teacher did not complete either the age or gender questions). Figure 5.1 demonstrates the age structure of the participant EC teachers in this study.
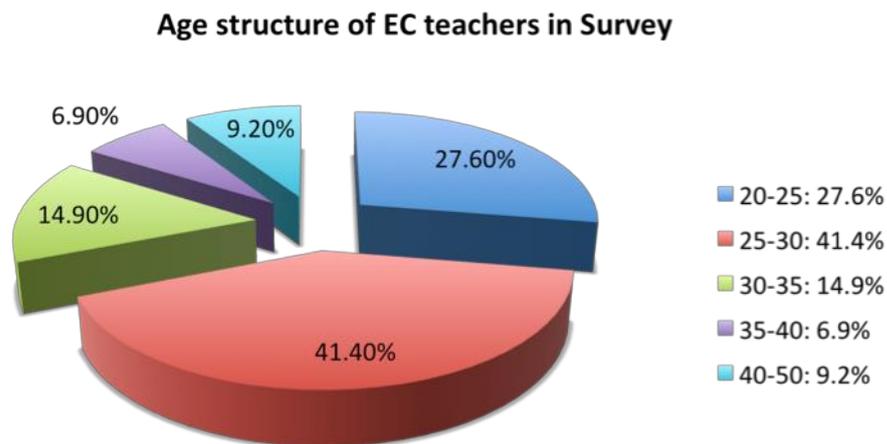
Figure 5.1 Age structure of early childhood teachers in survey

Owing to the limitation of the small sampling size, it is inappropriate to generalise this result as a typical age structure among EC teachers in the whole Beijing area. However, it provides some basic demographic information regarding the 87 EC teachers in the 12 participant kindergartens, with the finding that 69% of the EC teachers were under 30 years old, thus indicating a young workforce among the participant EC teachers. In a recent study in the Chongqing Municipality (south-west China) regarding kindergarten teachers' quality of life, Hu, C., Lv and He (2015) suggest that teachers' quality of life is influenced by their age, seniority, marital status, children, and the position and nature of their kindergarten. Hu, C. et al. (2015) argue that compared to other age bands, kindergarten teachers aged under 29 have the highest satisfaction level in relation to the study dimension of the environment in terms of life quality, as they may easily accept new ideas and acquire new information and skills, as well as having more training opportunities and therefore better career development than their elder peers. On the other hand, the research of Hu, C. et al. (2015) also suggests that kindergarten teachers aged over 40 have advantages in relation to the study dimension of societal relationships in terms of life quality, as they are more experienced and resilient teachers with a higher level of communication skills,

and they experience less job burnout. In this survey investigation, 9.2% of the teachers belonged to this older age band.

5.4.2 A gendered workforce

All of the 87 EC teachers in this survey study were female teachers. This finding reflects a gender issue in the EC workforce in Beijing. In a recent study of 52 kindergartens in Beijing, Sha et al. (2015) only found 10 male EC educators. Based on the data from their study, it is calculated that the proportion of male educators represents 0.8% of the total EC workforce among participant kindergartens in Beijing. This figure is under the national average level of 2.06% in 2014 (Zeng, 2016). The gender imbalance in ECE and care is a worldwide issue (e.g. Peeters, Rohrmann & Emilsen, 2015; Koch & Farquhar, 2015; Zeng, 2016).

5.5 Features of children's arts education

This section presents the responses on the features of children's arts education, such as the time allocation, art forms, programs and activities, teaching materials, and underpinning theories, approaches and experiences. Responses from questions No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4 and No. 6 (refer to Appendices 1 and 2) are analysed.

5.5.1 Time allocation for arts education

Using the "filter" function on the column "weekly time allocation related to arts education (hour)" on the electronic data spreadsheet, the weekly time allocation described by the 88 EC teachers was categorised into five time bands which are shown on Figure 5.2. Of the responses received, 60.2% respondents indicated that they offer less than four hours for the arts per week.

Weekly hours for arts education
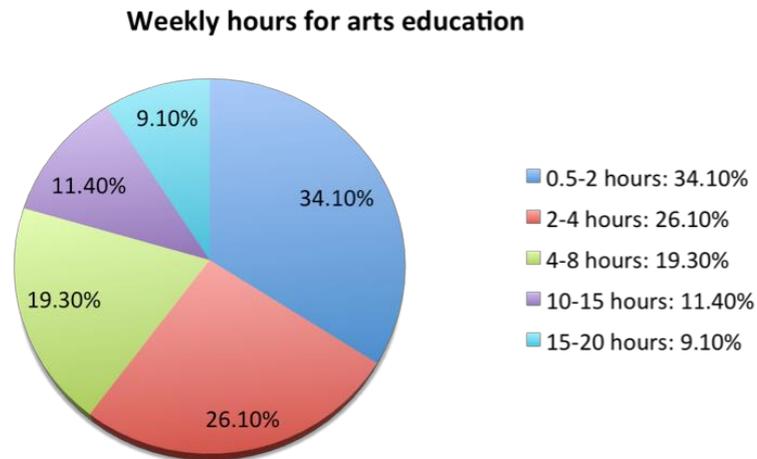
Figure 5.2 Weekly hours for arts education

5.5.1.1 Time allocation discussion

The time allocation of Chinese preschool children's arts education is sparsely reported in the literature, although some records were found of elementary students' arts classes. For example, in the *Overview Report of Arts Education in Asia*, presented at the UNESCO Regional Conference on Arts Education in Asia, Iwai (2003) reported that the arts were "taught two class hours per week respectively in primary schools and one hour in junior secondary schools" (p. 8). In her thesis, *Art Education in China since 1978: A Report Card,* Ma (2014) states that "from 1978 to [the] present day … all elementary students now have two art classes a week, which was not always the case" (p. 33). Ma (2014) points out that art classes in elementary school are "40 minutes long" (p. 55). This indicates that some Chinese elementary students have 80 minutes of art classes per week, which is less than 1.5 hours, and correlates with 34.1% of the responses in this survey. However, the majority of the responses indicate a time allocation of over two hours. The longer time allocation in the arts among some of the participant kindergartens could be related to the integrated nature of the EC curriculum, where the arts are integrated into other learning areas (as previously discussed). Compared to the EC curriculum, the curriculum in primary schools is far more segregated (Ma, 2014).

5.5.2 Participants' understanding of main art forms

The responses to question No. 2 revealed interesting aspects in terms of how EC educators conceptualise art. Of the 88 EC teachers, 81 teachers (92.0% of responses) mentioned "music", 80 teachers (90.1%) indicated "fine arts", 32 teachers (36.4%)

stated "dance", 29 teachers (33.0%) listed "craft", and 15 teachers (17.0%) reported "drama". Figure 5.3 demonstrates the main art forms identified in the surveyed participant kindergartens.

Main art forms reported by survey participants
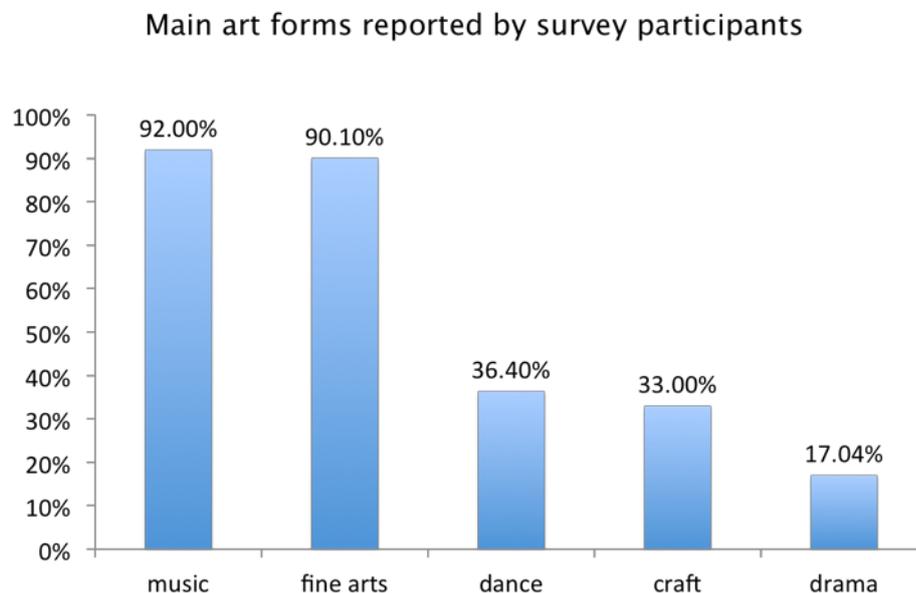
Figure 5.3 Main art forms reported by survey participants

Iwai's (2003) report states that "music and fine art (singing, musical knowledge and appreciation, painting, art and craft, appreciation of fine arts)" (p. 8) are the main art forms for Chinese primary and secondary school students. The New York-based College Board (2011) indicates that the art disciplines addressed by Chinese primary and secondary school students from Grade 1 to Grade 9 are mainly visual arts (including fine art and art) and music. Figure 5.3 shows that music and fine arts are taught in most of the participant kindergartens (both over 90%), which appears similar to findings in the above two studies.

5.5.2.1 Main art forms discussion

Music and fine arts are traditional art forms in China, and music, in particular, together with etiquette, archery, chariot driving, calligraphy and mathematics, formed the "six arts" of the curriculum in government-owned schools in the West Zhou Dynasty, over 3000 years ago (Chang, 2005). Moule (1907) argues that "ceremony and music" were considered two of the most important things in life in ancient China (p. 163). In ancient China, fine arts had rich connotations, encompassing industrial arts (e.g. porcelain, silk, silverware and goldware, lacquer), architecture, sculpture and painting (Chang, 2005). Since the beginning of the 20th century, the definition of fine arts has experienced some

changes in China. For example, according to the Zouding School Law issued by the Qing government, it might refer to "drawing", which included "free drawing (Chinese painting and western sketching) and technical drawing" (Chang, 2005, p. 232). At the end of the 1920s, during the reform of the primary school curriculum, the name of the drawing course was changed to "fine art" (Chang, 2005), and the term "fine art" was used until the 1960s. In the 1960s, "the fine art curriculum in primary and secondary schools was based on the Soviet model, and the name was changed to drawing once again" (Chang, 2005, p. 233). During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the term "drawing" was changed back to 'fine art', and was combined with music "into a subject called 'Revolutionary Art' [which was] supposed to serve politics" (Chang, 2005, p. 233). In the contemporary Chinese educational system, fine arts constitute one of the main art forms and contribute to "constructing creativity facing the 21st century" (Qian, 2010, p. 48).

The results from the current survey study accord with both Piscitelli et al. (1999) and Wang and Bian's (2012) conclusion that the content of Chinese young children's arts curriculum includes drawing, craft work, music, dance and drama. Some traditional arts (e.g. calligraphy) and folk arts (e.g. paper cut and clay which can also be categorised as craft) co-exist in this field (BAESECE, 2015). The survey responses also identified these traditional forms of the arts. For example, respondent No. 45 indicated that "calligraphy" was a key element in a quality arts education, and 18 respondents in this study mentioned paper cut as one of the art forms that they teach.

It was also found that some respondents from the same kindergarten gave identical answers to this question. For example, in listing their main teaching and learning art forms, respondents No. 34, No. 35 and No. 36 gave exactly the same answers to this question identifying "fine arts (line drawing, traditional painting, paper cut, clay), chorus, Peking Opera, percussion, small drama performance, shadow puppetry, dance, etc.": all these teachers were from Kindergarten No. 5. Similarly, respondents No. 80, No. 83, No. 84, No. 85, No. 86 and No. 88, who were all from Kindergarten No. 12, gave identical answers to this question by listing "music, fine arts, paper cut" as their main art forms.

In addition, the terms that the respondents used to describe art forms varied from kindergarten to kindergarten. For example, almost all respondents from Kindergarten No. 7 only listed "music, fine arts", while the list of art forms was much longer in other kindergartens, such as Kindergarten No. 5. This might be explained by

the different kindergartens having different learning patterns in the arts, or by respondents completing the survey as a group.

Since China re-opened its door to the world in 1978 and later with the deep influence of the globalisation process, Chinese ECE has achieved significant progress in various aspects including the arts (Wang, 2012). The survey data indicated that ECE teaches five main art forms among the participant kindergartens in Beijing, namely, music, fine arts, dance, craft and drama. These art forms correspond with many of the arts learning areas in Western countries, such as Australia and New Zealand. For instance, in Australia, the Arts Learning Area for students of Foundation to Year 10 consists of dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts (ACARA, 2016); while, in New Zealand, the curriculum includes dance, drama, music (or sound arts) and visual arts (Ministry of Education [NZ], 2007). Based on the above statement, I argue that the art forms existing in contemporary Beijing EC arts education can be deemed as one of the outcomes of the ongoing globalisation of education. Nonetheless, as indicated in the curricula analysis chapter, media arts appear to be absent in this survey data.

5.5.3 Sub-forms under the main art forms

It is important to note that two prompts were attached to this question, namely "music" and "fine arts". As a multilingual researcher, in retrospect, I realised that when I submitted the English version of the questionnaire, I used the word "drawing" in English. However, when I translated it into Chinese, I used the word "fine arts" because "fine arts" is actually the official term in the contemporary Chinese school curricula (including kindergarten, primary and secondary schools). The fact that I used the most common term is an illustration of my position working between two cultures which is still influenced primarily by my local culture. The interchanging of these two terms is evident in participant responses, because the participant EC teachers used the prompt "fine arts" as an example but they also used the word "drawing" as a sub-form of "fine arts".

The survey data show that these two forms of music and fine arts were most frequently mentioned by the respondents. This provides an example of how heavily the respondents relied on the prompts that had been provided by the researcher.

Further analysis reveals that the respondents used terms that construct each main art form differently. For example, respondent No. 23 unpacked "music" into "play, rhythm, chorus" and "fine arts" into "appreciation, drawing, craft, clay, etc." Respondent

No. 24 categorised "music" into "play, rhythm, chorus" and "fine arts" into "appreciation, drawing, craft, etc." This differentiation shows the varied understanding of respondents of certain art forms. Nonetheless, sometimes the art forms were not clearly categorised. For example, respondent No. 31 mentioned "music, fine arts, clay, drama (Peking Opera), water ink painting, percussion, chorus" in responding to this question. This response revealed the differences between the categorisation. A limitation of using a questionnaire for data collection is that it depends on what the questions mean to people, and may not fully elicit what they actually do.

In this survey investigation, some sub-forms were also found under each of the main art forms. For example, some respondents clearly identified sub-forms under music, such as percussion (e.g. drum), chorus, singing and melody. Figure 5.4 shows the percentage of each sub-form under music, as mentioned by the EC teachers in this survey. As described in the curricula analysis chapter, these sub-forms can all be found in the Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum, and are organised via various music activities, such as music activity "Looking for Happiness" (BAESECE, 2008, V.2, p. 239); the music game "Chicken Eat" (BAESECE, V.2, 2008, p. 272); and folk music "Celebrating Gongs and Drums" (BAESECE, 2008, V.1, pp. 135-136).
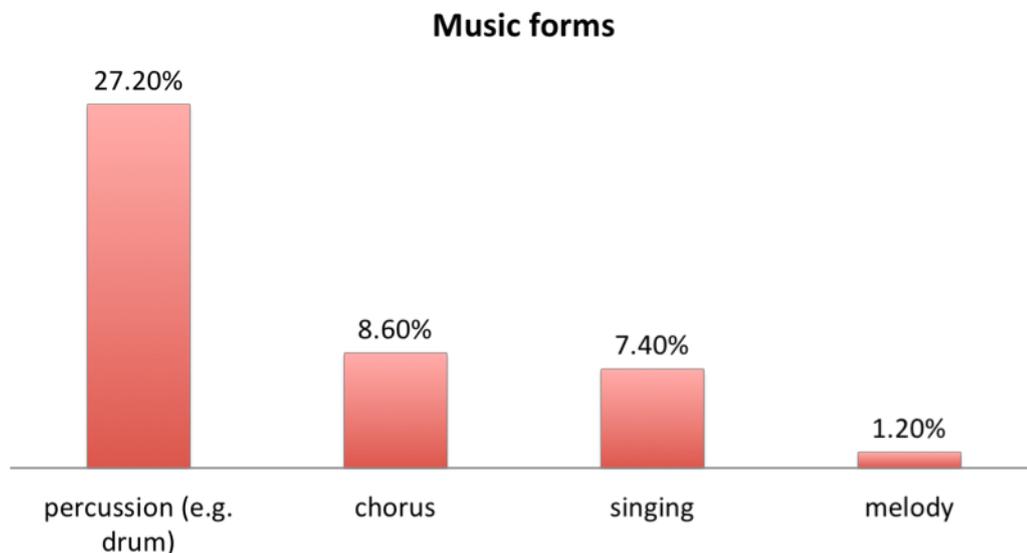
Figure 5.4 Music forms

Hong (2013) lists a number of strands in Chinese children's music education, such as "music games, performances, songs, music gymnastics, rhythm, dance, and instruments" (p. 51). Some participant EC teachers in this survey study also mentioned "music gymnastics", "rhythm" and "dance". Unlike music and fine arts, dance was not

categorised by any of the participant teachers. Terms in relation to dance, such as "group dance", "aerobics", "rhythm and melody games", "gymnastics" and "national festival", were found in the survey study.

Fine arts included "appreciation, drawing, craft, clay" (three respondents), or "line drawing, traditional painting, paper cut, clay" (one respondent): three respondents simply referred to fine arts as "drawing". Based on the data, fine arts in this survey comprised water ink drawing, traditional Chinese painting, line drawing, clay, appreciation, craft, gouache and paper cut. Clay, craft and paper cut are usually considered to be craft activities (Chen, 2016); however, here these examples were categorised under fine arts to respect the choices of the participant EC teachers. Figure 5.5 presents the percentage of each sub-form under fine arts, as reported by the survey respondents. These sub-forms can also be found in the Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum. Apart from these sub-forms of children's fine arts, some other forms are discussed in the literature, such as stick figures (Wang, 2011) and jigsaw puzzle (Du, 2012). However these forms were not reflected in this survey.

Fine arts categories

Category	Percentage
paper cut	1.30%
gouache	1.30%
craft	3.41%
appreciation	3.41%
clay	4.50%
line drawing	6.30%
traditional painting	7.50%
drawing	8.75%
water ink	13.80%
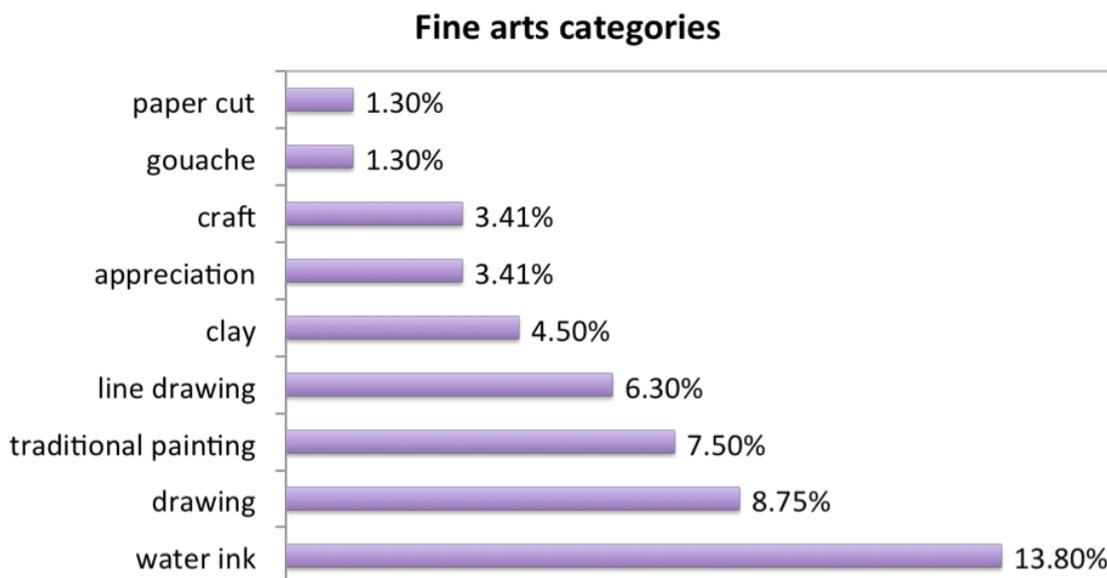
Figure 5.5 Fine arts categories

In the art form known as "craft", terms such as "paper cut", "clay", "embroidery" and "flower arrangement" were found in this study. Chen (2016) recently provides a more comprehensive summary of the different strands included in children's craft making. Based on different kinds of materials, she classified paper design, fabric design, thread design, clay design, natural material design (such as leaves, seeds and fruits) and

integrated material design. Furthermore, each form consists of both two-dimensional and three-dimensional design. This classification seems to be more comprehensive than the responses from the survey. Chen (2016) argues that "preschool children's craft differs from the craft of a more general sense, in that it focuses on the design processes rather than the results" (p. 36). This resonates with Ewing's (2010) point of view regarding the central importance of processes in children's arts learning, as she argues that "arts processes should be at the heart of the formal or intended curriculum, embedded in pedagogy" (p. 10).

Terms such as "small drama performance", "music drama", "opera", "Peking Opera", "Chinese shadow puppetry" and "literature" were found in relation to drama. Three respondents referred directly to drama as "Peking Opera"; and five respondents mentioned "Chinese shadow puppetry". Peking Opera is regarded as "a symbol of Chinese traditional culture" (Cui, 2006, p. 85), and Chinese shadow puppetry is classified as "a unique art form combining Chinese folk arts, crafts and drama" (Xue, 2008, p. 169). In addition, one respondent listed "national festival" as one of their art forms. Such unique symbols of Chinese culture connect with the concept raised by Pudsey et al. (2007) that culture is a kind of toolbox comprising symbols and signs, language, values and meanings, beliefs, norms, rituals and material objects. The findings in this study provide examples of the close relationship between children's arts learning and the promotion of the national culture in contemporary China (as discussed previously in the curricula analysis chapter). Under a governmentality perspective, arts education serves as a *techne* in order to achieve the *telos* of the preservation and promotion of national and indigenous cultures in China.

On the other hand, from pedagogical perspectives, compared to Western countries, Tang (2013) argues that Chinese children's drama education is undervalued and develops into a monotonous form. Being an important learning form in ECE, drama education has almost 100 years' history in the West, where there are different genres such as creative drama (Ward, 1930); drama in education (Way, 1967); theatre in education (Heathcote, 1976); and remedial drama (Jennings, 1973) (all cited in Tang, 2013). Tang (2013) reveals that Chinese children's daily pedagogical activities in drama are mainly based on creative drama, which is based on Dewey's "child-centredness" and pragmatic philosophy, and which uses the approach of "do drama" to achieve educational goals among children (p. 16). In a comparative study of children's drama education between Mainland China and Taiwan, Qu and Nie (2011) conclude that Mainland China has a late start in this field and is actually in the phase of active exploration and development.

5.5.4 Programs and activities in arts education

All participant EC teachers mentioned that arts were taught in their kindergartens in various ways: 63 teachers (71.6% of the responses) indicated parental participation in children's arts learning; 47 teachers (53.4%) reported that their arts teaching and learning involved exterior visits and activities; 44 teachers (50.0%) mentioned guidance from arts experts, and 18 teachers (20.5%) listed community activities in children's arts learning. Figure 5.6 shows a general picture of the activities and programs relevant to children's arts education among the 12 participant kindergartens.
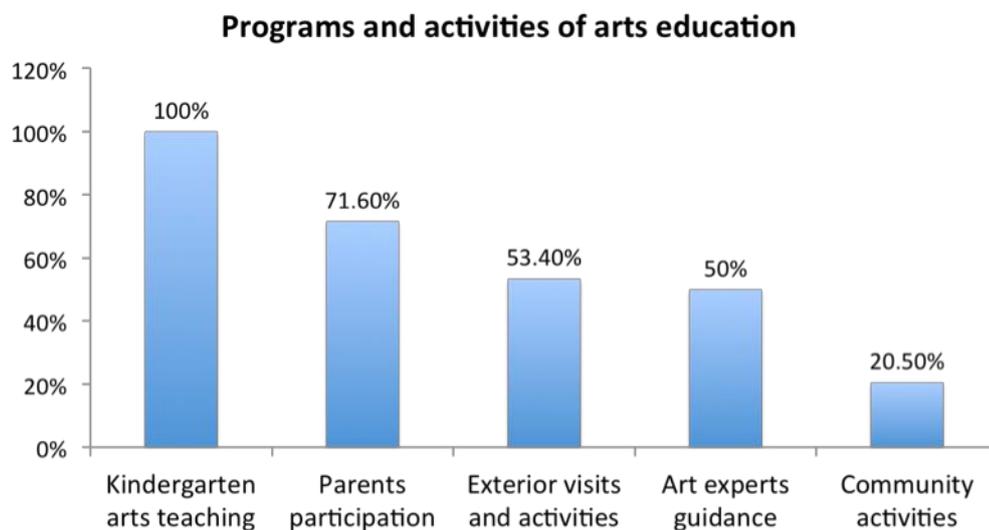
Figure 5.6 Programs and activities in arts education

More details were identified under some of the classifications. For example, under "kindergarten arts teaching", there are lectures/lessons; collective/class activities; small group activities; zone/corner activities; party (show) activities; celebration/festival activities; bazaar activities; charity activities; competitions; performance; games; video demonstrations; and artifact making. Under "exterior visits and activities", there are museum visits; exhibition visits; art gallery/zone (e.g. 798 factories in Beijing) visits; theatre and concert experiences; outdoor painting; nature observation; and masterpiece appreciation. Listed under "community activities" are exterior performances and exchanges, district exhibitions and social interactions.

5.5.4.1 Programs and activities' discussion

The data from this survey relating to the programs and activities in children's arts reveal a change in the traditional collective teaching activities which have been the

main form of organisation of Chinese children's arts curriculum, since the beginning of the 1980s (Wang, 2012). At the turn of the 21st century, the organisation and implementation of contemporary children's arts curriculum appear to be more open, experiential, explorative and interactive (Wang, 2012). Experiential learning suggests that children draw from the different resources within the community, and this relates to an ecological perspective. Wang (2012) argues that since the beginning of the 21st century, ecological research in ECE has been brought to the forefront. Chinese EC scholars, such as Teng Shouyao (2001), Tu Meiru (2002) and Bian Xia (2004), advocate introducing an ecological view into children's arts education. Ecological systems theory developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) posits that children's development, in this case in the arts, is fundamentally impacted by their social environment.

Bronfenbrenner conceptualises the environment as four levels of interdependent structures called: "the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem" (Stacks, 2005, p. 270). In this study, the most proximal microsystems are children's arts programs, their kindergarten setting and children's parents. The parent–kindergarten collaboration, being a kind of relationship between two microsystems, can be deemed as a mesosystem. The exterior arts experts and arts settings, such as museums and galleries, in isolation, can each be regarded as a form of exosystem. Children's arts activities in a wider community contribute to building a local culture which can be considered as a kind of macrosystem. The development of Chinese children's arts education in this respect reveals how global knowledge and theories have influenced Chinese EC arts education.

5.5.5 Teaching materials

In their responses to the question about "teaching materials", 67 participant EC teachers (78.8% of the responses) mentioned ICT-related materials. Such materials included computer, electronic/PowerPoint courseware; interactive table; iPad; media player; projector; recorder; soundtracks; and all-in-one-machines. In all, 46 teachers (54.1%) listed books and curricula materials (e.g. Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum), while 33 teachers (38.8%) reported traditional teaching equipment, such as a whiteboard, picture album, illustration board, art exhibitors, environmental wall and table. Finally, 19 teachers (22.4%) listed hands-on materials, such as recycled materials, ink and brush, headdresses, props, scissors, stickers, musical instruments, paper and tools. Figure 5.7 shows a general picture of the

teaching materials relevant to children's arts education among the 12 participant kindergartens.

Teaching materials
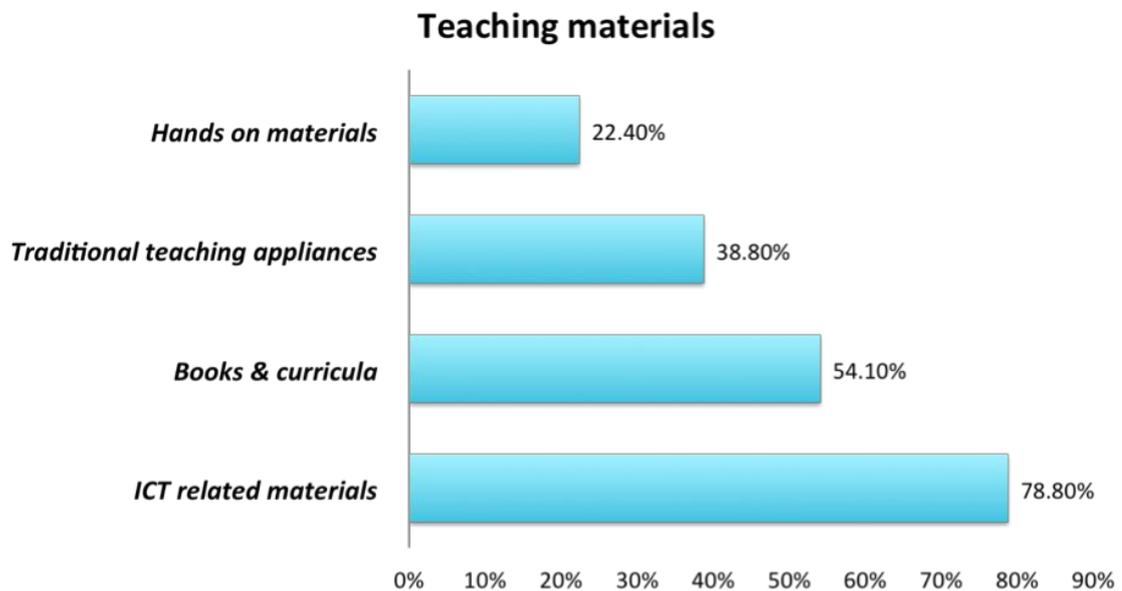
Figure 5.7 Teaching materials

As stated in the curricula analysis chapter, "media arts are almost invisible both in the learning content and as an effective pedagogical approach" in the Beijing Curriculum. Therefore, it is surprising to see that ICT-related materials are rated the highest among all the teaching materials of children's arts in the participant kindergartens in Beijing. For example, 24 respondents (27.3% of the responses) mentioned "multi-media" in response to the question regarding "teaching materials".

5.5.5.1 Teaching materials' discussion

Worldwide, consensus among contemporary scholars is apparent on the importance of ICT in children's learning. Greek researchers Kaitsa-Kulovana and Theodotou (2013) argue that "children are exposed to various digital tools and media from their early childhood and ICT has become a major part of the educational curriculum" (p. 1). Indian researchers Rajakumari and Viswam (2015) suggest that "ICT improves the quality of students' learning and it will create an opportunity for children to develop their creativity, problem-solving abilities" (p. 1). In a recent doctoral study of more than 300 EC teachers among 20 kindergartens in Shanghai, Dong (2014) reveals that the majority of the participant teachers in Shanghai had positive perceptions of the use of ICT in ECE; however, "integrating ICT into ECE classrooms was not fully realized" (p. iii). The barriers listed in this regard by Dong (2014) involved different aspects such

as teachers' beliefs regarding the use of ICT, the absence of an ECE ICT framework and curriculum guidance, and ineffective ICT training. In the current study's survey, some of the EC teachers (e.g. respondent No. 58) indicated that they had limited ability in ICT while teaching the arts (see Section 5.6.4 for further details). Through the comparison of the case study observations, further investigation was able to be carried out on whether and how these ICT materials were used.

5.5.6 Underpinning theories, approaches and experiences

The influence of the prompts is an important discussion point and is evident in the data. For example, the Italian Reggio Emilia and the New Zealand Learning Story approaches were common responses, and both were given as examples in the question.

Responses to the question about the "examples of any international theories, approaches and experiences that have influenced the arts education in your kindergarten" were categorised into four themes: general international influences on children's arts education, international influences on children's music education, Chinese influences, and single response influences.

Figure 5.8 shows the underpinning theories, approaches and experiences that influenced arts education among the survey participant kindergartens.
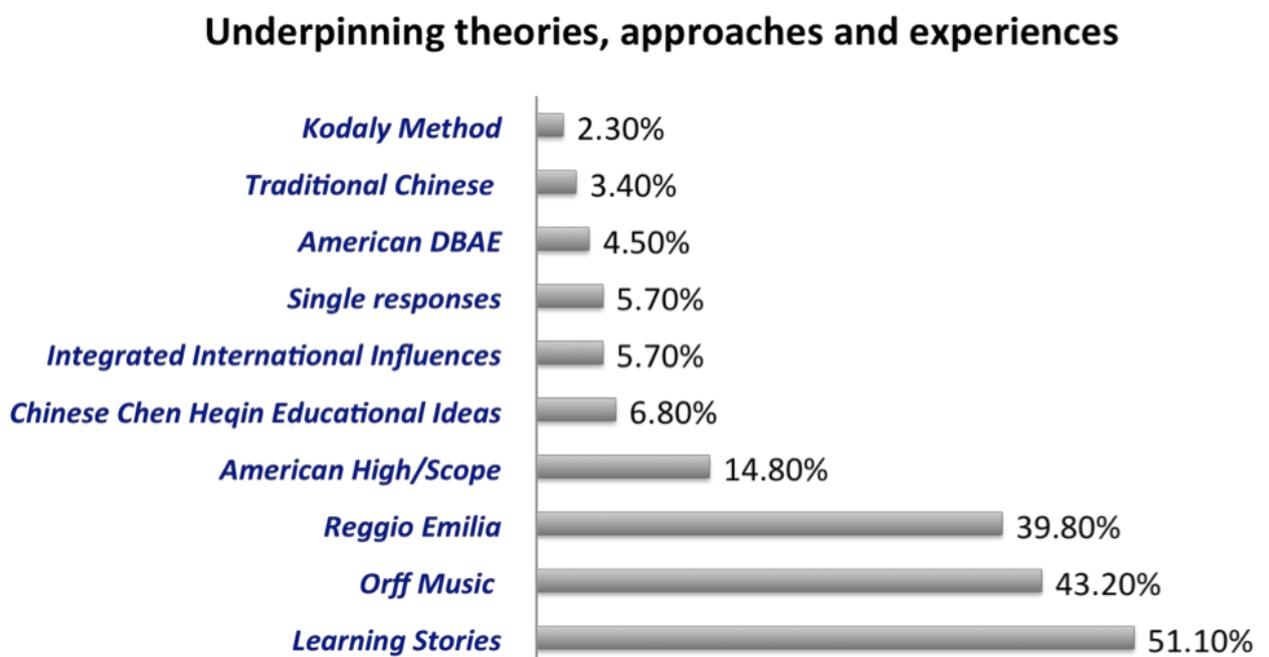
Figure 5.8 Underpinning theories, approaches and experiences

5.5.6.1 General international influences

Learning Stories, "designed as a sociocultural tool to support New Zealand's curriculum framework Te Whariki", are "a means of studying everyday experience" (Nyland & Acker, 2012, p. 329) in early childhood contexts. Considered to be a narrative assessment practice (Carr & Lee, 2012), Learning Stories have been used internationally as "the preferred form of assessing children's learning" (Cameron, 2014, p. 30). For Chinese EC educators, Learning Stories are not only a form of assessment, but also "a set of ideological and behavioral models" that enable each child to believe himself/herself as a "capable and confident learner and communicator" (Shi, 2015, p. 18). In this survey investigation, 45 EC teachers (51.1% of the responses) mentioned Learning Stories as an influential international approach/experience in their arts teaching—the highest rate in this study. According to Shi (2015), Learning Stories were first introduced to China in 2004. After about 10 years' development, they appear to be an influential learning approach in Chinese EC settings. Promoted by the director of ECERA, Ms Jing Su and her team, Learning Stories have been adopted by many kindergartens in the Beijing area.

In this study, the Reggio Emilia approach appeared to be another influential international approach, indicated as it was by 35 EC teachers out of 88 (39.8% of the total responses). "The city of Reggio Emilia, Italy, is the home of the world-renowned Reggio Emilia schools" (Stegelin, 2003, p. 163). For many reasons, the Reggio Emilia approach has now become popular in EC settings across the world (Zhu, J., 2007). Stegelin (2003) summarised four key concepts in the Reggio Emilia approach while applying it to the EC science curriculum in the US, with these being: the view of the child as a learner; the integrated, emergent curriculum and project work; the teacher–child learning relationship; and the documentation of children's thinking processes and products. More recently, Baker (2015) reflected on five themes in this approach for EC teacher education in the context of Abu Dhabi. These themes were identified as: "socio-constructivist learning with child as protagonist"; "the environment as the third teacher"; "making children's thinking visible through art"; "the value of interaction with nature"; and "observation and documentation of learning with teacher as researcher" (p. 982). In China, scholars have learnt from the Reggio Emilia approach from Chinese perspectives, so EC educators can enhance children's learning in the Chinese context (Zhu, J., 2007). For example, Cai et al. (2011) suggest adopting the "project work" of this approach; Song (2012) embraces the importance of "parent participation" and

"parent & kindergarten collaboration" in children's learning; while Di (2013) advocates learning from Reggio Emilia to set up appropriate environments for children's learning.

Thirteen (13) EC teachers (14.8% of the total responses) mentioned High/Scope's approach. High/Scope's approach to education is a blend of Piaget's constructivist theory and the best of traditional teacher experience (Liu & Feng, 2005), with this having been adopted widely in EC settings in the US since the 1980s (Zhu, 2015). According to Schweinhart and Weikart (1999), High/Scope is an open framework approach that "emphasizes success in life, not just in school, for all children, including those born in poverty" (p. 76). Shi (2010) argues that being a world famous learning approach, High/Scope has much to offer Chinese ECE reform, such as the transformation of the EC teacher's role to one which emphasises children's active learning, respects children's rights and enriches children's activity zones.

Five EC teachers (5.7% of the total responses) in the survey study stated that they were influenced by integrated international influences which meant that they had absorbed a mixture of different kinds of international approaches, theories or experiences.

Four EC teachers (4.5% of the total responses) indicated that discipline-based art education (DBAE) was an influential international theory in their arts teaching. Although DBAE was a vision of arts education in the last century (Efland, 2004), it still seems useful in the Chinese educational context, given that the educational resources and pedagogical methods remain undeveloped in China (Zhu, M., 2007). It is unclear whether this is an important influence or whether my prompt led to this result.

5.5.6.2 International influences on children's music education

In this survey investigation, 38 EC teachers (43.2% of the total responses) reported that they had been influenced by the Orff music pedagogy. The Orff music pedagogy is a child-centred way of learning in music (Campbell, 2008). Orff early music education promotes children's creativity with movement and music making through mainly percussive instruments (Andreasen, 2014). The Orff music pedagogy is realised as "a process through activities around exploration, imitation, improvisation and creation" (Shamrock, 2013, cited in Andreasen, 2014, p. 47). Li (2013) argues that in China, the Orff music pedagogy has proven to be effective in children's music learning: focusing on cultivating children's holistic capabilities, this pedagogy inspires children's initiative, enthusiasm and creativity. More remarkably, the Orff music pedagogy has been

successfully combined with Chinese traditional arts education. For example, by adopting the Orff music pedagogy, Chinese children have started to "enjoy learning the percussion instruments of the Peking Opera, which they otherwise may have felt were antiquated" (Li, 2013, p. 28).

Two teachers (2.3% of the total responses) mentioned the Kodaly method as influential in their arts teaching. Hungarian composer and musical educator Zoltán Kodaly (1882–1967) believed that "true musicianship is the ability to hear what is seen and see what is heard" (Gallina, 2006, p. 12). The Kodaly method of music education is found in the principles of elemental singing and notation (Andreasen, 2014). Li (2013) summarises the following three important dimensions of the Kodaly method in Chinese children's music education: all children's involvement, mother language music and happy chorus in collectivity.

5.5.6.3 Chinese influences

Despite the survey question asking specifically for international theories, during the data collection, some Chinese pedagogies, approaches and influences such as "Chen Heqin educational ideas", "traditional Chinese" and "Taiwan Meiyuyaofu" emerged. As a result, I included these Chinese elements as part of the "global perspectives" in my data discussion.

Three EC teachers (4.5% of the total responses) in the survey indicated that they were influenced by traditional Chinese culture in their arts teaching, without providing any concrete examples. This influence can be best illustrated by a quote from Chinese Tang Dynasty poet Han Yu: "teacher, therefore proselytizes, instructs, dispels doubt" (Han, 1991, p. 186). It appears that traditional Chinese culture endorsed the superiority of teacher over student, and adopted a teacher-directed approach (e.g. Ryan et al., 2013; Liu & Feng, 2005)

In contrast to these three teachers, six teachers (6.8% of the total responses) in this survey specifically mentioned the influence of Chen Heqin's ideas on the arts education in their kindergartens, with this influence ranked as No. 6 in this study. As discussed in the curricula analysis chapter, Chen Heqin was considered to be the forefather of the Chinese kindergarten (Tang, 2006). It appears that the educational ideas of Chen Heqin have gained popularity among the EC teachers of today.

5.5.6.4 Single response influences

Alongside multiple responses regarding some theoretical influences, four single responses were received. These were as follows: one respondent mentioned Howard Gardner's (1993b) multiple intelligences theory, another indicated Montessori pedagogy, a third listed Piagetian constructivist theory, while a fourth indicated the influence of Meiyuaofu (a Taiwanese Institution that specialises in music and dance training for children aged 2-8 years) (Wang, 2015).

5.5.6.5 Theories, approaches and experience discussion

In contemporary literature, many scholars argue that Chinese ECE has been influenced by Western theories and pedagogical models since the Reform and Opening-up policy in 1978. For example, Hu and Szente (2009) argue that "influential philosophies written by Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky are becoming popular and widely introduced among early childhood education practitioners in contemporary China" (p. 250); and Zhu and Zhang (2008) state that "in recent years, many curriculum and pedagogical models have been introduced to China. These include the Project Approach, the Montessori curriculum, Reggio Emilia, High/Scope, the Whole Language Approach, and especially DAP (Developmentally Appropriate Practice)" (p. 176). In addition, in her thesis *The history of children's art education since the reform and opening-up in China,* Wang (2012) mentions a range of influential international theories in Chinese children's arts education, such as Gardner's (1993b) multiple intelligences theory, Gestalt psychology, Gadamer's hermeneutical aesthetics, Suzanne K. Langer's art theory, H. Read and V. Lowenfeld's instrumentalism, and Eisner and Greer's essentialism. In addition, Wang (2012) includes different kinds of influential pedagogies such as the German Orff music pedagogy, the Hungarian Kodaly method, the Swiss Dalcloze approach and the Japanese Suzuki method. Ho (2015) also argues that "in HK [Hong Kong], the early childhood field has borrowed ideas and practices from Western models such as the project approach (Katz, 1994), thematic approach (Shoemaker, 1989), Reggio Emilia (Malaguzzi, 1993), and HighScope (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1997)" (p. 5).

The analysis of the survey results provides evidence that children's arts education among the participant kindergartens in Beijing is significantly influenced by global educational theories, pedagogical approaches and experiences. This finding resonates with Hu and Szente's (2009) statement that "the development of Chinese early childhood education is following a distinctive trend of integrating Western educational

philosophy into national curriculum guidance for class-room practices" (p. 247). Nonetheless, it remains a mystery as to whether these global influences are effectively absorbed and assimilated during local pedagogical practice. Rao, Ng and Pearson (2010) suggest that a discrepancy can occur between the tenets of a Western approach to education and the way in which that approach is actually implemented in the preschools of China. For example, they point out that in many classrooms, the project approach, a hallmark of the Reggio Emilia model, "is used in a teacher-centered, rather than a child-centered way" (p. 272). Liu and Feng (2005) posit that the reason for the gap between pedagogy and kindergarten practice is that "practitioners do not have first-hand experience in the kind of teaching that the advocated ideas require—ideas that are based on early childhood educational practice in the west" (p. 97). Li et al. (2012) further explain that "imported ideas and practices might be [in] conflict with those indigenous cultures, belief, education systems, and languages"; hence, they suggest that it is necessary to take "a very careful consideration of local culture and tradition when one is incorporating Western pedagogies into Chinese classrooms" (p. 605).

As discussed previously in the introduction chapter, many scholars share the view that contemporary Chinese ECE is utilising a hybrid cultural background (e.g. Wang & Spodek, 2000; Zhu & Wang, 2005; Tobin & Hsueh, 2007, Chen-Haftech & Xu, 2008, Zhu & Zhang, 2008), where three distinct cultural threads co-exist: traditional Confucian culture, communist culture and Western culture (Zhu & Zhang, 2008). To some extent, the findings in the survey study reflect this cultural hybridisation in contemporary Chinese ECE.

5.6 Teachers' beliefs

This section presents participant EC teachers' beliefs regarding children's arts education, in terms of the child–teacher relationship, children's creativity and the main challenges of, and the support needed for, arts education, as well as the key elements of quality arts education. These questions comprised Questions No. 5, No. 7, No. 8, No. 9 and No.10 (refer to Appendices 1 and 2).

5.6.1 Teachers' beliefs regarding the child–teacher relationship

It is interesting to note that none of the participant EC teachers described the child–teacher relationship as "teacher-directed", despite the survey question including examples such as "teacher-directed" and "child-initiated". This is an example of

responses that were inconsistent with other responses where the respondents relied on the prompts provided by the researcher. In all, 69 EC teachers (78.4% of the total responses) responded using terms such as "child-initiated". For example, from the data, terms were found, such as: "child-initiated"; "child-centred ideas"; "child autonomously choose"; "child freely imagine and create"; "children's interest"; "subjectivity"; and "child as subject of the arts education". Furthermore, EC teachers in this study seemed to show respect for children as partners in the learning process. For example, some teachers stated that teacher and child "co-construct" or "co-make" (e.g. respondent No. 51) during arts education. They also reported the "interaction between child and teacher" (respondent No. 26); with terms such as "equality" (respondent No. 37), and "harmony" and "happiness" (respondent No. 42) used in reference to the child–teacher relationship. The verb "teach" or "direct" was not used in response to this question; and only one teacher mentioned the "combination of child and teacher-initiated" (respondent No. 76) with this depending on the setting of the curriculum.

5.6.1.1 Child–teacher relationship's discussion

Given the Chinese influences described previously, it is surprising to see that child-centred ideology is so widely acknowledged among participant EC teachers in Beijing. Hu and Szente (2009) argue that "culture always plays a critical role in each country's educational beliefs and practices" (p. 249). Child-centred approaches have been considered traditional EC pedagogic approaches in Western culture for more than 100 years (Grieshaber, 2016), but these are "at odds with traditional Chinese beliefs and values" (Ho, 2015, p. 78). Traditional Confucianism tended to endorse the superiority of the teacher's wisdom (Ryan et al., 2013): "teachers are seen as authority figures within Confucian ideology" (Grieshaber, 2016, p. 11). Hence "subject-centred and teacher-directed teaching through group lessons" has been the main approach in teaching and learning in kindergartens in Mainland China, since 1949" (Liu & Feng, 2005, p. 96). With such a cultural and historical background, I tend to conclude that the endorsement of child-centred ideology among EC teachers in this study is a significant outcome of the Chinese EC curriculum reform since the 1980s (as discussed in the literature review chapter). In addition, it is a result of the globalisation process in this domain, during which "the communist culture's control and the influence of traditional culture on early childhood education have been waning ideologically and philosophically" (Zhu & Zhang, 2008, p. 176).

However, as Grieshaber (2016) points out, "it is how those ideas are taken up in practice that makes a difference" (p. 21). Ho's (2015) doctoral study in Hong Kong reveals that all participant teachers "claimed they agreed with the notion of child-centred learning" as they believed that "it is easier for the children to learn. Children will engage more in the activities, and the relationships between children and the teacher will be better, especially for K3 children [upper kindergarten class for children aged 5-6 years]" (p. 208). Nevertheless, these teachers also reported difficulties in fully implementing such an approach into their pedagogical practices, due to the lack of time (Ho, 2015). Similarly, Sha et al. (2015) stated the existence of structural issues, such as the low teacher–child ratio in the Beijing area, especially among rural kindergartens. This could be one of the obstacles to implementing the child-initiated approach in a Chinese EC context.

Among the responses, the most common word collocated with the word 'teacher' or 'teachers' was: "support" ("supporter", "supports") (27% of the responses), followed by "guider" ("guidance", "guide") (16%), then closely followed by "leader" (15%). Other terms related to "teacher" were also found, such as "developer", "collaborator", "participant", "companion" or "assistant". Furthermore, respondents in this study stated that the teacher needed to have a "good attitude, ideas, responsibility" (respondent No. 43), and "flexible pedagogical methods" (respondent No. 21), in order to "understand children and appreciate children" (respondent No. 28), "interpret children's self-creation artwork" (e.g. respondent No. 21), "develop child's initiatives" (respondent No. 84), and "inspire their creativity and interests" (respondent No. 37).

It is evident in the data that these Chinese EC teachers embraced the idea that the teacher's role is to support the child—a traditional Western EC pedagogic approach as discussed previously. However, this approach is being challenged by contemporary international EC research (e.g. the Effective Provision of Preschool Education study in the UK, where 3000 children were tracked), which advocates a pedagogy of play that "incorporated a dual approach of 'teacher-directed and child-initiated play'" (cited in Grieshaber, 2016, p. 16). Similarly, the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (DEEWR, 2009) suggests a balance between intentional teaching and child-initiated activities in play.

While documents and examples in Mainland China and Hong Kong Special Administration Region are moving towards Western ideas such as child-centred play, there is a "move away from a solely child-centred approach in the Australian document" (Grieshaber, 2016, p. 8). This author indicates that the "pedagogy of play [that]

incorporated a dual approach of 'teacher-directed and child-initiated play'" (p. 16) which is currently reflected in EC policy documents among Western countries, such as the UK and Australia. Despite all the above-mentioned advantages, the "child-centred" approach is criticised for the "lack of a focus of content" and a lack of necessary child–teacher interactions (p. 18). Research shows that "the quality of adult-child interactions (e.g. sustained shared thinking) makes a difference to children's outcomes" (p. 17). Consequently, in the Australian EYLF (DEEWR, 2009), the "planned or intentional aspects of the curriculum" (p. 9) are emphasised. This national document requires that EC educators combine learning through play with intentional teaching and sustained shared thinking (SST) (Grieshaber, 2016), and that the teacher becomes a "critical mediator of knowledge" in children's learning (Krieg, 2011, p. 52). Specifically in the arts, educators hold that children can be taught and that there is this balance of intentional teaching and child-initiated learning (e.g. Roy et al., 2015). McArdle (2012) accentuates that "the child is at the centre of the emergent curriculum" (p. 51), and advocates a "guided learning approach to the arts" among young children, where EC educators "may take a more active role and suggest alternatives or initiate learning, while trying to ensure that the child will then take the lead again" (pp. 209-210).

Compared with contemporary EC research, the survey data show an imbalance between teacher-directed and child-initiated play in children's arts education. However, the various roles of the teacher that have emerged in the data (e.g. "leader", "guider" and "developer") would suggest an aspect of "intentional teaching" in children's arts activities among the participant kindergartens in Beijing. As Grieshaber (2016) argues, "enacting the fine balance between child-initiated play and intentional teaching to realize outcomes can be demanding" (p. 20). To summarise, in the current survey study, the participant EC teachers appeared to utilise a child-oriented perspective regarding the child–teacher relationship, which adopts some key principles of a child-centred ideology; however, the important role that teachers play in children's learning is not neglected. This is coherent with "the place of child and teacher" discussed in the curricula analysis chapter, where it was found that both in the Beijing Curriculum and the Australian Curriculum, a "child-oriented perspective" is adopted, and teachers are "supporters, facilitators, collaborators and guiders" (refer to Table 4.1 of the curricula analysis chapter).

In the above section, I have discussed the responses to survey questions No. 1–No. 6. As discussed previously, in this survey, questions from No. 7–No. 10 are more open-ended without any prompts. The variety and range of the responses to these

open-ended questions created a much richer picture of Chinese EC arts education than the more closed-ended questions.

5.6.2 Teachers' beliefs regarding children's creativity

In responding to this question, I went back to raw data, and undertook a grounded theory coding process. As previously explained, grounded theory coding involves a sequential process of initial coding, focused coding and theoretical coding.

During the phase of initial coding, informed by Charmaz's (2014) suggestions, I tried to "remain open"; "stay close to the data"; keep my codes "simple and precise"; "compare data with data"; and "move quickly through the data" (p. 120). Some initial codes around the theme of "creativity" emerged during this analytical phase, such as "an innate ability"; "a process"; "loose environment"; "abundant materials"; "different methods"; "imagination"; "curiosity"; "expression"; "previous experiences"; "daringly"; "respect"; "trust"; "imitation"; "interest"; and "pose questions".

These terms are clearly evident in contemporary literature in relation to the research on creativity. As discussed in the literature review chapter, based on the different research foci on creativity, Sawyer (2012) summarised the four major research approaches to creativity since the 1950s. These approaches comprise: the personality approach (1950s and 1960s); the cognitive approach (1970s and 1980s); the sociocultural approach (1980s and 1990s); and the interdisciplinary approach (1990s to the present).

The personality approach mainly focused on studying personality traits, with such personality traits possibly including the innate ability of a person (e.g. Eysenck, 1997; Colangelo & Davis, 1997). It is obvious that a study conducted under the cognitive approach is focused on process-oriented creativity. Scholars in this field tend to explain the occurrence of creativity by a series of mental processes (e.g. Sternberg, 2006; Sawyer, 2011). Under the sociocultural approach, the study of creativity shifted from the individual perspective to the perspective of creative social systems, where environmental factors remain as the research focus of social psychologists. For example, Trnova (2014) considered the "suitable environment" as the most important factor among all eight factors of creativity development. In the fourth wave of the study of creativity (see Section 2.2.3), people are tending to look at the notion from wider perspectives, and are using an interdisciplinary approach.

To some extent, the data from this question's responses show a mixture of the different perspectives above regarding creativity. However, it seems that these data emphasise the personality approach where the individual child's personality appears to be the focus (e.g. "an innate ability", "children's own/unique/extra/original/new ideas" and "novel thoughts", as shown in Figure 5.9).

As pointed out by Ewing (2010), "the characteristics of creativity resonate strongly with how imagination is usually conceptualised by educators" (p. 7). In the current study, imagination is a word frequently used by respondents, and which is a key term in the literature regarding the concept of creativity. As stated by Gaut (2010), "according to Kant imagination has a constitutive connection to creativity" (p. 1042). Imagination is also regarded as a "catalyst for all creative actions" (Eckhoff & Urbach, 2008, p. 180). It is widely recognised that "creativity is an imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value" (NACCCE, 1999, p. 29).

Prentice (2000) lists the following relevant criteria about the nature of the creative process:

> Include a sense of curiosity and wonder, inventiveness, flexibility, exploratory behaviour, imagination and originality. A capacity to take risks, to tolerate ambiguity and break boundaries, along with an openness to experience and a freshness of perception are also widely regarded as fundamental features of creativity (p. 150).

These fundamental features seem to be endorsed by the participant EC teachers in this study, as listed previously during the initial coding.

Sawyer (2011) holds that "in the Chinese language, there is no word that easily translates as 'creativity'", and that "creativity was viewed as an inspired imitation of nature" (p. 2052). This Chinese perspective of creativity is also reflected in the data, as three EC teachers mentioned the importance of "imitation" in response to the current question on creativity.

I then moved to the next phase of focused coding by synthesising the initial codes into the following six categories: "teacher support"; "environment support"; "materials support"; "how do children form creativity?"; "how do children express creativity?"; and "what is creativity?". Under each of the categories, some subcategories were also established. For example, under the category of "materials support", the subcategories were "abundant materials" and "low-structure materials" (e.g. respondent No. 5). These

subcategories can be defined as another type of coding—axial coding—which "specifies the properties and dimensions of a category" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 147).

With the six focused codes, the research data relevant to the theme "creativity" appeared to be clearer and more focused. It was then time to proceed to the last phase of the coding process, known as theoretical coding. Inspired by Glaser's (1978, 2005) principles of theoretical coding, I examined the relationships between these six focused codes (which is shown in Figure 5.9).

In summary, as a result of this analytical process, the participant EC teachers were found to consider children's creativity to be an innate ability, a kind of process, original ideas, or contents and artifacts that children express through different methods and under different forms and that children synthesise their experiences using different methods and express this creatively every day. They felt that the appropriate environment was needed for children's creativity as well as abundant material supports; but above all, the children needed teachers to respect them and provide them with opportunities for creativity. A computer-designed diagram of "teachers' beliefs regarding children's creativity" presents the results of this analysis, as shown in Figure 5.9.

Teachers' beliefs regarding children's creativity

Environment support
loose and harmonious spiritual environment;
good environment.

Teacher support

set up space, provide children with opportunities, resources and time;
respect, encourage, liberate, appreciate and praise children;
child-centred;
democracy and trust
...

How do children form creativity?
children create everyday. They like to pose questions, **touch, play, and operate;** they think hard, imitate, express daringly and freely; they combine environment, activities with their thoughts; they interact with environment and materials; creativity Is based on **experiences**, perception, observation, and art appreciation. foster plural & divergent thinking and flexibility;

Materials support
abundant materials;
low-structure materials

How do children express creativity?

by different methods and under different forms;
by body language, and novel thoughts;
by autonomous choice, free imagination, and individual ideas
...
daringly, confidently, spontaneously

What is creativity?

an innate ability;
an integrated ability;
curiosity, imagination;
learning desire, exploratory spirit, persistence;
spontaneous divergent thinking;
a kind of **process**;
children's own /unique/ extra/original/new **ideas**;
content and artifact;
expression and presentation;
children's sparks;
individuality;

children's creativity is limitless, everywhere;
every child has creativity
...

Figure 5.9 Teachers' beliefs regarding children's creativity

5.6.3 Teachers' beliefs regarding the key elements of children's quality arts education

The key elements that emerged from the analysis regarding children's quality arts education involved children's interests and habits, teachers' professional quality and flexible pedagogy, together with family and kindergarten supports. In an enriching material environment, a delightful spiritual atmosphere, and under favourable educational policies, children actively take on all kinds of artistic activities: they need to be exposed to the arts and to be cultivated day by day.

It is interesting to find that 14 respondents (16% of the total responses) indicated "interest" in the responses to this question. For example, respondents No. 1, No. 55, No. 75, No. 76 and No. 89 simply mentioned "interest"; respondents No. 8, No. 33, No. 53 and No. 60 stated "children's interest"; respondents No. 32 and No. 34 listed "children's interest and initiation"; respondent No. 3 reported "activities that children are interested in"; respondent No. 9 mentioned "interesting and educational meaningful play"; and respondent No. 59 indicated "environment and interest".

The emphasis on children's interest among the participant EC teachers appears to be in line with contemporary EC arts curriculum trends. As McArdle (2012) argues, "current arts curriculum documents are based on a way of seeing art that encourages children's active participation" (p. 51). Therefore, children's interest and involvement is of key importance in their arts learning. As the saying goes, "interest is the best teacher": children's artistic experiences "should be built on the children's interests, but not narrowly confined with them" (Dunn & Stinson, 2012, p. 120). This point of view resonates with respondent No. 9 in the current study who considered "interesting and educational meaningful play" to be one of the key elements of children's quality arts education.

5.6.3.1 Key elements of children's quality arts education discussion

As demonstrated in the literature review, the quality of arts education is influenced by the interplay between "people (children, teachers, parents, and school directors)" and "situations (schools, informal learning settings)" (Bamford, 2010, p.57). These elements relate to both people and situation are explicitly reflected in the current study, given that theoretical codes such as "child" and "teacher" were included, which are about "people"; and "kindergarten", "family", "environment" and "material" were listed, which are about "situations".

Seidel et al. (2009) also proposed using the following four lenses in researching quality arts education: student learning, pedagogy, community dynamics and the environment. In comparison with the findings of the current study, achievement of each of these four lenses serves as a key pillar that sustains the ecological system of the quality arts education among Chinese Beijing young children.

In addition, teacher issues, professional learning, resources and curriculum—the four indicators of quality in music education in the Australian context (Pascoe et al., 2005), were explored in the current study's data in Beijing, China. The participant EC teachers demonstrated significant concerns about environmental resources (e.g. "relaxing spiritual", "loose", "convenient", "human", "enriching", "good", "abundant", "educational") and material resources (e.g. "abundant", "multiple", "option", "range", "convenient"). This echoes the socio-constructivist learning of the Reggio Emilia approach, with which the environment is deemed to be the third teacher (Baker, 2015). Many teacher issues also emerged in the data. For example, respondent No. 9 was concerned about "professional knowledge background"; respondent No. 22 mentioned "flexible pedagogical methods"; respondent 77 indicated "brand new arts education theories"; and respondent No. 22 listed "reflection and evaluation" as some of the key elements in quality arts education. McArdle (2012) argues that teaching the arts can be as challenging as teaching literacy and numeracy in the EC context. For example, teaching visual arts to very young children "calls for an understanding of artistic problem-setting and problem-solving, and the artistic processes involved for each" (McArdle, 2012, p. 53). These elements regarding the teachers' pedagogical issues in the current study are very closely related to the responses to the main challenges (i.e. Question No. 8), details of which are discussed in the next section.

In summary, the research findings regarding the key elements in quality arts education among the 12 participant kindergartens in Beijing appear to align with key international documents in this field, although these documents are not confined to early childhood.

5.6.4 Teachers' concerns about the main challenges in arts education

In the results of the analysis, the main challenges for EC teachers in arts teaching involved people—children, teachers and the relationship between them. However, the core challenges appeared to be pedagogical issues such as how to enhance children's abilities, what are good pedagogical strategies and methods, how to use curricula and

materials, and how to combine arts education not only with traditional culture but also with other learning areas and activities. Figure 5.10 summarises these results.

Some participant EC teachers were concerned with the child–teacher relationship. For example, respondent No. 2 stated that "[the] teacher don't know sufficiently children's needs and interests in arts learning; [the] teacher cannot meet children's needs of self-expression". Respondent No. 9 asked, "how can I provide individual guidance to individual child?"

Participant EC teachers in this study considered children's artistic expression to be important. For example, respondent No. 6 asked "how to inspire children to express daringly and how to guide children to express their thoughts". Respondent No. 28 similarly asked "how to lead children to express daringly". Respondents No. 77, No. 78 and No. 79 posed the question about "how to promote children's brave expression". Respondent No. 76 wondered "how to guide children to express in music activities". This concern is reflected in the contemporary literature. For example, Wright (2012) argues for the importance of EC teachers understanding the "meaning-making process in relation to young children's artistic representation", and that this representation should occur via children's symbolic construction "through analogy and metaphor" (p. 25), which seems to be a kind of artistic expression that particularly pertains to children.

Some teachers appeared to hold relatively deficit views about children. For example, respondent No. 3 mentioned that "children are reluctant to try"; respondent No. 4 stated that "some children do not actively operate despite the induction of [the] teacher"; respondent No. 5 pointed out that "children's ability of expression is weak, their routine unstable"; and respondent No. 12 indicated that "children have abundant imagination, but they don't know how to practise". Their views on children seemed to be the opposite of the Reggio Emilia approach, where the child is deemed to be a capable artist and "protagonist" in their learning (Baker, 2015). These views were also in conflict with the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, where the child is considered to be a "cultural code-breaker" (ACARA, 2016, "Introduction to the Australian Curriculum: The Arts").

Main challenges in arts education

Children('s)

- are reluctant to try;
- ability of expression is weak;
- routine is unstable;
- do not know how to practise despite rich imaginations

Child-Teacher relationship

Teachers feel uncertain to:
- know sufficiently about children's needs and interests;
- transmit arts skills to children

Teacher quality

Teachers feel
- **lack of knowledge and skills in the arts**
- Insufficient body language and expression
- limited ability in ICT

PEDAGOGY

Child abilities

How to cultivate children's **creativity,** autonomy and efficiency?

Strategies & Methods

Issues of **demonstration:** to teach or not to teach? How to
- provide individual guidance?
- evaluate children's art works?
- provide appropriate challenges?
- grasp important & difficult points?
- guide art appreciation?

Curricula & Materials

How to
- spread and edit arts curriculum?
- put in various materials during arts teaching ?

Issues of Combination

How to combine arts education and:
- **traditional culture** (e.g. Peking Opera);
- other area learning
- whole day activities
- multi-media

Figure 5.10 Main challenges in arts education

As discussed previously in the literature review chapter, since the 1980s, Chinese ECE has been experiencing a fundamental reform "from whole group, teacher-led instruction to inclusion of individualized, child-guided experiences", and "from traditional teacher-directed practice to adaptation of Western child-centered philosophies" (Fees et al., 2014, p. 231). It seems a huge challenge for Chinese in-service EC teachers to effectively put these Western philosophies and pedagogies into classroom practice, as "they are trained in older models" (Fees et al., 2014, p. 236), despite the fact that the majority of the workforce in this study comprises young teachers, as discussed previously. Furthermore, they are exposed to a hybrid cultural background. This result resonates with what Grieshaber (2016) argues: "there are no simple solutions to complex challenges, especially where established practices, cultural values and traditions are concerned" (p. 22).

5.6.4.1 "To teach or not to teach"?

Pedagogy is the method and practice of teaching (Soanes & Stevenson, 2005), and the term generally refers to "the strategies or style of instruction" (Li et al., 2012, p. 604). In this study, issues relating to pedagogy appeared to be the core challenges for participant EC teachers. It is evident that the shift from a teacher-centred ideology to a child-centred one requires a pedagogical transformation among Chinese EC teachers. Nevertheless, as stated by Fees et al. (2014), "pedagogical change is a gradual process of assimilation, not without challenges and requiring significant investment by teachers directly responsible for the translation of philosophy to practice" (p. 232). Participant EC teachers in this study posed all kinds of questions regarding the pedagogical strategies in children's arts education. For example, respondent No. 10 wondered "how can I make the educational content more interesting?" Respondent No. 20 asked "how can I guide children's learning more effectively and more deeply, in reaction to their artistic expression and show?" Respondent No. 24 wondered "how can I make children more autonomous?" Respondent No. 30 asked "how can I improve children's aesthetic ability?" Respondents No. 50, No. 67 and No. 68 posed the question: "how can I grasp the difficult and important points of a certain artistic aspect?" Respondent No. 83 struggled with "the insufficient methods to foster children's full perception", and respondent No 81 asked "how can I evaluate children's works?"

However, the biggest pedagogical dilemma seemed to be the issues surrounding demonstration. Many teachers in this study posed questions specifically relating to demonstration, and statements emerged in the data such as: "I am not sure if I should

do drawing demonstrations to children" (Respondent No. 42); "issues about drawing demonstrations" (Respondent No. 44); "how can I demonstrate during arts education? What are the methods and forms?" (Respondent No. 84); "how can I guide tacitly and achieve the learning outcomes?" (Respondent No. 85); "how can I achieve teaching objectives without demonstration?" (Respondent No. 87); "I can't make a specific dance demonstration when asked by a child" (Respondent No. 47); "I am not sure if I should do drawing demonstrations to children" (Respondent No. 59); "challenges occur during drawing activities" (Respondent No. 62); and "the conflicts between children's free creation and copy" (Respondent No. 63). Respondent No. 14 asked: "to teach or not to teach? How can I provide convenient and appropriate challenges?" And this was echoed by Respondent No. 23 who asked: "to teach or not to teach? How can I integrate both methods organically?"

According to Bai (2014), at present the pedagogical model of Chinese children's fine arts is based on three main steps, namely, "teacher instruction and demonstration", "children copying" and "teacher commentary" (p. 123). Undoubtedly, this "highly structured and teacher-dominated" (Ho, 2015, p. 33) pedagogical model is strongly influenced by the model of the former Soviet Union, and historically originated from the Confucian Master/Apprentice educational tradition (Zhao, 2007). This kind of pedagogical model is not only found in ECE in Mainland China, but also in Hong Kong. A recent study in Hong Kong has shown that "the teachers in this study frequently used demonstration and direct instructions to children to maintain classroom discipline and rules" (Ho, 2015, p. iii). Ho (2015) claims that "such practice may affect other aspects of children's development such as creative and critical thinking, and problem solving" (pp. ii-iii). Bai (2014) shares this view with Ho (2015) by arguing that this pedagogical model is focused on imitation, but ignores children's creativity. Consequently, some of the participant teachers were struggling between the choice of "demonstrating or not" during their teaching practices, and this seems to be a pervasive pedagogical quandary among Chinese EC teachers.

Another key pedagogical concern expressed by the participant teachers was their claim that cultivating children's creativity is a big challenge. For example, respondents No. 16 and No. 18 asked "how to inspire children's creativity"; respondent No. 19 wondered "how to inspire children's creativity and creative potential"; respondent No. 21 struggled with, "how to find out a kind of effective strategy that fits children's creation"; while respondents No. 22, No. 25, No. 47, No. 62 and No. 86 posed the same question: "how to better cultivate children's creativity". This challenge can also be attributed to cultural differences. Niu (2012) asserts that "whereas the liberal

individualistic society of the West facilitates the creativity of Westerners, the Confucian society of the East inhibits the creativity of Asians" (p. 24). This assertion is reinforced by the view that "traditional Chinese pedagogy in early childhood education often emphasizes conformity, discipline, behavioral control, and academic achievement" (Li et al., 2012, p. 605) instead of creativity. Phoutrides (2005) argues that "for the past fifty years, China has discouraged creativity" due to communist ideological concerns (p. 154). These different cultural influences have formed an intricate web of power relationships in this particular field. In the current study, EC teachers expressed their aspiration to cultivate young children's creativity via the arts, but this seemed to be a challenging task.

In addition, teachers expressed their concerns regarding curriculum issues, especially about how to combine multi-media and curriculum. For example, respondent No. 88 asked "how to spread curriculum for new skills"; and Respondent No. 55 asked "how to combine multi-media and curriculum". Similarly, respondent No. 55 wondered "how to combine ICT and curriculum". As stated in the previous chapter, further developments are envisaged in the Beijing Curriculum; in particular, the use of multi-media, which appeared to be insufficiently developed in this intended curriculum.

With the abundant pedagogical materials available, teachers posed the question of how to incorporate these materials effectively into arts teaching. For example, respondent No. 7 asked: "what is the best way to put in various materials? and how do I best care for children with significant individual differences?" Respondent No. 80 wondered "how to teach according to materials"; while respondent No. 45 asked "how to choose convenient music activities as pedagogical materials in accordance with children's age and ability".

As introduced in the curricula analysis chapter, the forefather of the Chinese kindergarten Chen Heqin had far-reaching influence in Chinese ECE. Chen advocated a holistic education that emphasises ecological improvement: in addition, he suggested that Chinese traditional culture not be neglected while adopting international experiences (Tao, 2015). The participant EC teachers in this study reflected these concerns. For example, respondents No. 31, No. 33 and No. 34 asked "how to combine arts education with traditional culture". Respondent No. 32 specifically asked "how to combine arts education with traditional Peking Opera", Respondents No. 35–No. 40 posed the question "how to combine traditional culture and five areas learning". Respondent 54 wondered "how to integrate arts with other subjects" and respondent No. 43 asked "how to permeate arts teaching throughout the whole day activity".

Finally, the EC teachers in this study identified a prevalent topic regarding their perception of their "lack of knowledge and skills in the arts". The raw data showed that several teachers were concerned about their "lack of art knowledge" (Respondent No. 49); their "insufficient body language and expressions" (Respondents No. 69 and No. 70); their "limited art abilities or art appreciation level" (Respondents No. 51 and No. 52), their limited knowledge on "how to practise during arts appreciation" (Respondents No. 72 and No. 73); and "how to dig deeper about the connotations of music works" (Respondent No. 64).

5.6.4.2 Pedagogy discussion

This particular challenge of pedagogy seemed to share common ground with the theme of "[the] teacher's self-efficacy beliefs in teaching arts" (Garvis, Twigg & Pendergast, 2011) which appear to be negative among many EC and primary teachers, not only in China, but also in Western countries, such as Australia and France. The results of Bamford's (2001) study of 22 Australian primary and middle school arts teachers (12 specialist arts teachers and 10 generalist teachers) emphasised the importance of teachers' "personal qualities and feeling in art education" (p. 40). Some of the weaknesses highlighted in a survey conducted among primary school teachers in France included "a lack of confidence on the part of the teachers and lack of practical and theoretical training" (cited in Bamford, 2010, p. 48). Alter, Hays and O'Hara (2009) indicate that "one of the most substantial hindrances to effective teaching and learning of the creative arts in primary schools appears to be a lack of confidence in teachers" (p. 23). According to Garvis et al. (2011), some teachers perceive "the lack of competence to teach the specific knowledge and skills" (p. 37) required in arts. In order to cope with these challenges, Garvis et al.'s (2011) study among 21 novice EC teachers in Queensland indicates the importance of pre-service teacher education and ongoing professional learning for teachers to improve their self-efficacy beliefs in teaching the arts. Based on a study of 18 Canadian teachers exploring their perspectives on learning to teach in and through the arts, Andrews (2010) draws the conclusion that teachers' comfort and confidence levels with the arts can be increased with a balanced approach, combining subject expertise and integrative teaching strategies, and with artist–teacher collaboration. McArdle (2012) argues that in order to teach the arts among very young children, "teachers do need confidence in their ability" and "they need to learn new ways of looking, touching, listening, and finding the magic and mystery in things" (p. 53).

On the other hand, these challenges can also be linked to the uncertainty felt by adults about their artistic skills. The advice offered by John O'Toole (2010b) is helpful in this regard:

> Artistic skills—The experience and skills of adults can provide a most important function—to deepen artistry. More's the pity, some adults and teachers think of themselves as unartistic and uncreative, whereas the truth is that through osmosis, if not training, we have all absorbed masses of artistic discrimination and skills. We have seen and made countless paintings and sketches, watched thousands of dramas, listened to and joined in with countless songs and tunes and dances. Our artist's palette is bigger and broader than children's—we know more about rhythm and balance, melody and harmony, colour and line and perspective, dramatic tension and theatrical presentation. Artistry is the prerogative of all of us, not just professional artists—any more than science is just for professional scientists. It's our privilege and duty to share it with our children (p. 29).

Again, Chinese EC educators might find inspiration from the insightful advice of John O'Toole, the lead writer of the Shape paper of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (ACARA, 2011), just as Chinese children's arts curricula might benefit by learning from the Australian Curriculum, as was discussed in Chapter Four, the curricula analysis chapter.

5.6.5 Teachers' beliefs regarding support for arts education

The prevalence of the word "training" from the data echoes exactly what Garvis et al. (2011) suggest for the improvement of EC generalist teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in teaching arts. As discussed previously, whether by pre-service teacher education or by ongoing professional learning, teacher development seems to be a central theme regarding the "support" for arts education.

As a result of the theoretical coding stage of this analysis, it was found that external resources and internal development constitute support for EC teachers' arts teaching. The former consist of ICT, books, modern curricula resources and resources from parents as well as from the community. The latter consists of teachers' professional training related to the knowledge and skills required for both teaching the arts and teaching children, activities in exhibitions, competitions, discussion and the community. This is further strengthened by teachers' research endeavours into the fields of arts education, curriculum, pedagogy and policy. This result is shown in Figure 5.11.

Figure 5.11 Support for early childhood teachers' arts teaching

5.6.5.1 Support for arts education discussion

The data show that external resources combined with internal development create optimal support for EC teachers' arts teaching. This evidence regarding the endorsement of social constructivism among participant EC teachers would suggest that knowledge construction related to arts teaching occurs as part of a complex social process (including both external resources and internal development) rather than merely in an individual's cognitive process (internal development). Given that Chinese education ideology before 1978 had long been influenced by the former Soviet Union model that emphasised an ontology (world view) of materialism (Huang, 2010) and which implied a positivist epistemology (Blaikie, 2007), such an epistemological shift from positivism to social constructivism among the participant EC teachers in Beijing can be deemed a significant step forward during the globalisation process. This resonates with Australian arts educator Susan Wright's (2012) advocacy of the kind of arts pedagogy that is

align[ed] with the ideals of social constructivism—it invites negotiation and speculation, where thoughts, ideas and feelings are created and interpreted,

and where adults and children enter the teaching–learning interface on an equal basis and, together, shape the direction of their learning, the processes undertaken and the means for evaluating the outcomes (p. 208).

The question "what is the support for teachers to deliver quality arts education" is a topic discussed among international researchers, and is not just confined to the EC field but, rather, is relevant across a wider scope. For example, Garvis et al. (2011) suggest that a high level of teacher self-efficacy beliefs results in high quality arts education among students. Bandura (1997) considers that teacher self-efficacy beliefs in teaching arts are influenced by four sources: "mastery experiences", "vicarious experiences (modelling)", "verbal persuasion" and "emotional arousal" (cited in Garvis et al., 2011, p. 37). Garvis et al. (2011) argue that "mastery experiences" and "vicarious experiences" can be enhanced by professional learning, while "verbal persuasion" and "emotional arousal" can be obtained through activities such as peer discussions and engagement with the community. These elements are explicitly reflected in this study. Shuler (2014) states that "arts educators need to broaden their programs and outreach to welcome and engage alternative populations and interests" (p. 10). He advocates the redesign of teacher preparation programs and the development of authentic assessment tools (Shuler, 2014). The strategies that Shuler (2014) appeals for as a contribution to supporting teachers in order to realise quality arts education are also reflected in the current study's findings.

In order to investigate teachers' personal arts experiences and their pedagogical reflections, Alter et al. (2009) conducted a study among 19 primary teachers in 12 schools across New South Wales (NSW), Australia. The findings of that study suggest the importance of "the practice of utilising others and working together to implement lessons", "the availability of galleries and resources to support teaching" and "the influence of families and communities in developing creative arts skills and interest" (p. 24). The study also recommends a large increase in the "amount of pre-service teacher training" as well as provision of "further in-service teacher support in the area of creative arts for generalist primary teachers" (p. 28). The principles of their research findings are confirmed in the current survey study.

In summary, Piscitelli's (2012) study found it increasingly important for EC educators to "forge new bonds with families, as well as arts and cultural organisations, to strengthen young children's arts and cultural learning" (p. 173). McArdle (2012) holds that "creative children require creative teachers, and children who are learning to participate fully and actively in society require teachers who are active participants in

their communities and societies" (p. 54). This author asserts that teachers should take responsibility for their professional learning in order to provide quality experiences for young children: her suggestions in this regard include "reading good-quality books" in the arts, enrolling in art classes and "visiting art galleries and artists' shows" (pp. 53-54). These suggestions are all reflected in the current study.

5.7 Chapter summary

This chapter provided descriptive and analytical results that emerged in the field of contemporary Chinese Beijing young children's arts education. A comparison of the results of the qualitative survey of 88 EC teachers in 12 public kindergartens with information gained from a critical review of the literature further clarified the meaning of the informants' responses to each question. Such an approach is consistent with the grounded theory analytical method.

The majority of the responses indicate a weekly time allocation of over two hours for the arts; the main art forms were music, fine arts, dance, craft and drama; the five principal programs and activities of children's arts education were kindergarten arts teaching, parents participation, exterior visits and activities, art experts guidance, and community activities; the most frequently used teaching materials in the arts were ICT related materials, books and curricula, traditional teaching appliances, and hands on materials; the underpinning theories, approaches and experiences in children's arts included both international and Chinese influences, which reflects a cultural hybridisation in contemporary Chinese ECE.

In this study the majority of participant teachers acknowledged the child-centred ideology regarding the child-teacher relationship. These teachers' understanding regarding children's creativity comprised a wide range of themes such as the nature of creativity, the means of expression of creativity, the ways of formation of creativity, and different kinds of support to foster creativity. Teachers perceived that children's interests and habits, teachers' professional quality and flexible pedagogy, together with the supports from family and kindergarten were the most important elements of children's quality arts education. Teachers' concerns about the main challenges in children's arts were centred on pedagogical issues, For example, they ask the question "to teach or not to teach". Teachers also believed that external resources combined with internal development create optimal support for their arts teaching, and this reflects an epistemological endorsement of social constructivism, which signals one of the outcomes of educational globalisation among the participant Chinese EC teachers.

Given that these results were taken from a limited sampling in the Beijing area, any generalisation within a broader context is limited. However, this survey study has provided references and information for the subsequent collective case study. Although the results from the survey seem to provide evidence in relation to the majority of the research questions of this study, further information relating to aspects such as "children's arts learning content (skills and knowledge)" and "community resources" is necessary. The next phase of the research—a collective case study provides further data regarding the educators' beliefs with the enacted curriculum.

CHAPTER SIX: CASE STUDY

6.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter presents the results of a collective case study of three kindergartens in the area of Beijing. As explained in the methodology chapter, these three kindergartens were selected from the 12 survey participant kindergartens, using a "maximum variation" type of sampling (Punch, 2014, p. 162) in terms of the level of socio-economic status (SES). The background of each kindergarten is described at the beginning of this chapter. Two main research methods were implemented in this collective case study, namely, interviews with educators and class observations. The analysis of the interview data is based on two types of interview questions. The report and analysis of the observation data are organised using a conceptual framework comprised of pedagogical framing and pedagogical interaction (Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004). A governmentality perspective is used to frame the discussion about the case study, the survey investigations and the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, where appropriate. This chapter concludes with comments regarding the themes that emerged from the data.

6.2 Background of three case study kindergartens

This section introduces the background and educational characteristics of each case study kindergarten, as drawn from the interviews and especially those with the principals of each respective kindergarten. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, all of the participant kindergartens are public kindergartens under the supervision of Beijing Municipal Education Commission. Figure 6.1 shows part of the map of the Beijing area, which identifies the locations of these three participant case study kindergartens (No. 1, No. 3 and No. 6, highlighted in red), selected from the 12 survey participant kindergartens. A purposive sampling using the criterion of different SES level among the 12 survey participant kindergartens guided the selection of these three kindergartens. Based on this criterion, two urban kindergartens (No.1 "The Harmonious Kindergarten" of higher SES level, and No. 6 "The Thematic Kindergarten" of relatively lower level), and one rural kindergarten (No.3 "The Beautiful Kindergarten" of lowest SES level) are selected. This sampling method aims to collect data as rich as possible, and as representational as possible in the Beijing area.
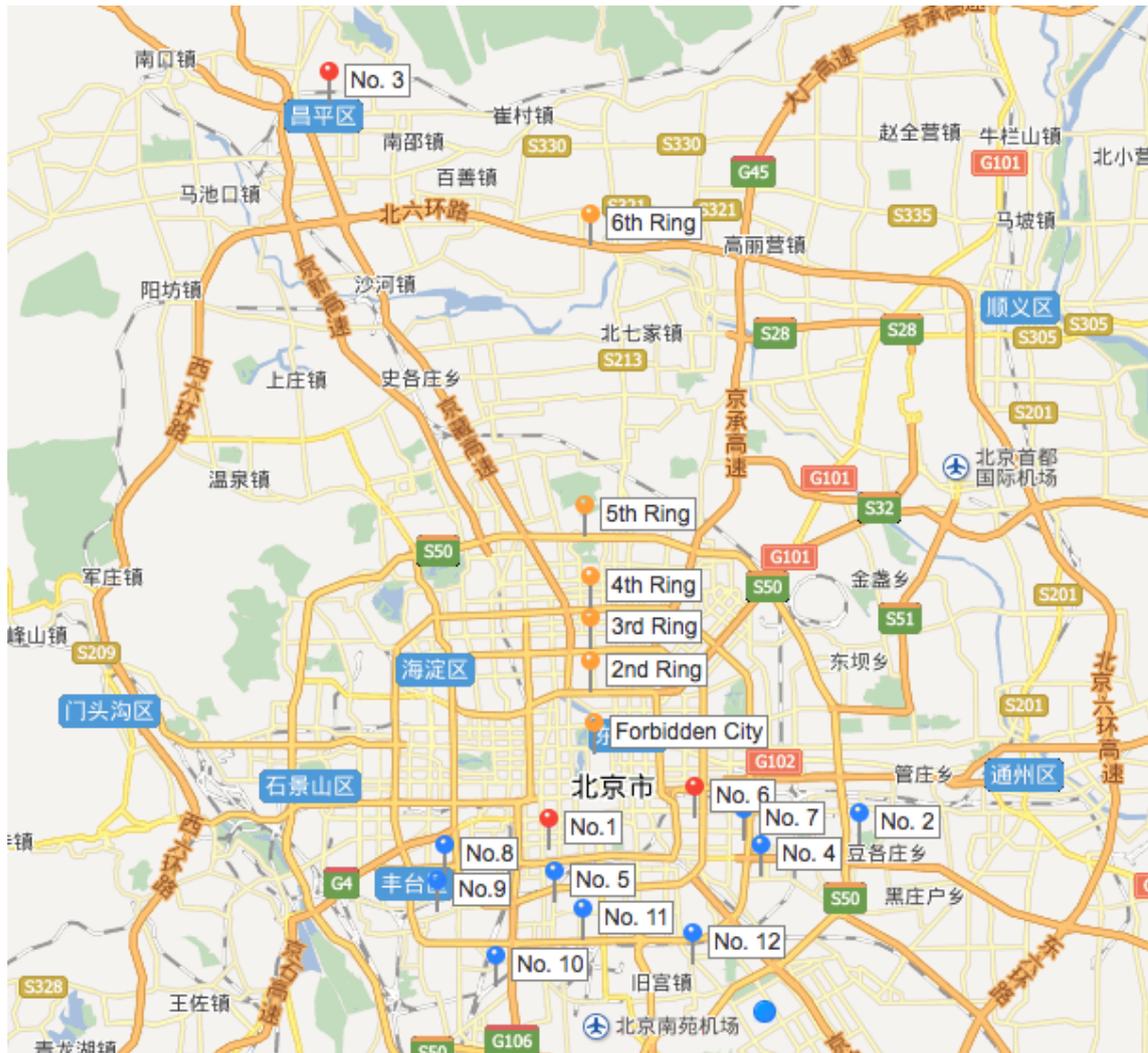
Figure 6.1 Locations of the participant kindergartens in the Beijing area

6.2.1 Kindergarten One: The Thematic Kindergarten

The first case study kindergarten was established in 1981, just after the implementation of the Reform and Opening-up policy in China. It is a community kindergarten located in the Chaoyang District, with 161 children in total, including two upper classes of 71 children.

Yolanda, the principal, explained that, in the early years, this kindergarten was quite "family oriented rather than institution oriented", which means that the primary purpose of the kindergarten was to provide childcare instead of child education. During the 1980s, the kindergarten staff was mainly female workers from printing, textile and timber factories around the community, and most were not qualified as EC educators.

Through a gradual process, this kindergarten shifted its operational focus from childcare to child education.

In order to facilitate children's initiative and to help children's learning through play, since the middle of the 1990s, the management of this kindergarten has started a "Role Play Research Project". Yolanda stated that, influenced by the global educational trends, at the beginning of the new millennium, the whole of China experienced comprehensive educational reform. In the EC field, the traditional segmented curriculum was developed into an integrated play-oriented curriculum. In this macro context, this kindergarten developed a particular "Role Play Thematic" kindergarten-based curriculum. Yolanda and her colleagues believe that "role play" is the best way for children to experience "the sense of responsibility" which, for Yolanda and her team, is the primary educational purpose of the kindergarten. This "Role Play Thematic" curriculum is organised based on different themes and under each theme is a variety of sub-themes. For example, under the big theme "automobile", sub-themes include "automobile logo", "4S shop", "maintenance workshop", "highway service" and "First Aid Post". From a governmentality perspective, Yolanda and her team have adopted the "Role Play Thematic" curriculum as a *techne* to realise their educational *telos* which is to build children's "sense of responsibility".

Based on this educational feature, the first case study kindergarten has the pseudonym of the "Thematic Kindergarten" in this study.

6.2.2 Kindergarten Two: The Beautiful Kindergarten

The second case study kindergarten was established in 1955 and already has a history of 62 years. It is located in Changping District, which was a rural county before 1999, and is about 40 kilometres from the centre of Beijing. Being one of the largest kindergartens in Changping District, this kindergarten serves 870 children, with 27 classes including nine upper classes of 290 children.

In comparison with the size of EC centres in Australia, the size of the kindergartens in Beijing is considered large. As discussed previously in the introduction chapter, Australian children aged 5-6 years are in the Foundation year of primary school, of which the class size varies from 15-25, which is a smaller class size that that experienced by children in Beijing of the same age band. Given the different demographic contexts of these two countries, some structural conditions, such as the size of EC institutions in each country, differ significantly.

The educational orientation of this kindergarten is "cultivating children by aesthetics and developing children in an all-round way", and their educational purpose is "inspiring intelligence via aesthetics, developing morality via aesthetics, and strengthening [the] body via aesthetics". It is obvious that this kindergarten embraces an aesthetic rationality to guide its educational practices.

According to this prominent educational feature, the second case study kindergarten is assigned the pseudonym, the "Beautiful Kindergarten".

6.2.3 Kindergarten Three: The Harmonious Kindergarten

The third case study kindergarten was also established in 1955, and the children and their parents, together with the staff of this kindergarten celebrated the 60th anniversary in a local park two years ago. This is one of the largest kindergartens in Xicheng District, in the centre of the city, which serves 450 children spread across 13 classes, including 140 children aged 5-6 years in four upper classes. This kindergarten specialises in physical education, with the kindergarten culture based on "cooperation" as well as "harmony"—a shared value in the three main traditional Chinese philosophies (i.e. Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism) (Gao, Zheng & Yan, 2010). It is obvious that the culture's atmosphere is meticulously built into this kindergarten. For example, they create their own mascot, logo and own kindergarten song (which was composed by the parents of two of their children). In this way, this kindergarten is constructing its own identity by drawing on the essence of Chinese traditional culture.

In brief, the educational orientation of this kindergarten is "building the culture of harmony and cooperation, and cultivating healthy persons". Therefore the third case study kindergarten has the pseudonym, the "Harmonious Kindergarten".

6.3 Interviews with educators and discussions

The majority of the interviewees had extensive working experience in EC settings. All were female educators: this is coherent with the demographic information collected in the previous survey investigation. Table 6.1 provides some information regarding the interview participants in this study.

Table 6.1 Interview participants' information

Interview participants

Interview No.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Interview date	07.06.2016	07.06.2016	07.09.2016	08.09.2016	13.09.2016	14.09.2016
Kindergarten educational specialty	Role play thematic curriculum	Role play thematic curriculum	Inspiring intelligence through beauty and developing in an all-round way	Inspiring intelligence through beauty and developing in an all-round way	Harmony and cooperation	Harmony and cooperation
Kindergarten pseudonym	Thematic Kindergarten	Thematic Kindergarten	Beautiful Kindergarten	Beautiful Kindergarten	Harmonious Kindergarten	Harmonious Kindergarten
Number of children	161	161	870	870	430	430
Number of children of 5-6 years old	71	71	290	290	140	140
Number of upper classes	2	2	9	9	4	4
Interviewee pseudonym	Yolanda	Hermione	Rosy	Festival	Laura	Zenia
Position	Principal	Teacher	Principal	Teacher	Principal	Teacher
Interview duration	70 minutes	40 minutes	70 minutes	60 minutes	140 minutes	40 minutes
EC working experience (years of service)	32 years	5 years	20 years	17 years	16 years	21 years

In each kindergarten, I conducted one interview with the principal and another with one EC teacher of an upper class. In total, six interviews were carried out across the three kindergartens. The names (i.e. pseudonyms) of interview participants are: Yolanda and Hermione (from the Thematic Kindergarten), Rosy and Festival (from the Beautiful Kindergarten), and Laura and Zenia (from the Harmonious Kindergarten). All interviewees had over 16 years' working experience in this field, with the exception of one young teacher with five years' working experience. All interviewees were full-time educators, with this is a general characteristic in Chinese public EC institutions. These interviews were conducted individually, some before the classroom observation (interviews with Yolanda, Rosy and Zenia), while others were after the observation (interviews with Hermione, Festival and Laura). In addition, several participants were reinterviewed following observation of classroom activities and invited to explain certain classroom episodes.

6.3.1 Interview questions

The interviews were organised around a series of questions as listed in Appendices 7 and 8. The first five questions related to: time allocation, art forms, types of activities and programs, materials, and examples of international theories and approaches in the field of children's arts education. Questions No. 6–No. 15 related to educators' feelings, experiences, understandings and expectations regarding a series of themes in this field. Similarly to the questions investigated in the survey study, these questions were designed through a critical review of the literature in order to identify gaps in this research.

Questions No. 1–No. 5 were relatively closed-ended questions in comparison with Questions No. 6–No. 15 which were more open-ended. Accordingly, in the following sections, the interview results are presented in two groups. Group one involves the results of questions from No. 1 to No. 5, which are mainly about the features of children's arts education, while group two involves the results of questions from No. 6 to No. 15 which were mainly about educators' understandings and beliefs about children's arts. Among the 15 questions, four questions were specifically for teachers (questions No. 10, No. 11, No. 12 and No. 13), while two questions were specifically for principals (question No. 14 and No. 15). However, some teachers may have answered the questions specifically for principals, and vice versa.

All survey questions were included within the interview question list. The reason for this arrangement was that it was possible to compare the data that emerged from the survey with that from the case study, in order to triangulate the data. Unlike the survey questions, no prompts were provided with the interview questions.

6.3.2 Features of children's arts education (questions No. 1–No. 5)

Regarding the weekly time allocation to arts education, the answers from the six interviewees differed from three to 10 hours. In the Thematic Kindergarten, the weekly time allocation was from three to five hours: in the Harmonious Kindergarten, it was about five hours. Interestingly, the answer from Rosy, the principal of the Beautiful Kindergarten differed significantly from that of her colleague Festival. Rosy said that they had at least 10 hours per week for the arts, including three art lessons and other arts activities permeated the daily activities (e.g. transitional activities and meals); whereas Festival's weekly time estimation was at least three hours. It remains a question why two educators from the same kindergarten held such different views about the weekly time allocation for the arts. It seems that the principal of the Beautiful Kindergarten has a strong focus on arts education, and regards it as a key *techne* to achieve their educational *telos*. In addition, she mentioned the "permeated arts" (i.e. the arts that are permeated on various occasions throughout the whole kindergarten day) that her colleague neglected to mention, which might explain the significant difference in time allocation within the Beautiful Kindergarten.

In relation to the question regarding art forms, all six interviewees mentioned fine arts and music. This coincides with the findings that emerged from the survey: these two art forms were the most common forms mentioned by the participant EC teachers in both the survey and interviews. In particular, the sub-forms of fine arts that emerged from the interview data appeared to be more diversified. Alongside the "water ink drawing, traditional painting, line drawing, clay, appreciation, craft, gouache and paper cut" that were reported in the survey investigation, new sub-forms were named, such as "oil pastels, scratch" (reported by Hermione); "colour drawing, print drawing" (reported by Rosy); and "water colour" (reported by Zenia). In music, in addition to the "percussion, chorus, singing and melody" that emerged from the survey, new sub-forms emerged from the interviews: "appreciation, rhythm and GuZheng (a traditional Chinese string instrument)" (reported by Rosy). Two new sub-forms of craft were identified in the interviews: "paper-colouring and knitting" (reported by Yolanda). Two other main art forms, drama and dance, were also identified in the interview data.

Resonant with the findings that emerged from the survey, "Peking Opera" (reported by Rosy) and "shadow puppetry" (reported by Zenia) were mentioned in relation to children's drama in the interviews. These national art forms represent one of the dimensions in an analytics of government (Dean, 2010) approach, that is, the techniques and practices to preserve the heritage of traditional Chinese culture. In brief, the interview data regarding the art forms not only confirmed but also enriched the findings from the previous survey investigation.

6.3.2.1 Programs and activities in arts education

Both Hermione and Laura indicated "cross-class" activities (i.e. activities organised across several classes) in kindergarten arts teaching. Both Yolanda and Zenia mentioned "role play activities" in arts education, such as roles "in restaurant, hospital, construction site and supermarket" (listed by Zenia). Hermione reported that the Thematic Kindergarten has kindergarten open day (a half day per month) to welcome parents to co-play with their children in the arts. Hermione also stated that "[a] multiplicity of child-centred activities are organised around the arts". Rosy introduced the idea of expansive activities: "some expansive activities outside of [the] kindergarten (e.g. interaction with policemen, firemen), visit to an orphanage; visit to a fruit market; painting from life in the nature; organisation of exhibition, charity sale of children's artifacts, donation to Welfare Centre in Changping County". Festival indicated that they have "do it yourself (DIY)" performances; furthermore, "in May and June, we organise an arts festival that comprises large-scale artistic creation by children, as well as artistic and physical performances". In summary, the data presented above added variety to the information gathered from the survey study.

6.3.2.2 Underpinning theories, approaches and experiences

Most underpinning theories, approaches and experiences reported by the interviewees were evident in the survey results, for example, Learning Stories (reported by Yolanda, Rosy and Laura), Orff music pedagogy (reported by Yolanda, Festival and Zenia), High/Scope (reported by Rosy, Laura and Zenia), Reggio Emilia (reported by Laura and Zenia), multiple intelligences (reported by Festival), Montessori (reported by Festival) and Chen Heqin educational ideas (reported by Laura).

Furthermore, Yolanda mentioned that she was "impressed by one of the kindergartens in Malaysia, regarding teachers' beliefs of 'changing yourself for the happiness of the people around you'"; while Rosy stated that "in painting activities, we

show children some Western masterpieces (e.g. van Gogh's paintings of sunflowers, and Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*)", and "we are also influenced by Prof. Yang Jingzhi [a Chinese professor], who adopts a Developmental Appropriate approach, and advocates the expression of children's own ideas and a holistic development through fine arts". Exceptionally, the youngest teacher among all interviewees, Hermione (who has only five years' working experience), was the only one who admitted, "I am not particularly familiarised with theories".

The above data exhibit the important international influences present in this particular field, providing evidence that the forces of globalisation are considered to be a predominant power in the policy making of Chinese EC arts education since 1978, as argued in the literature review chapter. This also reflects a cultural hybridised situation, as some Chinese influences are evident among the various international approaches and experiences. This is coherent with Holton's (2000) hybridisation thesis.

It is understandable that some of the elements reported in response to the survey questions were not found in the interviews, such as "integrated international influences", "American DBAE" and "Kodaly method", given that the sample size of participants in the interviews was much smaller compared to that of respondents in the survey.

6.3.2.3 Teaching materials

It seems that "recycled materials" were widely used among the three case study kindergartens, as four of the six interviewees (Yolanda, Rosy, Festival and Laura) mentioned this type of material, which was a higher proportion than in the survey findings (67% vs. 22.4%).

Rosy highlighted "low structure" materials (i.e. open-ended materials, such as clay and paper) believing that these were helpful for children's creative arts making. In this regard, Festival indicated "paper structure" materials while Laura and Zenia from the Harmonious Kindergarten particularly mentioned "paper structure" materials and "all kinds of papers (e.g. fluting paper)", which could be considered as a type of low structure material. This seems to be new information in comparison with the data from the survey; and the implementation of these materials seems to be a "technique and practice", which signals a response to the problem of the "national creativity deficit", as mentioned in the literature review chapter. Festival from the Beautiful Kindergarten listed "local natural clay, corn starch paste" as children's art-making materials. In

addition, Festival stated that they had adopted media methods, such as electronic PowerPoint files, to support children's arts learning from the nursery class to the upper class: "regarding the music, dance and drama performance, from the nursery class to the upper class, we make PPT [PowerPoint] files for children to search and select their favourite content by themselves, so they can practise and deliver the related performance". This provides an explicit example regarding the use of ICT in children's arts learning, as "ICT-related materials" were ranked the highest in the survey study. However, from a creative point of view, in the Beijing context, ICT was only used as a tool to assist children's arts learning; whereas in the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, media arts constitute a distinct art form for children's artistic expression and creation.

6.3.3 Educators' understandings and beliefs about children's arts education (questions No. 6–No. 15)

This section of the interviews explored educators' understandings and beliefs about children's arts. This phase of the research contributes complementary information to the previous document analysis and survey study. Interviews are considered to be "a very good way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality", and also "one of the most powerful ways we have of understanding others" (Punch, 2014, p. 144).

Firstly, a shared view among the interviewees emerged: they felt they benefited from using international theories, approaches and experiences regarding children's arts education during their professional practices. For example, Yolanda stated that "we would like to draw on mature international experiences to improve our teaching and learning". Some other interviewees explained more explicitly their experiences regarding some particular international theories, approaches and experiences as follows:

> *Influenced by Western approaches such as High/Scope and Learning Stories, teachers learn how to approach children, but in the meantime they learn how to keep appropriate distance with them; teachers learn to observe and recognise children and they learn how to respond to children. (Rosy)*

> *Orff music pedagogy is helpful in the selection and make up of music (from individual sections to a complete music drama such as Lion King March, Alibaba, in respecting children's age band) … Montessorri pedagogy can develop children's individuality, respects children's freedom, but also requires more educational resources and the process is more flexible, that's why it is better adopted in private kindergartens in Beijing. (Festival)*

> *According to Chen Heqin's educational ideas, influenced by Dewey's progressivism, arts is based on life. [Inspired by such ideas], we encourage children to find the beauty in daily life, to paint in the nature (e.g. Great Wall, public parks), to take photos in different scenarios and with different perspectives. (Laura)*

> *Drawing on some international approaches, I have inspirations about more open forms and more material options in arts teaching. (Zenia)*

Such authentic voices from these practising EC educators provide meaningful examples of the influences of the relevant international theories, approaches and experiences in the Chinese Beijing context. From a governmentality perspective, this international knowledge seemed to be legitimated by the participant Chinese EC educators by its proven effectiveness worldwide. Meanwhile, the recognition and adoption of this international knowledge can also be deemed as effective *techne* to achieve these Chinese EC educators' educational *telos*.

Secondly, the "interaction" and the "combination" of the international and local experiences were emphasised by some interviewees. For example, Yolanda pointed out that "it is also important to have an interaction of international and local experiences"; while Festival stated that: "however, it's important to combine such elements with local culture". Here the local culture might refer to the cultures of Beijing, a combination of traditional Chinese culture (e.g. Confucianism and Taoism), socialist culture (under the governance of the CPC), and some unique cultural features of Beijing city. This also reveals that knowledge is not context-free; instead it is context-bound. As indicated by Foucault (1982), knowledge is always social and always embodies local situations.

Thirdly, the analysis indicated the need to improve EC teachers' knowledge in this field. For example, Yolanda stated that "we also find that our new teachers need to improve their basic knowledge and skills about the arts [especially in relation to the international experiences]"; Hermione admitted that "I need more training regarding this"; and Zenia explained that "due to the different EC contexts between China and other countries (e.g. large class size), we are too busy to learn new international theories and approaches …"

6.3.3.1 Expectations regarding children's arts learning content, skills and abilities

Rich data with regard to this important aspect of children's arts education emerged from the interviews. The responses from the six interviewees apparently revealed a

prominent feature in Chinese Beijing children's arts education which was also the first characteristic in the Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum, as discussed in the curricula analysis chapter: learning "through" the arts. The interviewees appeared to focus on a series of instrumental benefits rather than intrinsic benefits as the main targets in children's arts education. For example, Yolanda highlighted the "sense of responsibility, ability of communication, social and emotional development, and international perspectives"; Rosy listed "kinaesthetic, social abilities, and learning qualities such as attention and concentration"; Festival stated that "arts education can help the emotional development of children, turn the introvert children into expressive ones, and can develop their body coordination"; and Laura expounded that "we do not expect children to acquire pure skills and abilities, and we do not assess them based on the level of imitation. We expect to inspire … their abilities to express and their qualities of perseverance". All these three principals aimed to develop a variety of children's holistic abilities, especially their social, emotional and dispositional abilities through the arts.

Interestingly, the three teachers of these kindergartens seemed to embrace not only the instrumental values of arts education, but also some intrinsic values. For example, Hermione mentioned "children's abilities such as imagination, creation, expression and communication"; Festival insisted that "children need to know about the basic skills and abilities in the arts, so that they can realise their ideas in making the arts"; and Zenia stated that "I hope children will have more emotional experiences by learning the arts. They will know how to appreciate the arts and express via the arts. For example, we encourage children to use different colours to draw their mood diaries."

This discrepancy raises questions about why the principals and first-line teachers from the participant kindergartens had different perspectives regarding children's arts learning content, skills and abilities. It might be explained by the different educational foci and professional experiences held by these two groups of EC educators in Beijing, regarding children's arts education.

Although disciplinary artistic skills and abilities were not neglected (e.g. Festival, Laura and Zenia), it seems that all educators in this study unanimously aimed to assist children's lifelong development through arts education. In particular, they wished to develop children's holistic abilities such as "imagination and creativity", and "their good habits" through the arts. In this regard, arts education was again deemed to be an effective technique to resolve the national creativity deficit, as discussed previously.

6.3.3.2 Teachers' beliefs regarding children's creativity

The responses to this question suggested that most of the interviewees adopted a personality approach regarding their beliefs about children's creativity, with this coherent with the research findings from the survey. For example, "creativity can be any new discovery by the child, as long as he/she engages in it by his/her own; creativity lies in 'this person, this time and this place'" (Yolanda). This statement represents a personality approach. "I think every child has excellent creativity, they all have their original ideas …" (Hermione); and "[a]ll children are smart" (Laura). These opinions echoed "innate ability" which was coded from the survey.

However, this view seemed to be challenged by some other interviewees. As Rosy explicitly argued, "children's creativity is not an inherent ability; it is based on the previous perception, and influenced by the stimuli of the environment; it is a kind of divergent thinking, based on predecessor's foundation". Similarly, Festival believed that "children's creativity needs some basic conditions, such as sufficient perception and visual impact". From Rosy and Festival's statements, I identify a sociocultural approach to children's creativity, as both interviewees shifted the focus from an individual level to a social level which, according to Blessinger (2014), is a social-cultural approach, as discussed in the literature review chapter.

Furthermore, as Yolanda indicated, "I think creativity is also the ability to resolve problems". This statement resonates with the kind of creativity that pertains to the interdisciplinary approach discussed in the literature review chapter. This orientation to creativity is reflected in Craft's (2012) statement that currently we are facing many new challenges and we need this kind of "wise, humanizing creativity" in order to meet these challenges (p. 179).

A shared view seemed to be held among the interviewees regarding the importance of "divergent thinking" in the development of children's creativity (e.g. Rosy and Laura). This appears to be in line with the cognitive approach where we find the focus on studying mental processes, as was illuminated in the literature review chapter.

In summary, the data that emerged from the interviews provided quite wide perspectives regarding children's creativity, covering all four approaches to creativity as outlined in the literature review chapter. At the same time, a consensus seemed to appear among the interviewees that teachers play a crucial role in cultivating children's creativity. For example, "we teachers need to protect and support children's interest" (Yolanda); "teachers should not constrain children; teachers need to keep open and

need to be centred on children, and not to give concrete requirement[s] during arts education" (Hermione); "the activity themes, and the materials that teachers select need to inspire children's imagination" (Festival); and "we need to encourage divergent thinking among the children in order to realise their creative potential. More experiences and trials are also necessary in this regard" (Laura). Zenia stated the following:

> *We teachers need to observe children carefully and prepare sufficiently to encourage children [to] express uniquely their internal ideas, mobilise their initiatives to represent their experiences. We use both national and international masterpieces for children to appreciate and experience the arts, sometimes use online resources; we also induce children to touch the arts in their daily lives. (Zenia)*

This perspective was consistent with one of the survey conclusions which stated that children "need teachers to respect them and provide them with opportunities for creativity".

However, some discrepancies were also identified between teachers' discourse and their practice. For example, Hermione stated that "teachers need to keep open and need to be centred on children, and not to give concrete requirement[s] during arts education". Nevertheless, during the site observations, it was found that both Hermione and her colleagues gave concrete requirements in their art lessons (refer to pedagogical examples 1–4 from the Thematic Kindergarten). Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate why such a discrepancy exists in the Chinese Beijing EC context. Further elaboration on this issue is presented in the meta-analysis of the following chapter.

6.3.3.3 Teachers' beliefs regarding the key elements of children's quality arts education

The principals of the three kindergartens provided insightful opinions in this regard. Yolanda, the principal of the Thematic Kindergarten, with 32 years' experience in ECE, suggested the following regarding the key elements in children's quality arts education:

> *Firstly, the active status that **children** have during the process, they actively perceive things, dedicate themselves to the arts activities, they establish [a] relationship naturally and they use initiative with the arts;*

> *Secondly, **teachers** need to prepare sufficiently and need to know about children's needs and children's age characteristics; and there needs to be **good coordination among teachers**;*

*Thirdly, **the active interaction between child/teacher and teacher/teacher during the activities**;*

*Finally, **evaluation** is also important. Make sure that the arts activities help children to **discover themselves, to establish self-confidence, and to have happy experiences.** (Yolanda)*

Laura, the principal of the Harmonious Kindergarten stated the following:

We all think that the evaluation of children's arts education is very important. However, this is a field under exploration. It is not our kindergarten alone that can make an evaluation standard in this aspect. It should be scientific, objective and systematic; I think our teachers do not have such abilities to propose an evaluation standard, and in China there seems to be a lack in this regard; we need researchers to contribute to this domain. (Laura)

Rosy, the principal of the Beautiful Kindergarten, echoed this view and further developed Yolanda's suggestions above by stating the following key elements:

*Prior to the activity, teachers' **preparation** of curriculum and materials;*

*During the activity, the **interaction between teachers and children**, **between children and children, and between teachers themselves**; the utilisation of media and modern formalities; the degree of children's **involvement and enjoyment** in the activity (pay special attention to children's eyes);*

*After the activity, teachers' **reflective practice** and professional summary regarding the advantages and issues of the activity; facilitating the **sharing and communication among the children**; realising **a good combination of formative and prescriptive curriculum based on children's interest and needs.** (Rosy)*

The third principal, Laura from the Harmonious Kindergarten, added to her statement regarding the importance of this issue, with this expressed as follows:

*Under our circumstances, I think teachers should incite the **initiatives of children**; the arts programs should combine with the **daily life**. There should be a complete **process of introduction, development and extension**. The way of introduction should be natural. (Laura)*

The EC teachers in the current study echoed their principals by stating the following:

*At first, the kind of activities that can make children **fully involved and busy**;*

> *Then, teachers'* ***way of introduction,*** *their tone of voice, the preparation of* ***materials and tools****, all these need to meet with children's needs. (Hermione)*

> *One of the key elements in quality arts education is a* ***gradual process that children make progress and they break through their own limits*** *during that process. The key role of teachers is to* ***incite their interest by observing the children carefully, by using subtle methods and inspirational language.*** *Teachers need to* ***guide*** *the children in order to improve children's level. (Festival)*

> *Firstly, quality arts education can* ***grasp children's age characteristics, mobilise children's internal feelings and experiences, encourage them to express daringly****.*

> *Secondly, the arts programs should* ***show the beauty of relevant disciplines and specific skills and knowledge****. But it also depends on children's age band. For example, for the children of nursery class, it's good enough to encourage children to express themselves daringly.*

> *Thirdly, teachers should create* ***loose space*** *for children, organise* ***effective evaluation****, including children's self-evaluation, collective sharing, and mutual appreciation, and try to find the extraordinary aspect of each child. Sometimes we will find a separate time for the evaluation, depending on the circumstances (children need some rest after their arts making). (Zenia)*

To summarise, the opinions regarding the key elements in children's quality arts education from two of the principals, Yolanda and Rosy, would suggest a procedural framework comprised of three phases: prior to the activities, during the activities and after the activities. The third principal Laura similarly indicated "a complete **process of introduction, development and extension"**. From the opinions expressed by the teachers, I find that key elements in quality arts education also involved the "gradual process that children make progress" (Festival), as well as the aesthetic qualities, including "the beauty of relevant disciplines and specific skills and knowledge" (Zenia).

6.3.3.4 children's active participation in arts education

Children's active participation mentioned by EC educators during the interviews are substantiated and exemplified by the following artworks observed in this study. The artwork presentation in both the Thematic Kindergarten and the Harmonious Kindergarten revealed that the children made their own choices regarding their play. In particular, in the Thematic Kindergarten, a vote was organised among the children to decide the name, the content and the roles under the theme of "primary school". More

details can be found in Figure 6.2. I consider the photos in this figure to be a significant finding in this research phase, as not only did they demonstrate some real efforts to promote child-centredness and child-initiation in these kindergartens, but they also demonstrated a certain level of higher-order thinking by the children, such as analysing, evaluating, creating and critical thinking (Pohl, 2000). It can also be argued that this kind of voting by children is a powerful *techne* to build competent future citizens with a high "sense of responsibility", which is the educational *telos* of the Thematic Kindergarten, according to its principal Yolanda and her staff.

My play, my choice (in HK)   Voting results (in TK)

Figure 6.2 Voting for play in Harmonious Kindergarten and Thematic Kindergarten

In the same vein, the critical thinking spirit, which was a key topic in the analysis of the curricula for Chinese and Australian children (although not explicitly reflected in the intended Beijing Curriculum), emerged from the case study during the observations. Figure 6.3 shows that in the Thematic Kindergarten, teachers asked the children "why" some of the activity areas were to remain and "why" some new areas were to be added. Children answered these questions by drawing. The thinking skills such as "comparing", "organising", "judging", "justifying" and "critiquing" that the children were using, as demonstrated in Figure 6.23, revealed that they were undoubtedly creative

and critical thinkers (Pohl, 2000), as well as being young artists, for they successfully expressed their ideas and arguments in such a vivid and aesthetic way.

Figure 6.3 Let us draw: "Why"

The above examples were exceptional as the children appeared to not only have their own voices, but also appeared to have some power. In contrast, in most examples in the current case study, the children seemed to be very compliant; they did what they were asked to do; and their voices seemed to be weak.

6.3.3.5 Teachers' beliefs regarding the child–teacher relationship

A significant finding from the responses to this question seemed to be a consensus that the child–teacher relationship can be **diverse and flexible**. Interviewees not only put forward their points of view regarding this issue, but also supported their points with some explanations and evidence. For example, Yolanda argued that:

> *The relationship between teachers and children can be diverse: child-initiated or teacher initiated. For early childhood arts curriculum is a combination of prescriptive and formative components. For example, when it snows, children might be interested in snowflakes. Teachers can provide different kinds of support (pictures or real objects) for children to express their ideas about the snow. Teachers can also introduce a theme (e.g. lovely animals), and create a scene for children to create. (Yolanda)*

Consistent with her concepts regarding the key elements of quality arts education, Rosy proposed the following framework with regard to the child–teacher relationship in quality arts education:

Prior to the activity, teacher is in the forefront, child is at the back; During the activity, child is in the forefront, teacher is at the back; After the activity, teacher is in the forefront, child is at the back. The principle is that the relationship between teacher and child is similar to two parallel lines, they are close friends; teacher is the guide, while child is an active and competent learner. (Rosy)

The third principal Laura also stated that:

Regarding the pedagogic interaction between teacher and child, there are no fixed rules; the key point is that such interaction should be appropriate and adaptive to children's needs. Teachers should try new methods and new contents and use them flexibly. (Laura)

Laura's colleague Zenia seemed to echo this argument by stating that "there are no absolute rules in this regard". Furthermore, she expounded that "I think [the] teacher should be able to catch the moment that children are especially interested and focused, and provide appropriate guidance".

Teachers in this study tended to provide more details on the "how" question. For example, Hermione suggested that:

Teachers create [an] environment and conditions based on children's interest and requirements. Teachers basically do not make demonstration. Teachers do not evaluate based on the level of imitation by children; the important point is that children learn by doing on their own; teachers just assist children. (Hermione)

The following statement from Festival revealed a co-constructive perspective regarding the child–teacher relationship during arts education:

It is a kind of mutual learning and helping each other between the teacher and the child. Teachers need to discover the shining spots of the children, inspire their motivation and ideas; children also help teachers to accumulate experiences, to help teachers to acquire more general, more specific and more holistic experiences. (Festival)

The findings from the interviews exhibited some differences in comparison with the data from the survey. For example, none of the interviewees stated explicitly the "child-initiated" approach: they instead held a much more balanced and eclectic view regarding this important aspect in early childhood education (ECE). In contrast, in the survey, "child-initiated" seemed to be overwhelming (78.4% among participants). In fact, the data that emerged from the interviews appeared to be more coherent with the

findings from the prior phase of the curricula analysis, where we found the Beijing Curriculum to be "a child-oriented" one that combined children's initiatives within a fairly structured and prescriptive curriculum document.

However, some data from the interviews resonated with the survey findings. For example, in the survey, some EC teachers considered the children to be their "partners in the learning process"; and they described the learning process as "co-construct" or "co-make". Similarly, in the case study, Festival stated that "[i]t is a kind of mutual learning and helping each other between the teacher and the child …"; in the survey, "good attitude, ideas and responsibility" were articulated by participant EC teachers; in the case study, Laura considered that "love is an eternal theme regarding the relationship between teacher and child. Teachers should firstly be kind persons with good morality"; also in the survey, "flexible pedagogical methods" were mentioned; and here in the case study, Laura urged that "teachers should try new methods and new content and use them flexibly".

6.3.3.6 Teachers' concerns about the main challenges and biggest gains in arts education

The same question about the "main challenges" was posed to participant EC teachers in the survey; in addition, the interviews explored educators' experiences about their "biggest gains" in order to explore in more depth their experiential world.

The "main challenges" echoed the survey findings where "the core challenges appear[ed] to be the pedagogical issues" and where a series of "how" questions were posed by the participant EC teachers, pedagogical issues also emerged in the case study. For example, Yolanda described the following:

How to induce children more actively and with initiative [to] take part in the arts seems to be a main challenge for our teachers. For example, some children are interested in science; they are not very active in the arts. How to inspire children's interest in the arts? (Yolanda)

Laura also stated that:

The biggest challenge involves how to grasp during the process, how to choose more conveniently and mobilise children's initiatives, how to better understand children and help them to progress gradually. (Laura)

Festival pointed out that "the conception of a sequential music drama named 'Small Kitchen' seemed to be a challenge to me". Apparently, this example pertained to pedagogical issues.

Another common topic discussed in the survey responses involved EC teachers' perception of their "lack of knowledge and skills in the arts". Most interviewees in the case study confirmed this concern. For example, Yolanda, when answering the previous question about "feelings and experiences" about international influences in arts education, mentioned that "we also find that our new teachers need to improve their basic knowledge and skills about the arts"; Hermione expressed the view that "I need to receive more theoretical knowledge in order to combine it with my pedagogical practices"; while Rosy stated that "teachers lack specific knowledge and skills". Zenia admitted that "disciplinary knowledge and skills in the arts seem to be a challenge for teachers". In order to give an example, she said that "[an] experienced arts educator (e.g. Ms Yang Qianling from Taiwan) can use the simplest method to show the best artistic effects in fine arts. Sometimes we lack this kind of expertise". Again, this is coherent with the challenge of teachers' professional learning imbalance, as previously indicated. Here, in particular, this challenge involved the lack of teachers' artistic expertise.

Other elements discussed in the survey were also reflected in the case study interviews, for example, the curriculum issues. As Rosy argued, "a more specific arts curriculum is needed".

Rosy, the principal of the Beautiful Kindergarten, who has visited some EC centres in New Zealand and Australia, provided new insights in relation to the question of "main challenges", in comparison with the survey findings. She stated that:

> *Compared to Australian EC teachers, Chinese teachers have a heavier workload and more constraints in their professional practices (e.g. due to different teacher to child ratio, Australian teachers can pay more attention to fewer children. Chinese teachers need to spend a lot of time to prepare teaching materials, and need to spend a small part of time to pay attention to a large scale of children). Sometimes teachers feel burnt out, and they lose enthusiasm and their brains slow down. (Rosy)*

Based on this statement, the "heavy workload and more constraints in their professional practices", as well as the professional "burnout" of Chinese EC teachers were evident. Rosy compared Chinese and Australian EC educators. Are they governed differently within their respective educational regime? In this regard,

structural differences certainly provided one reason that accounted for such different situations between Chinese and Australian EC educators. But the question was asked: were there any more fundamental reasons for the different situations?

Regarding EC educators' gains in children's arts education, most interviewees appeared to endorse the intrinsic benefits of arts education, such as the "expression" and "joy and happiness", as well as the aesthetic qualities. One of the principals Yolanda indicated that "teachers are particularly happy to see children express creatively and solve problems during arts learning". This statement covered both the intrinsic and the instrumental benefits of children's arts education. One small difference was that teachers seemed to be more concerned with intrinsic benefits and aesthetic qualities. For example, Hermione stated that "when I observe children's reactions during the arts activities, I feel that I know them better; when I find they are happy, then I feel happy too"; Festival admitted that the success of the sequential drama that she had mentioned in response to the "main challenge" became "a hard but fulfilling experience, which suggests that teachers need to be open and flexible, and involve the active participation by children during the arts activities"; and finally, Zenia stated that:

> *When children successfully expressed their real feelings, and have a sense of achievement and satisfaction, teachers will also feel satisfied. If their artifacts are of high artistic quality, I will be happier. For example, last year, children of my class have exhibited their water ink paintings in a local community museum, and I feel it's amazing! (Zenia)*

6.3.3.7 Teachers' beliefs regarding support for arts education

In response to this question, the most prevalent word that emerged in the survey was "training" (33% of the response rate). The interviewees also placed emphasis on "professional training" or "professional learning" in responding to this question. This was illustrated by Hermione's quotation: "for us, the best welfare is training!" Furthermore, she categorised "expert guidance" into two groups: "art knowledge and skills" and "pedagogical strategies with children". This seemed to be in line with the two types of content of "professional training" that were one of the survey findings (refer to Figure 5.11). Here "professional training" or "professional learning" seems to be a direct technique to solve the relevant problems.

Rosy also mentioned "professional development guidance" and "professional training" and, in this regard, she reiterated the importance of "curriculum support".

Zenia more specifically indicated "professional learning with arts specialists who have received systematic/academic training".

The term "reflective practice" was introduced by Festival:

When I do my reflective practice, I feel that interest is important for me to go deeper and further in my professional practice. I also need to know more about some of the forms and content in music and some of the skills and abilities in fine arts. I need to break through my own limits and use the arts elements in daily life. (Festival)

In summary, information gathered in the interviews regarding "support" not only confirmed some of the survey's key findings, but also provided new perspectives from the in-service Beijing EC teachers.

6.3.3.8 Unforgettable art stories

As pointed out by Punch (2014), "narrative and stories are also valuable in studying lives and lived experience", and some contemporary researchers emphasise "the study of lives from the narrator's viewpoint, with data seen as a shared production with the researcher" (p. 187). In the interviews, I attempted to engage the participant educators, especially the front-line teachers to narrate their real and unforgettable stories during their professional practice regarding children's arts education, as I believe that "narratives of this sort can give a uniquely rich and subtle understanding" (Punch, 2014, pp. 187-188) of children's arts education. The four stories presented below demonstrated different facets of children's arts learning in the contemporary Chinese Beijing context, and provided rich connotations in relation to the pedagogical interactions, as well as the educators' professional development in this field.

Yolanda, principal of the Thematic Kindergarten, narrated story one:

In a role play game, a child acted as a sales clerk; he sold some stationery to a teacher. When the teacher asked him to pack the stationery into a bag, the child could not find a bag. With the encouragement of the teacher, this child provided another solution to his "customer": he found a ribbon and helped to wrap the stationery with the ribbon. In addition, he also gave the "customer" a rubber as a gift. (Yolanda)

In this story, the kind of intentional teaching that is "deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 15) on the part of the teacher is evident. "Mediation strategies" were used, when the teacher encouraged the child to use his own

"independent problem solving", "initiative" and "further thinking" abilities (Leggett, 2015) in order to resolve a problem. This story also implied that children have much potential, and their abilities of creativity and problem solving can be cultivated by teachers' intentional teaching, and in responding to teachers' "cognitive challenge" (Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004, p. 713).

Rosy, principal of the Beautiful Kindergarten, narrated story two:

In a thematic craft-making activity of "Dinosaurs", a four-year-old girl could not make the pointed back of stegosaurs by using the clay, and she felt very upset. Then I asked her, "Can you make it by some materials other than the clay?" The girl replied, "There is no pointed material. Where can I find the pointed material?" At that time, in the natural corner of our class, there were some sunflower seeds. Then I told her, "Have a look of the natural corner; maybe there is something that you need". The little girl went to the corner, and found the seeds. She immediately picked up some seeds and used them on the back of the stegosaurs. As a result, the little girl felt particularly satisfied and happy about her artifact. In order to express her appreciation, she held in both hands lots of sunflower seeds for me ... (Rosy)

This appeared to be an example of sustained shared thinking (SST) skills between both the principal and the child, as they worked together "in an intellectual way to solve a problem" (Siraj-Blatchford, 2008, p. 7). More concretely, the principal implemented a multiplicity of intentional teaching strategies as summarised by Leggett (2015), which involved co-construction of knowledge, collaboration and co-problem solving. She also encouraged the child to take initiative and use imagination; in particular, the principal provided resources, choice and clues to stimulate the child to find the solution by herself.

Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva (2004) indicate that in the most effective adult–child interactions, adults "provoke speculation and extend the imagination" of the children by asking them "open-ended questions" (p. 725). This effort is clearly reflected in Rosy's story.

In this story, the child also exhibited a high level of intentional learning, as she used a number of relevant strategies such as "asking questions"; "requesting assistance"; finding out "clues from [her] environment"; "demonstrating"; "explaining"; "inviting others"; and "using gestures and actions" (Leggett, 2015, p. 314). Finally, the expression of appreciation to the principal by the child is purely a child-initiated attempt, which built a meaningful experience in the arts education for both the adult and the child.

Festival, teacher at the Beautiful Kindergarten, narrated story three:

Once, children were asked to bring a vase from home for a fine arts lesson. One child brought a beautiful antique vase from home. Her vase had original decorative patterns that were rare in contemporary society, and which attracted enormous attention and interest in the whole class. Other children also wanted to bring such a vase. However, not all families have precious antique vases. Then I asked children to find out alternative solutions, for example, by searching antique vases online, and by observing antique vases in a museum. These solutions enabled me and my colleagues to explain the differences between ancient and contemporary vases in terms of colour, design and the making process, by taking a vase titled "Promoting longevity" as an example, which was found in a museum. (Festival)

This is a typical child-initiated and teacher-guided example in arts learning. Festival admitted that she and her colleagues did not expect that one of the children would bring an antique vase; neither did they expect that the whole class would be fascinated by its beauty, demonstrating a strong interest in further exploring. However, she and her colleagues decided to follow the children's interest and provide a series of "mediating strategies" of "intentional teaching", such as "[encouraging] further thinking"; "[involving/inviting] children"; "[making] connections"; "[mediating]"; "[negotiating]"; "[providing] choice"; "[providing] clues"; "[providing] resources"; "[respecting] children's ideas/choices"; "[speculating] and [supporting] peer interactions"; and "[scaffolding] skills and abilities" (Leggett, 2015, p. 313). This story proved to be another SST experience co-constructed by both the adults and the children, and which appeared to be another successful experience in quality arts education.

Zenia, teacher at the Harmonious Kindergarten, narrated story four:

A five-year-old boy usually did not dare to draw. He always said, "Teacher, I can't", and only picked up the brush at the last second of each class. Once we introduced a theme about the "cat"; children collected pictures about cats and they observed some cats. Based on such experiences, I encouraged the boy, "Let's just have a try; it is not a formal drawing". Eventually, the little boy started to draw and he could not stop! He drew so many different cats with different gestures. From then on, he became another boy and never had he encountered the same problems with the creative drawing! [sic] I am so much impressed by this experience. I realised it is crucial to make children feel relaxed in their arts creation; [the] teacher should prepare all kinds of conditions including the selection of materials, the way of experiential accumulation prior to the practice, and the tone of language during the introduction. Since then, I have been paying closer attention to children's psychology and internal world based on their artifacts; I not only emphasise the

> *artistic effect. Children may express their panic, fear, loneliness or depression*
> *through their arts making. It is important for teachers to observe such*
> *phenomena and [to] do the necessary intervention (e.g. communication with*
> *children's families). (Zenia)*

This appeared to be a good example of a teacher's reflective practice, which has a central role in work-based professional development among EC teachers (Keay & Lloyd, 2011), as discussed previously in the curricula analysis chapter. In this story, Zenia adopted "action research" as a main strategy to develop her reflective practice (Ng et al., 2014), in order to cope with the challenge that she encountered during her teaching. Her endeavour did not end after this challenge was conquered. Instead, she summarised some useful coping principles based on this experience and made her conclusions. Furthermore she extended this experience to her future professional practice. This resonates with what Krieg (2008) has argued: "reflective practice involves moving back and forward in time and place" which is an "iterative, recursive research process" (p. 28). In this story, Zenia demonstrated a high level of SST on her part, as she successfully developed "the best environments for SST to nurture the child and provide love, warmth and support" (Purdon, 2016, p. 278). She has become a careful observer of children's artifacts as they could possibly reveal "children's psychology and internal world" and, therefore, perhaps that the child might need some "necessary intervention" by the teacher. From this perspective, arts education does not only involve children's aesthetic and cognitive development, but also their psychological health. Through a governmentality lens, as an EC teacher, Zenia has intentionally extended her governance from disciplinary knowledge and skills to knowledge of the whole child: in this spirit, she has also tried to exercise her governance not only in the kindergarten, but beyond.

6.3.3.9 Principals' beliefs regarding support for teachers' professional learning relating to arts education

All principals mentioned that they invited experts from outside to provide professional guidance for their teachers, and encouraged teachers to go outside the kindergarten to visit and to learn. Yolanda's statement provided a summary in this regard: "we offer budget, time, organisation and resources for teachers to develop their PL [professional learning]". She also provided the following specific descriptions regarding teachers' research on "One lesson", as well as other aspects of professional learning, such as evaluation, audit and research publication:

To undertake multiple research on one lesson, to conceive different structures for the same lesson; to organise professional evaluation, to audit and to assess lessons, to prepare teaching plans, to write papers, and to participate in oral defence". (Yolanda)

Similarly, Rosy stated that:

We stimulate teachers to learn (everyone has her/his own specialty and everyone is wonderful), organise cross-kindergarten visits, encourage them to participate in training projects of www.teacheredu.cn, and help them to communicate with some children's fine arts institutions". (Rosy)

Laura's narrative seemed to echo Rosy's previous claim regarding the "heavy workload" of EC teachers in Beijing:

I feel that EC teachers in China are doing a hard job: they need to be skilled in different learning areas, they need to be creative, pursue PL [profession learning] using their spare time, do the check and assessment, do the tasks from the superior institutions, and so on. They have a very long daily working schedule, from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm (10 hours per working day!). (Laura)

This appears to be supplementary information regarding Chinese contemporary EC teachers' context of professional learning. During the interviews, all principals expressed their appreciation towards their staff for their enthusiasm and dedication to the EC career, despite all kinds of difficulties in real life. For example, Yolanda emotionally indicated that:

The residential properties in Beijing are so expensive that our teachers [with their low income], especially those who recently graduated from school, can only buy or rent properties in the outskirts of the city. That's why some of them had to travel 50 km from home to kindergarten every working day, even if they are pregnant! (Yolanda)

Festival was the only teacher who responded to this question that was designed for the principals, and her focus seemed to be the pedagogy issues. She argued that "I think it is important to emphasise the child-initiated activities. Teachers need to spend some time for the creation and research in fine arts, so that we could provide experiences for children and disseminate knowledge". She mentioned specifically the "creation and research in fine arts" from the perspective of teachers' professional learning. This confirmed the findings from the survey that the "fine arts" were one of the most important arts learning forms in the Beijing EC context.

Again, the data that emerged from the interviews provided valuable information regarding contemporary Beijing EC teachers' professional learning situation, with this information unobtainable through other methods used in this research.

6.3.3.10 Principals' beliefs regarding kindergarten leadership for children's arts education

In responding to this question, the three principals provided three different perspectives. Firstly, Yolanda pointed out the significance of kindergarten leadership for children's arts education:

> *Kindergarten leadership for children's arts education is very important for the whole life of our children, and it is significant in the real life. In contemporary Chinese society, people are in pursuit of equity, excellence and holistic development. Arts education is crucial in promoting the level of civilisation of our society, and the holistic accomplishment of the individual. (Yolanda)*

In this statement, the term "equity" emerged for the first time from the research data in the Chinese context in this study (it seems that during the previous research phases, "equity" was mentioned only in the Australian Curriculum: The Arts). It was also the first time that the term "civilisation" emerged in the study's data. Furthermore, Yolanda's statement echoed one of the key policies in this field: the *Educational Master Plan of National Art (1989–2000)* (State Education Commission of China, 1989a), according to which arts education can be deemed as a *techne* to "consolidate the construction of socialist spiritual civilisation".

In relation to the "how" question, all three principals used the term "platform": "kindergarten leaders should establish [the] platform for all staff and for all children to realise their artistic potential and to flourish in the arts" (Yolanda); "we need to create a platform for children to show their talents" (Rosy); and "to provide platforms and to facilitate every member to realise her/his own value and potential" (Laura). The concept of "platform" also pertains to the dimension of "techniques and practices" in the analytics of government (Dean, 2010) in order to realise kindergarten governance in relation to children's arts education.

Another aspect about the "how" question seemed to be the principals' own qualities in various fields. For example, Yolanda stated that "kindergarten leaders need to enrich their own artistic attainment, deepen their artistic understanding, appreciation and expression". Rosy held that it was necessary for leaders "to have a high sensitivity

of the forefront of reforms, and to know about the newest changes and trends in this field, to create educational opportunities and learning environment for staff", and even "to educate parents about the new trends of ECE [early childhood education]". This aspect relates to the idea of "self-government" under a governmentality perspective, according to which "government encompasses not only how we exercise authority over other[s] … but also how we govern ourselves" (Dean, 2010, p. 21).

Laura was a governmental official prior to her career as principal; she had much to offer on this topic of leadership:

> *I think the essence of [a] principal's leadership is to enhance the sense of* **cohesion and pride of the kindergarten,** *to provide* **platforms** *and to facilitate every member to realise her/his own value and potential. I may not have the sufficient skills and abilities (e.g. in the arts or in the finance, or even cooking and cleaning), but I know how to mobilise all the talents in my organisation and guide them to contribute to the development of our kindergarten. It requires that I treat everyone sincerely, and resolve real problems of my staff, based on the spirit of* **people-oriented***. Another point is that, being a principal, I need to be* **happy** *at first, and then my staff and all children will also be happy. Prior to the position of a kindergarten principal, I was a governmental official in the educational system in Beijing Xuanwu District. Someone asked me if I would prefer to be an official or be a principal. I think it's busier to be a principal, but I have a better sense of self-actualisation and career achievement, especially when I see children's growth, teachers' development and the social recognition of our kindergarten, I feel really proud and satisfied.* **Being a principal enables me to realise many of my ideas.** *(Laura)*

Using a governmentality framework to consider this statement, Laura's kindergarten governing rationality was to "enhance the sense of cohesion and pride of the kindergarten", by using the *techne* such as providing "platforms", treating her staff sincerely, and resolving their real problems. For Laura, the most important knowledge as the principal is not in arts education nor in finance, but in mobilising and organising people in her institution. She is aware of the self-government aspect, for example, the importance of keeping herself happy, in order to provide a positive example for all staff and children. Finally, all her endeavours are to realise the *telos* of "children's growth, teachers' development and the social recognition of our kindergarten".

Festival was again the only teacher who responded to this question. She considered that "the arts [have] fundamental influences on the teachers; it provides different experiences and brings happiness to our body and heart; it regulates our mentality. And th[ese] kind of positive influences will affect our children". Her statement

presented an aesthetic rationality which resonated with both Yolanda, in terms of the importance of the arts, and Laura, in terms of "happiness" in arts education.

6.3.3.11 Early childhood teachers' long working day

During the interviews, kindergarten principals also mentioned the long working day of EC teachers, their heavy workload and their admirable professional dedication. For example, Rosy stated that "compared to Australian EC teachers, Chinese teachers have a heavier workload and more constraints in their professional practices … Sometimes teachers feel burnt out, and they lose enthusiasm and their brains slow down". Similarly, Laura and Yolanda expressed the same concern regarding the heavy workload and long working schedule of EC teachers, and even the inferior income level compared to their peers in primary and middle schools. To relieve some of the teachers' workload, Laura had made some efforts. For example, she tried to remove the breakfast session in the nursery classes, with this seeming to be an initiative undertaken by public kindergartens in Beijing. This trial by Laura shows a kind of governor's agency to make a change regarding the existing irrational structure, in order to "open the space … to do things in a different fashion" (Dean, 2010, p. 38).

The concerns in this aspect are reflected in the observations as well. Figure 6.4 explicitly demonstrates that children in one kindergarten are there from 7:30 am to 5:00 pm, thus 9.5 hours. In addition, teachers tend to stay for more than 10 hours (they need to arrive earlier and leave later than the children). As presented in Table 6.2, the daily working time for the teachers in the Beautiful Kindergarten is even longer at 10.5 hours (from 7:30 am to 6 pm). In comparison, in one primary school in Australia, which opened at 8:30 am and closed at 3:05 pm (refer to Table 6.3), the working day, in total, was only 6.5 hours. In the participant kindergartens, the EC teachers appeared to have a much longer working day. As previously indicated, this long daily working schedule generally applies among kindergartens in Beijing. In addition, during the observations, I found that the teachers of the Beautiful Kindergarten were using their lunch-break to undertake professional learning sessions organised by Rosy, their principal.

Figure 6.4 One day in the kindergarten

6.3.3.12 Emphasis on early childhood and educational equity issues

During the interview with Laura, principal of the Harmonious Kindergarten, some issues were discussed regarding educational equity, especially between developed cities such as Beijing and remote areas in the west of China. Laura participated in a tour to Qinghai Province in June 2016 to exchange some educational ideas and resources with local kindergartens. Qinghai is a province in western China about 1800 km from Beijing. According to Laura, ECE in this area is under-developed: many children from shepherds' families are not able to receive ECE, as they live dispersed across the province of Qinghai. In addition, Laura stated that children's arts education pedagogy in this region is still focused purely on imitation and replication, based solely on teachers' instruction. Some male chauvinism appears in local kindergartens, even among the children. Laura explained that this is due to traditional Tibetan cultural influences, as many Tibetan children attend the kindergarten that they visited. Laura's experiences in Qinghai Province revealed the first main challenge in this field in China, as indicated in the introduction chapter: ECE differences between urban areas and rural and remote areas in China.

Figure 6.5 shows a restored traditional Beijing courtyard in the centre of the city, which has an estimated market value of A$40 million (Australian dollars). Laura said that this would be a new branch of the Harmonious Kindergarten, which was scheduled to start operating at the beginning of 2017. With such a location in the heart of Beijing and in such an environment, normally people would undertake more profitable activities, such as opening a luxury restaurant or club, rather than running a kindergarten. This future kindergarten particularly implies that, in contemporary China, early childhood education is privileged in some large cities such as Beijing. The principal Laura expressed the wish that the children in this new kindergarten would experience the real "taste" and cultures of old Beijing.

Figure 6.5 Future kindergarten in a traditional courtyard in the heart of Beijing

These two stories introduced by Laura depicted two different pictures of Chinese ECE: in one picture, ECE is privileged and powerful in terms of money and other resources; in the other picture, ECE is still underdeveloped for historical and geographical reasons. In an attempt to tackle this imbalance, Laura mentioned that the Chinese central government is now making significant efforts to improve ECE in remote and rural regions. For example, teachers from developed areas are organised to provide pedagogical training to local teachers in these areas; remote network systems are built to provide distance education in the pasture areas; and more funds and educational materials are allocated to these regions. These measures, implemented to support remote and undeveloped areas to improve the provision of ECE, are in response to the relevant educational policies propelled by the "equity-driven reform" in contemporary China, as discussed in the literature review chapter.

6.4 Case study observations

As stated in the methodology chapter, the main purpose of the site observations of the case study kindergartens involved investigating "how arts are taught by teachers and learnt by children" in these EC settings. The issues of pedagogy were therefore a central focus of the observations.

As stated by Alexander (2001), "pedagogy is defined as both the act of teaching and the discourse in which it is embedded" (p. 507). Siraj-Blatchford (2008) considers pedagogy to be "the full set of instructional techniques and strategies that enabled learning to take place in early childhood settings, which provided opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions" (p. 7). This broad definition of pedagogy in EC settings appeared to be highly relevant to the current study.

6.4.1 Observation framework

The conceptual framework that was adopted in this section to organise the findings of the collective case study observations was based on the two pedagogical categorisations developed by Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva (2004), namely, pedagogical framing and pedagogical interactions. This framework appears to be acknowledged among contemporary EC researchers. For example, Hammer and He (2016) utilised the framework to guide their comparative study of Norwegian and Chinese preschool teachers' approaches to science. Based on the work of Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva (2004), Hammer and He (2016) further elaborate that "pedagogical framing refers to the organisation and structuring of the learning environment, while pedagogical interactions refers to specific behaviour on [the] parts of adults" (p. 455) and children. In the same vein, in her doctoral study of young children's use of ICT in the Chinese Shanghai context, Dong (2014) refers to pedagogy as the "interactive process between teachers and children and to their learning materials and contexts" (p. 8). Similarly, in another doctoral study about the curriculum and pedagogical practices in the Hong Kong context, Ho (2015) develops four dominant themes based on her empirical data. These themes with regard to the curriculum and pedagogical practices comprise: classroom environment, routines and activities, teacher–child interactions, and discipline (which refers to classroom management according to the Western framework) (e.g. Lyons & Ford, 2013).

Drawing on contemporary research experiences and addressing the research questions of the current study, the findings of the case study observations in this section are organised into two categories: pedagogical framing and pedagogical interactions. The former refers to the structural elements in the kindergarten setting, the latter, however, is focused on the teacher–child interactions.

6.4.2 Pedagogical framing of the case study kindergartens

An array of structural elements in relation to children's arts education among the three case study kindergartens was identified including the kindergarten environment, pedagogical materials, activities and time schedule.

The kindergarten environment consisted of separate spaces specifically for fine arts both in the Beautiful Kindergarten and the Harmonious Kindergarten. In the Beautiful Kindergarten, a spacious fine arts workshop (281 square metres in total), was compartmentalised into different functions such as "colour, line drawing, paper cut, clay,

traditional Chinese water ink [drawing], holistic craft making, and displaying area (where children's own artworks are displayed)". In the Harmonious Kindergarten, the fine arts workshop (about 110 square metres) was comprised of different areas, such as "drawing, clay, holistic making, appreciation and cleaning". In addition, a separate music room with a much smaller space was located in the Harmonious Kindergarten. Some photos regarding the fine arts workshops of these two kindergartens are presented in Figures 6.6 and 6.7. However, in the Thematic Kindergarten, no special artistic workshop was available. The general environment, including classrooms and playground, of the Thematic Kindergarten is presented in Figure 6.8.

Traditional Chinese arts corner   Displaying area

Craft making area   Holistic making area

Figure 6.6 Fine arts workshop in the Beautiful Kindergarten

Figure 6.7 Fine arts workshop in the Harmonious Kindergarten

Figure 6.8 Environment in the Thematic Kindergarten

The focus of my observation on the pedagogical materials in the three kindergartens was particularly relevant with regard to the materials implemented in artistic activities. The materials presented in Figures 6.9, 6.10 and 6.11 comprised Chinese traditional painting colours and brush, and paper materials (in the Thematic Kindergarten); and a variety of accessory materials such as buttons and textile materials (in the Harmonious Kindergarten). In the ex-rural Beautiful Kindergarten, children used natural materials in their artistic making, such as beans and clays that were found locally. The materials listed here only represented a small part of the materials employed in these kindergartens.

Chinese traditional paintings and brush

Paper materials

Figure 6.9 Arts education materials in the Thematic Kindergarten

Accessory materials

Textile materials

Figure 6.10 Arts education materials in the Harmonious Kindergarten

Figure 6.11 Arts education materials in the Beautiful Kindergarten

The daily routine differed slightly among the participant kindergartens. However, a shared pattern was apparent. Table 6.2 presents a typical daily schedule of the summer of 2016, for upper class children in the three kindergartens. This schedule shows that daily activities among the participant kindergartens included education activities, outdoor physical activities, area activities and transitional activities.

It shows that children in the participant kindergartens stayed for a fairly long day in their kindergartens, from 7:30 am to 5:00–6:00 pm, for 9.5–11.5 hours per day. According to the interviewees, this kind of schedule is typical among kindergartens in Beijing, whether public or private.

As highlighted in Table 6.2, in these kindergartens, educational activities include one collective teaching session in the morning as well as in the afternoon; each session lasts from 30–45 minutes. Most art lessons occur during these collective teaching sessions.

Table 6.2 Daily schedule of participant kindergartens

Upper class daily schedule of three participant kindergartens in Beijing (2016 summer)

Kindergarten name	Thematic Kindergarten	Beautiful Kindergarten	Harmonious Kindergarten
Time / Content			
Check in	7:30 – 7:50	7:30 – 7:50	7:30 – 7:50
Breakfast	8:00 – 8:30	7:50 – 8:20	8:00 – 8:35
Education activities	9:20 – 10:00 (40 minutes)	8:20 – 9:05 (45 minutes)	8:35 – 10:10 (fine arts lesson once per week only; normally area activities)
Outdoor activities	10:00 – 11:00	9:05 – 10:15	10:10 – 11:10
Snacks		10:15 – 10:25	
Area activities	8:30 – 9:20 11:00 – 11:30	10:25 – 10:55	
Transitional activities (Drinking water, WC, etc.)		10:55 – 11:10	
Lunch preparation		11:10 – 11:30	11:10 – 11:25
Lunch	11:30 – 12:00	11:30 – 12:00	11:25 – 12:00
Afternoon nap	12:00 – 14:00	12:00 – 14:30	12:00 – 14:00
Afternoon snacks	14:00 – 14:40	14:30 – 15:10	14:00 – 14:30
Education activities	14:40 – 15:20 (40 minutes)	15:10 – 15:40 (30 minutes)	15:40 – 16:15 (35 minutes)
Transitional activities (Drinking water, WC, etc.)		15:40 – 15:50	
Outdoor physical activities	15:20 – 16:00	15:50 – 16:40	14:30 – 15:30
Dinner preparation	16:00 – 16:30	16:40 – 17:00	16:15 – 16:25
Dinner	16:30 – 17:00	17:00 – 17:30	16:25 – 16:50
Check out	17:00 – 17:30	17:30 – 18:00	17:05 – 17:15

6.4.3 Pedagogical interactions of the case study kindergartens

As indicated previously in this section, the pedagogical interactions in this study refer mainly to teacher–child interactions during educational activities, which can be either teacher-initiated or child-initiated.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, deductive strategy is adopted in this phase of the study, which uses theories and frameworks from the literature (Klitzman, 2011) to guide the data collection and analysis. This study drew on the three approaches in Weikart's (2000) typology of the pedagogical model in ECE, as shown in Figure 2.1. These approaches are:

1.   "Open Framework Approach" which means that both teachers and children take initiatives during the activities;

2.   "Child-Centred Approach" which means that the activities are basically initiated by children, whereas teachers provide support and assistance when necessary;

3.   "Programmed Approach" which means that the activities are basically initiated and directed by teachers, whereas children do not have much space for their own initiatives.

The presentation of the observation data also drew on Van Hoorn et al.'s (2011) play continuum, with spontaneous play, guided play and teacher-directed play, depending on whether the play is child-initiated or teacher-initiated, or between these two ends, as previously demonstrated in Figure 2.2.

The following description and discussion regarding the 10 examples of pedagogical interactions between teachers and children that I observed across the participant kindergartens in Beijing were developed by drawing on these useful frameworks, as well as the concept of SST, the strategies of intentional teaching and intentional learning, and the two types of "work" activities (Wing, 1995) as presented in the literature review chapter. It is also worth mentioning that in each kindergarten, I observed one upper class for two full days. As indicated in Table 6.2, each day, collective teaching sessions (either one or two) were conducted among these classes, together with other learning activities. Therefore, the 10 pedagogical interactions (seven of which were collective teaching sessions) that I present below are likely to represent the general situation regarding pedagogical interactions in the participant kindergartens.

6.4.3.1 Pedagogical interactions in the Thematic Kindergarten

Example one: A collective teaching session of Chinese traditional painting

In a collective teaching session of Chinese traditional painting, Teacher Lee, a Chinese painting artist who was invited into the school as a visiting teacher, asked the children of the upper class of the Thematic Kindergarten to paint their kindergarten flower.

As shown in Figure 6.12, firstly, Teacher Lee introduced the flower and presented a demonstration in front of the whole class (for about five minutes); secondly, he went to one of the tables in the class and demonstrated to the children how to mix the inks, and how to prepare the ideal colours (for about two minutes); thirdly, he painted a flower on a separate paper on the children's table (for about three minutes); fourthly, the children started painting by themselves, but collaboratively (for about 20 minutes). In the third photo of Figure 6.12, during the making of the painting, a teacher is shown helping a child to paint a particular leaf. Finally, a collaborative painting work was completed by a group of children on the same table, where about 11 children were working. The whole process took about 30 minutes.

This example shows that the painting activity was mainly initiated and directed by the teacher, and children did not have much space for their own initiatives. According to Weikart (2000), this example typifies a programmed approach. This type of play can be considered as work disguised as play (Wing, 1995), as the task to paint the logo flower is stored in the activity. This activity also reflects an enacted arts curriculum that is highly structured: based on the above description, each of the four steps in the painting activity was clearly structured and well prescribed, and therefore the curriculum prescription level is deemed to be high.

It appears that the teacher had a clear idea about the learning task during this activity, which might involve the use and experimenting with some traditional Chinese painting materials such as the brush and inks. However, such a teacher-directed activity allowed little room for children's creativity, as children seemed to purely listen to the teacher, then imitate and copy what the teacher had demonstrated. Although some scholars of arts education have argued that disciplinary knowledge and skills are necessary for children to realise their creative potential (e.g. McArdle, 2001), children's "individual expression", which means that "each child may select the subject matter and/or art medium, and carry out the work in his or her own way" (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 2005, p. 41), should not be neglected. During the activity, some children stood away from the teacher, and barely made eye contact with him, whereas some children

tried to make sense of the shape of the flower, and asked why some leaves were big and some were small. The teacher replied briefly that each leaf was not necessarily identical, without further explanation or extension based on the question posed by the children.

This artist teacher was invited to the kindergarten to give a weekly traditional Chinese painting lesson, and his pedagogical decision seemed to be limited by the task assigned to him—the way in which he was governed.

Figure 6.12 A collective teaching session of Chinese traditional painting

Example two: A collective teaching session of clay making

In a collective teaching session of clay making, the class teacher Hermione introduced the topic of this session which was also about flowers. Hermione firstly invited a boy to come up and make an example of a flower using clay. When the boy finished his example, another boy came up spontaneously and he said, "Teacher, I want to make a flower too, and my idea is …" Hermione looked at that boy and listened carefully to him, and let him finish his example. Then, Hermione took out the examples that she had prepared prior to the session, and put her examples together with the examples from these two boys. After explaining how to do the flower making, she asked the whole class to make the flowers by themselves. During the flower making, some children were focused on their own task, whereas other children observed and commented on their peers' works, as shown in the fourth photo in Figure 6.13.

This example can also be deemed as a programmed approach (Weikart, 2000), as the idea of making the clay flower was introduced by the teacher. However, some room was made in which children could express their own ideas and demonstrate their own artworks. Therefore, this activity can be regarded as the type of play that is guided by the teacher, with the curriculum structure and prescription level appearing to be medium: between totally teacher-directed and purely child-initiated. The learning content concerned three-dimensional materials such as clay, to gain a sense of colour and shape, and to develop children's aesthetic awareness during the clay making. There appeared to be some space for children's own creativity, as children were "allowed" to express their own points of view and to demonstrate their own artworks.

Figure 6.13 A collective teaching session of clay making

Examples three and four: An outdoor dance rehearsal and a collective music lesson

During both the outdoor dance rehearsal and in the collective music lesson, children were required to follow teachers' instructions and to be disciplined. As shown in the second photo of Figure 6.14, reminded by the teacher, children all raised their hands in order to get permission from the teacher to answer her questions.

These two activities both signalled a programmed approach (Weikart, 2000) which appeared to be purely teacher-directed. In the dance learning routine, the learning content seemed to be the practice of some fundamental movement skills: all children followed the teacher's directions, lined up and did the same movement. In the music game, the teacher tried to develop children's aural skills by exploring sounds and rhythm patterns; however, to some extent, the teacher seemed to emphasise compliance among the children. Under these circumstances, the children's voices were weak, and the space for children's creativity was very limited. The teachers did not appear to seek opportunities to make meaning together with the children; instead, they simply gave orders or instructions.

Outdoor rehearsal   Music lesson

Figure 6.14 Outdoor and classroom management

6.4.3.2 Pedagogical interactions in the Beautiful Kindergarten

Example five: A collective teaching session of "paper tearing"

In a collective teaching session on "paper tearing", Teacher Teresa, who was an arts educator invited into the school as a visiting teacher, showed the class some photos of the National Swimming Centre (also called the "Water Cube"), using a huge computer displayer (as shown in the first photo of Figure 6.15). She next introduced the class to several famous constructions built for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and then demonstrated and explained to the class how to make these constructions by using "paper tearing". After the demonstration, the whole class started making their own constructions. During the construction making process, Teresa, together with the class teachers, provided some support when necessary (as shown in the second photo of Figure 6.15).

This is another example of the programmed approach (Weikart, 2000) as all ideas were introduced by the teacher. The teacher had a very clear task, and the learning content seemed to be the use and experimenting with "paper tearing" to make some local iconic constructions. The curriculum structure and prescription level were both high which typified teacher-directed play. The space for children's creativity development seemed to be limited. An alternative approach to this activity would be that children made the artworks without the demonstration and without models; and the teacher provided suggestions and the demonstration based on children's interest and questions.

Figure 6.15 A collective teaching session of "paper tearing"

Example six: Area activities

As listed previously in Table 6.2, in addition to the collective teaching sessions, area activities occur among the participant kindergartens. Some photos of children's area activities in the Beautiful Kindergarten are shown in Figure 6.16.

Figure 6.16 Area activities

In photo one, children are shown paper cutting by themselves, while a teacher smiles and watches them, sometimes exchanging some words with the children. In

photo two, some children are shown making dinosaurs using clay in imitation of a dinosaur model. No adults are nearby. In photo three, from observing an example, two girls are shown drawing a cactus independently with no adults nearby. In photo four, a boy is shown sitting in front of an easel, and painting as he observes some real chrysanthemums; the same teacher crouches next to him and attentively watches this painting exercise.

These area activities appeared to be initiated by the children, thus typifying the open framework approach categorised by Weikart (2000). These activities seemed to be a kind of "spontaneous play" (Van Hoorn et al., 2011), of which both the curriculum structure and prescription were at a low level. The role of teacher was more like a supporter or facilitator instead of an instructor or guide. The learning content of these activities involved free time craft and drawing imitation. As these activities were mainly child-initiated, the children had an expanded space in which to realise their free creation.

Of the four activity photos, three involved imitation (the clay making to observe and imitate a dinosaur, the imitation drawing of the cactus, and the imitation painting of chrysanthemums). Therefore, the children's own imagination and creativity opportunities were limited.

Example seven: A drama performance – "The Princess and Her Food"

In one of the upper classes, a group of children were performing a drama called "The Princess and Her Food". One girl approached me with a cup of water, and invited me to sit down. Another girl went to the computer, using a mouse to search for the background music (as shown in the first photo of Figure 6.17). After about one minute, she found her favourite music; she then picked up a prop and started her action. Waving her "cooking shovel" with the rhythm of the music, this girl acted as a cook (as shown in the second photo of Figure 6.17). After this "overture", all the other characters appeared, including the protagonist, a "picky princess" who only liked to eat meat, and her "good friend", the "pig meat", together with some vegetables such as "carrot" and "celery" (as shown in the third photo of Figure 6.17). As the princess never ate any vegetables, she was eventually attacked by the "vicious sickness" and fell down on the ground … (as shown in the fourth photo of Figure 6.17). These small actors seemed so engaged in their performance; they laughed, they spoke, they sang and they danced. Finally, they all took a bow together to their audience.

This drama activity seemed to signal a child-centred approach (Weikart, 2000) where children initiated the play. However, it was unclear if it was the children's idea to act out this drama and whether it was the children who created the choreography. It was unclear whether they designed the costumes, developed the story and selected the music. With this lack of clarity, it was difficult to claim that this was a child-initiated activity. During the interview after this activity, Festival, the head teacher of the upper classes of the Beautiful Kindergarten stated that such activities were co-created by children and teachers, and that the teachers usually provided support based on the children's ideas. The co-creation suggested some SST between teachers and children during preparation: in particular, teachers should have provided "meaningful contexts based on children's interests" (Purdon, 2016, p. 278). Based on this statement, I categorised this activity as child-initiated "spontaneous play" (Van Hoorn et al., 2011), with both the curriculum structure and prescription at a low level. In this activity, children's voices were strong; they seemed to be highly engaged and powerful in their own learning. This learning in drama shared some similar features with the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, in terms of the learning content which was to "use voice, facial expression, movement and space to imagine and establish role and situation" (ACARA, 2016, F-10 curriculum/The arts/Drama, "Foundation to Year 2 Content Descriptions", para. 2). This activity could potentially free the children's expression and imagination and, in this way, it would be possible to foster the development of their creativity.

Figure 6.17 A drama performance

6.4.3.3 Pedagogical interactions in the Harmonious Kindergarten

Example eight: A collective teaching session of group fine arts activities

In the fine arts workshop of the Harmonious Kindergarten, during a collective teaching session, the teacher stood in front of the whole upper class (in total, 35 children), and demonstrated on a whiteboard how to use acrylic painting materials on adhesive tape (as shown in the first photo of Figure 6.18). This seemed to be an introduction to a new form of painting, and the children looked at her with curiosity and interest. Some of the boys spontaneously asked questions, and the teacher listened to their questions and gave them some feedback and explanations. At the same time, the teacher posed some questions, and induced the children to find out the main content of this lesson, which included four types of fine arts activities: the acrylic painting, the oil pastel painting, the black line drawing, and the "blue and white porcelain" painting with brush (a traditional Chinese painting). The whole class was therefore divided into four creation groups based on the principle of "free choice" by the children themselves. After about 15 minutes of introduction and discussion, the children excitedly joined their

favourite group and started creating. Some were assisted by the teacher (as shown in the second photo of Figure 6.18), and some exchanged ideas collaboratively (as shown in the third photo of Figure 6.18). After about 40 minutes, children finished their artistic creation, and one girl went to the teacher and asked if she liked her drawing. The teacher smiled and looked attentively at this piece of work, and gave the girl some feedback (as shown in the fourth photo of Figure 6.18). The whole process lasted about one hour.

This is another example that was introduced and initiated by the teacher which could be described as the programmed approach (Weikart, 2000). Children were given some freedom to choose their favourite group activity among the four types of fine arts activities as described above. Therefore, it can be described as "teacher-guided play" (Van Hoorn et al., 2011). The curriculum structure and prescription were at the medium level. The learning content in this fine arts group activity coincided with that in the Foundation year of the Australian Curriculum, in the form of visual arts: to "use and experiment with different materials, techniques, technologies and processes to make artworks" (ACARA, 2016, F-10 curriculum/The arts/Visual arts, "Foundation to Year 2 Content Descriptions", para. 2). Some activity groups seemed to have some creative opportunities for the children, as no explicit instructions or models were given to them. In particular, as shown in the third photo in Figure 6.18, some of the group creative opportunities, provided children with opportunities to co-create with their peers.

Figure 6.18 A collective teaching session of group fine arts activities

Example nine: A music game

In the Harmonious Kindergarten, a music room is available; however, it is much smaller compared to the fine arts workshop of the same kindergarten. Each class in the Harmonious Kindergarten has a music lesson of about 40 minutes per week. Figure 6.19 includes two photos taken during a music game named "Old Wolf and the Strange Sound". The first photo shows 12 upper class children sitting on the mat around the music teacher as she introduced the game to the children by telling a story. The teacher then suggested that they play a music game together, and explained about the game rules. After about 10 minutes of introduction and explanation, the teacher took out the wolf headgear, and pretended to be the wolf, playing with the whole class while accompanied by a special episode of music with sudden pauses. The children were required to stop immediately when they heard the sudden pauses. After the first practice of this music game, the teacher asked, "Who would like to play as the wolf this time?" A girl raised her hand and shouted, "Me!" Then the teacher helped her to put on the wolf headgear and they played the same game again (as shown in the second photo of Figure 6.19). The game was extended by some discussions and instruments

played by the teacher and the children: all children appeared to be highly involved in this activity. The whole session was about 40 minutes.

This music game was directed and introduced to the children by the teacher, typifying a programmed approach (Weikart, 2000) as well as teacher-directed play (Van Hoorn et al., 2011). Both the curriculum structure and prescription were at a high level. The learning content in this music game aligned to the Foundation year of the Australian Curriculum, in the form of music: to "develop aural skills by exploring and imitating sounds, pitch and rhythm patterns using voice, movement and body percussion" (ACARA, 2016, F-10 curriculum/The Arts/Music, "Foundation to Year 2 Content Descriptions", para. 1). Given the highly structured and prescribed feature of this activity, the room for children's own creative exploration in music was quite limited.

Teacher introduction   Teacher-led music game

Figure 6.19 A music game

Example ten: A collective teaching session of "warm and cool colours"

This fine arts collective teaching session comprised the following five steps:

1. The teacher introduced the session to the children to observe and discuss relevant pictures by telling them a story named "Little Bear in the Forest";

2. The teacher showed the children the warm and cool colour spectrum, to make a comparison (as shown in the first photo of Figure 6.20);

3. The teacher demonstrated some artworks that showed the use of warm and cool colours, and asked for feedback from the children (as shown in the second photo of Figure 6.20);

4. The children started making "warm or cool" colour lumps or relevant paintings, and the teacher provided feedback and suggestions when necessary (as shown

in the third photo of Figure 6.20)

5.   This activity was finished by a game: "Find Your Way Home", where children picked up some colour cards on their tables and categorised these different colours into warm colours or cool colours (as shown in the fourth photo of Figure 6.20)

Note: Based on the information provided by the teacher, prior to these five steps during the teaching session, she needed to conceive the main intention of this lesson, in terms of the disciplinary knowledge (e.g. colour in this lesson); she also needed to prepare a series of activity targets, activity foci and the difficult points in this lesson. Furthermore, she needed to prepare all the necessary materials (e.g. colour spectrum, electronic courseware, oil pastels, painting papers and some game tools in this lesson).

Based on the above activity process, this seemed to be a standardised example of a programmed approach (Weikart, 2000) as well as work disguised as play (Wing, 1995). This typified an enacted curriculum that was highly structured and prescribed. It was also clear that the learning content involved the knowledge of cold and warm colours, as well as the relevant artwork appreciation. The children in this activity seemed to be passive; they accomplished a task that had been assigned by the teacher; they were focused on doing the job instead of dreaming of or imagining something else.

Figure 6.20 A collective teaching session "warm and cool colours"

6.5 Discussion of the case study observations

6.5.1 Pedagogical framing

Based on the observations, it was found that the participant kindergartens seemed to pay predominant attention to fine arts and craft, from among the variety of art forms listed previously in this chapter. Significant evidence was that both the Beautiful Kindergarten and the Harmonious Kingdom had a specific fine arts workshop (with areas also for craft activities), as shown earlier in this section.

The materials used for artistic creation also revealed that these kindergartens paid attention to sustainable development of the environment, as all used recycled materials. Furthermore, in the ex-rural Beautiful Kindergarten, local materials were adopted into children's arts learning, such as the beans and clays found in the region.

Regarding the weekly time allocation for the arts, combining the observations with the data from the interviews, the arts appeared to have a significant place in young children's learning among the participant kindergartens. All interviewees indicated that they had two or three collective teaching sessions for the arts per week. According to

their weekly time schedule (refer to Table 6.2), two of the kindergartens (the Thematic Kindergarten and the Beautiful Kingdom) had 10 collective teaching sessions whereas the Harmonious Kindergarten only had six. Therefore, the arts, as one of the five learning areas in the Chinese EC context, represented 20–33% of the total collective teaching sessions in these kindergartens. One example in this study was that Rosy, the principal of the Beautiful Kindergarten mentioned that they had at least 10 hours a week for the arts, "including three art lessons and other arts activities permeated in the daily activities (e.g. transitional activities and meals)". My observations supported this particular statement, as I observed during the daily routine among the participant kindergartens, that the arts were not only taught in the collective teaching sessions (usually with explicit learning targets and prescriptive learning process as depicted previously in this section). In addition, the arts were also naturally permeated (without any specific learning targets or process) during other time sessions, such as transitional activities; meals and snacks (e.g. background music); area activities; cross-class activities (e.g. role play games); literacy learning sessions (e.g. introductory music for storytelling); and outdoor physical activities (e.g. accompaniment music). This again was in line with the integrated nature of the EC curriculum, as discussed previously in the survey chapter.

Using a governmentality perspective, the combined daily schedule (as shown in Table 6.2) can be deemed as a form of technique or practice used to implement governance in these kindergartens. As described previously in this chapter, this time schedule segregates different types of activities during the daily routine, such as breakfast, education activities, outdoor activities, area activities, lunch, nap, snacks, transitional activities and dinner. In particular, the two sessions of "education activities" each day would imply that all activities in relation to children's education only exist within these two sessions. A clear separation appears to exist between "education" and the other routine activities. This seems to be a very different discourse with regard to the concept of education in the early years, in comparison with some Western countries. For example, some Western scholars argue that breakfast can be a learning opportunity for children, and all routine activities can be educational (e.g. Van Hoorn et al., 2011).

As an example in this regard, Table 6.3 shows the daily schedule of an Australian Foundation year class, from 8:30 am to 3.05 pm. Unlike the combined daily schedule of the three participant kindergartens in Beijing, the Australian schedule did not contain so many daily routines, such as breakfast, snacks, transitional activities and nap. Instead, it covered various areas of learning, such as literacy, science, mathematics and

computer. Although this research did not include observations of the enacted Australian Curriculum, it is interesting to note that in this timetable, there is no designated "Arts" time. Similarly to the combined Beijing timetable (i.e. Table 6.2), it appeared that the arts were mainly included in "integrated studies" during the afternoon in this Australian timetable. As a result, Australian children aged 5-6 years seemed to have more segregated learning activities compared to their peers in Beijing. One explanation regarding this contrast was that they were situated in different educational institutions in their respective country, as indicated previously. It would also be interesting for us to further investigate a series of questions such as:

1.   Why did people use different structures and discourses in relation to children's learning activities between China and Australia?

2.   Why are the educational institutions between the two countries under different regimes, and what are the conditions under which such regimes emerged, and continue to operate?

3.   What are the rationalities behind the structures and discourses and whose decision was this?

Table 6.3 Daily schedule of an Australian Foundation year class

ROOM   **TIMETABLE. TERM 4. 2007**   Week .....

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8.30	YARD DUTY				
8.45	Discovery learning	Discovery learning	Discovery learning	Discovery learning	Discovery learning
9.20	Roll – Show & Tell	Roll– Show & Tell	Roll– Show & Tell	Roll– Show & Tell	Roll– Show & Tell
9.45	Literacy Block Writing- Recount	Literacy Block Writing	Literacy Block Reading groups	Literacy Block Reading Groups	Literacy Block
10.30	Circle Time	NIT Phys. Education		10.15 10.20 Assembly even weeks	10.15
10.50	RECESS	YARD DUTY JP OVAL ,	RECESS	YARD DUTY JP PLAYGROUND	RECESS
11.15	NIT Science	Mathematics	Mathematics *Probability Activities*	Library	Computer
12.20	Maths	12.25.	Fitness	Fitness	Maths
12.55	LUNCH D	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
1.10		Outside play	Outside play	Outside play	YARD DUTY
1.35	Class meeting	Integrated Studies *Play Board Games*	Integrated Studies	Integrated Studies	NIT Phys. Education
2.00	Integrated Studies *Explore Board Games*			Play Boxes	
2.20	Positive play				Integrated Studies
3.05	Dismiss	YARD DUTY			

6.5.2 Pedagogical interactions

To undertake a holistic analysis regarding the pedagogical interactions in the participant kindergartens, I have developed a comparative analytical table, as shown in Table 6.4, by drawing on a series of tools in this field such as Weikart's (2000) pedagogical framework (refer to Figure 2.1), Van Hoorn et al.'s (2011) play continuum (refer to Figure 2.2), Siraj-Blatchford et al.'s (2003) concept of sustained shared thinking (SST), Purdon's (2016) attributes of SST, and Leggett's (2015) suggested strategies regarding intentional teaching and intentional learning in the EC context, as previously discussed in this section and in the literature review chapter.

Of the 10 examples, seven occurred during the collective teaching session, one during area activities, one during cross-class activities and one during class performance. This would suggest that the main pedagogical form of the arts in this study was collective teaching.

Regarding the art forms, four of the 10 examples were in relation to fine arts; three were about craft; two out of 10 were about music; one was about dance; and one was about drama. This finding was in line with the five main art forms identified in the survey study. However, the data that emerged from the case study would suggest that fine arts and craft appeared to be the two most important art forms among participant kindergartens, which was different from the findings of the survey, where music and fine arts were considered to be the two major art forms.

In relation to pedagogical interactions between teachers and children, it appeared that most of the examples were initiated by teachers (about 80%, as eight of the 10 examples were considered to be teacher-initiated, as shown on Table 6.4), and only two were initiated by children (20%). These two child-initiated arts activities observed in this case study both occurred in the Beautiful Kindergarten: one was in area activities, and the other was in a class performance. Accordingly, the pedagogical approaches in the 10 examples mostly comprised the programmed approach (80%): only one example was of the open framework approach (i.e. the fine arts and craft activities in area activities), and one was the child-centred approach (i.e. the drama performance).

Table 6.4 Analysis of 10 examples of pedagogical interactions among three case study kindergartens in Beijing (June–September 2016)

| Name of Kindergarten	The Thematic Kindergarten				The Beautiful Kindergarten			The Harmonious Kindergarten		
No. of example	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Example activity form	collective teaching	collective teaching	cross-class	collective teaching	collective teaching	area activities	Class performance	collective teaching	collective teaching	collective teaching
Name of example	Chinese traditional painting	clay making	dance rehearsal	music lesson	paper tearing	paper cutting, drawing, clay and painting	"Princess and her food"	group fine arts activities	music game	"Warm and cool colours"
Art form	fine arts	craft	dance	music	craft	fine arts and craft	drama	fine arts	music	fine arts
Teacher initiated	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Child initiated	no	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	no	no
Demonstration or concrete requirement by the teacher(s)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	yes
pedagogical approach	programmed	programmed	programmed	programmed	programmed	open framework	child-centred	programmed	programmed	programmed
Type of Play	work disguised as play	teacher-guided play	teacher-directed play	teacher-directed play	teacher-directed play	Spontaneous play	Spontaneous play	teacher-guided play	teacher-directed play	work disguised as play
Curriculum structure level	high	medium	high	high	high	low	low	medium	high	high
Curriculum prescription level	high	medium	high	high	high	low	not applicable	medium	high	high
Learning content / disciplinary knowledge and skills	to use and experiment with traditional Chinese painting materials such as the brush and the inks	to use and experiment with three-dimensional materials such as the clay, in order to get a sense of colour and shape, and to develop children's aesthetic awareness	the practice of some fundamental movement skills	to develop children's aural skills by exploring sounds, pitch and rhythm patterns	to use and experiment with paper tearing to make some local iconic constructions	free time craft and drawing imitation	to "use voice, facial expression, movement and space to imagine and establish role and situation" (ACARA, 2016)	to "use and experiment with different materials, techniques, technologies and processes to make artworks" (ACARA, 2016)	to "develop aural skills by exploring and imitating sounds, pitch and rhythm patterns using voice, movement and body percussion" (ACARA, 2016)	knowledge of cold and warm colour
Space for creativity	limited	some	limited	limited	limited	expanded	expanded	some	limited	limited

In these examples, based on the level of control and structure imposed by the adults, as well as the choice and freedom accorded to the children, only two examples of "spontaneous play" were found. Of the remainder, there were two examples of "teacher-guided play", four examples of "teacher-directed play" and two examples of "work disguised as play".

In terms of the curriculum structure level, only two were considered to be "low structure" and two were "medium structure", with the remaining six all of "high structure". Similar findings were reported with regard to the curriculum prescription level.

These findings provide significant research insight in relation to the nature of the EC pedagogy in the contemporary Chinese Beijing context. However, these findings seem to be inconsistent, in comparison with the previous survey, where 78.4% of respondents used the term "child-initiated" in response to the relevant question. In contrast, "child-initiated" activities only represented 20% in this phase of the study. Nevertheless, the case study findings seem to be consistent with the analysis in the curriculum comparison chapter, where the Beijing Curriculum was found to be highly structured and prescribed.

Regarding this particular aspect of the curriculum structure and prescription, I would like to introduce one more vivid example that was found in the Beautiful Kindergarten.

In the spacious fine arts workshop of the Beautiful Kindergarten, in the craft-making area, on a whiteboard, the process of a lesson specifically to make a "Paper Vase" was found. The details of this process were translated from Chinese to English, and are shown below next to Figure 6.21 (which shows the original lesson instruction in Chinese).

Figure 6.21 Process of making the "Paper Vase"

Still resonating with the fine arts lesson of the "warm and cool colours" in the Harmonious Kindergarten, as previously presented in example ten, this additional example explicitly showed the strict structure and high level of prescription in these arts activities. A closed framework was in place in terms of the artwork name, the time schedule, the pedagogical requirements and the tools to be used. In comparing this example with the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, examples of this type of closed framework were hardly to be found in the curriculum documents, even in the online resources in relation to pedagogical examples. However, in the enacted arts curriculum in Australia, some teachers might also use a similar approach in their teaching. The above example appears to share a similar pattern with the learning process expounded and demonstrated in the curricula analysis chapter (refer to Tables 4.1 and 4.2), with this found in the Beijing Curriculum.

The various strategies used by both the teachers and the children during the example arts activities would suggest limited SST and both intentional teaching and intentional learning among the participant kindergartens. This was in line with the argument raised in the previous chapters on curricula analysis and the survey, that children's arts in this study adopted a child-oriented curriculum, where both teachers and children co-constructed knowledge. The collective teaching approach as revealed in this study also reflects some of the Chinese elements in children's arts education. It however, demonstrates an imbalance between teaching and learning where teacher-initiated, teacher-directed or teacher-led activities seemed to be the overwhelming model in this phase of the research. Therefore, many opportunities still exist for teachers to further explore extended SST together with children, and ample space

continues to exist for teachers to foster children's creativity in their arts learning, as suggested in Table 6.4.

Interestingly, the vivid stories that the principals and teachers narrated during the interviews provided evidence that these EC educators regarded a variety of child-initiated abilities, such as independent thinking, divergent thinking, problem solving, creativity and self-challenging, as highlights during their professional practice. All these stories demonstrated a high level of SST and several strategies for intentional teaching and intentional learning that had been used by both the educators and the children in these kindergartens. These real stories would suggest that, based on educators' beliefs regarding pedagogical interactions as well as their dedication to the EC career (especially in terms of professional development), an improved balance between intentional teaching and intentional learning, and between teacher-initiated and child-initiated learning is possible in these EC settings. As argued in the literature review chapter, it is widely agreed among contemporary EC researchers that such a balance is optimal in enhancing children's learning outcomes (e.g. Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004; Krieg, 2011; Hammer & He, 2014; Leggett, 2015; Grieshaber, 2016).

6.5.3 Comparison with the previous research phases

In addition, other aspects were found that echoed the findings of the previous two research phases. For example, as argued in the curricula analysis chapter and reflected in the case study, the connection between the arts and the national culture was intense in the intended Beijing Curriculum. As noticed during the observations, children were found to be actively engaged in craft-making activities, such as making rice puddings (food eaten during the Dragon Festival) and moon cakes (popular during the Moon Festival). These kinds of activity were also deemed to be arts, as they involved the cultural heritage, design thinking and aesthetic awareness (e.g. the special design of the rice puddings, different kinds of decoration on the moon cakes). It was a coincidence that two observations encountered preparations for these two traditional Chinese festivals. In this way, it seems that the arts could be an effective means to preserve traditional Chinese culture. Through using the analytics of government (Dean, 2010) framework, the arts serve as techniques and practices to form the sense of national identity among young Chinese children. Figure 6.22 shows how excited and proud these children were of the amazing food they had created on their own.

Figure 6.22 Rice pudding and moon cake

In the curricula analysis chapter as well as in the survey chapter, the happiness and enjoyment of children appear to be central themes of children's arts education. During the case studies, this theme was reaffirmed by the interviewees. For example, both Yolanda and Rosy held that the feeling of enjoyment by children during arts activities was a necessary element in quality arts education. During the observations, I was often deeply touched by children's laughter. Figure 6.23 shows an outdoor dancing gymnastic activity guided by a male physical education teacher. This photo caught the moment when every child was laughing or smiling.

Figure 6.23 Happy dancing

6.5.3.1 Contextual considerations

In the curricula analysis chapter, it was mentioned that a series of contextual considerations regarding children's arts education, such as international perspectives, ICT in teaching and learning, teachers' reflective practice and community participation, needed to be observed in the enacted arts curriculum. The data that emerged from the collective case study in Beijing represented and enriched all of these contextual aspects in arts education, therefore, creating a sense of difference between the intended curriculum and the enacted curriculum.

The current research has presented evidence that many historical and contemporary international elements have been adopted into children's arts learning. As discussed previously in this chapter, among the participant kindergartens, masterpiece appreciation was an important part of arts education, especially in fine arts. Some famous Western art works were introduced to children's learning including van Gogh's *Sunflower* and *Starry Night* (refer to Figure 6.7 and Figure 6.20). However, no equivalent Chinese classic artists as highlighted as van Gogh were observed among participant kindergartens. In the Beautiful Kindergarten, some photos of a student's trip to the UK were displayed, alongside photos of the British royal family. Evident among children's artwork presentation were figures such as "Mr Bean" and the main character in contemporary British illustrator Anthony Brown's "Through the Magic Mirror" (refer to the first and the second photos in Figure 6.24). This example reveals that with the process of globalisation, some of the world popular culture is well received by Chinese people, even from a very early age. Meanwhile, traditional Chinese culture seems to permeate though children's art works. The third photo shows a collaborative Chinese traditional ink painting which depicts various Chinese herbal medicines recorded in the famous Chinese pharmacopeia *Compendium of Materia Medica;* and the fourth photo shows a combination of multiple Peking Opera masks. Figure 6.24 shows a harmonious hybridisation in Chinese Beijing children's arts education. During the interviews, all the participant principals stated that they had visited international EC centres (e.g. in the US, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Japan), and they had some experience of international exchanges in the EC field; therefore, they had brought back some international perspectives to their kindergartens.

The collective case study also reflected the use of ICT. During the child drama performance in the Beautiful Kindergarten, a child independently operated the computer to set up the music accompaniment. Apart from this particular example, it was evident that children used computers to assist them in their area activities. For

example, the first photo in Figure 6.25 shows two boys in the Thematic Kindergarten building some LEGO® models while observing the example displayed on the computer; the second photo shows two girls, with the help of their teacher, selecting their favourite owls while surfing online. In addition, all three kindergartens utilised the Chinese social media platform "WeChat" to transmit kindergarten information and notices. Each class even had a particular "WeChat Group" for teachers to communicate with the parents of the whole class. In brief, among the participant kindergartens, ICT seemed to be widely used as an effective means to enhance teaching and learning, as well as for sharing kindergarten information with the parents and the wider public. However, in comparison with the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, media arts did not yet seem to be an art form in its own right.

Mr. Bean

Through the magic mirror

Compendium of Materia Medica

Peking Opera masks

Figure 6.24 Combination of international and traditional culture
in children's arts education

My LEGO model   "I like this owl"

Figure 6.25 ICT in teaching and learning

It was evident that the children played an active role in participation in and co-construction of local culture. The Harmonious Kindergarten is a good example in this regard. Guided by the two themes of the kindergarten culture, "harmony" and "collaboration", they actively collaborated with the local community. For example, in June 2016, the children from four upper classes of the Harmonious Kindergarten participated in an exhibition at the local paper museum (historically, the paper industry has been located in this community). In this special exhibition, Class One of the Harmonious Kindergarten presented their paper cut works; Class Two demonstrated their Chinese traditional ink paintings of "cat" and other animals and flowers; Class Three displayed a variety of paper craft works; and Class Four produced some traditional Chinese calligraphic works. Figure 6.26 shows a collaborative calligraphic work titled "A Hundred Family Names", which can also be called "The Book of Family Names". This artwork suggests rich connotations regarding Beijing children's artistic activities: it is about culture, history and collaboration, and it is about participation with wider society. The other two kindergartens in this study also demonstrated a high level of participation in local community activities. For example, children from the Beautiful Kindergarten regularly visited the local orphanage, and made donations to the Welfare Centre in Changping County after selling their artifacts; and children from the Thematic Kindergarten presented artistic performances to the local community.

Figure 6.26 Collaborative children's calligraphy: "The Book of Family Names"
in a community exhibition

Although, as mentioned in the curricula analysis chapter, teachers' reflective practice is not explicitly reflected in the intended Beijing Curriculum, it is clearly spelled out in the case study. The most significant example in this regard seems to be Zenia's story, as presented previously. In addition, other interviewees also indicated this important aspect. For example, Rosy stated that "after the activity, teachers' **reflective practice …"** Festival also indicated that "when I do my reflective practice, I feel that interest is important for me to go deeper …" In these examples, reflective practice can be considered as a technique or practice for EC teachers' self-governance.

6.5.3.2 Pedagogy issues (e.g. demonstration)

One topic in the survey study was the pedagogical dilemma in terms of giving demonstrations. Several survey respondents seemed to struggle with "to teach or not to teach", with some even explicitly expressing this as teachers should "… not give fixed demonstration[s]" as a way to enhance the cultivation of children's creativity. Surprisingly, among the ten examples of pedagogical interactions, as described in this chapter, most examples showed that teachers gave "fixed demonstration"! To answer the question "why" regarding this issue, an in-depth analysis using the governmentality lens is described in detail in the next conclusive chapter.

6.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the results of a collective case study among three kindergartens in Beijing, including the data collected from two research methods: interviews with educators and site observations. In summary, the data that emerged from the interviews appear to be consistent with the findings from the previous research phases—the curricula analysis and the survey. The participant interviewees contributed more vivid and thicker descriptions regarding arts education among a cohort of Beijing children, and fleshed out the data that were previously obtained. The site observations focused on pedagogical interactions in these kindergartens, and referred to a series of pedagogical frameworks, concepts and strategies in contemporary ECE literature. Ten pedagogical examples in relation to children's arts education were observed, reported and analysed. It was found that most examples followed a "teacher-initiated" pedagogical interaction and a "programmed" pedagogical approach: this represented a type of enacted curriculum that was highly structured and prescribed, and mainly revealed a type of teacher-directed play.

The richness of the data presented in this research phase contributes to illuminating some of the "blank areas" as implied in the precedent curricula analysis. Namely, children's critical thinking skills, and the various contextual considerations of children's arts education, such as the adoption of international perspectives, the use of ICT in teaching and learning, the application of teachers' reflective practice, and children's participation and co-construction in their local cultures. In addition, some findings and themes emerged from this collective case study greatly enriched my understanding of this research field, for example, children's active participation in their arts learning such as voting for play and using arts to express their opinions and arguments; EC teachers' long working day; and some equity issues among different regions in contemporary Chinese ECE.

Under the guidance of a governmentality framework, I asked questions about governance, knowledge, techniques and practices in this particular field, in comparison with Australian examples, where appropriate, to achieve a deeper understanding about children's arts education in Beijing; and furthermore, to "practise a form of criticism" and to "open the space" (Dean, 2010, p. 38) for readers to discover the relevant answers.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

WEAVING THE THREADS OF CURRICULUM, ARTS AND PEDAGOGY
USING A GOVERNMENTALITY LENS

7.1 Chapter introduction

> Like intelligence or beauty, creativity is a trait that is seen as rare and inherent, a trait that is intuitive and cannot be taught; the works that are produced by those with creativity are awesome and unattainable. However, if children are given the proper opportunities to practice and develop their creativity, as with any muscle in the human body, the trait will become stronger and feel more natural (Chen, 2016, para. 2).

Many important worldwide innovations originated in ancient China but the end of the Sung Dynasty (960–1279) heralded a lengthy period of stagnancy (Lin 2008), while Europe underwent great advancement in politics, the economy, culture and the progress of human creativity. The stagnancy of Chinese social development and the creativity gap between China and some Western countries was as a consequence of colonialism, foreign invasion and tumultuous political change (Morris & Leung, 2010). This culminated in the Chinese feudal society with a conservative attitude to the development of knowledge; a cultural emphasis on social order and conformity; the application of the imperial examination system (IES); and the rigid seclusion policy.

The Chinese government's approach to reducing this creativity gap has taken into account Baark's (2007) advice that changing cultural values is a slow, incremental and continuous progress. The implementation of the key policy of Reform and Opening-up issued in 1978 resulted in a new historical stage in arts education in China in alignment with the contemporary trends of international arts education (Ma, 2014; Wang, 2012). This also included the reform of Chinese early childhood (EC) curricula with further support from the *Educational Master Plan of National Art (1989-2000)* (State Education Commission, 1989a) with the recommendations for a change from teacher-centred to child-centred approaches, the improvement of students' creativity and innovation, and the promotion of students' intelligence and healthy development in both mind and body (Zhu & Zhang, 2008; Wong & Pang, 2002).

The current study set out to explore the status quo of Chinese early childhood (EC) arts curriculum among a cohort of 5-6 year old children in Beijing under globalisation influences. Challenges and barriers in contemporary Beijing early childhood arts

education include: lack of expertise and experience in teaching the arts; lack of teacher confidence; long teaching hours with little time allocated to preparation of classes, timetabling, education outcomes and assessments; focus on the product rather than the process; cultural mores; and inequity in resources and funding.

This chapter summarises the research findings based on the research questions designed for this study, points out the significance of the study's findings, examines the study's limitations and signals the implications for policy making and practice improvement. In conclusion, this chapter also provides suggestions for the directions of future research in this field.

7.2 Summary of the research findings

The study reported in this thesis presents a snapshot of arts education among a cohort of children aged 5-6 years in Beijing, China. The analysis of data in Chapters Four, Five and Six have provided both descriptive and analytical elements in response to the general research question of the current study:

To what extent have globalised perspectives influenced quality arts education in contemporary Chinese Beijing early childhood?

The data collected and analysed in previous chapters also responded to specific questions for this research as follows:

1. *What place do the arts have in Chinese and Australian early childhood education?*

2. *What are the features of the Chinese enacted arts education curriculum in a sample of kindergartens in Beijing, China, in terms of:*

   - *Underpinning theories, paradigms and approaches*

   - *Art forms*

   - *Content (skills and knowledge)*

   - *Activities and programs (e.g. time allocation, textbooks and materials, community resources), and*

   - *Teachers' beliefs*

Guided by the research questions, and drawing from the literature to discuss the research findings, this section aims to look across the data chapters and, thus, to render a meta-analysis of the whole study.

7.2.1 The arts, a significant learning area in contemporary Chinese Beijing ECE, as well as in the Australian Curriculum

This study reveals that the arts represent a significant learning area in contemporary Chinese Beijing early childhood education (ECE). As outlined in the literature review and curricula analysis chapters, together with health, language, society and science, the arts constitute one the five learning areas in contemporary Chinese ECE (State Education Commission of China, 2001). In the survey investigation, it was found that the majority of the responses indicate a weekly time allocation for the arts of over two hours, which is longer than the weekly time allocation in many Chinese primary and secondary schools, as was argued in that chapter. According to the six interviewees from the three case study kindergartens, the weekly time for the arts varied from three to ten hours. The case study observation revealed that the arts represented 20–33% of the total collective teaching sessions, which is above the average level of time allocation for each of the other learning areas. Furthermore, the arts are not only taught in collective teaching sessions, but naturally permeate through other time sessions, such as transitional activities, meals and snacks, area activities, cross-class activities, literacy learning sessions and outdoor physical activities.

The importance of the arts is also reflected in the case study in the educational orientation of the Beautiful Kindergarten, which is on "cultivating children by aesthetics and developing children in all-round way". The educators of the Beautiful Kindergarten seek to inspire children's learning, to develop their morality and to strengthen their physique through arts education. Therefore, arts education is considered to be a crucial *techne* in achieving the overall educational *telos* in the Beautiful Kindergarten, as explained in the previous chapter.

Regarding pedagogical framing in the three case study kindergartens, as presented in the previous chapter, spacious arts workshops were found in both the Beautiful Kindergarten and the Thematic Kindergarten, with these specifically designed for children's artistic activities in fine arts and craft. In comparison to these arts workshops, no specific workshops were found for other learning areas, such as science or society; instead "scientific corners" or "social activity corners" were found, with these much smaller and embedded within the observed classrooms.

Based on the findings of this research, I conclude that the arts hold a significant place in the learning of children aged 5-6 years in the contemporary Chinese Beijing context. This view is in line with what I have discussed in the literature review chapter, that art education has existed for more than 2000 years in China, and that traditional

Chinese education emphasised holistic development via aesthetic education (Evans, 2001). More recently, Chinese former Director of National Education Commission He Dongchang (1986) claimed that "education without aesthetic education is incomplete" (cited in He, 2009). Using a governmentality perspective, I argue that from ancient times until now, the arts have served as one of the major techniques and practices for achieving governmental ends in Chinese society.

Based on analysis of the intended Australian Curriculum: The Arts, the arts also appear to represent a key learning area for children aged 5-6 years in Australia. In this innovative national arts curriculum, young children are legitimised as "art makers and audiences of the now" (ACARA, 2016, "Introduction"). In responding to a market-oriented economics in which "children are expected to be creative thinkers and problem solvers" (McArdle, 2001, p. 236), "the arts have the capacity to engage, inspire and enrich all students, exciting the imagination and encouraging them to reach their creative and expressive potential" (ACARA, 2016, "Rationale", para. 1). Therefore the arts appear crucial in empowering young Australians to become competent citizens in the future, and to thrive in this globalised world.

7.2.2 Features of the arts curriculum in contemporary Chinese Beijing ECE

To gain an understanding of the features of the enacted arts curriculum in contemporary Chinese Beijing ECE, in the following section, I summarise the main findings in a number of aspects in this field. These comprise "the underpinning theories, paradigms and approaches"; "the art forms"; "the learning content"; "the activities and programs"; and an array of "educators' beliefs" regarding children's arts education in Beijing, China.

7.2.2.1 Underpinning theories, paradigms and approaches

From the responses to the survey, the underpinning theories, paradigms and approaches in Beijing children's arts education, listed in order, were: Learning Stories; the Orff music pedagogy; Reggio Emilia; American High/Scope; Chinese Chen Heqin's educational ideas; integrated international influences; a series of single responses (multiple intelligences theory, Montessori pedagogy, Piagetian constructivist theory and Taiwan Meiyuyaofu influences); American discipline-based art education (DBAE); traditional Chinese culture; and the Kodaly method (refer to Chapter Five, Table 5.8). However, as indicated in the survey chapter, to some extent, this research finding was influenced by the prompts that were provided to the participant EC teachers. In the

case study, educators also expressed their feelings and experiences in implementing these global theories and approaches. The following three central themes were coded using grounded theory analysis. Firstly, it was a shared view among all case study educators that they benefited from using international theories, approaches and experiences regarding children's arts education during their professional practice. Secondly, the interaction and combination of international and local experiences were emphasised by these case study EC educators. Thirdly, it was considered imperative by the case study EC educators that EC teachers' knowledge and skills in the field of children's arts education needed to be improved.

The findings in this aspect of Chinese children's arts education reflect the characteristic of cultural hybridisation (Holton, 2000) in the development of Chinese ECE since 1978, as argued in the previous chapters. This was evident among these underpinning theories, paradigms and approaches, with both international and national elements identified. In summary, international influences, according to the participant EC educators, appeared to be a significant power in this study. This echoes the argument in the policy analysis section of the literature review chapter that the forces of globalisation are considered to be a predominant power in this research.

7.2.2.2 Children's arts learning forms

The five main forms of the arts reported by survey participants were led by music, followed by fine arts, dance, craft and drama (refer to Figure 5.3). In the survey, over 90% of respondents mentioned both music and fine arts as the main art forms. As argued in the survey chapter, this is consistent with the literature which identified that music and fine arts were traditional art forms in China (e.g. Chang, 2005), and are the main arts learning forms for contemporary Chinese primary and secondary school students (e.g. Iwai, 2003; College Board, 2011). This result appears to be in accord with the findings of Piscitelli et al. (1999) and Wang and Bian (2012). These authors found that the arts curriculum in Chinese ECE comprised drawing, craft work, music, dance and drama. In combining the current study's survey data with data collected from the case study, an array of sub-forms was found within these main art forms, with this presented in Chapter Six, the case study chapter. These findings were reflected in the Beijing Curriculum. However, differences were found between these findings and the art forms described in the Australian Curriculum. As mentioned previously, the five art forms in the Australian Curriculum were identified as: dance, drama, media arts, visual arts and music. "Visual arts" in the Australian Curriculum could be deemed as being equivalent to "fine arts" in the Beijing Curriculum, although they have used

different names. Another difference was that in the Australian Curriculum, media arts were considered to be a substantial art form in their own right whereas, in both the intended and enacted arts curriculum in Beijing, ICT only served as a form of media or a tool to assist children's arts learning.

Some dissonances have been found between the survey and the case study, particularly during the case study site observations. Among the 10 pedagogical examples listed in Table 6.4, 40% of the examples were in relation to fine arts, 30% were about craft, 20% were about music, while 10% were about both drama and dance. These findings suggest that fine arts and craft represent the two most popular art forms in children's arts programs in the participant case study kindergartens, with this differing from the results of the survey, where music and fine arts were reported to be the two main art forms. In going through the data chapters in this thesis, the prevalence of craft activities in the collective case study is evident and coherent with one characteristic in the Beijing Curriculum, that craft-making activities were abundant throughout this intended curriculum. A retrospective analysis regarding this dissonance reveals that it might be caused by the prompts (i.e. "music" and "fine arts") that I had used in the survey questionnaire in relation to the question on art forms. This issue reminded me that, as a researcher, I need to be careful in designing research instruments, especially with regard to the inclusion of "prompts" in facilitating responses from participants. In future research, it is my intention to avoid the use of prompts as they could influence the research findings.

7.2.2.3 Children's arts learning content, skills and abilities

Based on the data presented in the case study chapter, it appears that the main purpose of children's arts education is not to take the traditional paradigm of training future professional artists. Instead, EC educators in this study unanimously aimed to enhance children's lifelong development through the arts. Children's holistic abilities, including their social, emotional, ethical and dispositional abilities were emphasised and valued by the educators interviewed in this study. Although some teachers considered obtaining the disciplinary artistic skills and abilities to be one of the goals in children's arts education, it was clear that these disciplinary skills and abilities were not the main educational goals. Instead, the participant EC educators highlighted the gaining and exercising of abilities, such as imagination, creation, expression and communication, as well as a sense of responsibility, as educational goals gained through children's arts learning. In particular, the educators repeatedly stated that the

arts serve as effective techniques and practices to enhance children's creative and expressive abilities.

These findings resonate with the instrumental benefits of arts education proposed by Western arts educators, such as the "academic, personal and social skills" (Roy et al., 2015, p. 35); the emotional expressions and multiliteracy abilities (Wright, 2012); the re-imagined ideas (Dunn & Stinson, 2012); the sense of empathy and autonomy (Stinson & O'Connor, 2012); and, of course, the higher-order thinking skills depicted in the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, which comprise "design thinking" and critical thinking skills. Some opinions of the study's interviewees seemed also to resonate with the "experiential and cross-curricular approach to arts programming" (Ewing, 2010, p. 29) highlighted in the Australian Curriculum. For example, Rosy, principal of the Beautiful Kindergarten, emphasised the "abilities of rich perception, precise observation, and expression, as well as kinaesthetic, social abilities"; Hermione, teacher at the Thematic Kindergarten, mentioned "expression and communication"; and Zenia, teacher at the Harmonious Kindergarten, expected that the children "will have more emotional experiences by learning the arts". Thus, contemporary arts educators from different contexts were revealed as sharing some similar principles regarding their educational purpose and pedagogical approaches, under the influences of educational globalisation.

The shift away from pure disciplinary artistic skills and abilities to children's holistic lifelong development has also revealed a new orientation in the field of Chinese children's arts education. More than one decade ago, Chinese scholar Zhang (2003) argued that:

> Currently, as a whole, children's arts education in our country is a kind of arts education that pertains to the specialized arts institutions … where the main educational purpose is to transmit arts theories and to implement the drilling of artistic skills and abilities … (p. 32).

For example, traditional Chinese pedagogy in music, without exception, focused on the drilling of skills, and regarded the methodology as the highest criterion: children rarely expressed their individuality in music (Zhang, 2003). To some extent, this statement presents a contrast with the current research where, in Beijing in contemporary China, children's arts education was found to be focused on balanced and holistic growth for every child, instead of the drilling of disciplinary artistic skills and abilities for "a small cohort of talented children" (Zhang, 2003, p. 34). This resonates with US scholars Fox and Berry's (2008) claim that, "far from creating individual

prodigies, th[e] integration of making and enjoying art in the early childhood classroom will result in the 'all-sided development' of the children participating" (Conclusion section, para. 1). Therefore, in this respect, the research findings mirror global trends in this field, with their aim of arts education being beneficial for children's lifelong development.

7.2.2.4. Activities and programs of children's arts education

From the responses to the survey study, the activities and programs of children's arts education in the participant kindergartens, listed in order, were: "kindergarten arts teaching activities"; "parental participation"; "exterior visits and activities"; "guidance from arts experts"; and "community activities". Some new elements were found in the case study as follows: "cross-class activities"; "role play activities"; "a multiplicity of child-centred activities"; "expansive activities outside of kindergarten" "DIY [do-it-yourself] performances"; and "arts festivals".

The different activities and programs reported in this study present a picture of children's arts education in the contemporary Chinese Beijing context, in which several meaningful aspects can be found. For example, in the current study, children were found to have been actively participating in the construction of the culture of their local communities. They displayed their artistic creations in local museums; they presented art performances to local communities; they visited orphanages; and they donated their charity sales to a local welfare centre. These activities reflect a re-constructionist view of arts education (Wong & Piscitelli, 2009)—a powerful means by which children contribute to building their local culture—which looks somewhat similar to what the Reggio Emilia children do in their community. As Wright (2012) argues, "the arts not only reveal culture heritage—they are also a means by which the culture is defined and evaluated" (p. 198).

Evidence of children's collaborative creations in the arts was another significant finding in this study. Several examples in the data chapters showed that children collaborated closely with their peers as well as with adult educators in their artistic activities, such as: the drama performance in the Beautiful Kindergarten (refer to Figure 6.17), the fine arts activities in the Harmonious Kindergarten (refer to Figure 6.18) and the collaborative calligraphy artwork that children of the Harmonious Kindergarten displayed in their local museum (refer to Figure 6.26). This reflects alignment with the principles of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) in sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), according to which children's artistic cognitive

development is supported through social interactions between children, the more experienced adult partners and their peers, as discussed in the methodology chapter. This finding is also coherent with the contemporary view of the child who finds himself/herself in society and under various cultural influences (Vygotsky, 1986; Miller Marsh, 2002; MacNaughton, 2004), instead of the view of the individual child standing on his/her own (Piaget, 1980). Knight (2008) argues for "the steady but significant shift towards looking at early childhood through a sociocultural lens" (p. 306). Using collaborative drawing activities as an example, this author proposes that making arts collaboratively "can open up pathways of communication, and facilitate processes of transformation for both adult and child" (p. 306). Under a social constructionist paradigm, the following comments regarding the arts experiences of Reggio Emilia children provide a reference to arts learning experiences among a cohort of children aged 5-6 years in contemporary Beijing, China:

> We have here children and adults who are playing, working, talking, thinking and inventing things together. They are trying to get to know both each other and themselves, and to understand how the world works and how it could be made to work better ... (Malaguzzi, 1987, p. 22, cited in White, 1995, p. 68).

In relation to the forms of activities and programs of children's arts education, the current study found the collective teaching session to be the most predominant feature. Although various program and activity forms were reported in the survey study, of the 10 examples of pedagogical interaction in the collective case study, the form of the collective teaching session represented 80% of all forms of activity (refer to Table 6.4). This collective teaching session, also known as whole-class teaching or whole-group teaching, normally lasted 35-45 minutes (refer to Table 6.2), and constitutes the main educational activity in the three case study kindergartens. The predominance of the collective teaching session, which is usually teacher-directed instead of child-initiated, seems to be dissonant with the contemporary international early childhood pedagogical trends that advocate a balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated learning, as argued in previous chapters. Under a governmentality framework, I asked a series of questions: why is this pedagogical form deemed to be the most appropriate in the Chinese Beijing context? What are the rationalities behind this decision? What kind of *telos* is to be expected by using this kind of *techne*?

Some contemporary scholars argue in favour this type of learning, considering it to be the optimal learning form in the Chinese EC context. For example, from a social-constructivist perspective, Ge (2014) claims that knowledge construction is based on

the interactions within a community, where children's creativity is facilitated by the sparks and collisions of all kinds of thoughts. Hu, B. et al. (2015) argue that "well designed and implemented, whole-group teaching can offer many advantages, such as instructional efficiency in fostering a sense of community and belonging, even for young children aged three to six" (p. 6). Drawing on Yu (2005), these authors list the following advantages of whole-group teaching:

> (1) clear learning goals; (2) promotion of students' language and higher-order thinking skills development; (3) a harmonious learning environment, with students and teachers showing mutual respect for each other; (4) flexible curriculum activities; and (5) respecting the individual child's unique way to learning (Hu, B. et al., 2015, p. 6).

Some of these qualities of whole-group teaching resonate with my observations in the three participant kindergartens in Beijing. For instance, in each collective teaching session, clear learning goals (e.g. example ten in Chapter Six) were evident; during some sessions, children were encouraged to pose questions and to think creatively; the learning environment was harmonious; and mutual respect existed between teachers and children. However, in the case study, curriculum activities also appeared to be highly structured and prescribed in most of the observed classes.

As cited by Hu, B. et al. (2015), the prevalence of whole-class teaching in Chinese ECE "can be attributed to a deep-rooted culture of collectivism (Tobin et al., 2009)" (p. 10). Apart from the cultural and historical influences, pragmatic factors, such as the teacher to child ratio in China and the high academic expectations of parents, are also believed to account for "Chinese teachers' preference for group teaching" (Hu, B. et al., 2015, p. 7). In a recent study, Li and Liu (2016) state that the teacher to child ratio in China is the main reason accounting for this form of class organisation. Furthermore, they argue that this pedagogical form is highly structured and highly controlled, which has negative impacts on educational outcomes within kindergartens. The case study observations also noted these issues. For example, the limited space for the development of children's creativity was identified in most of the pedagogical interactions.

7.2.3 Teachers' beliefs about children's creativity

"Creativity is a quintessential factor of development and it is during this golden age of childhood where an abundance of ideas flow from the imagination" (Leggett, 2011, p. 16). The child's development of creativity is one of the key aims of modern reform in

early education (Fees et al., 2014), particularly in China. As indicated in the literature review chapter, according to the *Early Learning and Development Guideline of Children aged 3-6* (Ministry of Education [PRC], 2012), one of the key targets in the arts learning area for Chinese children aged 3-6 years is to "enrich their imagination and creativity" (p. 41). In this context, in the current study, the inquiry with regard to teachers' beliefs in children's creativity was considered to be meaningful. Cheung and Mok (2013) argue as follows:

> Teachers' understanding of creativity can affect their expectations for children and the instruction they give can either facilitate or inhibit children's creative thought and expression (Nickerson, 1999; Runco, Johnson, & Bear, 1993). To actualise creative development in schools, there is a need to understand how teachers view creativity. A good understanding of teachers' conceptions of creativity is a promising starting point for any educational policies and programmes targeted at developing creativity in school (pp. 120-121).

At the present time, "creativity and innovation have become more important in the world and Asian societies in general, and in Chinese societies in particular" (Wu & Albanese, 2010, p. 151). In recent years, various studies have emerged to explore teachers' understanding, conception and belief in creativity.

For example, based on a 2005 study, Kim (2007) reported as follows: "Korean science teachers' understanding of creativity appeared to emphasize only the cognitive components, while they ignored environmental components" (p. 45). Cheung and Mok (2013) compared a series of studies in this field, finding in a study of 1028 British teachers in 1991 that "creativity was primarily perceived in terms of imagination, originality and self-expression" (p. 121). Another study by Davis et al. (2004) revealed that "teachers still held a rather narrow, arts-based view of creativity, which involved imagination, expression and ideas" (cited in Cheung & Mok, 2013, p. 121). In another study, 162 teachers in Singapore described creativity as "newness, uniqueness, imagination and expressing own ideas" (Tan, 2000, cited in Cheung & Mok, 2013, p. 121); while among 44 South Korean teachers, "novelty and problem solving were the major two characteristics of creativity" (Hong & Kang, 2010, cited in Cheung & Mok, 2013, p. 121).

In the current study, Chinese EC educators in the Beijing context demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of children's creativity. This understanding was mainly based on a personality approach that focused on the individual child, but it also used other approaches to the study of creativity, such as the cognitive approach, the

sociocultural approach and the interdisciplinary approach (Sawyer, 2012). Differing from previous research, the current study's investigation of the beliefs and opinions of in-service EC teachers regarding children's creativity covers various facets of children's creativity. As shown in Figure 5.9, not only does the study identify teachers' perceptions of the concept of children's creativity, but it also identifies the ways in which children express their creativity. More fundamentally, it shows the vibrant and diverse ways in which children form their creativity, together with the key influential contextual factors that foster children's creativity. Both in the survey and the case study, the teacher's crucial role in cultivating children's creativity is spelled out. Both "teaching creatively" and "teaching for creativity" were mentioned in this research.

The findings of the current study cover a wide spectrum of children's creativity, with many that are suitable to other studies in this field. For example, a recent study in Hong Kong by Hui et al. (2015) suggests that "arts-enriched learning elements and playfulness in the classroom environment can enhance individuals' creative performance" (p. 393). The study by Kampylis, Berki and Saariluoma (2009) also asserts that "in a flexible classroom atmosphere having no strict disciplinary rules, children's creative characteristics, such as independent thinking and risk-taking can be stimulated (cited in Alkus & Olgan, 2014, pp. 1912-1913). Correspondingly, the findings of the current study suggest that arts learning occurs in a "loose and harmonious spiritual environment" (survey respondent No. 6) and with "abundant/low-structure materials" (survey respondent No. 5) that support children's creativity. According to Moran (1988), children's creative aptitude is encouraged and stimulated "in educational settings where there is a tolerant and playful environment" (cited in Alkus & Olgan, 2014, p. 1913). Similarly, the current study suggests that "teachers should not criticise children's art works" (survey respondent No. 60), and teachers should "… not give fixed demonstration[s]" (survey respondent No. 27). Another aspect about which this study's findings express caution is "rote learning". This finding resonates with Alkus and Olgan's (2014) study in Ankara, Turkey, where half of their participant teachers believed that "there was no relationship between creativity and rote learning" (p. 1909). Interestingly, other participants in their study considered that "existing knowledge or repetition might infer that there is some sort of relation between rote learning and creativity" (Alkus & Olgan, 2014, p. 1910). One of their participant teachers stated that "nobody can be creative without using his/her prior knowledge", while another claimed that "creativity means the alteration of existing knowledge to produce different viewpoints" (Alkus & Olgan, 2014, p. 1910). Some echoes of this view are apparent in the survey study which showed that 14 of the total 88 teachers (15.9% of the total

responses) believed that children's creativity was based on their previous experiences. Some of the interviewed educators in the case study shared a similar view (e.g. Rosy and Festival)

In addition, the current study's findings seem to go beyond the narrow conceptions of creativity provided by 38 pre-service teachers in the UK which were "predominantly associated with the use of resources and technology and bound up with the idea of 'teaching creatively' rather than 'teaching for creativity'" (Bolden, Harries & Newton, 2010, p. 143). In the current study, not only is the idea of 'teaching creatively' mentioned (e.g. materials, space, resources and time), but also the idea of 'teaching for creativity' (e.g. respect, democracy, trust, child-centred, and encourage, liberate, appreciate and praise children) is put to the forefront.

To conclude, the results of this study provide new ways to perceive Chinese children's creativity, with these findings also revealing that the participant EC educators in Beijing appeared to have a comprehensive understanding of children's creativity.

7.2.4 Teachers' beliefs about the main challenges in children's arts education: Issues around pedagogy

According to the survey and case study results, the core challenges identified by the participant Chinese EC educators were issues around pedagogy in children's arts education. As discussed in the survey study, teachers struggled to decide between "to teach or not to teach". In the case study, some discrepancies were identified between teachers' discourse and their practice: teachers stated that the pedagogy should be child-centred, and that it was better to neither give demonstrations nor specify concrete requirements to children. However, in the ten pedagogical interaction examples, eight were found to be initiated by teachers; furthermore, demonstrations or concrete requirements by teacher(s) were identified in these teacher-initiated examples. Using a governmentality perspective, I was led to ask: why is there this pedagogical discrepancy in Chinese Beijing children's arts education?

7.2.4.1 A discrepancy between teachers' discourse and practice

Behind this discrepancy, tensions and interplays of different powers are apparent. Firstly, different views of the child are evident. Contemporary global trends view the child as a competent learner (e.g. the Reggio Emilia approach) and an active contributor to society (e.g. ACARA, 2016). Some scholars argue that child-centredness remains central to the contemporary ECE discourse (e.g. Chung & Walsh, 2000); it is

also advocated that opportunities for child-centred activities should be provided to children in their arts learning (e.g. Fox & Berry, 2008). However, this view of the child is in conflict with the view in traditional Chinese culture. In Confucian ideology, teachers were regarded as authoritative figures, whereas students/children were considered to be "dependent" and "incapable", and "should follow the expert master-educator, learning through imitation and emulation by rote and practice" (Zhao, 2007, p. 10). As a result, the power relation between teacher and child was imbalanced, and "fall[s] into the hierarchical realm in which teachers perceive themselves as having power and authority over children" (Zhao, 2007, p. 10). This view was reflected in the survey study data, as some teachers appeared to hold relatively deficit views about children, for example, "children's ability of expression is weak" and "their routine is unstable". In addition to global and traditional cultural influences, another power appears to be the influence of the ex-Soviet educational model, under which the "subject-centered and teacher-directed teaching through group lessons" has been the main educational approach in Mainland China since 1949 (Liu & Feng, 2005, p. 96). Alongside these ideological considerations, other pragmatic factors also accounted for this pedagogical discrepancy. For example, the long kindergarten day and the high academic expectations of parents have both contributed to a more teacher-directed pedagogical approach among the participant kindergartens in Beijing.

This discrepancy identified in the current research challenges some of the claims in the contemporary literature regarding the Chinese EC curriculum. For example, Wong and Pang (2002) argue that, as a result of the EC curriculum reforms in China since the 1980s, the Chinese EC curriculum has developed from teacher-centred toward child-centred. In reality, the current research findings have revealed that the pedagogical interactions related to children's arts education in the participant kindergartens in Beijing were still mainly teacher-initiated and teacher-directed. Furthermore, due to the integrated nature of the EC curriculum, these findings are likely to apply to the other learning areas in Chinese ECE, namely, language, science, society and health. This echoes the view that EC teachers in China "have been used to teacher-centred practices for a very long time, and it was not easy for them to adapt to a child-centred curriculum" (Qi & Melhuish, 2016, p. 6).

In addition, the discrepancy discovered in this research appears to be relevant to the problems that exist between the Chinese ECE policy documents and their implementation, as indicated in the literature review chapter. For example, the two key policy documents in this field, the *Kindergarten Work Regulations and Procedures* (Trial version) (State Education Commission of China, 1989b) and the *Guidance for*

Kindergarten Education (Trial version) (State Education Commission of China, 2001) are considered to be "the two waves of curriculum reform [that] have been promoting child-centered, progressive methods while criticizing and discouraging the traditional teacher-directed curriculum" (Li, Wang & Wong, 2011, p. 6). However, in reality, the EC practitioners in Beijing still seem uneasy about the implementation of these policy documents. The data that emerged from the survey indicated that most of the participant EC teachers in Beijing (78.4%) endorsed the child-initiated approach. In the case study, the EC educators agreed on a flexible and diverse approach with regard to the teacher–child relationship, and they also emphasised the importance of child-centred activities. Nevertheless, the overwhelming proportion of teacher-initiated pedagogical interactions reported in the case study (80%) revealed a gap between the Chinese EC "practitioners' ideas and practices" (Pan & Liu, 2008, p. 36), as discussed in the introduction of this thesis.

7.2.4.2 Issues surrounding demonstrations

In the current study, most of the participant EC teachers identified the dilemma they faced in the issues surrounding demonstrations in children's arts learning. In the survey, many participant EC teachers struggled with the decision between "to demonstrate or not", whereas in the case study, most of the participant EC educators proposed not giving demonstrations. In fact, as seen during the observations, in 80% of the pedagogical interaction examples, the EC teachers gave demonstrations and specified concrete requirements as a way of introduction, with children required to follow teachers' instructions and imitate the examples given by the teachers. Even in the child-initiated spontaneous play related to the fine arts and craft making, children were found to imitate examples and models (refer to Chapter Six, pedagogical example six). Using the lens of governmentality, I asked the question: what are the power relations that lie behind this phenomenon?

The Chinese artistic traditions appear to be a major power in this regard. Gaskell (2012) argues that in Chinese art, "emulation, imitation and copying" are considered to be "necessarily unchanging constants essential to Chinese practice" (p. 8) through which "the 'perfect balance between the transmission of ancient models and the formation of [the artist's] own style'" is possible, "thereby assuming a place in 'the great chain of cultural transmission'" (p. 8). Therefore, the prevalent phenomena of "emulation, imitation and copying" observed in this study found their historical origins and rationale in this artistic tradition in China. The EC teachers in this study believed that through imitation, children would learn the basic skills and abilities in the arts, so

they could express their own ideas and therefore realise their creative potential (e.g. Festival from the Beautiful Kindergarten). Some Western arts educators also agree that the training of disciplinary knowledge is important in order to foster children's creativity. For example, McArdle (2001) argues the following viewpoint:

> Train [sic] for creativity refers to the work of the teacher in enabling children to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to be able to make creative contributions … creativity, like all areas of intellectual endeavour, is a product of training. In art, creative pursuit involves a knowledge of art history and art appreciation, as well as practical experience in artmaking and critique. It is through accumulation and application of these knowledges that the child will be enabled to produce creative work (p. 236).

Whether it is considered to be "a conversation between generations" (Gaskell, 2012, p. 10) or as the "training of disciplinary knowledge" (McArdle, 2001), with its roots deep in the Chinese artistic tradition, the pedagogical approach of "demonstration" and "imitation" predominantly adopted amongst the participant kindergartens in Beijing appeared to be an effective strategy in promoting children's arts learning. However, some scholars argue that the Chinese traditional artistic style was "imitative" rather than "creative" (e.g. Morris & Leung, 2010). The overuse of this approach could hamper the development of children's creativity. Using a "demonstration" and "imitation" approach, it is necessary to be alert to the inhibitory consequences of conforming to a stereotype (Gaskell, 2012). Particularly for young children, "adult models for children to follow are also frustrating because most children do not have the fine motor and visual perceptual skills to replicate adult efforts"; therefore, "too much direction or assistance interferes with the creative process" (Fox & Berry, 2008, Classroom Art Center section, para. 1).

7.2.4.3 Other challenges in children's arts education

In addition to the pedagogical issues discussed above, other challenges mentioned by the participant EC educators in this study involved how to use curricula and materials, and how to combine arts education with traditional culture, and with other learning areas and activities. The perception of the "lack of knowledge and skills in the arts" among EC teachers was also identified as a prevalent topic in this study.

In response to these challenges, the participant EC educators considered professional training to be of key importance. In the survey study, external resources (including ICT, books, modern curricula, resources from parents and the community)

and internal development (including professional training in the arts, in teaching children, and on different types of activities and research) were considered to constitute the necessary support for EC teachers' professional learning in the field of arts education in the Beijing context.

7.3 Significance of the research findings

This section presents the significance of the research findings from four aspects, namely: the significance from a cross-cultural perspective; the identification of resonances and dissonances in the Beijing and Australian curriculum comparison and with the contemporary literature; the examination of the interaction and interplay between global and local powers; and the implications of grounded theory in this study.

7.3.1 Australian experiences and Chinese experiences: Researching from a cross-cultural perspective

This cross-cultural study compares two contemporary early childhood arts curricula in the two countries of China and Australia. Two decades ago, Australian arts educator Susan Wright (1995) argued that "the education systems in Australia and China have their own strength and weakness, and educators and policy makers from each country can learn much from the other" (p. 44). Piscitelli et al. (1999) also suggest that some important insights could result from cross-cultural studies. Australian arts educators are recognised for their international perspectives (ACARA, 2016; College Board, 2011) and, during the past two decades, some cross-cultural studies with regard to children's arts education, especially between Australia and China, have been reported (e.g. Wright, 1995; Piscitelli et al., 1999; McArdle, 2001). This thesis presents an in-depth and systematic comparative study regarding two intended arts curricula between China and Australia. The Australian Curriculum: The Arts, Foundation to Year 10 (F-10) is a contemporary arts curriculum which focuses on "breadth", "experience" and "participation", and which privileges young people as "art makers and audience of the now" (ACARA, 2016, "Introduction to the Australian Curriculum: The Arts"). This curriculum also provides teachers with both the scope and the opportunity to choose educational resources during their professional practice.

Chinese arts educators and policy makers could benefit by drawing on some elements of this innovative Australian arts curriculum. For example, by consulting with the Australian Curriculum, the Beijing Curriculum could develop in the area of media arts, so ICT does not only serve as a tool in children's arts learning, but also offers

media through which to realise children's creative and expressive potential in the arts. The Beijing Curriculum could also use the Australian Curriculum as a contemporary reference, thus including more international elements to enrich its curriculum content, pedagogical examples and work sample portfolios for assessment. In the same spirit, Australian arts educators could draw on the experience within the Beijing Curriculum, in particular, the preservation and heritage of the traditional and indigenous culture through children's arts learning. "China has an ancient saying that history is a mirror, meaning that the present can learn from the past" (cited in Evans, 2001, p. 214). This principle is reflected in the Australian Curriculum which "values, respects and explores the significant contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Australia's arts heritage" (ACARA, 2016, "Rationale", para. 2).

7.3.2 Resonances and dissonances: Comparison with contemporary discourses

As indicated in the introduction chapter, one of the current study's aims was to contribute to the planning and practice of arts education for Chinese children in order to cultivate their creativity. For this particular purpose, this study not only explored Chinese EC educators' beliefs regarding children's creativity, but also investigated how their enacted arts curriculum fostered creativity among a cohort of children aged 5-6 years in Beijing. One stimulus for this study was to present a response to the appeal by Leggett (2015) who explored the relationship between intentional teaching and the development of the creative thought processes of young children aged 4-6 years. She recommended that "further research into the cultural implications for how creativity is defined and represented in different countries would paint a better picture for how creativity is being widely interpreted and represented on the world stage" (Leggett, 2015, p. 315). The survey study revealed that EC educators from 12 kindergartens in Beijing appeared to have a comprehensive understanding of children's creativity. However, the case study in three kindergartens identified a gap between the espoused philosophy and the enacted practice among these EC educators. Piscitelli et al. (1999) argued that "careful study of cross-cultural philosophies, policies and practices in early childhood art education may, indeed, lead to a cross fertilization of ideas" (p. 29). Therefore, the dissonance between the espoused philosophy and enacted practice found in the current study provides the opportunity to explore the development of children's creativity from a new perspective.

The research presented in this thesis investigated arts education among a cohort of Chinese public kindergarten children aged 5-6 years. Echoing the introduction chapter, this study also sought to establish a substantial knowledge contribution to arts

education in China. From a global perspective, "young children's art education is a relatively un-explored area of research" (Piscitelli et al., 1999, p. 21). Based on the situation in China, Evans (2001) also argues that "Chinese art education research is very weak on the whole and has failed to address many fundamental issues" (p. 215). This investigation not only confirmed some key issues addressed by other researchers in this particular field, but also problematised some claims and understandings regarding contemporary Chinese children's arts learning. As discussed in the introduction and literature review chapters, a gap exists between the policies and the implementation, and between Chinese EC educators' beliefs and practice. The findings in respect to the dominant teacher-directed and teacher-initiated pedagogical approaches that emerged in this research provided evidence of these gaps. In this way, the findings resonated with the second challenge in this field, that "teacher education [in Chinese ECE] is confronted with great challenges" (Zhu, 2008, p. 361), as identified in the literature review chapter.

This study raised some questions in this research field. For example, over one decade ago, Wong and Pang (2002) argued that the Chinese early childhood (EC) curriculum "had eventually moved from the teacher-centered end toward the child-centered end of the continuum" (p. 65). Mou (2004) claimed that the orientation of the Chinese early education (EC) curriculum "was towards child-centrism and took social need into consideration at the same time" (cited in Huo, 2015, p. 13). Tobin et al. (2009) also suggested that, in contemporary Chinese early childhood, "a play-oriented, child-centered approach is dominant; a didactic, content-masterly approach is residual; and a hybrid form, combining the two, is emerging" (p. 90). However, the findings of this study reveal that in 2016 contemporary Chinese children's arts learning in the Beijing context is still dominantly teacher-directed and teacher-initiated.

This thesis argues that the arts represent a significant learning area in contemporary Chinese Beijing ECE, compared to other learning areas. This interpretation appears to contradict Evans' (2001) prediction of the future of the arts education in China, and her claim that "art education will continue to be either political education or an unimportant course for the vast majority of students" (p. 213). The current study challenges this prediction, at least, from the early childhood perspective in Mainland China.

Evans (2001) also argues that, due to the ideological concerns, "art education [in China] will … be … political education", and that international influences, for example, "the influence of US art education will remain quite limited" (p. 213). The findings of this

study initially problematised this prediction. As argued in the previous chapter, even though international influences appear to wield significant powers, in the current study, the limited application of globalised concepts in childhood arts education (e.g. a balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated) confirms Evans' (2001) prediction.

This study also reveals that traditional Chinese artistic pedagogical approaches such as "demonstration", "imitation" and "copying" were still widely adopted by Chinese EC educators in the contemporary Beijing context. This finding is at odds with Ma's (2014) claim that, in China, "since 1978, the method of art teaching no longer follows the old teaching model that emphasized skill and copying in painting and drawing (p. iv)". Ma (2014) also argues for the view that some "positive developments that the government has mandated for quality art education", such as students' abilities of communication, imagination, creativity, expression, critical thinking skills, and aesthetic and artistic abilities, finding that "they are in place today" (p. 64). However, during the class observations in the case study, it was found that, due to the highly structured and highly prescribed nature of the enacted arts curriculum, the space for children's creativity development is limited. In the current study, children often appeared to be very compliant, their voices were often weak, and the power relations between teacher and child seemed to be imbalanced. Although Ma's (2014) study mainly focused on arts education in elementary and secondary schools in China, from an early childhood (EC) perspective, the findings of the current study raise reservations concerning Ma's (2014) statement. There is still further progress needed in this field, particularly in terms of the development of creative and critical thinking skills among young Chinese children.

7.3.3 Interplay between global and local powers

As previously argued, the influences and power of globalisation are evident in each stage of this research. This power, interacting and interplaying with other powers, such as the traditional Chinese culture (e.g. Confucianism), the communist ideology and the local Beijing cultures, paints an intricate picture of contemporary Chinese Beijing children's arts education. For example, the data analysis reveals that multiple international theories, paradigms and approaches, together with the local influences, are underpinning Beijing children's arts learning. The arts learning forms in this study are reflected in many of the international EC arts curricula, with the abundant craft-making activities a distinct feature from the Beijing context. The integrated nature of the Chinese Beijing children's arts curriculum reflects the global educational trend, which is

not only confined to early childhood. For example, "the concept of 'phenomenon-based' teaching—a move away from 'subjects' and towards inter-disciplinary topics", is argued to have a central place in the new National Curriculum Framework in Finland (Sahlberg, 2015, "Phenomenon-based learning", para. 2). The current study reveals that, in an integrated learning approach, children's learning content, skills and abilities in the arts shift away from the disciplinary artistic skills and abilities towards a holistic lifelong development, with this aligned with the international trend in this field.

The diversified activities and programs of children's arts reflected a social constructionist paradigm, which shares some common features with the world-renowned Reggio Emilia approach. Indeed, the predominant pedagogical organisation of the collective teaching sessions that was found in the current research provides evidence of the mixture of the traditional, communist and local cultures, at a degree of resistance against the global influences. Such a mixed power association is also reflected in several aspects in this study, with evidence of an imbalanced power relationship between teacher and child, and the widely adopted programmed pedagogical approach. Undeniably, the present conflicts and interactions of local and global cultural influences in Chinese early childhood arts education is similar to a "tug-of-war" (Chen-Haftech & Xu, 2008, p. 9), where Chinese stakeholders are trying to learn from the west "on their own terms, in ways that respect their local cultures" (Tobin & Hsueh, 2007, p. 142).

7.3.4 Methodological implications

Another aim of this study was to use grounded theory to explore the features of children's arts education in the Chinese Beijing context. The current research provides evidence that constructivist grounded theory was a viable methodology for the investigation and exploration of children's arts education in the Beijing context. As indicated in the methodology chapter, various research strategies were employed in this study. For example, during the survey study, inductive reasoning was mainly used to build explanatory models or key categorisations regarding children's arts education, based on a sequential coding process that comprised open coding, focused coding and theoretical coding. Through the inductive reasoning process, data were used to identify patterns and construct explanatory frameworks (Blaikie, 2010). Deductive reasoning was applied during the analysis of the case study observations. By drawing on existing frameworks and tools in the relevant research field, the data that emerged from the research sites were organised and categorised in a systematic and meaningful way. Abductive reasoning brought together both inductive and deductive thinking in order to

ensure a comprehensive and critical analysis of the study results combined with policies and literature in this field.

The current research supports the view that grounded theory is an effective research methodology in the field of children's arts education. Based on the experience in this study, it also appears important to use computer software appropriately during data analysis, while avoiding over-reliance on it. In summary, constructivist grounded theory honours the researcher's subjectivity, facilitates the co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and the researched, and has more potential to be used in a constructive and flexible way depending on different research backgrounds.

7.4 Limitations

The first limitation of the current study is the geographical limitation as it was conducted only in the Beijing area. The cross-cultural comparative curricula analysis had the limitation that only the intended Australian Curriculum: The Arts was researched without including the enacted arts curriculum in Australia. The empirical study in Beijing was conducted only in public kindergartens, without extending to other types of kindergartens (e.g. private and international) which also play important roles in the Chinese ECE system (e.g. Dong, 2014). Another limitation of this research was that it only accessed some Chinese Beijing EC educators' voices, without comparing their voices to those of children and children's parents, and of external arts specialists. In addition, this study was limited by the age band of the children involved, which was confined to children aged 5-6 years, without including the age bands of children aged 3-4 years and 4-5 years.

7.5 Implications for policy and practice

In terms of the study's implications for future policy making, as discussed in the previous chapters, the educational inequity between different areas across China presents a challenge, particularly in the EC field. In response to this issue, a concerted effort should be made to tackle the difference in China, between rural and urban areas, and between developed and undeveloped regions.

Professional learning for EC educators requires further and continuing development, in order to incorporate contemporary views of children, the Arts disciplinary knowledge, and a more open understanding of the optimal pedagogy in children's arts learning, for a better realisation of children's creative and critical thinking

capacities. At the same time, measures need to be taken to enhance EC educators' professional well-being and to avoid the burnout reported in this study.

The cross-cultural analysis of the intended curricula showed that several contextual considerations, such as school, community, intercultural and electronic contextual elements, were not clear in the Beijing Curriculum. The investigation of the enacted arts curriculum in Beijing provides evidence of all these considerations. However, in this study, both in the intended and enacted curriculum, ICT appeared to be limited to use as learning tools instead of as a substantial art form that enables children to realise their artistic expression and creation, as in the description of "media arts" in the Australian Curriculum. Therefore, new policy in this field needs to address the importance of emergent technology in children's arts learning in China.

Concerning the implications for the improvement of practice in this field, as argued in this thesis, an imbalance exists between the curriculum reforms and Chinese EC educators' professional practice. This study also demonstrates that the pedagogical interactions among the participant kindergartens are predominantly teacher-directed and teacher-initiated, and the space for children's creativity development is limited. In this context, Chinese EC teachers need to be supported in order to understand and integrate international theories into their daily professional practice, to appropriately support and guide children's arts learning, or even to know "how to teach, without teaching" (McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002, p. 14).

7.6 Directions for future research

Based on the current study, the need for future research is presented as follows:

A focus group study among several representatives of the participant EC educators, volunteer parents, local EC researchers and exterior arts specialists can be used to inspire further research in this field, in the Beijing context. More observation in classroom is required, for the acquisition of longitudinal data, in order to examine what happens overtime in relation to children's arts education. A comparison between children's arts learning of different age bands has the potential to provide a more complete picture of the Chinese EC arts curriculum. It will be meaningful to hear children's voices regarding their arts experiences.

Online survey questionnaires could be distributed to EC educators in other regions of China, in order to present the picture across the nation. Future research in other cities such as Shanghai, Nanjing and Chongqing, as well as in some rural and remote areas,

would provide a more complete picture of Mainland Chinese children's arts learning, and would also examine how people across China interpret the national policy guidelines in this field.

Future research in other Chinese-speaking societies such as Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore, as well as in other Asian countries influenced by Confucianism such as Korea and Japan, will provide a more complete picture on how traditional Chinese culture interplays with global cultures in similar and/or different fashions compared to Mainland China, based on different contextual conditions. Future research in EC settings in Australia and other Western countries would help to realise empirical cross-cultural comparative studies.

Future research is recommended as to the influence of university or college education of EC teachers, as well as their ongoing education in the arts to the implementation of Chinese EC policies and the quality of children's arts learning.

Future research regarding the development of ICT in children's arts is a significant demand of the current digital age in which we are situated.

This study's findings regarding children's arts possess the potential to inform future research in the other learning areas in Chinese early childhood education, and stimulate future research regarding Chinese primary, secondary and college/university students' arts education.

7.7 Chapter summary

Using a governmentality lens, this chapter has woven together the three main threads of this study, namely, curriculum, arts and pedagogy. In the chapter, it is argued that the arts constitute a significant learning area in contemporary Chinese Beijing and in Australian early childhood education (ECE). The chapter has examined the features of the enacted arts curriculum in Beijing, including different aspects, such as the underpinning theories, paradigms and approaches; the arts learning forms; the arts learning content, skills and abilities; the activities and programs of children's arts education; as well as EC educators' beliefs about creativity and the main challenges that they face in their professional practice.

The collision of two clouds generates sparks and lightning, and the comparison of two contemporary EC arts curricula from two cultures provides opportunities for the betterment of children's arts education. In this globalised era, in order to enhance the

early childhood arts curriculum in Chinese society, it is important for Chinese stakeholders to learn from other innovators in the field of ECE in China, and from other countries while respecting their own local cultures. Children's arts education remains a territory for further exploration and discovery. It is the intention of the current research to draw more attention to, and to inspire more endeavours in, this promising field.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire Questions in English

1. What is the weekly time allocation related to arts education in your kindergarten?
For example, 1–2 hours, etc.

2. What are the main teaching and learning art forms in your kindergarten?
For example, music, drawing, etc.

3. What kinds of activities and programs do you adopt in your enacted arts curriculum?
For example, parents participating children's arts practices, art specialists guiding and interacting with children and teachers, museum & gallery visits, etc.

4. What kinds of teaching materials do you use?
For example, textbooks, computers, etc.

5. How would you describe the relationship between yourself and the children during the arts education?
For example, teacher-directed, child-initiated, etc.

6. Can you give some examples of any international theories, approaches and experiences that have influenced the arts education in your kindergarten?
For example, American Discipline-Based Art education (DBAE), Italian Reggio Emilia approach, New Zealand Learning Story approach, etc.

7. What do you understand about children's creativity?

8. What are the main challenges in your arts teaching pedagogical practices?

9. What kinds of support will benefit your future arts teaching practices?

10. What do you think are the key elements of children's quality arts education?

Appendix 2: Survey Questionnaire Questions in Chinese

1. 贵园每周与艺术领域相关的教育教学活动的时间是几个小时？
例如：1－2 小时，等等

2. 贵园的艺术教育教学活动主要有哪些艺术形式？
例如：音乐，美术，等等

3. 贵园在艺术教育教学活动的过程中，会采取什么样的活动形式和组织什么样的活动？
例如，请家长参与孩子的艺术实践，请园外专家指导和互动，博物馆参观，等等

4. 贵园艺术课程采用哪些教学材料？
例如：教科书，计算机，等等

5. 您认为幼儿和教师在艺术教学中的关系是什么样的？
例如： 由教师主导，由幼儿主导，等等

6. 贵园的艺术教学受到哪些国际理论、方法和经验的影响？
例如：美国 DBAE（以学科为基础的艺术教育），意大利瑞吉欧，新西兰学习故事，等等

7. 您是如何理解幼儿的创新能力的？

8. 您在艺术教育教学过程中遇到过哪些挑战？

9. 哪些支持有助于您将来的艺术教育教学？

10. 您认为什么是构成高质量儿童艺术教育的要素？

Appendix 3: Information Sheet in English

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INFORMATION SHEET

Title: The arts curriculum in contemporary Chinese early childhood education

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Description of the study:

This research aims to examine the arts curriculum in contemporary Chinese early childhood for a cohort of 5-6 year old children.

In this sequential study, qualitative methods will be used in order to collect relevant data. These methods will form four research phases:

Phase 1: Document analysis (*The Australian Foundation Year Arts curriculum* and *Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum*)

Phase 2: Qualitative survey to collect initial data regarding the educator beliefs and nature of arts education in thirty Chinese early childhood kindergartens.

Phase 3: Three case studies will involve interviews and kindergarten observations of the arts experiences offered in three Chinese early childhood kindergartens.

Phase 4: One focus group will be held in order to discuss and comment on the analysis of the data from phases 1, 2, and 3.

The purpose of this research is to

1. Examine the arts curriculum in Chinese early childhood for a cohort of 5-6 year old children;
2. Generate guiding principles for evaluating early childhood arts programs.

What will I be asked to do?

- 150 early childhood teachers will be asked to complete a qualitative survey.
- Principals will be asked for permission for the case study research to be conducted in their kindergarten. They will also participate in an interview and a focus group interview.
- Parents in the case study kindergartens will be asked to give consent for their child to be observed in the kindergarten during regular session times.
- Children will be observed, video recorded and photographed as part of the research project during the phase of case studies.
- Six of the case study teachers will be asked to participate in a kindergarten-based interview and be observed in their normal, day-to-day teaching. They will also participate in a focus group interview.
- One member of Beijing Early Childhood Education Research Association, one artist with connection to early childhood education, and one volunteer parent representative will be asked to participate in a focus group interview.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

The major aim of the project is to examine the arts curriculum for a cohort of 5-6 year old children in Beijing, China, and also to generate guiding principles regarding the evaluation of children's arts programs. Your contribution to this study is highly important in order to generate beneficial research outcomes that enhance the planning and practice of children's arts education.

What about confidentiality?

Names and other identifying information will not appear in any form on questionnaires or in electronic databases used to store participant's responses. Personally identifying information and contact details will be stored separately from responses in secure facilities (locked filing cabinet and /or password protected database).

Once the interviews have been transcribed, voice files will be destroyed; any identified information will be removed and stored on a password-protected computer.

Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?

There will not be any foreseen risks or discomfort for you or children to participate in this research regarding arts education in Chinese early childhood. However, there is some potential for participants to be identifiable from the data you provide due to the small population pool. You are welcome to examine and comment on the research findings once these are documented.

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project number: 7039). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

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How do I agree to participate?

Participation is voluntary. If you agree to participate, please read and sign the Consent Form, which accompanies this information sheet and return to the researcher. You are free to withdraw from the research at any time without effect or consequences.

How will I receive feedback?

A summarized version of the research findings will be sent to you after the research is completed.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.

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Appendix 4: Information Sheet in Chinese

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关于本项研究的基本信息:

本项研究的目的是了解当代中国 5－6 岁儿童的艺术课程。

在这个序列的研究中将展开定性研究的方法以采集相关数据。这些研究方法将形成四个研究阶段:

第一阶段：文献分析 （澳大利亚一年级艺术课程和北京幼儿园快乐与发展课程）

第二阶段：定性调查问卷，在三十个中国幼儿园中收集关于教师理念和艺术教育状况的初步数据。

第三阶段：在三个中国幼儿园中进行关于艺术教育的包含访谈和实地观察的个案研究

第四阶段：在第一、二、三阶段数据分析的基础上组织小组讨论，以探讨和评论相关的数据分析。

本研究的目的是:

1

本研究的目的是：

1. 了解当代中国 5－6 岁儿童的艺术课程
2. 形成评估学前儿童艺术课程的一些指导性原则

我将被请求做什么？

- 60 位学前教师将被邀请参与定性调查问卷的填写。
- 园长将被请求给予研究者进入园区进行个案研究的许可。园长也将被请求参与一个访谈和一个小组讨论。
- 参与个案研究的儿童家长将被请求同意他们的孩子在正常园内活动过程中被观察研究
- 作为本研究项目的一个组成部分，在个案研究阶段，儿童将被观察，摄影以及录像，
- 6 位参与个案研究的教师将在园区被请求参与访谈，以及在他们的日常教课的过程中被观察研究；教师也将被请求参与一个小组讨论。
- 一位北京学前教育研究会的成员，一位有早教经验的艺术家，还有一位儿童家长志愿者代表将被请求参与一个小组讨论。

在此研究中我将获得什么利益？

本项研究的主要目标是了解当代中国北京 5－6 岁儿童的艺术课程，并且形成评估学前儿童艺术课程的一些指导性原则。您对此项研究的贡献将有助于形成有益的研究成果，进而得以促进儿童艺术教育的规划和实践。

如何保证机密性？

在调查问卷或电子数据库中将不会出现任何形式的姓名和其他可以鉴别身份的信息。个人鉴别的信息和联系方式将分开储存，以确保机密（锁在保险柜里并且／或者存放在有密码保护的数据库）。一旦访谈被录入文本以后，音频信息就会被销毁；带有个人鉴别的信息将被移动到有密码保护的计算机硬盘内。

如果我参与该项研究，是否会有任何风险或不适？

参与本项中国儿童艺术教育的研究不会对您或孩子产生任何可预见的风险或不适。然而，由于参加本项研究的人数较少，参与者有可能会从所提供的材料中被识别。当本项研究的结果形成文件之后，欢迎您的检查和评论。

2

我如何同意参与该研究？

本项研究的参与是志愿的。如果您同意参与，请阅读和签署与本信息表一起发给您的"同意书"，并将其返还给研究者。您有权在任何时间退出本项研究，而不会引起任何影响或后果。

我将如何获得反馈信息？

一份研究结果的概述将在研究工作结束后发给您 。

感谢您阅读本信息表，我们希望您能接受我们的邀请参与本项研究。

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Appendix 5: Letter of Introduction in English

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Tel: +61 8 8201 2312
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Susan.krieg@flinders.edu.au

www.flinders.edu.au

CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

Date: 5th November, 2015

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Principal/teacher,

This letter is to introduce Ms Yan Jin who is a PhD student in the School of Education at Flinders University. She will produce her student card, which carries a photograph, as proof of identity.

She is undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis or other publications on the subject of the Arts education in Chinese early childhood education.

She would like to invite you to assist in this project, by firstly responding to a questionnaire.

After the completion of the survey questionnaires, Ms Yan Jin is going to approach three of the participant kindergartens which represent different socio-economic levels in the area of Beijing, so that to conduct three case studies on the foundation of voluntary principle among participants including kindergarten principals, teachers, and parents of the observed children.

Those involved in the case study phase of the research will be invited to participate in an interview and a focus group, which covers certain aspects of this topic and being observed in your classroom for two hours per day over a period of one week. No more than one hour on two occasions for interviews would be required.

Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and none of the participants will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis, report or other publications. You are, of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions.

Since she intends to make a tape recording of the interview, she will seek your consent, on the attached form, to record the interview, to use the recording or a transcription in preparing the thesis, report or other publications, on condition that your name or identity is not revealed, and to make the recording available to other researchers on the same conditions.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above. Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours sincerely

Associate Professor Susan Krieg

Early Childhood Program Coordinator

School of Education

Flinders University

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project number: 7039). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

Appendix 6: Letter of Introduction in Chinese

School of Education

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日期：2015年11月5日

介 绍 信

亲爱的园长／老师，

本函是关于金焱女士的介绍信。金女士是福林德斯大学教育学院的博士生，她会带上附有本人照片的学生证作为身份的证明。

金焱目前正以"中国学前儿童的艺术教育"为主题从事一项研究，以完成她的博士论文，以及其他的发表作品。

她想邀请您协助该项研究，首先参与一个调查问卷的填写。

调查问卷填写结束后，金焱女士将在北京市教育学会学前教育研究会的指导下，在参与问卷调查的幼儿园中找出三个最能代表北京地区不同社会经济水平的幼儿园。金焱将邀请这三个幼儿园在自愿的基础上，参与个案分析阶段的研究工作。与个案研究阶段相关的人员将被邀请参与访谈和小组讨论，这些研究方法将覆盖本研究题目的几个方面；在该阶段也将对教师所在的班级进行为期一周，每天二小时的实地观察。每个幼儿园将进行二个教师访谈，每个访谈不超过1小时。

请确信，您所提供的任何信息都将以最严格的保密措施来处理，而且没有任何参与人员的个人信息会在最终的论文里被披露。当然您有权在任何时候终止参与该项研究，或者拒绝回答个别问题。

因为金焱女士将对访谈录音，她会在附件中的同意书上请您签字同意在访谈过程中录音，以便使用录音或者把录音录入文本，从而准备编写论文、报告和其他的发表作品，前提是您的姓名或者个人信息将不会被披露。因而也可以使相同领域的其他研究者可以使用该录音。

如果您对该项研究有任何问题，请直接和我联系，联系地址如上。感谢您的关注和支持。

此致

敬礼！

副教授　Susan Krieg

学前项目协调员

福林德斯大学教育学院

Appendix 7: Questions in English for Interviews with EC Educators in Beijing

1. What is weekly time allocation related to arts education in your kindergarten?

2. What are the main teaching and learning art forms in your kindergarten?

3. What kinds of activities and programs do you adopt in your enacted arts curriculum?

4. Can you give some examples of any international theories, approaches and experiences that have influenced the arts education in your kindergarten?

5. What kinds of teaching materials do you use?

6. What feelings and experiences do you have during your arts education pedagogical practices drawing on some of the international theories, approaches and experiences?

7. What kinds of contents, skills and abilities do you expect that children of 5-6 year old acquire from their arts learning?

8. What do you understand about children's creativity?

9. What do you think are the key elements of children's quality arts education?

10. How would you describe the relationship between you and children during the arts education? (question specially for teachers)

11. What are the main challenges during your pedagogical practices? And what are your biggest gains? (question specially for teachers)

12. What kinds of supports will benefit your future arts teaching practices? (question specially for teachers)

13. Can you please tell me an interesting story during your teaching practice? (question specially for teachers)

14. What kind of support do you provide for teachers' professional learning relating to arts education? (question specially for principals)

15. What do you think is the kindergarten leadership for children's arts education? (question specially for principals)

Appendix 8: Questions in Chinese for Interviews with EC Educators in Beijing

1. 贵园每周与艺术领域相关的教学活动的时间是几个小时？

2. 贵园的艺术教学主要有哪些艺术形式？

3. 贵园在艺术教学的过程中,会采取什么样的活动形式和组织什么样的活动？

4. 贵园的艺术教学受到哪些国际理论、方法和经验的影响？

5. 贵园艺术课程采用哪些教学材料？

6. 您在采用国际理论和方法进行艺术教学的过程中有哪些感想和体会？

7. 您期待大班的孩子（5－6 岁）在艺术学习中学到什么样的知识、技巧和能力？

8. 您是如何理解幼儿的创新能力的？

9. 您认为什么是构成高质量儿童艺术教育的要素？

10. 您认为幼儿和教师在艺术教学中的关系是什么样的？（特别对教师的提问）

11. 您在艺术教学过程中遇到过哪些挑战，得到过哪些收获？（特别对教师的提问）

12. 哪些支持有助于您将来的艺术教学？（特别对教师的提问）

13. 您是否可以讲一个在您教学过程中遇到过的有趣的故事？（特别对教师的提问）

14. 对教师与艺术教育相关的职业学习，您提供什么支持？（特别对园长的提问）

15. 您是如何理解儿童艺术教育的领导力的？（特别对园长的提问）

Appendix 9: Ethics Final Approval Notice from Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC)

发件人: **Human Research Ethics** human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au
主题: 7039 SBREC final approval notice (16 November 2015)
日期: 2015年11月16日 上午11:54
收件人: jin0072@flinders.edu.au, **Susan Krieg** susan.krieg@flinders.edu.au, **Amy Hamilton** amy.hamilton@flinders.edu.au

Dear Yan,

The Chair of the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC) at Flinders University considered your response to conditional approval out of session and your project has now been granted final ethics approval. This means that you now have approval to commence your research. Your ethics final approval notice can be found below.

FINAL APPROVAL NOTICE

Project No.:	**7039**
Project Title:	The arts curriculum in contemporary Chinese early childhood education
Principal Researcher:	Ms Yan Jin
Email:	jin0072@flinders.edu.au

Approval Date:	16 November 2015	Ethics Approval Expiry Date:	**31 January 2019**

The above proposed project has been **approved** on the basis of the information contained in the application, its attachments and the information subsequently provided with the addition of the following comment(s):

Additional information required following commencement of research:

1. Permissions
   Please ensure that copies of the correspondence granting permission to conduct the research from (a) the Beijing Early Childhood Education Research Association and (b) kindergarten principals are submitted to the Committee *on receipt*. Please ensure that the SBREC project number is included in the subject line of any permission emails forwarded to the Committee. Please note that data collection should not commence until the researcher has received the relevant permissions (item D8 and Conditional approval response – number 10).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESEARCHERS AND SUPERVISORS

1. **Participant Documentation**
   Please note that it is the responsibility of researchers and supervisors, in the case of student projects, to ensure that:

   · all participant documents are checked for spelling, grammatical, numbering and formatting errors. The Committee does not accept any responsibility for the above mentioned errors.

   · the Flinders University logo is included on all participant documentation (e.g., letters of Introduction, information Sheets, consent forms, debriefing information and questionnaires – with the exception of purchased research tools) and the current Flinders University letterhead is included in the header of all letters of introduction. The Flinders University international logo/letterhead should be used and documentation should contain international dialling codes

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for all telephone and fax numbers listed for all research to be conducted overseas.

· the SBREC contact details, listed below, are included in the footer of all letters of introduction and information sheets.

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 'INSERT PROJECT No. here following approval'). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

2. **Annual Progress / Final Reports**
   In order to comply with the monitoring requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (March 2007)* an annual progress report must be submitted each year on the **16 November** (approval anniversary date) for the duration of the ethics approval using the report template available from the Managing Your Ethics Approval SBREC web page. *Please retain this notice for reference when completing annual progress or final reports.*

   If the project is completed *before* ethics approval has expired please ensure a final report is submitted immediately. If ethics approval for your project expires please submit either (1) a final report; or (2) an extension of time request and an annual report.

   Student Projects
   The SBREC recommends that current ethics approval is maintained until a student's thesis has been submitted, reviewed and approved. This is to protect the student in the event that reviewers recommend some changes that may include the collection of additional participant data.

   Your first report is due on **16 November 2016** or on completion of the project, whichever is the earliest.

3. **Modifications to Project**
   Modifications to the project must not proceed until approval has been obtained from the Ethics Committee. Such proposed changes / modifications include:

   · change of project title;
   · change to research team (e.g., additions, removals, principal researcher or supervisor change);
   · changes to research objectives;
   · changes to research protocol;
   · changes to participant recruitment methods;
   · changes / additions to source(s) of participants;
   · changes of procedures used to seek informed consent;
   · changes to reimbursements provided to participants;
   · changes / additions to information and/or documentation to be provided to potential participants;
   · changes to research tools (e.g., questionnaire, interview questions, focus group questions);
   · extensions of time.

   To notify the Committee of any proposed modifications to the project please complete and submit the *Modification Request Form* which is available from the Managing Your Ethics Approval SBREC web page. Download the form from the website every time a new modification request is submitted to ensure that the most recent form is used. Please note that extension of time requests should be submitted prior to the Ethics Approval Expiry Date listed on this notice.

   Change of Contact Details
   Please ensure that you notify the Committee if either your mailing or email address changes to ensure that correspondence relating to this project can be sent to you. A modification request is not required to change your contact details.

4. **Adverse Events and/or Complaints**
   Researchers should advise the Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee on 08 8201-3116 or human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au immediately if:
   · any complaints regarding the research are received;

2

- · a serious or unexpected adverse event occurs that effects participants;
- · an unforeseen event occurs that may affect the ethical acceptability of the project.

Kind regards
Andrea

Mrs Andrea Fiegert and Ms Rae Tyler
Ethics Officers and Executive Officer, Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee
Andrea - Telephone: +61 8 8201-3116 | Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday
Rae – Telephone: +61 8 8201-7938 | ½ day Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

Email: human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au
Web: Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC)

Manager, Research Ethics and Integrity – Dr Peter Wigley
Telephone: +61 8 8201-5466 | email: peter.wigley@flinders.edu.au
Research Services Office |Union Building Basement
Flinders University
Sturt Road, Bedford Park | South Australia | 5042
GPO Box 2100 | Adelaide SA 5001

CRICOS Registered Provider: The Flinders University of South Australia | CRICOS Provider Number 00114A
This email and attachments may be confidential. If you are not the intended recipient,
please inform the sender by reply email and delete all copies of this message.

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Appendix 10: Ethics approval notice from Early Childhood Education Research Association (ECERA) of Beijing Education Society (BES) in English

Early Childhood Education Research Association of Beijing education Society

The Chair,

Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee

Finders University

South Australia, 5000.

1ˢᵗSeptember 2015

This letter is in relation to the proposed research regarding "The arts curriculum in contemporary Chinese early childhood education"to be conducted by Ms. Yan Jin, who is a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) student in the School of Education at Flinders University. Yan is undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis or other publications on the subject of the Arts in early childhood education.

The methods of this research will form four research phases as below:

Phase 1: Document analysis (*The Australian Foundation Year Arts curriculum* and *Beijing Kindergarten Happiness and Development Curriculum*)

Phase 2: Qualitative survey to collect initial data regarding the educator beliefs and nature of arts education in thirty Chinese early childhood kindergartens.

Phase 3: Three case studies will involve interviews and kindergarten observations of the arts experiences offered in three Chinese early childhood kindergartens.

Phase 4: One focus group will be held in order to discuss and comment on the analysis of the data from phases 1, 2, and 3.

The purpose of this research is to

1. Examine the arts curriculum in Chinese early childhood for a cohort of 5-6 year old children;

2. Generate guiding principles for evaluating early childhood arts programs.

Beijing Early Childhood Education Research Association has the authority given by Beijing Education Society to carry out research in schools and early childhood

institutions. Beijing Early Childhood Education Research Association will manage the ethical processes regarding informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality.

On the basis of this authority, Ms. Yan Jin is authorized to collect survey questionnaires, to undertake case studies in the kindergartens as designated by Beijing Early Childhood Education Research Association, and to organize a focus group interview with some of the participants of the case studies.

We trust this research will prove beneficial to the Chinese, Australian and international early childhood field.

Yours faithfully,

Su Jing
Secretary General
Beijing Early Childhood Education Research Association

Su jing

Email: ECEbeijing@163.com; Phone: 86-010-68012277-825; Fax: 86-010-68012277-825; Address: Room 325Zhenwu hotel, Zhenwumiao Road, Beijing China

Appendix 11: Ethics Approval Notice from Early Childhood Education Research Association (ECERA) of Beijing Education Society (BES) in Chinese

北京市教育学会学前教育研究会

尊敬的福林德斯大学社会和行为研究伦理委员会主席

您好！

本信是关于福林德斯大学教育学院的博士研究生金焱女士将要从事的以"中国学前儿童的艺术教育"为主题的一项研究，以完成她的博士论文，以及其他的发表作品。该研究将分为以下四个研究阶段：

第一阶段：文献分析（澳大利亚一年级艺术课程和北京幼儿园快乐与发展课程）

第二阶段：定性调查问卷，在三十个中国幼儿园中收集关于教师理念和艺术教育状况的初步数据。

第三阶段：在三个中国幼儿园中进行关于艺术教育的包含访谈和实地观察的个案研究

第四阶段：在第一、二、三阶段数据分析的基础上组织小组讨论，以探讨和评论相关的数据分析。

本研究的目的是：

1. 了解当代中国 5－6 岁儿童的艺术课程

2. 形成评估学前儿童艺术课程的一些指导性原则

北京市教育学会学前教育研究会由北京市教育学会授权在相关的学校和早教机构进行教育研究；北京学前教育研究会将负责与该项研究相关的伦理审查程序，以保证相应的知情权，匿名权和保密权。

在此授权的基础上，金焱女士将被许可去由北京学前教育研究会指定的相关早教机构收集调查问卷，开展个例研究，以及组织一个由个例研究参加人员参与的小组讨论。

我们相信该项研究将对中国、澳大利亚以及国际早教领域做出有益的贡献。

此致

敬礼

北京市教育学会学前教育研究会 秘书长

2015 年 9 月 1 日

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