Arts and Cultural Education at School in Europe

Latvia

2007/08
Arts and Cultural Education at School in Europe

Latvia

(Reference year 2007/08)

1. Responsibility and purpose

Cultural and creative dimensions of education in broader sense are responsibility both of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Culture. Decisions about the creation of the curriculum related to culture and creativity within education are made at central level.

Latvia has specified aims for the whole curriculum. Curriculum (both the Standard and Model Programme for Basic Education) includes cultural and creative aims. Among main aims of basic education (ISCED 1 and 2) is a following: ‘to enable harmonic development of a pupil’.

Among main tasks of basic education (ISCED 1 and 2) are: ‘to ensure possibility that pupil gains experience of creative activity’ and ‘to develop basic perception on cultural heritage of Latvia, Europe and the World’.

Among the seven educational aspects mentioned in the Standard of basic (compulsory, ISCED 1 and 2) education the first one is ‘Aspect of self-expression and creativity’. The general content of this educational aspect includes the ‘experience of creative activity’, development of problem-solving skills, ‘unfolding of interconnections’, ‘cultivation of imagination’, as well as possibility to do artistic creative activities. Content of the third aspect ‘Moral and aesthetical’ includes ‘Positive attitude to the heritage of culture’.

Decisions about the creation of the arts curriculum are made at central level, but in close cooperation with all stakeholders at central, local and school level (association of directors of schools, associations of pedagogues etc.).

Concerning implementation of standards – this is decided at central level by the Centre for Curriculum Development and Examinations. As regards programmes of subjects and school teaching programmes – these are responsibility of school boards of municipalities and of schools themselves (teachers, pedagogical councils).

2. Organisation and aims of arts education

Latvia’s arts curriculum is organised as separate subjects and includes (as it appears in curriculum):

- Visual arts (classes 1-9)
- Music (classes 1-9)
- Literature (with drama as a part of it) (classes 4-9).

Three above mentioned subjects compose educational (subject) sphere or area called ‘The Art’ (Māksla).

‘Dance’ is integrated in subject ‘Sport’ and some schools offer subject ‘Rhythmic’ for primary classes (ISCED 1) for dancing lessons, in this case ‘Rhythmic’ is part of mandatory school curriculum.
'Media arts' might be integrated in 'Informatics'. 'Crafts' is integrated in separate subject 'Home economics and technologies' which belongs (together with 'Sport') to educational sphere 'Human being and Society'.

There are four general tasks (besides specific aims for separate subjects) for arts' subjects (Visual arts, Music and Literature):

- To acquaint pupils with various forms of artistic expression.
- To motivate pupils express themselves in creative works and participate in artistic activity (as for instance to sing, play, draw, model, write), and to develop perception of art work.
- To acquaint pupils with diversity of the art-world.
- To improve learning skills.

**Visual arts**

Aim of the subject is to facilitate emotional and intellectual development of a pupil, to perfect and develop creative abilities of pupil and interest about art, and to create preconditions that pupil would be able to use experience of her or his artistic and creative activity in various ways.

Task of the subject is to create possibility for a pupil:

a) To acquire terminology, concepts and forms of expression of art; to become acquainted with art forms, techniques and genres and **fields related to art**;

b) To cultivate skills to realise own ideas and conceptions with means of visual art, and to analyse and interpret own creative ideas and art-works;

c) To gain experience to perceive visual values in nature and in cultural environment, to comprehend own co-responsibility as regards preservation and creation of these values.

The Standard for the subject 'Visual art' also defines:

- Mandatory content of the subject and
- Basic learning outcomes at the end of class 3, 6 and 9.

**Music**

Aim of the subject is to facilitate emotional and intellectual development of a pupil, to bring out creative abilities, making pre-conditions that everyone will be able to become an active music listener or member of various types of music amateur groups.

Task of the subject is to create possibility for a pupil:

a) To acquire elements of music language;

b) To cultivate skills to listen in the world of sounds, to perceive music at emotional level and to develop imaginative and associative thinking; to cultivate ability to describe means of music expression; to gain necessary experience for practical playing of music;

c) To get acquainted with development of music in the world and to cultivate ability to perceive music language of different cultures.
Literature

Aim of the subject is to facilitate emotional and intellectual development of pupils by developing reception abilities of literature as art form, as well as developing of reading interests, imaginative thinking and creative self-expression of pupils.

Task of the subject is to create possibility for a pupil:

a) To acquire inner logic of literature and to use acquired knowledge during reading process and when interpreting art work;

b) To develop imaginative thinking and skills of self-expression both when interpreting and creating literary texts;

c) To develop understanding about literature as of form of culture heritage;

d) To be aware about values included in literary works, to develop interests, needs and experience of reader.

The drama is studied not only as a literature genre, but as independent world of the theatre; pupils acquire not only the structure of dramaturgical work but are also encouraged to read and play the drama works and even to make stage design attempts.

The Standard for the subject 'Literature' also defines:

- Mandatory content of the subject and
- Basic learning outcomes at the end of class 6 and 9.

The arts are compulsory for all pupils in basic education (ISCED 1 and 2) age (7-16 years). Schools must provide access to courses in visual arts, music and literature.

The time devoted to compulsory arts education at ISCED 1 and 2 levels is presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Music (lessons per week)</th>
<th>Visual Art (lessons per week)</th>
<th>Literature (lessons per week)</th>
<th>Arts (lessons per year)</th>
<th>Percentage of lessons devoted to arts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>38,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>38,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>33,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>29,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>26,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>19,35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>18,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>18,2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There exist cross-curricular links between arts and non-arts subjects such as natural and social sciences, mother and foreign language, ethics, history, geography, sports, informatics, home economics and technologies. The cross-cultural links have common and general aims defined by the Basic Education Standard: to give to the pupils basic knowledge and basic skills, to prepare pupils for further education, to contribute to harmonious (polymathic) development of pupils.

(1) One lesson corresponds to 40 or 45 minutes (depending on school)
As to the integration of **ICT**, programme for basic education recommends the use of ICT within the basic education in general. Among the main educational aspects there is ‘ability to use contemporary technologies’.

### 3. Special provision

In Latvia there are special provisions for the arts in the form of separate publicly-funded schools that have focus on arts education. There are around 20 schools all over Latvia where together with basic education (ISCED 1 and 2) pupils acquire professionally oriented programmes in arts – music, dance and crafts.

Besides, there exist 16 professional secondary education schools (ISCED 3) with programmes in music, dance, and visual arts (including audiovisual arts, media, design and conservation).

Schools where ISCED level 1 and 2 programmes are offered may not set entrance requirements notwithstanding whether they offer general or professionally oriented programmes. Enrolling pupils at ISCED level 3 schools may organise entrance competitions or selections according to defined criteria.

Besides, there are 142 music and visual art schools (62 music schools, 36 visual art schools, and 44 music and art schools offering professionally oriented education programmes in music, visual art and dance). Usually there are 12 hours per week when lessons take place and the length of programme may be from 5 to 8 years (depending on programme). As regards enrolment – it depends on number of applications. Music and art schools may select pupils according to rules approved by founder of the school.

### 4. Assessment of pupils' progress and monitoring of standards in the arts

#### 4.1 Pupil assessment

There are several basic principles for assessment practice in all the subjects:

- Transparency (demands are open and visible)
- Accumulation of good achievements
- Principle of correspondence of assessment
- Variety of methods used for assessment
- Regularity
- Obligation

The criteria building up the assessment of learning performance in all the subjects (including the arts) are as follows: the extent and quality of attained knowledge, learned skills, attitude toward learning process and dynamics of learning performance development.

The basic education content reform implemented since 2005 made impact also on arts subject content and assessment. It was a comprehensive reform, with an overall impact on educational content and new Standards for 16 subjects, including arts. Changes were introduced starting with grades 1, 4 and 7, and embraced the whole of primary and lower secondary education (ISCED 1 and 2) in a period of three years. The overall aim of this reform was to move from acquiring knowledge to acquiring skills.

Also, the ongoing task of the Centre for Curriculum Development and Examination is to develop unified and improved assessment system for pupils at ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3. The development and
improving of the assessment system for all the subjects including arts subjects is permanent task of this body subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science.

At ISCED level 1 in all subjects (including the arts – visual art and music) attainment of pupils is assessed without marks in the 1st grade, i.e. by using descriptive assessment. Descriptive assessment means that pupils receive a short oral and written assessment, and parents of pupils receive a short oral and written assessment report on pupils’ progress, describing development of knowledge, skills, attitude towards learning and class participation.

Also in grades 2, 3 and 4 pupils are assessed by using descriptive assessment in many of subjects, including arts (visual art and music), but excluding Latvian language and mathematics (and natural sciences in the grade 4th).

At ISCED level 2 teachers in classrooms carry out continuous assessment on pupils’ progress using a grading scale from ‘1’ to ‘10’ in all the subjects (including the arts – visual art, music and literature) in grades 5-9.

Teachers in classrooms carry out continuous assessment on pupils’ progress and also teachers are responsible for pupils’ assessment at the end of each semester. The criteria for building up pupils’ assessment by the teacher are as follows: the extent and quality of attained knowledge, learned skills, attitude toward learning process and dynamics of learning performance development in relation to curricular content and in relation to defined standard and guidelines. For instance, each subject model programmes (recommendations for the teachers) for the arts contain achievement assessment forms, methods and examples.

At ISCED level 1 (grades 1-4) pupils are given descriptive assessment. At ISCED level 2 (grades 5-9): pass/not pass is used for diagnostic assessment and formative assessment and the grading scale of marks from ‘1’ to ‘10’ is used for summative assessment.

At ISCED level 1 pupils receive a school-report showing descriptive assessment in every art subject at the end of each semester. At ISCED level 2 pupils receive a school-report showing grades in every subject at the end of each semester. Pupils of the 9th class receive a school-report once a year – at the end of the first semester. The Ministry of Education and Science approves a sample of a school-report issued to pupils.

However, some art and culture related themes or topics and creative/imagination aspects may be included in externally determined tests for other subjects (for example, mother tongue). The content of these art related themes is not subject for evaluation but appears as method for testing – pupils should visualize their impressions, attitudes and memories. Thus, the arts appear there as a method for testing, not pure content. These tests aren’t externally assessed. Pupils that have received assessment in all subjects, state tests and examinations receive a certificate on basic education (apliecība par vispārējo pamatzīdību) and an achievement sheet.

At the end of the 3rd, 6th and 9th grade pupils are obligated to pass centrally determined tests in certain subjects. The assessments of tests in the 3rd and 6th grades affect pupils’ end-of-year evaluation, while that in the 9th grade does not.

At the end of the 9th grade pupils have to pass state examinations and tests in order to get a certificate on basic education (apliecība par vispārējo pamatzīdību) Materials and a single order of examinations are developed by the Centre for Curriculum Development and Examination. Tests may be organised in a written or combined (written and oral or practical part) form. Examinations may be organised in written, oral or combined form.

At ISCED level 1 national test with combined content at the 3rd grade may include questions/exercises in relation to the arts/culture themes. However, the content of these themes is not subject for
evaluation but appears as method for testing – pupils should visualize their impressions, attitudes and memories.

At ISCED level 2 national test in Latvian language for 6th grade includes questions related to the arts, for instance, pupils are asked to think up with a short story about a visit to art museum by using in the story such concepts as 'Art', 'exhibits', 'widening of one's view', 'interesting way of spending time/pleasure', or they are asked to create a story about graffiti art, etc. Also, questions about literature works and creativity of writers are included. However, the content of these themes is not subject for evaluation but appears as method for testing – pupils should visualize their impressions, attitudes and memories. This test is externally prepared/determined but internally assessed.

At the end of the 9th grade pupils have to pass state examinations, including Latvian language and ethnic minority language (for pupils attending schools where ethnic minority education programmes are provided). This is externally determined but internally assessed examination. It contains cross-curricular themes with the subject 'Literature' which belongs to the Arts sphere in the curriculum in Latvia. However, the content of these art related themes is not subject for evaluation but appears as method for testing – pupils should visualize their impressions, attitudes and memories.

If a pupil receives a low grade or fails to meet the expected standard in an arts subject then most probably teacher will work with him or her individually during so-called 'consultation hours'. If achievement of pupil did not comply with one thematic part of art curriculum, he or she can try to do it again during the consultation hour. Usually teachers assist to slowly working pupils and help them to perform/fulfil their exercises or works during semester. It is regarded, that it is not a problem if a pupil fails to meet one part of expected standard. If he or she receives low grade or fails in design/composition then perhaps he or she will be more successful with graphic drawing.

If pupil receives a high degree or exceeds the demands of standard, then usually he or she is recommended by the teacher for participation in subject Olympiads (school / local / regional / national / international levels). Also, education institution should organise individual (or group) lessons/activities for notably talented children. These individual (or group) lessons should not be organised for the entire class, but if necessary and possible, pupils form different classes may be united in such groups. It may correspond to the formula for enrichment of studies for pupils of marked potential ability. A requirement to organise individual (or group) lessons for notably talented children is included in the Model subject plan and curriculum of basic education (ISCED 1 and 2) and in the Model subject plan and curriculum of basic education of ethnic minorities (also ISCED 1 and 2). The most important thing for a teacher is not to stall the development of pupil's abilities.

### 4.2 Monitoring of standards

The Centre for Curriculum Development and Examinations is responsible for monitoring of standards. There are several ways how the Centre inquires about achievements of pupils and the correspondence of these achievements to the demands of standard. This is not only external monitoring during the organisation of participation of talented pupils in national and international Olympiads. The Centre develops tests and offers to teachers in order to evaluate knowledge and skills of pupils.

Particularly in the arts subjects many tests developed by the Centre are recommend to teachers for use in schools. This is an externally developed recommendation for teachers. Teachers are asked to report results of the tests to the Centre for Curriculum Development and Examinations. In 2008 the Centre developed a diagnostic test for the 5th grade pupils. The responsibility of the Centre is to monitor teachers work as well, through monitoring of teachers’ methodology unions and associations. The Centre is consulted by the teachers, and the Centre organises seminars, in-service education courses and meetings for teachers.
Monitoring activities can take place at regional level, for instance the methodology association of visual art teachers in respective region monitors compliance of classrooms and classroom equipment to the needs of teaching visual art subject.

5. Teacher education in the arts

5.1 Initial Teacher Education

General teachers as a rule can not teach all or some of the arts subjects.

Main requirements for specialist or semi-specialist teachers in the arts are bachelor degree (professional bachelor degree in education (pedagogy)) and teacher qualification in respective art subject. They have to study arts as part of their professional teacher training. During or even prior their initial teacher training they have to demonstrate that they have achieved a certain level of skill in particular art form. For instance, laureates of Olympiads in art subjects can enrol to study programme without a contest. Or, for instance, among the requirements for starting an initial music teacher training is upper secondary education and professional upper secondary education in following programmes: 'Conducting of choir' or 'Music theory' or 'Vocal music' or 'Instrumental music'. During the initial teacher training they have to obtain special skills which belong to the arts (music, dance and visual art) teacher profession. Since in Latvia there is single structure education (basic education – ISCED 1 and 2) then the same requirements apply to prospective teachers for ISCED 1 and 2.

Higher education institutions in Latvia are responsible for the content of initial teacher training study programme. Main study areas usually are: pedagogy and psychology, professional art courses, art pedagogy and methodology of respective subject. All of content areas mentioned by the questionnaire are covered:

- Child development in the arts (focusing on respective subject – visual art, dance or music)
- Arts curriculum content (focusing on respective subject – visual art, dance or music)
- Arts pedagogy (focusing on respective subject – visual art, dance or music)
- Arts history (and also Folklore, History of Literature, History of Religion, Philosophy, History of National Music, Foreign language, ICT)
- Personal arts skill development of the prospective teacher (for instance playing instruments, vocal singing, conducting of orchestra etc.)
- Pupil assessment in arts.

Since higher education institutions are autonomous in deciding on the content of study programme, here is summary information about Professional bachelor study programme 'General (ISCED 0, 1, 2 and 3) education music teacher' developed by the largest and most significant music teacher education institution in Latvia – Jāzeps Vītols Music Academy of Latvia:

The amount of study programme is 240 ECTS credits; 8 semesters (4 academic years); practical training period is 39 ECTS credits.

Amount of compulsory courses ('A' part) is 159 ECTS credit points including professional study courses (129 ECTS credits) and general courses (30 ECTS credits). Professional study courses include pedagogy courses (30 ECTS credits) and music study courses (99 ECTS credits).

Compulsory courses ('A' part) in pedagogy: Psychology: general; developmental; of personality; Developmental psychology of pre-school children; Pedagogy, Ethics of pedagogue; Education management; ICT; Pedagogy of music; Methodology of teaching music and choir work management:
Teaching of Music, Work with choir at school, Solfeggio, Music in pre-primary school, Instrumentarium of K. Orff system.

Compulsory courses ('A' part) in music: Conducting and full score reading; Instrumentation playing by system of K. Orff; Rhythmic; Piano play; Improvisation; Solo singing; Transcribing; Stage rhetoric; Choral didactics; Latin language; History of music; History of Latvian music; Solfeggio; Harmonium; Polyphony; Form of music; Folklore.

Compulsory ('A' part) general courses: Culture of Latvian language; Foreign language; History of Literature; Entrepreneurship; Philosophy; History of Art; History of Religion.

Part 'B' (133.5 ECTS credit points) five specialised courses are offered and student has to choose at least three of them. Study courses provide students with knowledge and skills to conduct classes of rhythmic, to teach music instrument playing, to teach theoretic subjects in music, to perform duties of pedagogue for solo singing, to perform duties of music teacher in pre-school education institution and to work as a choir conductor.

Optional courses (part 'C') (9 ECTS credit points): special software courses; applied foreign language courses; electro acoustic music; music instrument playing; orchestra conducting. Amount of each study course is 3 ECTS credit points.

Practical training – 40.5 ECTS credits. Conducting lessons of music in pre-primary, basic (ISCED 1 and 2) and upper secondary school. Conducting of choir.

State examinations – 18 ECTS credit points: oral examination in music history and theory; examination in methods and pedagogical praxis – conducting of lesson in music; concert-examination in choir conducting and work with school choir; presenting of bachelor diploma theses.

Professional artists can perform teacher of arts subjects’ duties in schools at ISCED levels 1 and 2 only if they have started studies in teacher education programme in a time period of two years since they have started to work at school.

The Law permits that in professional study programmes professionals with significant practical experience can participate as lecturers and docents. Because of autonomy of higher education institutions, the requirements to such applicants to docent positions are approved in the institution of higher education by the senate or council.

5.2 Continuing Professional Development

CPD for teachers is compulsory in Latvia. This is regulated by the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers.

In general, teachers themselves are responsible for acquiring the necessary in-service training. A general education teacher (working at ISCED level 0, 1, 2 or 3) has a duty of further education of at least 36 programme hours in three years. Besides, teacher has the right to use 30 calendar days during a 3-year period for professional development, including improvement of competences, his basic salary being retained.

Training may be provided by education institutions, institutions or enterprises belonging to the state or municipalities, non-governmental institutions or private providers. In-service training is usually organized during the working time.

In 2008 the Centre for Curriculum Development and Examination organised CPD courses for the teachers of visual art in 24 hours amount. Following are examples of CPD courses in arts organised by the Centre and co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science:
Visual art:
- Implementation of varied teaching process in visual art, enhancing epistemological activity and creativity of pupil;
- Philosophical thinking in lessons of visual art;
- Creative approach and variety of techniques in visual art teaching process;
- The plastic art of paper;
- Professional development for art pedagogues working with children with special needs, etc.

Music:
- Development of creative abilities of primary school pupils in lessons of music;
- Elementary forms of playing music in contemporary pedagogy practice;
- Music subject – important part of education system for the development of harmonic personality, etc.

Literature:
- Contemporary approach of the implementation of teaching subject 'Literature' for the development of pupil personality;
- Implementation of varied teaching process in literature, enhancing epistemological activity and creativity of pupil, etc.

Crafts:
- Development of creativity and practical work experience for pupils in home economics lessons;
- CPD courses in textile work (macramé) for home economics pedagogues;
- CPD courses in textile work (weaving) for home economics pedagogues, etc.

Dance:
- Maintenance of children folk dance traditions in Song and dance festivals for school youth in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, etc.

Drama:
- CPD for school theatre pedagogue by using newest methods in stage rhetoric acquiring and drama playing;
- Innovations in work of pupils’ theatre;
- Master-classes of theatre director Hermanis Paukšs (children play-writer and drama editor);
- Improvisation theatre for personality development for children with special needs, etc.

Besides Latvian teachers are informed about opportunities to attend various national or international seminars and conferences, as for instance, EAS Conference for music teachers 'Music Inside and Outside the School' in Tallinn, capital of our neighbouring country Estonia, July 1-4, 2009.

Professional artists can be involved in CPD in Latvia at ISCED levels 1 and 2 if they participate in CPD programmes provided by institutions which are registered in the register of education institutions. From
the examples of offered courses it can be seen that professional artists may participate in theatre master-classes, they can also to share with knowledge on newest working methods, approaches or work materials in different art fields.

Basic education (ISCED 1 and 2) content reform (2005-2008) has influenced the content of CPD, because the reform accented more focus on pupils’ skills development, not so much on theoretical knowledge.

6. Initiatives
Concerning cultural and creative education requirements are defined at central level through the Basic Education Standard and the Standards for arts subjects. The Standard has adopted in 2005 (basic education teaching content reform). The Centre for Curriculum Development and Examinations has developed recommendations for teachers concerning cultural and creative education through programmes for arts subjects.

There exist recommendations and the Standard motivates pupils to attend the museums. There are also examples of partnership between schools and artists, musicians, poets and writers but these are initiatives at school and local level mainly.

There are recommendations and initiatives concerning provision of extra-curricular activities for pupils in the arts. Among the main educational aspects there is: 'self-expression and creativity aspect', including ‘experience of creative activity’ and ‘possibility to do arts, participation in interest-related education and to do sports’. Model programme for basic education states that amateur art activities organised in schools and by schools take place as optional classes or lessons. These lessons are over and above of total teaching load. According to the Model programme for basic education also interest-related education activities are organised in schools as extra-curricular activities. Besides, extra-curricular activities should contribute and deepen cross-curricular links and should contribute to achievement of the aims defined by the Basic Education Standard.

The Centre for Curriculum Development and Examinations organises national visual art Olympiad for pupils regularly; in 2009 the 47th Visual Art Olympiad took place with overarching theme “Painting. Play of colours in industrial landscape”. A special exhibition of 115 participants was organised with paintings by 5-12 grades’ pupils, the exhibition supported by the Association of general education visual art pedagogues and a design company.

7. Ongoing reforms and proposals
In 2005 basic education content reform had started and new Basic Education Standard was adopted. The new Standard defines educational or subject areas or spheres and educational aspects, therefore creates common structure with cultural education and creativity within.

The development of the teaching content reform in basic education has been one of the key tasks over the last years in Latvia. A number of new subject standards were developed in order to ensure a logical link between the subjects and acquiring core skills instead of overloading pupils with the factual material. The implementation of the new standards was started in September 1, 2005 and covered pupils of the 1st, 4th and 7th class. Gradually, all pupils in basic education are involved in three years time (2nd, 5th and 8th class were included in 2006/07, and 3rd, 6th and 9th in 2007/08) thus completing implementation of this reform at the end of 2007/08. However, in several subjects, such as sports, crafts, visual arts, music and foreign languages, the new standards was used in all classes already in 2005/06.

In 2008 basic education content reform will be finally implemented completely and analysis of results of the reform might follow.
The Ministry of Culture recently has tried to attract attention of education policy makers to the notion 'cultural education'. The Ministry of Culture proposes that there is broader meaning of term 'cultural education' that covers not only the field of professionally oriented music and art education system. Cultural education should be integral part of lifelong learning.

The Ministry of Culture accents that the term 'cultural education' imply responsibilities of both the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Science but until now the cooperation of both ministries took place in fragmentary way instead of permanent cooperation and coordination. That is why the Ministry of Culture launched work on development of policy document 'National programme for development of cultural education' (Valsts programma kultūrizglītības attīstībai). The development of this policy programme now is under responsibility of both the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Science.

Besides, the Ministry of Culture has launched recently the development of Culture Canon of Latvia. The experience of Denmark regarding development of the Canon plays significant role. It might be that the Culture Canon will play some role in school education in future.

8. Responsibility and purpose

Arts education at schools is usually regarded as self-evident process which not requires any special surveying. There are some national monographs by art pedagogy professors, for instance, on 'Art pedagogy' (2004 part one and 2006 part two), or on 'Visual activity of child' (2000). However, there is a lack of any report commissioned by the Ministry of Education about the real practice of implementation of curriculum. Notwithstanding this, many bachelor and masters’ papers are written about practical implementation of art education in schools, as for instance Master theses on 'Role of comprehensive school management in ensuring of visual art teaching' (2008).