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SAAME response to *Australian Curriculum: The Arts Foundation to Year 10 (Draft)*

The response from this Association comes from a meeting dedicated to discussing the Draft document as well as comments covered through our online environments. Headings below refer to those in the document and we have specifically only addressed the introductory section and that relating Media Studies.

Rationale:

- Disappointment remains that despite advice given in a meeting in Sydney, May, 2010 that the art form is still being referred to as 'Media Arts'. This is a term that is not used by any of the states that currently offer 'Media Studies'. Internationally, the term 'Media Arts' is considered a shortening of the term 'New Media Arts' which is a genre rather than a discipline. Having to qualify the subject as an 'art' form appears redundant and everyday language use would see the term shortened to 'Media' in any case. It is further disappointing that Australia as a Member State of UNESCO has not recognised the opportunity in this document to continuing work towards achieving the objectives of the Grünwald Declaration (1982), the Alexandria Declaration (2005) and the UNESCO Paris Agenda (2007), all of which Australia is a signatory.
- Paragraph 2 refers to 'unique identities' however this needs to be balanced with a comment that the Arts also reinforces culture through shared experiences as noted below in the Aims.
- More emphasis could be made in Paragraph 4 about the Arts as a mode of learning e.g. Arts uniquely covers all learning domains – cognitive, psycho-motor and affective.

Aims:

- Dot Point 1 - perhaps the three types of thinking listed need greater clarification or inclusion in the Glossary. How do they differ?

- Dot Point 2 - while reference to innovative arts practice is good, should traditional practice also be included?

Organisation:

1. Content Structure –

- In Paragraph 4, we agree that Foundation to Year 6 should have ...experience... in all five Arts subjects but we believe that in secondary school, students should continue to learn in two or more subjects rather than one. Dropping from five to one is a considerable gap and we are afraid that many schools may interpret this as permission to scale back their Arts programs.
- The final paragraph about terminology reads as though there are two clear stages – primary and secondary. Understanding and use of terminology should be continually developing. Perhaps this needs to be written more clearly.

2. Making –

- We wonder if the term ‘experimenting and developing’ might be more accurate if the word ‘designing’ was also used. Interestingly the word seems to be avoided in this section but is included in the Glossary.

3. Responding –

- Under the question relating to ‘form and elements’, the use of the word ‘media’ could be confusing.

The Arts across Foundation to Year 10:

Years 7 to 10 –

- Surprisingly no explicit mention is made in this section about career choices and vocational learning. Certainly by Year 10 there are students considering a career in the Arts and some are undertaking V.E.T. courses e.g. Certificate II in Media (Creative Industries).

Glossary:

- We are happy to see the inclusion of a Glossary but this needs more work e.g. anime and Machinima are mentioned but are not in the Glossary.

General Capabilities:

ICT capability –

- This needs to be much stronger as in the Critical and Creative thinking that follows. ICT is integral especially with respect to Media. Refer to the Media and Information Literacy Curriculum document published by UNESCO in 2011.

Media Arts – Rationale:

- Paragraph 2, second sentence – Is it Media Arts or the Media that ‘connect audiences, purposes and ideas exploring viewpoints’?

- Why is Media Arts capitalized but the Media is not?
- Paragraph 4 – the comment that the Media are ‘culturally used and negotiated’ needs to be unpacked using plain language.

Media Arts – Aims:

- Dot Point 2 is too dense particularly, ‘...exploring perspectives in media as producers and consumers’ and needs to be reworded.

Learning in Media Arts:

- The introductory paragraph talks about using communication technologies and this should be reinforced back in the General Capabilities as discussed earlier.
- The five interrelated concepts need further explanation. These are derived from David Buckingham and the British Film Institute but were originally – Language, Representation, Audience and Production. Why the change? Buckingham’s Language concept is far broader than what is listed here and includes Meanings, Conventions, Codes, Genres, Choices, Combinations and Technologies. Technology appears here as well as under Production to differentiate between using technology to produce messages and how the technology itself becomes part of the message. Similarly Institutions is a subset of Production. Both cases point to a need to explain where these concepts have come from. How well does this conceptual framework mesh with the states’ that offer Media in senior years? It would appear that this was written by someone from Queensland as this is the only jurisdiction using these five concepts. There should be more discussion on this!
- The concept of ‘language’ as it applies to Media Arts is not defined in the Glossary.
- Use of the term ‘media arts works’ is clumsy. Most would simply refer to Media Products which also embodies the more ‘industrial’ nature of what the Media creates in the main.
- Why have ‘codes and conventions’ been extracted from the ‘languages’ heading above? This does not make sense.

Foundation to Year 2:

Content Descriptions and Elaborations –

- Elaboration under 2.4/5 – ‘combining a variety of media sources’ needs to be more specific.
- Content description 2.9 – research would suggest that this is unlikely for children to achieve this given their cognitive development.

Years 3 and 4:

Content Descriptions and Elaborations –

- Paragraph 3 - ‘students apply codes relevant to the technologies ...’ needs more explanation given that this will probably be for a generalist teacher audience.
- Elaboration for 4.1 ‘maintenance of virtual worlds’ needs more explanation and is inappropriate at this level.
- First for Elaboration 4.2 should read ‘recreating *some of* the codes and conventions ...’
- Last Elaboration for 4.2 is beyond this Band!

Achievement Standard –

- “They discuss responsibilities of makers and users of media” needs to emphasis that this would only be at a superficial level.

Years 5 and 6:

Content Descriptions and Elaborations –

- First elaboration for 6.2 – apart from needing an explanation of Machinima, this is probably not age appropriate at this level.
- Second elaboration for 6.8 refers to ‘cyber safety’. This should be happening in all Bands!

Years 7 and 8:

Achievement Standard –

- Last paragraph, first sentence would read better as, ‘Students use *Media Arts* terminology *in analyzing* media representations and discuss the organizational context in which *these representations* are made’.

Years 9 and 10:

Content Descriptions and Elaborations –

- Elaboration 10.5 has too many descriptors that do not work together. For example what is the difference between a ‘digital context’ and an ‘online’ one? This would read better simply as, ‘Produce Media Arts works designed for a range of contexts.’

Final Comments –

Given the increasing immersion our students have in the world of media, be it traditional or social, this document offers Australian educators an opportunity to ‘get it right’. We are however concerned that the amount of time allocated to the Arts and then allotted to the area of Media, will not be enough to properly achieve what is set out in this document. We also believe that while the Conceptual framework might need more work that it is vital that this is kept as it is part of the uniqueness of the subject that must be retained.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the development of the curriculum document.

Yours sincerely,

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