

More than words can say

*A view of literacy
through the arts*

2019 edition
Edited by Julie Dyson

National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE)
naae.org.au

In developing students' capacity to participate fully in the life of work and the work of life, it is essential that we foster students' skills, knowledge and understanding in the languages of all art forms.

– Margaret Barrett

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Introduction

This edition of *More than words can say* celebrates the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the National Advocates for Arts Education (formerly the National Affiliation of Arts Educators) in 1989.

We are honoured that Professor Robyn Ewing AM has agreed to write the Foreword for this edition. Robyn is recognised as one of Australia's most distinguished arts educators, researchers and advocates.

Each art form chapter has been completely updated by the original authors and by current members of the NAAE.

We include the late Joan Livermore's original Preface (1998) and her paper 'A view of Literacy through the Arts' to provide context for NAAE's decision to publish this collection of papers. Joan was Chair of NAAE from 1991 to 1998, and was a driving force behind the establishment of the Centre for Arts Education at the University of Canberra, which briefly had federal government funding through the then Department of Education & Youth Affairs.

Another distinguished NAAE Chair, Robin Pascoe (1999–2002) had provided the Afterword for the 2003 edition, and this is also reproduced as a valuable contribution to this edition. Robin has also revised the Drama chapter.

As the current chair of NAAE, it gives me great pleasure to oversee this third edition as editor, and its launch during UNESCO's International Arts Education Week in May 2019, along with the new NAAE website, its first in 30 years. For a brief history of NAAE, see [page 110](#).

Julie Dyson AM
Chair of NAAE & editor, *More than words can say* 2019

Foreword 2019

One of the delightful (and perhaps sometimes unanticipated) outcomes that regularly emerges in the arts community is that of collegiality, strong commitment, enthusiasm and authentic friendships. There is the sheer joy that is part of the fabric of a shared passion for, and engagement in, arts education. I feel both humbled and incredibly privileged to be writing this Foreword for a document that remains as eerily relevant more than two decades after it was first published in 1998. A call to unite and advocate for the arts is once again at hand!

Today there is unequivocal evidence that adds further credibility to the original edition of *More than words can say*. Quality arts education positively contributes to the shaping of both personal wellbeing and place in the world (Delphin & MacDonald, 2018; Hunter, Aprill, Hill & Emery, 2018), academic performance beyond the arts (Fleming, Gibson & Anderson, 2015; Eisner, 2002) and an understanding of the other.

Each arts discipline embodies distinctive ways of making meaning. Engaging in quality arts processes and experiences not only enhances students' emotional and social wellbeing and artfulness – it fosters lifelong literacies. As Livermore wrote, all arts disciplines must therefore be understood as different ways of making meaning, different ways of representing reality – different literacies. And as Eisner (2002, p. 5) reminds us, each artform provides another way of being in the world: to experience, to understand, to express and represent meaning.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) articulates these understandings clearly. Published in 2009 after extensive consultation with early childhood educators, it states that literacy should be defined as:

... the capacity, confidence and disposition to use language **in all its forms**. Literacy **incorporates a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, storytelling, visual arts, media and drama**, as well as talking, listening, viewing, reading and writing. (DEEWR, 2009, p. 38, my emphasis)

Yet there is still no universally accepted definition of what it means to be literate today. UNESCO's (2014, p.149) definition, however, proposes that contemporary literacy should be understood as '**reading the world**' so we can '**develop the capacity for social awareness and critical reflection as a basis for personal and social change**' However, despite the ever-growing international and national research and consistent rhetoric, the arts continue to be marginalised in Australia. We must ask why.

Recently Evelyn Chapman, Brisbane Catholic Education Arts, used the concept of *the Arts in Symphony* for the Arts Big Day Out. The concept of symphony resonates strongly with me – the understanding that the need to synthesise and cross traditional discipline boundaries is integral to our future work together in, through and across the arts. We must combine the different and disparate, and ensure we dialogue to create a compelling understanding of the whole.

It is a given then that all children are entitled to a quality arts-rich curriculum that fosters the development of teachers' and children's creativity, imagination, self-confidence and identity. We must counter the simple 'one size fits all' approach to literacy and pedagogy that continues to pervade the focus of policymakers and bureaucrats. Improving our test performance and ranking in the world of benchmarks causes huge anxieties for many educators and their learners.

The potential of the arts in symphony to promote self-understanding and wellbeing and to make meaning to illuminate the advantages of viewing the world from multiple perspectives is limitless. Contemporary research, alongside multi-disciplinary and transdisciplinary arts-rich initiatives, underline that we must blur the boundaries while maintaining respect for the integrity of each arts discipline.

As MacDonald, Hunter, Ewing and Polley (2019) write:

Genuine collaboration is both critical and central and for enabling/empowering teacher knowledge and understanding. Working together, learning from each other and sharing new ideas grows experience and expertise and the professional dialogue nurtures the development of authentic learning communities. With such opportunities, teachers can build courage to embed the Arts in their pedagogies across the curriculum and to articulate their philosophies and processes.

Robyn Ewing AM
Professor of Teacher Education and the Arts
University of Sydney
May 2019

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Preface 1998

The arts can play several different roles in education. The prime function of arts education is to introduce students to the arts world – a world where they are able to learn about dance, drama, media, music, visual art and design and, from various arts experiences, develop their own artistic capabilities. Through these experiences they become familiar with the symbol systems in which artistic ideas are expressed and acquire an understanding of arts processes and practices. However, the richness and complexity of learning in the arts context also has value beyond the specific arts subjects and can facilitate personal and social development, learning in other curriculum areas and the development of a range of skills and understandings that can be applied in vocational and other life situations.

The arts can function as modes of communication. Creative ideas are expressed through visual images, sound, movement and drama and, with the assistance of technology, are presented in various forms in the electronic media. While humans usually communicate verbally, they also use the arts to express their feelings. On the one hand, body language, vocal inflection and graphic representation can enhance verbal interaction, but arts expression can also present ideas and meanings that are embedded within the art form itself. It is this notion of the arts as languages that is explored in this collection of papers. The word ‘literacy’ is a familiar one in relation to the forms of expression and structure of verbal language; in these papers, the writers expand on ‘literacy’ as it can be applied to the arts languages.

The idea for the papers grew out of a project conducted by the National Affiliation of Arts Educators (NAAE) with the assistance of the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs. The focus of the project was to promote the use of new communications networks by teachers of the arts and to link the work of arts educators to EDNA – the Education Network Australia, a national link between educators in all sectors. While much of the project was devoted to the technical aspects of setting up home pages, email networks and discussion groups, a particular focus of the teachers involved was on the effects of this new technology on teaching and learning. The rapid introduction of new information technology into schools will undoubtedly have a great impact on student learning in the future and, in particular, on the ways in which students access knowledge and information.

Although great efforts are being made to improve levels of verbal literacy in schools, many educators believe that the new modes of electronic communication will demand a much broader range of literacy and perceptual skills. Information is now presented in many forms other than words, and it seems to make sense that we should find out more about the ways in which people interpret information presented in these other forms.

It is obvious that a great deal of research is needed before any claims can be made regarding the role of arts education in promoting literacy skills in the IT environment,

but this set of papers is a step towards understanding the complexities of the perceptual, cognitive and emotional processing that occurs in the production and interpretation of meaning in artistic modes of expression.

The papers in this collection attempt to define what is meant by 'literacy' in each of the individual art forms of dance, drama, media, music, visual art and design. These art forms are those specified as the subjects forming the Arts Key Learning Area in Australian schools. Each writer has approached the topic of arts literacy from their own experiences as artists and educators. It is hoped that the papers will stimulate discussion among teachers of the arts and other subjects, and that they may raise an awareness of the potential for the arts to enhance learning across the curriculum.

I wish to thank the writers for their excellent contributions. As a collection, the papers give a fascinating overview of the arts as languages, of their similarities and differences. They raise fundamental philosophical and psychological issues that highlight the complex interactions between areas of learning, interactions that tend to be lost in curriculum models where subjects are separated and categorised into discrete learning areas.

Joan Livermore
Director
Australian Centre for Arts Education
1998

Introduction to 2003 edition

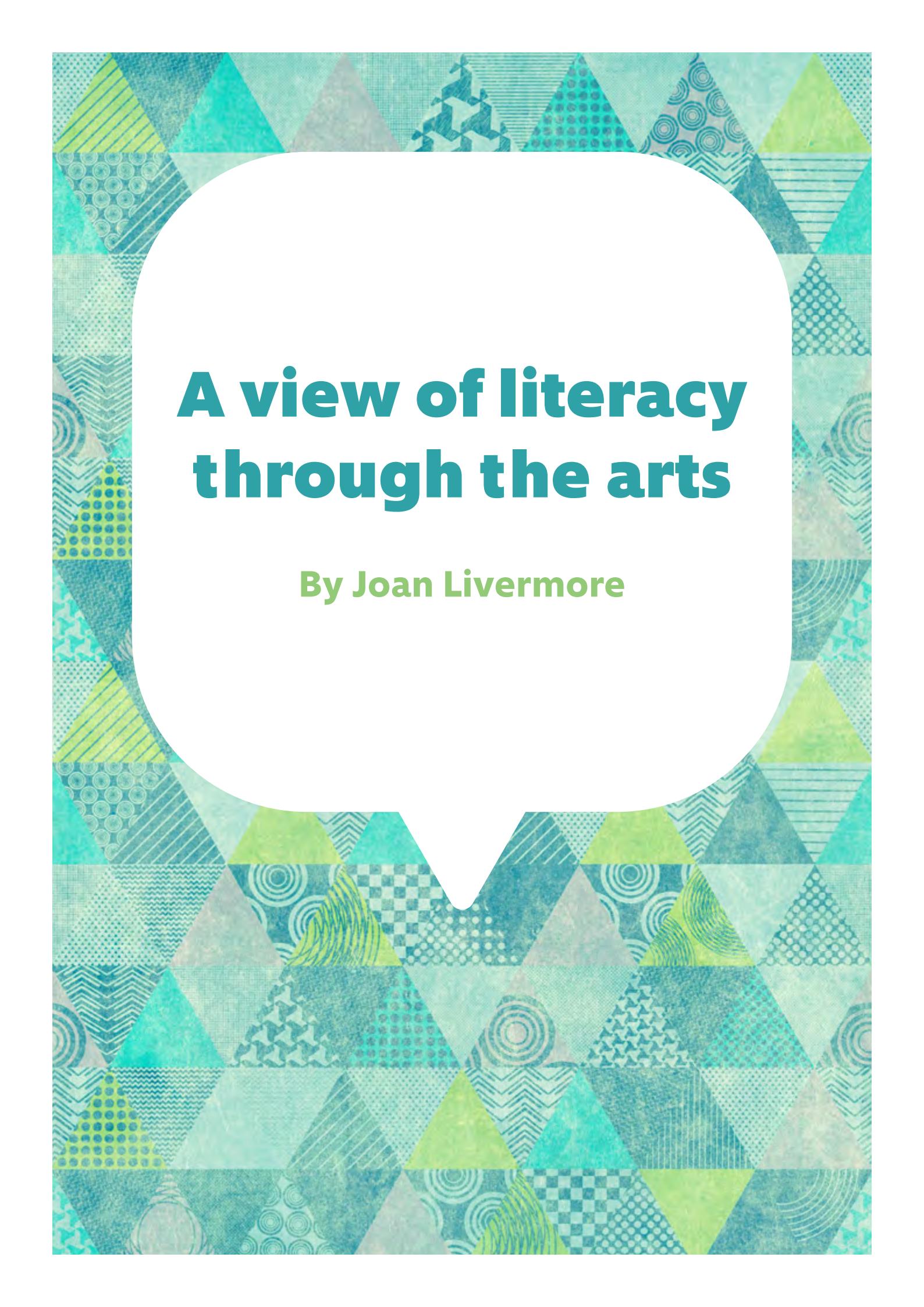
Since its publication in 1998, *More than words can say* has proven to be a seminal document in Australian arts education. It articulated a powerfully argued position on the arts and literacy.

In the current educational climate where literacy and numeracy hold dominant focus, it is more than ever timely that arts educators engage with literacy through and in the arts. In the current climate – perhaps even more assertively than in 1998 – arts educators need to claim a voice in the literacy clamour.

In re-publishing these papers, the National Affiliation of Arts Educators reaffirms its advocacy for a multiple literate education. Together we need to advocate for a broadly inclusive approach to literacy: a multiple literacies stand. We need to assert the inalienable right for all young Australians to acquire literacy in the arts. Similarly, we need to demonstrate how the arts – both the language rich arts forms as well as all the arts forms – contribute to the literacy of all students.

In re-publishing these papers in changing contexts, the temptation to tinker with the original articles has been resisted. The articles are re-published as originally produced in 1998. A framing article in the form of an Afterword has been included.

Robin Pascoe
President, NAAE

The background of the entire page features a repeating pattern of triangles in various sizes and orientations, filled with different textures and colors including teal, lime green, and light grey. Interspersed among the triangles are circular patterns, some with concentric rings and others with radial lines.

A view of literacy through the arts

By Joan Livermore

It is widely recognised that proficiency in English literacy is of major importance for each individual's personal, social and cultural development and that such proficiency also is crucial to the quality of civic and economic contributions to Australian society. Inadequate levels of reading, writing and oral communication have a personal cost in reduced opportunities to participate fully in Australian society and reduced employability when students leave school. (Masters and Forster, 1997, p. 1)

The above statement from *Mapping Literacy Achievement*, the report on the results of the 1996 National School English Literacy Survey, sets out the platform on which the Commonwealth government has based its national literacy policy. This survey was taken as a preliminary step in the government's campaign to improve literacy standards in Australian schools and mapped student achievement in (i) Reading and Viewing, (ii) Speaking and Listening, and (iii) Writing. While the results of the survey showed some variation in the levels of achievement, there was considerable debate over whether this variation amounted to what was labelled by government politicians as a literacy 'crisis'.

Many educators doubted that the survey and analysis of results gave a true representation of the full range of literacy in Australian schools and, in particular, whether the conclusions drawn from the study ignored some of the key social and cultural factors that impact on students' literacy achievements. Particular concern was expressed by members of the Australian Education Union for the diminishing support in schools for students most at risk – students in poverty, Indigenous students, students for whom English is their second language and students with a learning, disability (Burrow & Martin, 1998). Nevertheless, the government's response to the survey findings has been to set in place a national testing program which will regularly monitor student achievement in reading, writing and spelling.

A broad view of literacy

There is general concern that current literacy education policy (1998) is too narrow and does not take into account the rapidly changing communication environment. "In the late 20th Century, literacy is already very different from what it was at the turn of the century, in the middle of the century, or even some 20 or 30 years ago" (Christie, 1997, p. 16). New modes of communication use much more than written text. The interpretation of graphic images, colour, sound and film demands a broader range of literacy and perceptual skills than those required by the essentially verbal language which is the focus of education programs today. Fichter (1991) makes a strong case for broadly based literacy strategies when she proposes that –

As we seek multicultural literacy, let us also seek multi-literate culture and realise that art[s] literacy and computer literacy are both powerful and desirable languages, operating sometimes in different psychic neighbourhoods but both capable of opening the 'doors of perception'. (p. 4).

Elliott Eisner (1997) considers literacy to be “a way of conveying meaning, through and recovering meaning from the form of representation in which it appears” (p. 353) and reinforces Fichter’s proposition by stating:

We ought to be interested in developing multiple forms of literacy. Why? Because each form of literacy has the capacity to provide unique forms of meaning, and it is in the pursuit of meaning that much of the good life is lived. (p. 353).

The dominance of television in children’s lives prompts the visual art educator, Duncum (1993) to argue that “the single most important set of cultural skills today is the critical examination of the interconnections between words, pictures, performance and music to produce meaning in television” (p. 8). Interestingly, Phillip Adams (1998), the prominent journalist and commentator on social and cultural issues, goes to the extreme in proposing that India, a country where the majority of people are incapable of reading the newspaper, “will become the first modern society to leap-frog over literacy”. In that country the computer and TV have become the major transmitters of communication and information, and he claims that ‘business is booming’.

Teaching for multimedia literacy

If Adams’ scenario is indicative of the future, we need to know more about the ways people process information when it is presented in different modes and how they make meaning from different symbolic forms of expression. Salomon (1997) explores the difference between viewing the film *Out of Africa* and reading the novel, or from listening to an African storyteller rather than actually wandering through Kenya. He points out that “different forms of representation have what philosophers call different fields of reference” (p. 377), and they address different aspects of the world around us. He comes to the conclusion that the ‘reading’ of different symbolic forms of representation “requires different sets of mental skills and capacities” (p. 377).

It is generally accepted that the identification of students’ aptitudes and learning styles, and the adaptation of teaching strategies to them, are basic principles of good teaching. The Australian Council of State School Organisations calls for “a diversity of approaches to literacy development, to cater for the different backgrounds, interests and learning styles of all students” (Mogan, 1998, p. 24). Boix Mansilla and Gardner (1997) believe that “educators face the challenge of devising a variety of ‘entry points’ that honour each student’s idiosyncratic ways of representing the world” (p. 385). The use of multiple symbol systems is accepted as an essential feature of adaptive teaching by Snow (1997) who maintains that “only rarely does instruction in any domain rely purely on one symbol system alone” (p. 355).

Those working in the field of new technologies were quick to see the potential for new, innovative teaching resources. Strommen and Lincoln (1992) chose the term ‘child-driven learning environment’ to describe a context where –

... computers, video, and other technologies engage children with the immediacy they are used to in their everyday lives. Technology also allows for the repurposing of pre-existing educational materials across media formats: print, static illustrations, still and digital photographs, digital audio, still and motion video, still and motion film, animations, computer graphics and hypermedia can all be accessed and combined in novel ways. (p. 3).

The influence of new technology is certainly apparent in the proliferation of contemporary teaching resources which rely increasingly on multimedia presentation.

Interpretation of meaning in the multimedia environment

The multimedia environment of new information technology uses all the modes of artistic expression to convey information. Visual images, music and sound, dramatic presentation and movement are all important elements conveying meaning of their own, while interacting with each other and with text to produce complex, extended webs of meaning. A range of perceptual processing is required to interpret these messages fully.

The ways that meaning is constructed in this medium are closely allied to artistic processes and production. Aspin (1995), the educator and philosopher, is adamant that arts education has an essential role in developing those aspects of communication that are graphic and non-verbal. Freedman (1997) cautions against the limiting approach to what is often called ‘visual literacy’ as one that simply means the semiotic reading of signs and symbols – a structuralist analysis of literary texts that tends to narrow visual meaning. Like Aspin, he also supports “a broad view of creative production and interpretation in relation to multiple meanings and visual qualities ... if we are to understand and teach about the use of images in contemporary life” (p. 7).

This approach would depend upon students experiencing an arts education that included both the production and viewing of technologically produced images and where teachers “pay increased attention to the interpretive and critical analysis of imagery and other information” (p. 8). It is only ‘through a knowledge of artistic production and criticism that students will be able to evaluate manipulated images and relate them to what is real’. The artist’s predilection for disrupting reality is nowhere more evident than in contemporary video and TV production.

Even in an art form like drama where verbal language is a major element, the dramatic process introduces other perspectives that can affect the meanings derived from that language. For example, dialogic interactions are dynamic and open and, in contrast to the monologic nature of written text, offer interpretive choices to audiences. These interactions are more fluid and less fixed, and vary according to character and dramatic context (Edmiston, 1994).

If each form of representation tells us something different about the world around us, we need to build frameworks for interpreting information in different formats. Salomon (1997) maintains that:

the meanings we derive or construe during human communication are mainly a function of the mental ('constructivist') activity the eye engages in, strongly coloured by the knowledge structures ('schemata') we already possess and bring to bear on the new information. For much may depend on the richness and organisation of the knowledge schemata one brings to bear on the incoming information. (p. 377).

It would therefore seem to be essential to equip students with the skills to process information in different symbolic forms, using strategies that grow out of the structural and aesthetic qualities that underpin these forms of expression.

The essence of arts literacy

At this point it is important to clarify the meaning of the term 'arts literacy'. Some may assume that it refers to the technical terms associated with artistic elements and structures. Others may use the term in relation to the reading and writing of notation associated with music and dance, or dramatic scripts. However, in this context the language of the arts is embedded in the mode of expression of each art form. That is, ideas are expressed through movement, role play, musical sound or visual images and these ideas may not readily be transferable to verbal language. As Hirst (1974) states, "works of art are indeed artistic statements, stating truths that cannot be communicated in any other way" (p. 153).

The arts educator Bennett Reimer (1994) proposes that musical performance can be conceived as an act of intelligence, "an endlessly challenging and diverse mode of intelligence – of meaning making and meaning sharing" (p. 12). He sees the musical mind manifested in the body's actions and these actions consisting of 'thought as act or act as thought'. Dance educator Shirley McKechnie (1996) believes that we are "still being intimidated by the power of established modes of knowing in our school systems" (p. 4). She mirrors Reimer's view when she states "Its [i.e. dance's] value lies in a way of knowing, which is both sensory and aesthetic ... in bones and nerves and muscles, and in the exercise of imagination, aesthetic discrimination and skill" (p. 4).

Furthermore, when we move away from the representational view of the arts as illustrating ideas, to one which treats works of art as ideas themselves, the development of thinking skills can be vastly expanded. Tishman and Perkins (1997) present a point of view that is usually ignored in school teaching:

Language about thinking is mostly language in the familiar sense of words and sentences. But certainly people think in many other languages of mathematics, or music, or visual images, if one can call these languages in a metaphorically extended sense. More properly, people think in many symbolic vehicles. (p. 374).

Literacy – skills for arts languages

The ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ of arts languages take place within artistic processes. The reading of a performance work is not simply a matter of looking at the notation or reading a script, and then analysing and interpreting the intended meaning. In the performing arts the equivalent of the literary text is the performance itself, and the audience ‘reads’ the performance as an experience and constructs meanings which may change with each new performance. The text becomes a visual image in a painting, or drawing and, like performance art, is ‘read’ by the viewer, not necessarily for its representation of the real world, but as a statement of ideas embodied in visual imagery.

The producers or writers of arts languages must work within the semantic structures of the specific form of arts expression. They are using the same materials as the creators of art works and must make qualitative judgments accordingly. Any visual, dramatic or musical component of a multimedia product must fulfil artistic criteria and, in fact, the effectiveness of such components is often directly linked to their artistic quality.

Aspin (1991) sees art works, objects and performances as “the incarnation of an artist’s meaning whose publication provokes an intelligent and informed response from an audience concerned to seek information, illumination and enrichment from the disclosures they are ready for it to precipitate” (p. 7). He calls this the ‘living encounter’ that takes place in conversations between producer and perceiver.

The living encounters that are now an integral part of our interface with the rest of the world through information technology demand more than just an ability to read, write and spell verbal language. At the functional level, decoding of verbal text requires an understanding of spelling, vocabulary and linguistic structures, and the capability to interpret the ideas expressed.

Equally, the decoding of texts using other symbolic forms requires similar semantic processes. But just as the acquisition of verbal literacy depends upon carefully structured education programs, it follows that the development of literacy in other forms of expression requires equivalent training. In the absence of such training, students can only make vague, impressionistic judgments of much of what they see and hear. With appropriate education in the arts they can not only make meaning, interpret and respond to such forms of communication, but will develop the ability to ‘think’ in different modes and express a much wider range of ideas and feelings through multiple literacies.

The impact of information technology on human communication will be profound, and the rapid introduction of IT into schools will undoubtedly bring about fundamental changes in student learning. This new technology will transform the delivery of education programs and revolutionise access to knowledge and information. The Commonwealth government’s goal of ‘providing young people with the key

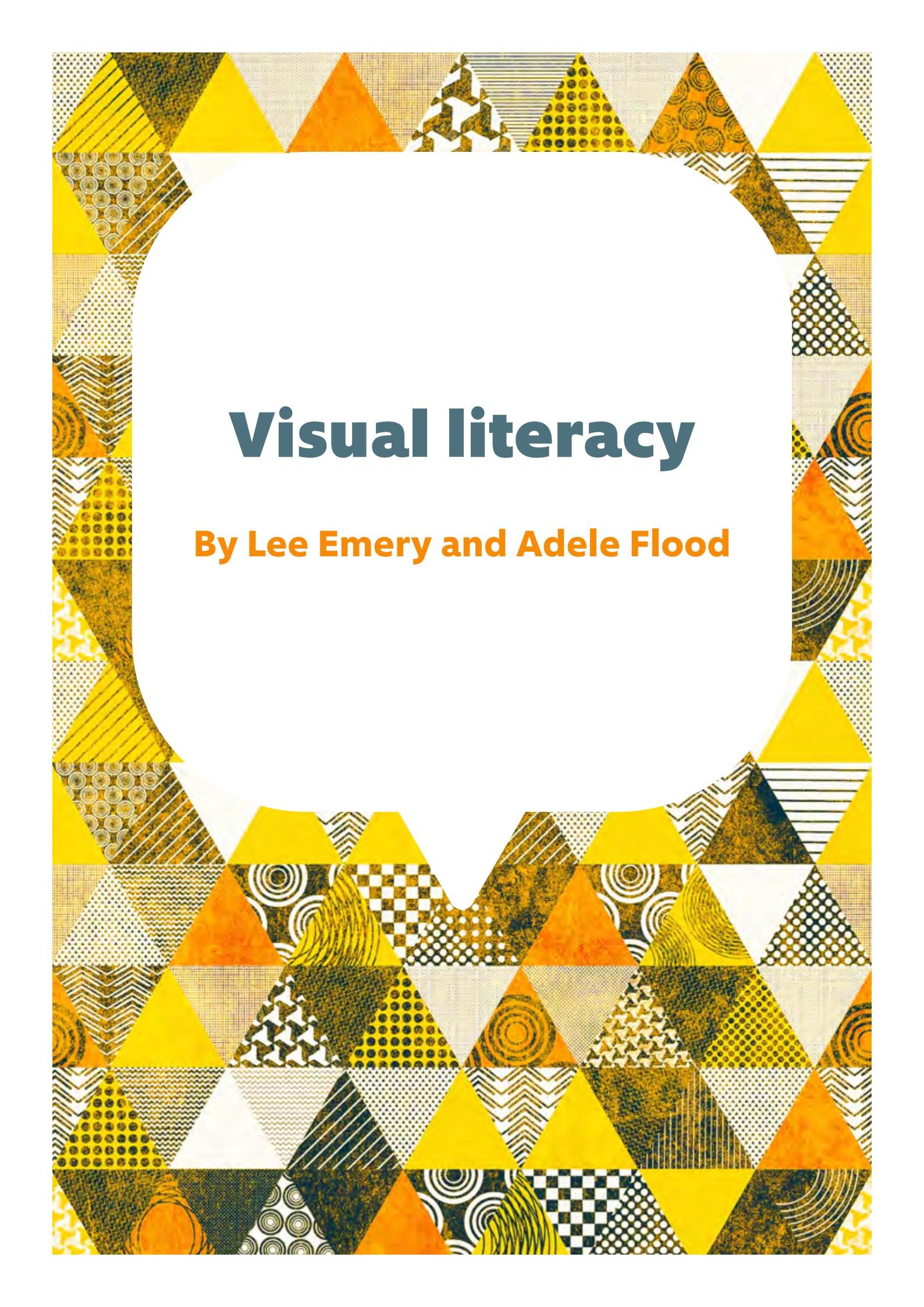
literacy skills that will enable them to make the most of their education, employment and training opportunities' (Kemp, 1997, Preface) can only be achieved if the full spectrum of literacy is addressed in education policy. National testing, and funding for literacy programs in schools, will have limited effect if this is not done.

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Joan Livermore was Director of the Australian Centre for Arts Education at the University of Canberra. She was President of the Australian Society for Music Education and Chair of the NAAE for 5 years.

[Note: Although Joan Livermore's paper on Literacy was written in 1998 for the original edition of *More than words can say*, it is still relevant today. We reprint it in this edition as a tribute to Joan's deep knowledge and wisdom, and for her lifelong advocacy for arts education, especially as Chair of NAAE in the 1990s. Ed.]



Visual literacy

By Lee Emery and Adele Flood

The exercise of Judgement in the making of artistic images or in their appreciation depends on the ability to cope with ambiguity, to experience nuance and to weigh the trade offs among alternative courses of action. These skills not only represent the mind operating in its finest hour but are precisely the skills that characterise our most complex adult life tasks ... The cultivation of judgement and the ability to be flexibly purposive is best achieved when the tasks and content children encounter in school provides the space for such skills to operate. When the arts are well taught, such skills have an essential place.

Eisner, 1985, p. 67.

The literate person

Although Elliot Eisner wrote this statement in 1985, its message continues to resonate. This article was first written in 2003 on behalf of AEA (Art Education Australia) for the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE). However, in 2019 'visual literacy' has taken on a whole new meaning. The visual world is now a complex meld of arts and technologies that did not exist and were inconceivable in 2003. This presents us with two key questions:

- ***What does it mean to be considered visually literate in the world today?***
- ***How should we educate students to be able to make art and to make sense of what they see?***

At the time this article was written we expressed our thinking about visual literacy in a new millennium. However, in updating this article it is clear the visual arts world today confronts students with more complex realities, possibilities and global opportunities than those that were available in 2003. Some of the basic definitions of 'the arts' remain as true today as they were 30 years ago; however, what it means to be visually literate in the contemporary world requires further consideration.

Cultural literacy in the 1980s

When E.D. Hirsch wrote his seminal text *Cultural Literacy* (1987), he tried to define 'what every American needs to know' in order to be considered a literate person, i.e. a literate American person. Hirsch proclaimed that every American should at least know things like the national anthem, be able to list the Presidents of the United States, sing key folk songs and recognise key American icons such as apple pie, blue jeans and Coca Cola. By insinuation, Hirsch suggested that an illiterate American would be one who could not recognise and comprehend the meaning of these traditional and ingrained symbols of American culture.

In making long lists of things which he considered 'every American should know' Hirsch unfortunately established a list of Euro-centrally defined values which excluded the

experiences of newcomers and First Nations people in the United States. The cultural experiences of those from countries rich with traditions in other folk songs, other national anthems, other histories and other meaningful icons were not listed.

However, the value of Hirsch's work was that it adopted a broad view of the types of human experiences and capacities that enable us to communicate effectively within a given culture. The literate individual was seen by Hirsch as one who could comprehend, recognise and express within the many shared meaning symbol systems of a culture, whether they be visual, verbal, gestural, aural or kinaesthetic. Hirsch's great fear was that young Americans were not familiar with the key symbols that shaped their destiny. Not only were they unable to read and write effectively, they were unable to comprehend other key symbols, many of which were found within the arts. The fear was that Americans were not familiar with their own culture, let alone that of others.

Illiteracy, Hirsch implied, is akin to alienation. All of us who travel to other countries feel alienated if we do not speak the language, do not know the customs of the people and cannot fathom the menu! However, most of us are only literate in one culture. Those who have embraced other cultures have had to learn to read new symbols in order to 'fit in'. Those who live in bicultural or multicultural countries, as many of us do, either accept that there is one dominant culture or grapple with making choices about which language to use (for example French/English in Canada). The overlooked communities in the melding of cultures are often Indigenous cultures that become dominated by the invading culture and are expected to 'fit in'.

Many white Australians have unjustly expected Aboriginal people to learn non-Indigenous ways with disproportionate or inadequate reciprocal effort given for learning about and respecting Aboriginal ways of knowing (Hogarth, 2017). Even in current times these attitudes are prevalent despite legislation and the development of a louder and more confident Indigenous voice being heard. For example, there are many Aboriginal verbal languages that, despite this adversity, prevail by being rekindled or reconstructed from composite contemporary languages (Berk, 2017). Literacy is a culturally specific ability. Generally speaking, we only expect people to be literate in one culture, the dominant culture of the place in which they live.

While these statements about culture may have held relevance in 2003, students today are living at a time of global mass migration, the internet and social media. Cultural experiences are not as insular as they might have been in the past. One issue then, when thinking of visual literacy, is to think beyond one's own cultural boundary and develop respect for and understanding of other cultures through a variety of contemporary forms of visual representation.

Visual literacy in 2019

While literacy may be culturally specific, it is sometimes thought that visual images are universal, with meanings that transcend cultural barriers (Veroff, 2002). Visual signs can certainly be read universally to indicate the danger of avalanches, school crossings and airport baggage terminals. However, even assumptions about the universality of these visual symbols cannot be made. For example, back in 2003, assuming that a new company logo was simply a flamboyant squiggle, the Nike company hastily withdrew its new logo when it was identified as an Islamic word referring to God. What may be seen as a mere squiggle in one culture may be seen as a powerful symbol, and even written word, in another culture. International companies, it seems, face a difficult task when choosing logos that are appropriate in all cultures.

However, while culture in 2019 also requires global consideration, what may have been confined to one country or tradition in the past is continually evolving because of increased movements of people and ideas across the world through migration, advertising, the internet, broadcast and social media and all other forms of communication.

Seeing art in a visually crowded world

Clearly we live in a visual world and in our waking hours we are selecting what we should look at and how. Art is all around us. There is art on clothing, television, the internet, hoardings, advertisements, in shopping malls, in fact, everywhere. In 1993 Paul Duncum argued that the visual arts are commonplace: “The prevalence of images point to their ordinariness. The unavoidable and simple truth is that the visual arts are commonplace. Their very special importance lies in the fact that they are ubiquitous” (p. 6).

However, just over a decade later in 2004, Duncum acknowledged that the visual arts are now rarely viewed in isolation. He argued that contemporary cultural forms, like the internet and television, involve many forms of communication, often acting simultaneously. Hence meaning is made through an interaction of modes such as music, language, sound effects and action.

Visual culture encompasses a range of literacies and modes. Therefore being literate in the 21st Century includes being able to decipher not just text, but a range of multi-literate and multi-modal forms. Being literate still involves possessing the skills to decode and encode but instead of being understood as primarily a cognitive act, it is now also understood “to be located in social settings” (Duncum, 2004, p. 255) or contexts. This is made more complex by the ubiquitous use of photo/moving images recorded on hand held digital devices and transmitted through social media.

Today we are bombarded with imagery presented in seductive ways to appeal to all of our senses. Films, advertisements, clothes, internet sites etc., are designed to be

eye-catching, to appeal to the senses and to influence audiences to think and feel in certain ways. The visual arts have become an integral part of consumer society. For students today, advertising is seductive because in visually appealing ways it promises wonderful products and services that can lead to a better life.

Through high quality visual arts learning experiences, teachers can encourage students to be discerning, to discriminate between marketing ploy and aesthetic quality, and to understand the strategies used by advertising companies to appeal to potential consumers. Students are taught how design is embedded in visual arts, and the considered use of design elements and principles can enable them to convey a powerful visual message in a variety of ways.

However, simply because we are surrounded by images in our daily lives, it does not mean that everything in the visual world is art. To be able to see the visual world is not the same as being able to see and value art. If we were supposed to engage with all the visual images we see in a day in the same way that we need to engage with art works, we would never cope with the visual bombardment that continuously confronts us.

In fact, being able to tell what is art and what is not art is a characteristic of the visually literate person. The artistically illiterate person, for example, may not recognise metaphorical forms of expression or the concept that an object may become art simply by intention or choice of context (MacDonald et al., 2017). When contemplating an art gallery installation of 1500 bicycles, such as those produced by the contemporary Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, the artistically literate person may recognise that the artist is expressing a proposition about the anonymity of life for many people in China. However, the sceptic is likely to think that, while a collection of bicycles might look interesting, it is not really art.

A more visually educated person may recall that in 1917 Marcel Duchamp's exhibition of a signed urinal as art sparked a new way of thinking about found objects. Such objects could be art if the artist used them to express an idea. A Campbell's soup can could, according to Andy Warhol, express complex ideas about consumerism and American culture. All visual objects are artistically inert until an artist changes their role from inert objects to art. The viewer in turn must then perceive something of the artist's intention. If the viewer does not recognise that a deliberate artistic act has taken place, then the art work has not been comprehended.

Susanne Langer made the point that the commonplace world is not art. Art, Langer said, has a sense of 'otherness'. While art can represent the common and real world and may be made from very commonplace materials or objects, it is clearly removed from the everyday. Andy Goldsworthy's sculptures may emerge 'naturally' as a path of sticks in a forest or a spiral of shells on a beach, but the intentional placement of objects is evident; we know that the arrangement has not been made by the forces of nature. We recognise that Goldsworthy has been there and nature has been transformed.

As Langer (1976, p. 45) states: “Every real work of art has a tendency to appear thus dissociated from its mundane environment. The most immediate impression it (i.e. the art work) creates is one of ‘otherness’ from reality”.

All art, according to Langer (1976), is abstract; its content is only a “semblance of a thing” (p. 46). The power of art lies in the fact that it can give the illusion or a semblance of reality and that it can evoke in us a sensory response. In that sense, Langer claims that visual art works have the capacity to tap into our sensate life, as they enable us to enter a world of ‘virtual reality’. It seems ironic that Langer used this term so many years before it became a buzzword in the field of computer technology.

Of course, Langer recognised that art has always been about the creation of virtual reality. Even the minimalists saw that a black on black painting epitomised some form of reality. It is just that the term ‘virtual reality’ takes on greater meaning in the visual world today; children simply have to discriminate between so many competing virtual realities. It is clear that animated movies, for example, can seem very ‘real’ for children such as the movies of ‘Shaun the Sheep’, ‘Frozen’ and ‘Moana’. The written stories of ‘Blinky Bill’, ‘The Magic Pudding’ and ‘The Famous Five’ which enabled children to individually imagine what the characters were like, appear almost quaint against the sophistication of children’s films today which present children with more lively and seductive visual appeal.

‘Reading’ forms and images

When visiting the National Gallery of Victoria, we observed a group of students being asked to articulate their impression of the large, gilt framed 17th and 18th century portraits that were hanging in the gallery around them. One of the students responded that he thought they were ‘great photos’. The education staff member gently guided the group to the realisation that these were, in fact, oil paintings on canvas, painted long before the invention of the camera.

Without relevant contextual knowledge, viewers can easily misinterpret art works. Perhaps students in the future will think that all pictures in galleries have been created on a computer. Students already find it difficult to comprehend that the works in galleries are ‘one off’. They grapple with the notion that artists of the past created art without access to technologies they are familiar with such as photocopiers, cameras and power tools. Being visually literate also implies understanding the type of technology that the artist used, such as the camera obscura. Understanding the process of the artist is a key factor in art appreciation. For example, the student who has worked in metal more readily comprehends the skill applied in the gold inlay scarab metal jewellery of the ancient Egyptians.

One key role of art education is to bring students into contact with the contexts in which art works are made. Without an awareness of the social and historical context,

the viewer either fails to comprehend the work or simply infuses the work with his or her own understanding. Art teachers attempt to take students on journeys into other contexts to build an understanding of how and why artists worked as they did in other times and places. The visually literate person is aware that the art they look at is a product of its time and place.

Quality art educators help students research the art of different contexts so that they can more accurately comprehend the symbolic statements that are embedded within the work. Literacy in art education involves guiding students to knowledge of past cultures, introducing them to processes that people used when different tools and equipment were available and contrasting those with the tools and varied forms of expression which are pertinent to the present.

Visual and verbal literacy

In order to talk about art, the art teacher encourages the student to become verbally literate in the language of art discourse. However, this does not mean that art works can be read like books. An art piece cannot be literally read like a novel. Visual literacy does not function in the same way as verbal literacy. Objects displayed in art galleries are not texts but art works, and these art works demand a different form of response to that of a novel.

The image actually impacts on us much more quickly than the word. The word is an abstract referent that often bears no resemblance to the thing it symbolises. However, the visual image can be direct and even though it may contain embedded symbols it is usually perceived immediately. In describing how we comprehend art works, Rudolph Arnheim (1989) contends: “The dynamics transmitted by the image resonates in the nervous system of the receiver ... And these actions are not just physical gymnastics, they are ways of being alive, ways of being human” (p. 26).

A literal reading of the narrative in an artwork should not dominate the obvious sensory qualities that the work may contain. In commenting on Paul Ziff’s critical analysis of Poussin’s ‘Rape of the Sabine Women’, Kerry Freedman (1996, p. 103) suggests that Ziff was so concerned about analysing the formal composition of the work that he seemed blind to the fact that the image actually was a representation of a rape. This seems ironic given the title of the artwork also conveyed this quite clearly through textual means.

The visually literate person becomes engaged with art works because they respond to their inherent meanings. The visually literate viewer identifies key visual properties. While viewers bring their own context to the work and thus may interpret a work in their own way, they need to be informed about the context in which a work was made and how this influences its intention and comprehension. Verbal language is a useful tool for sharing ideas, information and feelings about art, but words also have the

potential to kill an immediate sensory response. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) describes the sensation of intense engagement with an artwork as ‘flow’.

Flow is the euphoric rush that we experience when we are so absorbed in some experience that time and other distractions are obliterated. The interesting thing about ‘flow’ in relation to perceiving art works, is that we only see what we know how to see. In fact when faced with new images and forms we are often at a loss to know how to perceive them at all. We only have a ‘flow’ experience with art works when we resonate with the work and when there is a deep identification with the aesthetic properties or qualities of the work. Verbal language helps us to label, describe, analyse and interpret but the ‘flow’ experience is apprehended visually and viscerally without words.

In addition to encouraging and enhancing visual and verbal literacy the US National Art Education Association (2016, p. 13) contends that:

There is substantial evidence that high-quality education in the arts provides students with opportunities to develop a number of capacities that are not well addressed in other areas of the curriculum such as visual-spatial abilities, self-reflection and experimentation. In addition, visual arts education has been shown to create a dynamic school culture and to motivate students who might otherwise be at risk of dropping out of school.

Eisner (2002) argues that there are distinct forms of thinking that we engage with when we are involved in artistic activities, and these ways of thinking are relevant to everything we do. In his seminal lecture ‘What can education learn from the arts?’, further developed in his 2008 paper, Eisner presented a number of key points which explain how learning experiences through the arts can enhance and enrich educational experiences overall.

Eisner proposed that there are important ways of thinking that the arts evoke which substantially contribute to education including: that the limits of language are not the limits of cognition; that open-ended tasks permit the exercise of imagination; slowing down perception is an important way to see what is there; the element of surprise and the ‘happy accident’ are to be encouraged; that nuance matters; that form and content cannot be separated and that imagination is critical.

The ‘App Generation’

Howard Gardner and Katie Davis’s book *The App Generation: How today’s youth navigate identity, intimacy and imagination in a digital world* (2013) raises many issues about the ubiquitous nature of technology and how it affects young people today. Most children today cannot remember a time without computers. Gardner, drawing on Marc Prensky’s (2001) work, refers to them as ‘digital natives’, as they have grown up in the digital age.

Many adolescents have spent years deeply immersed in social media sites and applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and various networking communities. However, recent media focus on increasing instances of cyber bullying has resulted in greater scrutiny of the way these sites are used. Gardner and his research team explore how this 24/7 access to social media affects basic human development in terms of “the 3 Is: Identity, Intimacy and Imagination.” In relation to making art, he suggests that “...any person in possession of a smart device can begin to sketch, publish, take notes, network, create works of reflection, art, science – in short, each person can be his or her own creator of knowledge” (p. 181).

Gardner goes on to suggest that apps can enable us to do things more quickly, efficiently and confidently than in the past. He refers to Global Positioning System (GPS) devices, for example, as removing the uncertainty we once had with travel, navigation and finding our way around streets. It now appears quite neo-Luddite to consult a street directory or a map when travelling. Everything, it seems, can be replaced by an app. Gardner observes that young people “... are not only immersed in apps, they’ve come to think of the world as an ensemble of apps, to see their lives as a string of ordered apps” (p. 7).

Gardner suggests that apps can be both ‘app-enabling’ but also make people ‘app-dependent’. Clearly apps can be tightly controlled by the companies or individuals who design them; it is uncertain whether computer programs provide individuals with new freedoms, or whether the computer is moulding everyone to think and behave similarly.

Public backlash to organisations such as Facebook manipulating people through a process of ‘emotional contagion’ by filtering users’ news feeds has alerted the public to a range of complex issues inherent in these sites (Booth, 2014). In addition, the use of imagery in many apps and social media sites is culturally embedded, coded and dependent on people’s ability to apprehend their symbolic meaning. However, universal decoding may not be possible due to users’ diverse cultural backgrounds.

Technology and visual literacy today

To be visually literate in 2019 demands using visual images in new modes. Access to the range of possible technologies available including, but not limited to, the internet, computers, hand held digital devices, animation programs and digital games provides students with an extensive range of visual tools, information, music, art, movies and other forms of information and experience. Not only can students instantly access information but they can create their own visual imagery. Primary school children can design and make illustrated Powerpoint presentations, animated stories and text-based presentations such as journal articles. They can also use their iPads to make animated sequences using any form of material.

An 8-year-old student recently explained the animated Wallace and Gromit-style film she had created. The short sequence involved two plasticine people walking their dog along a road and then putting their sick dog to bed. She explained that the sequence was created from 120 frames to cover the short story. She also explained that children were not allowed to bring their iPads to her school until grade 5; however it was evident that her iPad has taught her to use the appropriate language to operate her ‘apps’ library. She is visually literate enough to read the symbols of the games and drawing programs she uses, but this also means that there is the potential for young children to access entirely inappropriate imagery and information. Parents and teachers need to vigilantly supervise students’ use of the world wide web. Social media can be an effective means of communication but can also be extremely destructive when used in malicious ways.

The Australian Government has recently funded a media campaign to assist parents in speaking with their children about the use of social media and to increase their awareness of what may be viewed and shared.

Kerry Freedman and Patricia Stuhr, in writing about visual literacy, suggested that:

Computer technology is not only a medium but also a means that has enabled people to see things previously unimagined and to cross borders of form from the fine arts to the mass media to scientific visualisation. Visual technologies allow people to create, copy, project, manipulate, erase, and duplicate images with an ease and speed that challenges distinctions of talent, technique, and the conceptual location of form (2004, p. 818).

How has technology changed visual literacy?

Arts students today need to think globally. They also need to be entrepreneurial and highly aware of world issues. “They are early adopters of digital tools, social media influencers and hyper aware of world issues ...” (p. 3). It is conceivable that the visually literate person of 2003 could walk into a classroom today and not understand or recognise students’ engagement with technology as part of their learning experience.

It is also quite possible that art teachers trained in 2003 may not be familiar with the technological tools that their students have already grasped. The visually literate art teacher will prepare students to become adept in the use of digital technologies so that they can be utilised as another tool in the making of art. Some schools already possess 3-dimensional (3D) printers for example, and while the technology is still relatively new, teachers and students are pushing the boundaries to discover how this new technology can be used in the creation of artworks.

How can art education contribute to students’ use of technology?

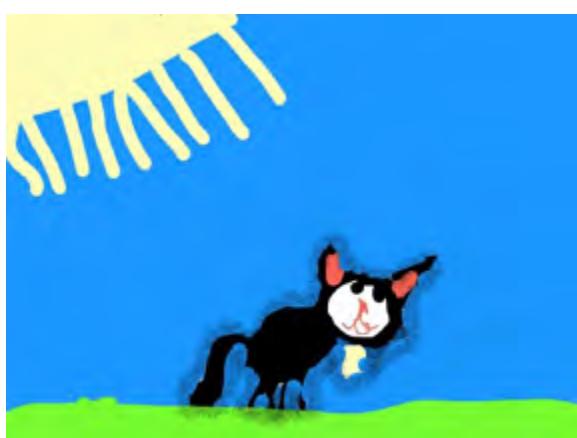
Visual artists have always pushed the limits of the available technology. Some of their

experiments have resulted in new applications of various technologies and led to technological innovation. Digital tools enable students to work in exciting new ways in the visual arts. However it is also important and valuable for students to make art using actual ‘real world’ materials so that they learn about the tools, skills and techniques required to transform the material into an expressive statement.

In 1986 David Hockney was first introduced to a computer generated drawing program, the Quantel Paintbox Graphics System. He found, after experimenting with computer drawing programs, that in the end it was quicker to just pick up a pencil and draw a line. However, since using his new iPhone in 2008 and more recently the ‘Brushes’ app on his iPad in 2010, Hockney’s landscape drawings of the Yorkshire Wolds reveal the excitement he now finds in using these new technologies. A draughtsman and prolific artist since the 1960s, Hockney now finds the iPad such a convenient, accessible and portable medium that he always carries one with him in his jacket pocket. The backlit nature of the screen, for example, allows him to express extraordinary luminosity that is simply not possible on paper; and it allows him to draw in the dark (an invaluable capacity if you are drawing the sunrise from your bed!).

The computer is an extraordinary drawing and painting tool, but of course the images created on the screen are dependent on the algorithms used in creating the program and are limited in scale, have no tactile qualities, no real space, no smell and are flat. Hockney can overcome the limitation of scale by printing his iPad images out in large scale (a prohibitive cost for many students today) but his recent (2013-15) painted portraits are clear evidence of his brilliant draughtsmanship. He still understands the implicit handmade aesthetic values we attribute to the techniques of watercolour, pencil drawing and oil on canvas. Of course, we the viewers understand completely how difficult it is to draw or paint a portrait on paper or canvas, but until we have tried drawing on our iPads (with the app ‘Brushes’) it is difficult to appreciate the artistic skills that Hockney has applied using the new technology, but the accessibility of this app encourages all of us to ‘have a go’!

Young children use apps with confidence and employ explorative or discovery methods to create visual images. They are much more adventurous and seem undisturbed by the tremendous range of options available, without any instructions. This cat was created by Clementine (aged 5), the first time she was given the Brushes app.



In the presentation ‘Visual Imagery and Adolescent Understanding of Text and Image within the Internet’ at the (2002) International Society for Education through Art (InSEA) World Congress in

New York, Bamford, Brown and Flood (2002) reported on a series of experiments in which children were provided with a range of apps. They observed that the children immediately collaborated and shared knowledge to create their images, and pooled their intuitive knowledge in a flexible and fluid learning environment.

STEAM not STEM

The recent prioritising of the STEM agenda globally has led to debates about innovation arising at least as much from the arts as from science, technology, engineering and maths. Arts advocates argue that the basic curriculum for literacy today must extend beyond the STEM disciplines to embrace the creative arts and other disciplines. The entrenched disciplinary privileging and siloing that continues to characterise our schooling system today remains problematic.

A significant contention underpinning the commentary around STEM and STEAM is the resulting discipline hierarchies that privilege one or more disciplines over another in an interdisciplinary education context. For teachers to be able to mobilise the three-dimensional vision of the Australian Curriculum in ways that allow for authentic entwinement of diverse disciplinary skills, capabilities and ways of knowing, they need to be empowered to improvise and challenge their own practices, try new working methods, and break routines without fear of criticism and punishment (Harris & de Bruin, 2017).

We contend that all children are entitled to a school program that includes critical creative thinking involving expression and the capacity to see their ideas and feelings manifested in a visible material form. The visual arts have a significant role to play here, and despite the ever-increasing body of research to evidence the value of the visual arts in this regard (Ewing, 2010; Gibson & Anderson, 2008; Sinclair, Jeanneret, O'Toole & Hunter, 2017), the visual arts are too often made peripheral in disciplinary hierarchy battles, resulting in the under mobilisation and accessibility of quality visual arts experiences for all Australian students (MacDonald, Hunter, Ewing & Polley, 2018).

It is interesting to examine the implications of education agendas being enacted in Australia in relation to other international education contexts. A report from the University of Warwick in 2015 entitled ‘Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth’ (*The Age*, 9 March, 2015) showed a decline in the teaching of art subjects in British public schools with less time given and fewer trained art teachers available. The report suggested that school programs overlooked the necessity for all children to receive an education that encourages creativity.

It also advocated the need for arts education to be given equal weight in the curriculum: for STEM to be modified to STEAM, by including the ‘A’ for Arts. Clearly visual art learning in 2019 is more complex and diverse than it was in 2003. The National Statements and Profiles, released in 1994, set out in a linear fashion the key concepts

that students would be expected to grasp during their years of schooling. In 2019 arts learning is more cross-modal and learning pathways are much more varied.

The French thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, in their 1980 seminal text *A Thousand Plateaus*, first introduced rhizomatic thinking as a new way of making sense of knowledge. They used the botanical metaphor of a rhizome (or haphazard underground root), to describe the complex and often messy nature of learning. Dave Cormier (2008), of the University of Prince Edward Island in Canada, has used the principles of rhizomatic thinking to develop unstructured learning scenarios that often occur through community building activities and social interaction.

Adopting rhizomatic ways of thinking, knowing and making meaning into pedagogic and learning contexts can help dissolve disciplinary hierarchies that have historically marginalised the visual arts in education agendas, as well as working to create the messy transversal spaces in which to cultivate visual literacy. Given that students today become visually literate in broad and diverse ways, art teachers now need to help students to compare, negotiate and interpret information in order to make their own judgments about art. The visually literate art teacher of tomorrow will need to cope with this diversity.

Conclusion

This chapter has raised a number of questions relating to the relevance and importance of the arts in a holistic education experience. Why, if these theories are so powerful, have we allowed the visual arts in schools to become marginalised? Why is the image of the artist one of the eccentric amateur rather than an essential skilled professional contributing to the economy and the public good? Why are students in schools given the feeling that the arts are optional extras, and other components of their education so much more important?

'Looking good' has never before been so important in life; every aspect of life today demands visual judgment and capability, whether it be in architecture, clothing, product design, display, advertising, streetscape, film and other media or making your own 'selfie'.

Being educated in the visual arts has never before assumed such prominence as a necessary literacy for everyone to be an informed and articulate citizen. There is so much opportunity for students of today to be active creators and consumers of a wonderful visual world. But this will require the visual arts to be a core part of the curriculum throughout all of children's schooling and teachers to be fully enabled to deliver it.

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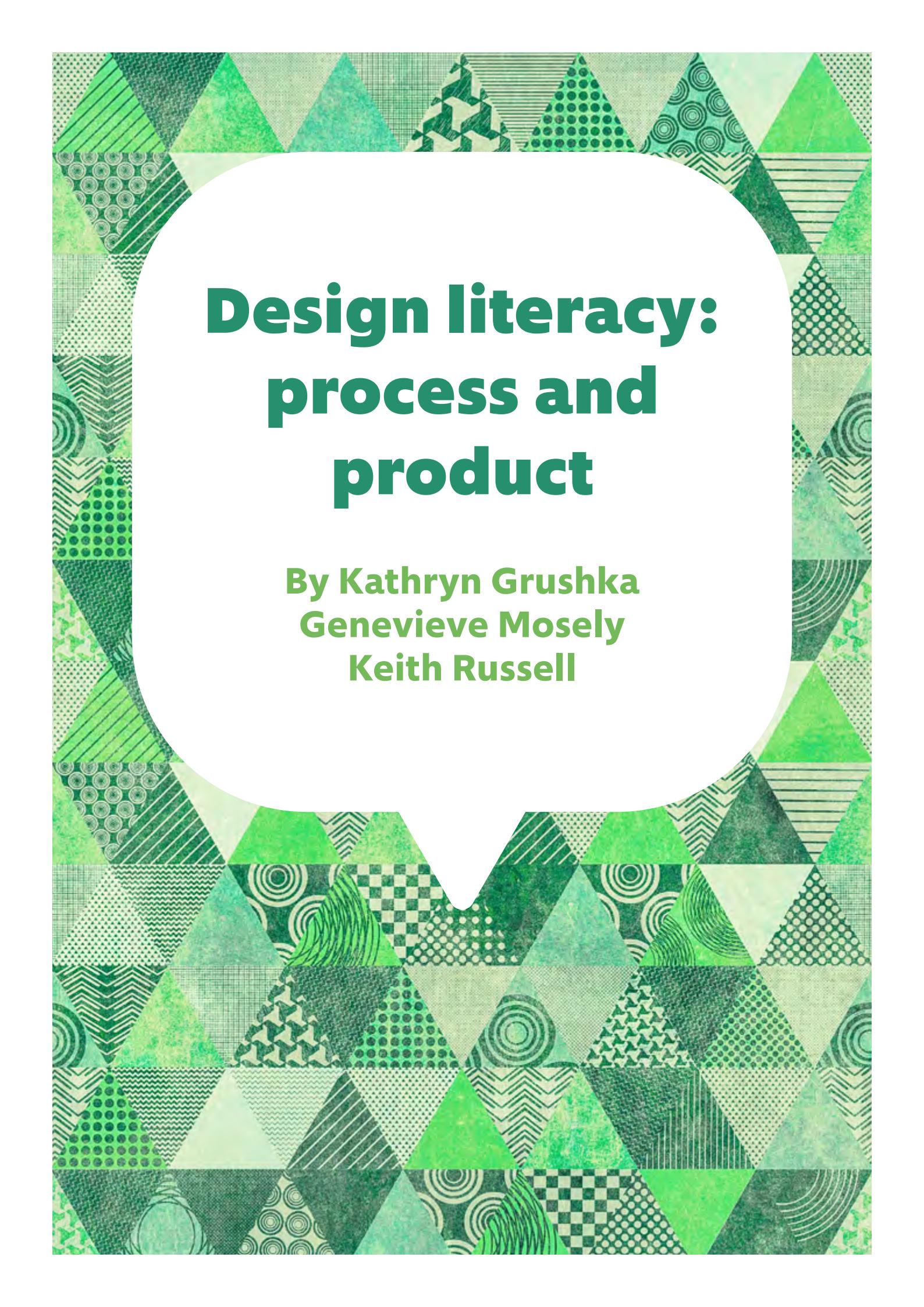
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Design literacy: process and product

**By Kathryn Grushka
Genevieve Mosely
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The concepts of design, technology, craft

Design emerged from within the Visual Arts as a separate academic domain, yet its history is as ancient as any of the arts. Universally, the concept of ‘design’ is used to recognise human intention, purpose and function in thoughts (design value), actions (design process) and objects (design products). This cluster of meanings can lead to ambiguity so that it is difficult to determine ‘what is being promoted or taught’ under the auspicious title of Design (Dilnot, 1989, p. 23).

We can speak of ‘design language’, ‘designing a design’ and we can speak of ‘designing an art work’ but we cannot speak of ‘arting an artwork’. Design, as a concept, is both more pervasive and yet less clearly defined than other nouns/verbs of making. Potentially, this openness to meaning is a strength.

Heskett (2001) suggests four usages of the word ‘design’: first the wider field of design which is a noun, second the action of the act of designing which is a verb, third the plan or intention to design as a process noun, and fourth, the finished product which is again a noun. Because of its universality, design has a complex language. It is used to assist other arts or to stand alone in the promotion of new modes of perception and communication.

In the contemporary world, the application of design is understood to apply not only to the conceiving, making and marketing of objects, but also as an approach to analysing and problem solving. This has become known as ‘design thinking’.

Driving the popularity of design thinking, particularly over the last decade, is its link to creativity, innovation and its ability to help solve complex or ‘wicked’ problems. It can be applied equally to systems and structures of managing processes, services and modes of working. However, the pairing of design and technology as a learning area in the school curriculum serves to narrow the focus of the teaching of design to the field of technology.

Design and Technology emerged as a new curriculum in the UK in 1990; design was separated from its traditional pairing of ‘Art and Design’ and developed its own theory, methodology and associated learning (Grushka, 2004). While currently in the curriculum design is still paired with both The Arts and Technologies, its predominate representation is in Design and Technology. The separation of design from being co-located with visual arts means that the cultural history and context, the zeitgeist which shapes and nourishes design concepts and expression, can be under-represented in the teaching of the discipline.

There is no doubt that the digital revolution and the internet have dominated our thinking and changed and expanded our understandings of both art and design practices. In the design field, we have shifted from graphic design, the manufactured things of everyday life (industrial design), to participatory design with products,

systems and services (user experience, user interface and service design), and the things of our own making (craft to interactive design-communication). New design practices afforded by technology have emerged in response to our rapidly changing communication practices and our teaching and learning worlds, where creative design pedagogies will increasingly be valued.

Design language

Design is the disclosure and subsequent development of order, form and pattern. It is a fundamental literacy that finds its process in all areas of knowledge. Its language is found in all the arts. In this conceptual sense, the language of design offers a way to develop common concerns between many areas of the current curriculum.

As a process (poetics), design is often reduced to a list of stages such as assimilation, investigation, development and communication. While each of these stages may be plotted on a flow chart to display the progress of a project, there are very real limitations in these prescriptions (see Alexander, 1965; Lawson, 1983). More and more sophisticated versions of such reconstructions tend to confuse the design language with the language that accounts for the process. Closer inspection of designers at work points to the design process as a fundamental way of being/doing. Lawson, in his testing of designers and scientists, came to these conclusions:

The essential difference between these two strategies is that while the scientists focused their attention on discovering the rule, the architects were obsessed with achieving the desired result. The scientists adopted a general problem focused strategy. Although it would be quite possible using the architects' approach to achieve the best solution without actually discovering the complete range of acceptable solutions, in fact most architects discovered something about the rule governing the allowed combination of blocks. In other words they learnt about the nature of the problem largely as a result of trying out solutions, whereas the scientists set out specifically to study the problem. (Lawson, 1983, p. 32).

As a product (aesthetics), design offers a language of objects that is open to ethnographic, sociological and phenomenological observation (see Bachelard, 1964). Here design offers its objects minus the preciousness of fine art works. To be a design object there must be a system of reference that is at the same time a system of use. At one end of the spectrum we may place fine art objects as objects that lack an intended direct use; that is, the painting of a chair is not to be used as a chair; its reference is indirect and mediated by the aesthetic distance that holds it within its frame (art for art's sake). For a chair to be an object of design attention, it must be able to be used within its own directly announced intention as a chair. The degree to which the chair as design object plays with this intention is the degree to which it is shifted towards the fine art end of the spectrum.

In the case of designer-objects – those objects which overtly state themselves as having been designed – this playfulness is overt, if not dominant. That is, there is a dynamic

tension between fine art objects and design objects that becomes apparent at the level of intended use. In the case of the design object, the chair retains its ‘chairness’ as its direct reference. To take another example, a door handle which failed to directly announce itself as a door handle would be in danger of not functioning and therefore of not being a design object. As a value (ethics), design both offers a history of failure and a language of possibility.

The growth of design as a feature of the everyday world of objects can be seen as one successful outcome of the efforts of the Moderns (such as the Bauhaus) to change the everyday world of objects. This growth can also be seen as the failure of these efforts to transform society. This is particularly evident with the rise of ‘design thinking’ being applied in non-design contexts (Dorst, 2011). Potentially, the language of design, as value, can assist in the social review of the world we are manufacturing and organising.

Repackaging and redesigning are ... part of a socio-economic system that assumes limitless growth and a continual state of desire. Consumer-led design in a market economy goes far beyond the idea of meeting human needs: it seeks to create and constantly to stimulate human desire. The modern consumer’s condition is characterized by dissatisfaction and a consequent state of longing. A continual stream of ‘new’ goods is produced to satisfy temporarily the desires which the market has, if not created, then certainly kindled. (Whately, 1993, p. 3)

Technology

If technology is the structuring of a skill or form of knowledge (*techne*) in a process that can be transmitted and replicated, then design is the cognitive ground of this structuring. Unless the design of a thing/process can be abstracted from the thing/process and formalised, the thing/process remains the secret of the maker. While historically the maker was also the user, the industrial revolution saw the relationship of an individual maker to their aesthetic techniques shift to a production and consumer orientation.

We can now design in teams and designers and their designing processes take many forms and all must be communicated and learnt. Design thinking has become complex and a highly contested term due to its adoption and implementation in fields outside of design (particularly in business and marketing contexts). As design represents a distinct way of knowing and designers have specific ways of approaching problems, the design process in the form of ‘design thinking’ has been adapted for creating solutions to a wide variety of problems.

Generally, design thinking is focused on being human-centred, iterative and prototype driven. Human-centred design is a design method which seeks to understand the user’s needs and issues when developing a product, system or service, and how to meet them. It focuses on empathising with the user and understanding that problems not only have technical constraints and requirements but also social and real-world

considerations which bring new insights to the problem being solved (Goldman & Kabayadondo, 2017).

Ultimately, design thinking draws on how designers think and how they solve problems. Design within the arts attempts to adhere to its enduring creative design pedagogies. Designers have many clients and they design or problem-solve according to the technologies they employ and the constraints of the brief, time and cost. The result has seen the emergence of the concept of design thinking and its processes and an explosion in creative design fields.

The original sense of technique (*techne*) has long gone; it has been replaced by design thinking for technologies. For many of us the word ‘technology’ has come to mean a thing we use and employ when creating, but can also be something we do not understand. This is particularly the case for ‘digital technologies’. The more we don’t understand it, then the higher order the technology must be.

This confusion is both at the level of production (how it is made) and at the level of product application (the ways it might be used). Often it appears that these secret systems are directing us rather than that we are directing them. We did not ask for their invention and often we have difficulty describing their place in our existing world. Yet we are compelled to explore them and their creative potential.

It would seem that the pure possibilities of electronics (or other physical sciences) are what define the ways in which the new information technologies can be applied rather than applying the skills of an artisan, master tradesman or designer (particularly evident in the new *The Australian Curriculum: Design and Technologies*).

This feeling of alienation from our own inventions arises out of the novelty and immaturity of the technology and not out of any recent change in the dynamics of technological development. While we may not know or understand the technology of making a violin, equally we may not know or understand the technique of a violinist, and yet we can all appreciate the music that is made between violinist, violin and audience.

The view of digital technology, in particular, as semi-autonomous, has shifted our attention from technology as an integrated activity requiring technique, to the devices that facilitate activity. We are in danger of mistaking the butter churn for milk technology, or of attending to the manufacturer of butter churns as the developer of better butter. Now that the design feedback loop of users and makers has come into play, digital technology – as integrated systems of hardware and software – displays the possibilities of a designed (technique-based) technology.

To appreciate this feedback connection between the design industries and the new technologies, we need to expand our view of the relationship between design and technology. It is not simply that design, in much of its professional practice, has

embraced the new devices. Design has also redefined the uses of these new devices through establishing the grounds of a rhetoric of information technologies. Such a rhetoric was called for over three decades ago to bridge the apparent gap between technologists and designers.

There is a general attitude that technology is only an applied science, rather than a part of design art, and this approach has led many to abandon hope that technology can be seriously influenced and guided by human values and a discernment of beneficial ends in the human community. A suitable theory of rhetoric in design would be one in which technology is viewed fundamentally as a rhetorical problem, integrated within the perspective of a broader design art, however radical that may seem to technologists. The theory would suggest productive ways in which closer connections between technology and design art could be established. (Buchanan, 1985, pp. 91-92).

Recent evidence of this rhetoric is the representation of design within the *Australian Curriculum: Technologies*. The subject ‘Design and Technology’ was integrated with the new subject ‘Digital Technology’. These two distinct subjects were placed under the learning area of ‘Technologies’. The combination of these two learning areas provides a “new curriculum context for the learning of technologies in Australia” (Fleer, 2018, p. 66).

Designers have had to continuously redefine their language during this ascendancy and expand design language beyond its traditional scope of ‘pattern’, ‘order’ and ‘form’ to strengthen the cultural connection between technology and design. Yet the urgent questions of value remain.

Culture and design no longer are forces that slowly but heroically move the world toward salvation through logical and ethical radicalism. They are mechanisms of emotions and adaptations of chances that fail to drag the world toward a horizon; they only transform it into many diffuse diversities. Progress no longer seems to be valued; instead, the unexpected is valued. The grand unitarian theorems no longer exist, nor do the leading models of the rational theologies. What exists is a modernity without illuminism. We are witnessing a definitive and extreme secularisation of design, within which design represents itself and no longer is a metaphor for a possible unity of technologies and languages. (Branzi, 1985, p. 37).

Design no longer is a metaphor for a possible unity of technologies and languages. The secularisation of design education as a field has expanded. It has moved beyond its traditional professional practices and representation in the school curriculum, with change accelerated by advances in digital technology.

When coupled with post-modern critical theory, the universal ideals held within design such as form, objectivity and social progress through art and design (Davis, 2017) are entering other domains. Increasingly, higher education institutions are developing undergraduate and postgraduate design curriculum to supplement non-design programs and upskill graduates for future, unpredictable and diverse workplaces (McWhinnie & Peterson, 2017; Wrigley & Straker, 2017).

Digital technologies and their design processes now transcend domains and have become genericised. The internet is an example of narrow-band technology achieving a universality simply through unrestricted access. Each circuit is closed but each circuit is linked to an open-ended exchange. The model is one of correspondence that knows no limit: any number of users can join the repertoire. The tribe may well have its rituals but more and more the language of design is structuring these rituals through form, pattern and order.

Craft

When the new technologies are reviewed from the broad cultural perspective of use and possible use, they reveal a pathway to the all but forgotten domain of craft. While each new device in the information technologies area can be seen as a response to an opportunity or efficiency demand in the information industries, the resulting devices have often ended up in the hands of the domestic user. Indeed we see the return of individualised designs afforded by the very expansion of digital technologies – such as unique house designs – responding to individual client needs.

This democratising of technology, and the emergence of end user interfaces has returned design to the individual or to their participation in the application of the technology to the design domain. At one level this is simply an extension of previous opportunities. Semi-professional equipment has long been available to schools, and semi-professional productions have been achieved.

At another level, the new technologies provide students with an opportunity to do ‘real work’ such as produce designs for large scale manufacture, create gaming worlds, produce computer masters for studio quality prepress, visualise or develop apps.

While each of these outcomes is exciting, such ‘real work’ has always been available through the setting of achievable projects and through the educational decision to focus on the acquisition of personal (craft) skills that are foundational and substantial in the learning of the individual. The new technologies simply offer a timely opportunity to recall the deeper learning aspects involved in all the arts subjects.

At the pedagogic level, there are teaching and learning decisions to be made. The advantageous aspects include the application of creative design through digital technologies which allow for cross disciplinary involvement. The range of traditional learning activities that are to be found are on the increase daily.

Beyond the hype, digital technologies have made available a broad range of basic skills, including image and text editing, that can be achieved at a professional level with very little cost beyond the initial capital equipment outlay. The virtual objects are environmentally safe, take up no real space and are open to be viewed and used from anywhere. These same virtual objects are, in all important respects, craft objects.

Integration of creative design pedagogies and new media technologies

As design is a relatively new area of educational concern, we can confuse design concerns with contemporary and new concerns. For example, if we look at design as inherently involved with recent technologies, we are in danger of restricting its language concerns to those of something like ‘techno-literacy’ and digital media literacy (Dezuanni, 2015).

This is not to deny that an important aspect of design in education should be to instruct the young in the uses of current and ancient technologies and to understand Media Arts and its design underpinnings. With an informed understanding of pre-existing and new technologies, we are all in a better position to explore the future implications of our designed material and digital world.

Equally, the language of design should not be looked at simply from the restrictive vantage of information online. The recent attention to learning online has promoted a new kind of skill, ‘mediacy’. However, mediacy within the arts and humanities shifts digital mediacy beyond the functional aspects of information visualisation, and the collection of online material, to the contemplation of the virtual and sensory technologies such as light and sound that promote spatial awareness and many communicative and interactive perceptual opportunities. In this understanding of mediacy individual cognition involves mental and emotional connections that facilitate learning “Mediacy is understood ... as a contemporary means of communication using technology and media, and as such, what literacy is to print media, mediacy is to all media”. (Araullo, de Berigny and Gough, 2018, p. 44).

When considering digital design and its interactive potential, we must shift beyond traditional literacy, aspects of sharing and disseminating information online. In announcing the rhetorical concerns of design, the intention should be to expand the traditional concept of design as literacy. Design is a complex, multimedia, information-rich language of social and cultural concern that offers insight into both the objects of its attention (topics/themes) and its process of making (material forms to information design to interactive artworks).

The arts and creative design pedagogies are seen as complementary to each other when seen through the elements and principals of design in Visual Arts and the use of digital technologies in Media Arts. These skills are required for digital technologies to become educationally useful in the development of higher order literacy skills, such as critical thinking, mixed and multimedia and aesthetically rich projects where students are able to explore the meta-cognitive rhetorics of design production.

The virtual objects of the web and beyond to virtual reality exist in this cultural space that is yet to be defined beyond the nascent design features of order, form and pattern.

The disclosure of meaning, in this space, offers the excitement of a new stage for human communication and a new opening for creative design pedagogies – a space where all participate as productive and interactive designers and where complexity and ambiguity, the existing language of design, is a guide and style manual.

Meaning in design, and its place

The intentional, purposeful and functional aspects of design necessarily involve design in a very broad range of meanings. Through the client relationship, design is specifically involved with aesthetics (ways of experiencing), ethics (ways of being), problem solving (ways of thinking) and poetics (ways of making). The pervasive and now genericised nature of design allows design languages to be taught across all curricula. The unavoidable presence of design (as products) now requires it to be interpreted across the whole community.

Without a formalised approach to a multidisciplinary model of design instruction, the potential openness of design can become limited to the professional concerns of current work places. For example, the exciting possibilities of information communication can be restricted to prepress aspects of graphics, and the global concerns of materials and markets can be restricted to production aspects of industrial design. Through a close focus on professional outcomes, the craft aspects of design can be lost.

The social world we inherited was designed; the world our children will inherit is being designed; digital technologies now generate creative, productive and interactive design-communication participants. Education allows us the opportunity to design, design.

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The language of dance

By Ralph Buck and Sue Fox

Dance is a poem of which each movement is a word

Mata Hari (1876-1917).

Introduction

This chapter analyses the current definitions and uses of the term ‘literacy’ within national and state/territory education systems’ strategic policies and curriculum. It unpacks the curriculum discipline of dance education in order to establish the validity of the term ‘dance literacy’ and discusses the place of dance literacy within the aesthetic literacies framework in schools. The paper briefly looks at the impact of technology and raises questions about the future impact of technology on dance and the impact of dance on technology.

Dance is a discipline of study in its own right; as a way of ‘knowing’ it involves unique concepts and skills. To be dance literate is to be able to comprehend the problems and concerns of choreography and performance (identified as Making in *The Australian Curriculum: The Arts*) and appreciation (identified as Responding in the Curriculum). Further aspects of dance literacy include placing the dance in its historical, cultural and sociopolitical context, acknowledging the function or purpose of that dance and consciously viewing the dance with an awareness of one’s own context and life experiences.

Providing all students with opportunities to realise their potential, to achieve success, and to experience a breadth of curriculum are foundation principles of a sound general education. Developing literacy standards is currently a priority within all Australian schools and an important objective to achieve. This paper discusses the validity of dance literacy as one of the ‘literacies’ and explores its value in terms of recognising the diversity of students’ range of needs and abilities, the cross-curriculum benefits initiated from participation in dance and the personal benefits gained from participation in dance.

Defining dance

Dance involves the communication and expression of information, ideas, feelings and values through gesture and movement. As in language, there are many different forms of dance and many different symbols in terms of gesture and movement that carry meanings and interpretations of culture. While dance is not a ‘language,’ it does have the capacity to function as a language because it is a communication system that may utilise gesture and movement as symbols.

Defining dance is elusive in that dance, and meanings coined from dance, are continually changing, with new forms and styles of dance evolving.

Dance is expressive movement with purpose and form. 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. Like all art forms, dance has the capacity to engage, inspire and enrich all students, exciting the imagination and encouraging students to reach their creative and expressive potential.

Dance enables students to develop a movement vocabulary with which to explore and refine imaginative ways of moving individually and collaboratively. Students choreograph, rehearse, perform and respond as they engage with dance practice and practitioners in their own and others' cultures and communities.

Students use the elements of dance to explore choreography and performance and to practise choreographic, technical and expressive skills. They respond to their own and others' dances using physical and verbal communication.

Active participation as dancers, choreographers and audiences promotes students' wellbeing and social inclusion. Learning in and through dance enhances students' knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures and contexts and develops their personal, social and cultural identity. (*Dance Rationale, The Australian Curriculum: The Arts*, 2014).

In addition, several education authorities provide a thorough overview of the current perceptions of what dance is in the following rationales from their senior dance syllabuses:

Dance uses the body as an instrument for expression and communication of ideas. It encourages the holistic development of a person, providing a way of knowing about oneself, others and the world. It is a means by which cultural heritage is preserved and translated through time. ... The study of dance enables the application of critical thinking and literacy skills through which students create, demonstrate, express and reflect on meaning made through movement. (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, Dance 2019 v1.1, General Senior Syllabus, p. 1).

Dance has been an integral component of every known culture, providing a means of expression and an extension of work and lifestyle patterns. It has accompanied the evolution of humanity as an integral part of the history of human movement, culture and communication. Dance provides a way of knowing about oneself, other people and the world. (The Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES), formerly Board of Studies NSW. 2009, Dance Stage 6 Syllabus, p. 6).

Dance communicates and gives expression to personal and social experiences. Humans have danced since the earliest times and dance continues to be a vibrant part of the cultural life of communities fulfilling a wide and dynamic range of roles ... VCE Dance prepares students to be creative, innovative and productive contributors to society as professional and social performers and makers of new dance works. (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, Dance Study Design 2019-2023, September 2018, p. 5).

Dance is dynamic and powerful. It embodies our ideas, thoughts, emotions and values and provides a unique opportunity to develop physically, creatively, aesthetically, emotionally and intellectually. People have always danced, and dance continues to evolve as a form of expression, fulfilling a variety of functions in society. As an art form, dance encourages artistic creativity and the active use of the imagination. The study of dance acknowledges the interrelationship between practical and theoretical aspects – the making and performing of movement and the appreciation of its meaning. It allows students to make and present

dance relevant to their lives. (Government of Western Australia School Curriculum and Standards Authority, Dance ATAR Course Year 12 Syllabus, 2018, p. 1).

All of these definitions represent a breadth of critical discussion from around Australia. Within the context of this paper it is worth noting that the above syllabus rationales, while written by dance teachers and academics, are edited and approved by a range of educational administrators such as school principals, curriculum directors, regional executive directors and university academics who do not have a dance background. The curriculum approving processes throughout Australia acknowledge the value of dance education, and in particular the role of dance in developing communication abilities.

If communication is the core issue in developing literacy skills (Freebody, 1997) then it could be assumed that the education systems throughout Australia would endorse the contribution that dance brings to the development of literacies. It is therefore an ongoing contradiction that the majority of all literacy projects focus only upon reading and writing. This issue alone is worthy of considerable research and needs to be attended to if Australia is serious about advancing education beyond the ‘back to basics’ policy, which aims to drill kids in state schools in the old print culture skills (Spender, 1997).

Common to all earlier and current definitions of dance in Australia is the reference to the communication and expression of ideas and values; the use of movement as an expressive code; dance as a symbol system, and the content organisers of making, performing and appraising dance. Dance uses gesture and movement to implicitly and explicitly convey meaning.

The crafts of creating, presenting and reading meanings in dance are explicitly articulated and conceptualised within developmental continuums in the primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors. The dance-specific content organisers of making and responding (formerly choreography, performance and appreciation), focus upon how meaning is created, what movement material best communicates intent, why movement communicates specific meaning within specific contexts and so on. Through developing abilities within the practices of choreography, performance and appreciation, students develop dance literacy abilities.

Exploring dance through the lens of making (choreography and performance) and responding engages students in creative and critical thinking. As students create and communicate meaning through dance they develop aesthetic and kinaesthetic intelligence in addition to personal and social skills. Self-confidence is developed alongside an awareness of, and respect for, the body. The study of this subject increases the quality of personal and physical wellbeing and fosters social inclusion through focused experiences of valued collaborative practice.

Through studying dance as both artist and as audience, students will develop a range of interrelated concepts, understanding and skills in dance as an art form and as a means

of social inclusion. Students will study dance in various genres and styles, embracing a variety of cultural, societal and historical viewpoints integrating new technologies in all facets of the subject. Historical, current and emerging dance practices, works and artists are explored in global contexts and Australian contexts, including the dance of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Students will learn about dance as it is now and explore its origins across time.

The current focus on literacy

Historically in every Australian state/territory education system there has been a plethora of literacy programs. The improvement of literacy has been a focus for education systems across Australia, government and private, for many decades. The introduction of an Australian National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) has maintained a national focus and sometimes a media and jurisdictional frenzy on the importance of literacy. NAPLAN assesses the literacy skills of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 through a series of national tests for all government and non-government schools across Australia.

As test results are published each year, media focus turns to how jurisdictions fare against each other and often what the lower achieving ones need to do ‘to raise the bar’.

Within educational systems – and within their literacy programs – the term literacy has been defined and used to meet local expectations. The concern is that in an effort to fulfil expectations regarding literacy, it would be easy to emphasise the teaching of reading and writing, rather than teaching for the improvement of literacies. Students today and in the future require literacies other than reading and writing (Rushkoff, 1997). Emerging literacy theories are placing greater emphasis on multiliteracies and modalities and coupling these with aesthetics and creativity (Barton, 2014).

At a national level the focus on literacy continues through the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). ACARA was established in 2009 to develop a common curriculum from Foundation to Year 12. In 2015 the Australian Education Council endorsed the Australian Curriculum in eight learning areas, including The Arts. One of the key dimensions of the Australian Curriculum is the General Capabilities.

The general capabilities ‘encompass knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that, together with curriculum content in each learning area and the cross-curriculum priorities, will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century’.

ACARA identifies literacy as one of the seven general capabilities and is defined in this context as encompassing “the knowledge and skills students need to access, understand, analyse and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas and opinions, interact with others and participate in activities

at school and in their lives beyond school". It involves students "listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts." (ACARA, 2018).

Literacy in the Australian Curriculum presents schools and teachers with a Literacy learning continuum that organises the key ideas for Literacy into six interrelated elements:

- Comprehending texts through listening, reading and viewing
- Composing texts through speaking, writing and creating
- Text knowledge
- Grammar knowledge
- Word Knowledge
- Visual Knowledge

In terms of text knowledge ACARA notes that texts include multimodal texts which "combine language with other means of communication such as visual images, soundtrack or spoken words, as in film or computer presentation media". Gesture is identified as a form of communication and texts are acknowledged for providing "important opportunities for learning about aspects of human experience and about aesthetic value".

ACARA acknowledges that the reading, experimentation, understanding and producing of diverse texts in and out of school is an important 21st Century skill. This imperative that students develop skills in a range of literacies is critical, and schools and their associated pedagogy need to reflect and stimulate this range.

Hong (2000) highlights the growing interest in diverse ways of knowing and communicating in an era of increasing globalisation. She focuses on research showing that literacy has "increasingly become conceived not as a narrow set of skills and practices pertaining to reading and writing the printed word, but more as a social practice that takes many forms, each with specific purposes and contexts". Barton (2013) reinforces that literacy in the 21st Century has become "complexly multimodal" with "students through their contemporary artistic endeavours conveying ideas through one or various combinations of different modes". Barton highlights that the arts use multiple ways to represent and express distinct bodies of knowledge:

Modes such as visual – use of line, shape, form, colour and texture; embodied – gestural, other movement, facial expressions; aural – various sound sources and silence; textural – physical features and composition; written – diverse symbol systems including language, notational forms, graphics; are all executed. Artistic knowledge, expression and communication can be conveyed through just one mode or in combination with others, an ensemble, and while the arts share this feature they also can be defined in their own distinct ways. (Barton, 2014, p. 5).

While there is now a more national focus on literacy it is important that policy makers continue to develop curriculum, advice and guidelines that define literacy beyond reading, writing and spelling. Education authorities and curriculum designers need to continue to reflect on developing a broad range of critical literacies that also include aural, visual and kinaesthetic modes.

Alloway et al (1996) and King (1996) also believe that many current interpretations of literacy are narrow. If the aim of improving literacy skills is about ‘responding to personal and civic-cultural as well as economic needs’ as stated by Lo Bianco (1997), then the definition of literacy must be much broader.

We need to expand the boundaries of literacy to ensure that it includes multiple literacies, cultural literacies (our own and others), technological literacies (cyberspace and computer literacies), critical literacies, visual literacies, aural literacies and oracies. (Alloway et al., 1996, p. 99).

There are many literacies that take various forms “each appropriate for different social occasions, each constructed by that situation”. (Alloway et al., 1996). Common to all definitions and explanations of literacy is the notion of communication.

As such, dance as a form of literacy is as valid and accountable as any other form of literacy. Dils (2004) recognises ‘the broad, interdependent bodily and intellectual skills, sensitivities and knowledges needed to create and understand dance’ and acknowledges that Howard Gardner’s (1983, 1993) concept of multiple intelligences highlights that people might be ‘dance smart’.

Dance literacy

Dance literacy can be taught and is currently being taught in schools throughout Australia.

‘Dance relies on multiple literacies. These include oral, visual, kinetic, text based and digital literacy as fundamental to learning, communicating, creating and responding. Students use and develop literacy skills as they describe, appraise and document their own dances and those of their peers. They respond to, interpret and analyse increasingly complex dance works made by others. They use their literacy skills to access knowledge, make meaning, express thoughts, emotions and ideas, interact with and challenge others’. (Western Australia Schools Curriculum and Standards Authority, Dance ATAR course Year 12 syllabus, 2014, p. 8).

The scope or potential for dance education as a meaningful contributor to the students’ education is best realised when dance is taught within the context of aesthetic literacy. Under the aesthetic literacy umbrella the scope for creating and comprehending dance that has communication as its main concern is vast.

Aesthetic literacy draws the attention of teachers and students to the influences that inform decision making, actions undertaken and views of oneself and others.

Barton (2013) suggests that

... becoming literate in aesthetic discourse becomes an integral part of the student's practice in making meaning through art. Being able to describe, critique, and master relevant arts vocabulary and technique is essential to the process of creating art. When arts students learn to see in aesthetic ways and use this knowledge and inspiration from other's artworks to create their own, the process of creativity takes place. (p. 3).

Aesthetic literacy

Holzer (2007) suggests an approach to arts education that uses nine flexible principles representing a framework and benchmark for aesthetic education that he identifies as the Capacities of Imaginative Learning, summarised as follows:

- 1.** Noticing deeply: identify and articulate layers of detail in a work through continuous interaction over time.
- 2.** Embodying: experiencing a work of art via the senses, emotionally and physically, and be able to physically represent experiences.
- 3.** Questioning: asking questions to further own learning.
- 4.** Making connections: connecting what you notice to prior experiences and other mediums.
- 5.** Identifying patterns: finding relationships in the details.
- 6.** Exhibiting empathy: respecting diverse perspectives to understand others, emotionally and cognitively.
- 7.** Creating meaning: creating one's own interpretations, synthesis and expression, in light of others'.
- 8.** Taking action: acting based on the knowledge acquired through the experience.
- 9.** Reflecting/assessing: looking back and continually assessing as part of the experience of what has been learned and where challenges still remain.

These should be identified across all learning areas in the curriculum. "Creating meaning opens a doorway to interpretation and exploration of our own and other people's perspectives" (Lussier, 2010).

Aesthetic literacy is not solely developed through the arts experiences taught in schools. All discipline areas, incidental experiences and environmental factors inform the development of the aesthetic literacy in each individual. However, education in dance and the other arts disciplines fosters the conscious development, discovery and application of complex cognitive and aesthetic functions in the process of creating, presenting and appreciating meaningful and expressive 'texts'. Dance literacy contributes to the development of aesthetic literacy which influences the way that

the individual perceives the made and natural environments, and acts within these environments.

In developing dance literacy within an aesthetic literacy framework it is essential to look beyond the encoding and decoding processes of choreography, performance and appreciation. In order to decode or read the many types of dance accurately, the initial function and context of the dance must be considered.

Like other literacies, the chief concern of dance is the communication of information, ideas and perceptions. The dance ‘texte’ (Rubidge, 1989) is created by the collection, manipulation and ordering of movement, gesture and imagery to give meaning. Comprehending the ‘texte’ involves decoding or interpreting the signifiers – the actual images and symbols used as the communicators, and the signified – the intended message of the textes’ (Rubidge, 1989). Signifiers seldom have single meanings. “A single image may simultaneously point to its signifier and act as a symbol around which a range of connotative meanings and metaphors cluster” (Rubidge, 1989, p. 45).

A dance (the text) can be read, but not in isolation from the socio-cultural and functional context in which it was developed. Nor can it be created and presented in a vacuum, as the current audiences’ values and attitudes will inform the reading of the dance. The viewer will bring to the dance a different set of experiences, points of views and histories that will inform their interpretation and valuing of the dance. As such many valid and reasoned interpretations of the signifier and signified are possible.

Essential to the reading of the dance text and the interpretation of the signifiers and further sub-texts is that the viewer can validate their interpretations and evaluations through a reasoned argument. Implicit to such reasoning is knowledge (Best, 1992), knowledge of personal aesthetic values and knowledge of distinct modes of discourse, and the new meanings drawn out by the interaction or these discourses.

All dance has a function or purpose. Someone has made the dance and it was made for a reason. Adshead (1981) identifies the functions that dance fulfils as being artistic, social and ritual. A dance may fulfil several functions and its function/s may change over time. For example, traditional dances from African cultures may have functions that are both social and ritual, while folk dances that were initially made and performed as social dances may now be presented in an artistic context with an artistic function. Traditional dance from Ireland being re-formed and presented as part of the ‘Riverdance’ production is an example here.

By acknowledging the function of the dance, the viewer is guided in discerning its form and its meaning. Similarly, establishing the dances’ initial social, cultural and geographical context provides valuable information that prompts insightful and accurate decoding or reading of the dance. For example, knowing where and when Meryl Tankard choreographed her works allows viewers to ascertain the influences upon her work and make informed interpretations and evaluations of that work.

The reading of movements, gestures, looks and attitudes as metaphors or as sub-texts within a dance is most accurately achieved when the socio-cultural and geographical contexts are understood. Occasionally, knowledge of local events or issues allows an audience to decode another layer of meaning from a dance. How often does the situation arise when a visitor is surrounded by a local audience in which everyone around is smiling or laughing at an event on stage, yet the individual has not seen anything funny? The ‘locals’ have recognised a subtext or another layer of meaning within the performance that required knowledge of the local context to read the meaning.

Another aspect of dance literacy is the use of specific terminologies and notation systems used to describe, analyse and record dance. The systematic recording, description and definition of ballet steps, initially by Pierre Beauchamp (1636-1706) and then Carlo Blasis (1797-1878), initiated the development of what is today a rich, clearly defined and internationally understood ballet terminology. Rudolf Laban and Rudolf and Joan Benesh developed systems for notating dance in order to accurately record choreography. Both Labanotation and Benesh dance notation are internationally understood forms for notating dance and are used throughout Australia.

Within the large variety of dance genres and styles, dance notations and dance analyses, there are specific dance terms and vocabularies that are a part of dance literacy. Familiarity with these terms provides a ‘way in’ to the comprehension of the dance and provide a common vocabulary for discussing dance that is internationally understood.

Dance literacy in the education context

Dance is one of the five subjects that form part of The Arts learning area for the Australian Curriculum. As a curriculum area it has been conceptualised into its component parts and the expectation is that it will be taught across Foundation to Year 10. It is also taught at upper secondary and tertiary levels of education.

Dance is taught and assessed throughout Australia as a tertiary entrance subject that has equal weighting with other curriculum areas.

The Australian Curriculum: The Arts highlights that “students use literacy to develop, apply and communicate their knowledge and skills as artists and as audiences”. Through making and responding, students enhance and extend their literacy skills as they create, compose, design, analyse, comprehend, discuss, interpret and evaluate their own and others’ artworks (ACARA, 2014).

Each arts subject requires students to learn and use specific terminology of increasing complexity as they move through the curriculum. Students understand that the terminologies of the arts vary according to context and they develop their ability to use language ‘dynamically and flexibly’.

To make the role of literacy across all learning areas more explicit the Australian Curriculum identifies key points of learning for this general capability throughout learning area content descriptions and elaborations. It is identified by an icon 

Literacy in the dance curriculum is explicit, though features more predominantly in the area of Responding where students are required to investigate, analyse and respond to dance they make and view. They are asked to respond using their own words and learnt dance terminology when expressing/communicating ideas, purpose and meaning.

In the area of Making, literacy is less explicit, often not tagged to the content descriptions but does feature in many of the content elaborations (which are optional, but are provided to give teachers ideas about how they might teach the content). At the elaboration level for curriculum content literacy has been linked to areas such as:

- exploring movement possibilities in response to stimulus, taking photos or videoing dance sequences;
- recognising and accepting teacher/peer feedback;
- using expressive skills to engage the audience, presenting their dance in a digital format;
- presenting their dance using internet-based technologies;
- experimenting with realistic movements, analysing dances from a range of times and locations;
- analysing and evaluating structural choices in their dances by documenting their process;
- improvising to find new movement possibilities and exploring personal style by combining elements of dance;
- extending movement vocabulary to explore stylistic preferences and personal identity;
- exploring use of elements of dance in different dance styles;
- investigating and adapting dance ideas to create movement (ACARA, 2018).

Throughout this paper the argument has been that there is not ‘a literacy’ but many literacies, that dance literacy is a valid form of literacy, that it is not immutable and that dance literacy can be taught. The value of acknowledging and supporting dance literacy within the education system can be summed up in the following key points:

- The inclusion of dance education in the curriculum recognises the diversity of students learning preferences, needs and abilities. As such, students have greater

chances of learning and therefore reaching academic goals. Not all students learn in the same manner using the same mediums of discourse. Gardner's work in researching 'the multiple intelligences' and identifying preferred learning styles, has highlighted the importance of including within students' education curriculum areas such as dance education that develop or demonstrate skills that would otherwise go undeveloped or unnoticed. (Gardner, 1993).

- On the whole, dance education involves enjoyable and fun activities that motivate students to learn. Irrespective of the dance specific outcomes from participation in dance, other major outcomes, invaluable in the classroom, include an increase in participation and attitudinal changes in behaviour "... arts experiences led to improvements in classroom attitudes and behaviour ..." (Fox & Gardiner, 1997, p. 3).
- The flow on from behaviour and attitudinal change is that there may be more actual classroom time spent on curriculum activity rather than behaviour modification, and that other literacies may actually improve as a result of including dance in the curriculum.
- Coordinating the mastery of skills and subject matter across the curriculum, with the aesthetic arts as central as the verbal and mathematical arts, can, we believe, add tremendous 'insight' and power into the learning process. By insight we refer to the brain's abilities to exploit natural similarities in the component processes that underlie different skills that are being learned. It is our hypothesis that the processes innate to artistic/aesthetic learning have the potential to greatly impact overall ability and general academic performance (Fox & Gardiner, 1997, p. 3).
- The dance industry and the wider arts industry are a growing field for employment. Students studying dance education not only develop self esteem, fitness, presentation skills, self confidence, problem solving abilities, team working skills, belief in independent ideas, discipline and negotiation skills, all of which are valued skills in any vocation, but they also develop dance industry skills that lead to employment in that vocational area.

Dance literacy and technology

Has technology impacted on how people interact with dance? Throughout history technological development has continually had an impact on the development of dance. For example, in the early 19th Century, the evolution of the Romantic ballet style was informed by the use of stage lighting, the use of trapeze-like wire and the wearing of pointe shoes.

These developments allowed choreographers greater scope in communicating their intent. Performances became more spectacular and the creation of illusion assisted audiences to perceive 'the mythical dream worlds' that became a choreographic

focus of the time. The advent of television and video is another example of the impact of technology on dance.

With increasing access to information, dance literacies will, we believe, evolve faster. People will become aware of a range of views on artistic issues from around the world, influencing their own choreography and writings. Specific technological developments with the internet and other developing technologies will provide improved dance education opportunities for distance education students who will have access to moving images and specific dance education information at their own sites. This technology is equally appropriate in the Open Learning University context, where studio dance teachers may enrol in and complete the greater part of a graduate certificate in dance to improve the quality of their local dance businesses.

Technology has had an impact because of its ability to increase the exposure of dance to a much larger audience, giving more people access to a wider range of dance experiences. This exposure may in part be responsible for a greater interest in dance as is evidenced by the large audiences at shows such as Tap Dogs and Riverdance and the inclusion of more and more dance in major arts festivals.

Creativity is fostered within dance education and within all arts areas, and it is the nurturing of this creativity that in turn will shape new means of communication via digital texts, video laser technology and information technology. This technology will inform if not drive education curriculum and pedagogical practice in the future.

Policy makers and politicians around Australia and the globe continually announce that ‘education is the way forward’ or ‘education is the future’, and we agree, it is. So why is it that in Australia, politicians emphatically endorse ‘back to basics’ education policies and dictums? If education is the way forward then education must focus on future technologies, the creative means for presenting and receiving knowledge, and value the breadth of abilities, needs, interests and ‘intelligences’ that abound in young people. Dance and the other arts are goldmines of educational endeavour and their potential for accessing knowledge, communicating ideas and sharing information is yet, we believe, untapped within Australian education.

As students participate in making and responding to dance, the awareness of current and emerging technologies will enable them to not only access information but to create and communicate through a variety of platforms, working independently and in collaboration with others in physical and virtual environments.

ACARA notes that for students to participate in the 21st Century they need a high level of technological awareness and skills. It has identified the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability as one of the seven General Capabilities. The focus is for students to learn “to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas at school and in their lives beyond school”.

ACARA believes that “to participate in a knowledge-based economy and to be empowered within a technologically sophisticated society now and into the future, students need the knowledge, skills and confidence to make ICT work for them at school, at home, at work and in their communities. Information and communication technologies are fast and automated, interactive and multimodal, and they support the rapid communication and representation of knowledge to many audiences and its adaptation in different contexts. They transform the ways that students think and learn and give them greater control over how, where and when they learn” (ACARA, 2018).

STEM/ STEAM agenda

Curriculum and classrooms that limit themselves to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects are in effect limiting the learners’ educational opportunities. A focus on STEM is reductive – how can we as a society comprehensively account for progress and innovation only through a concentrated attention to these four limited disciplines? However, while advocating for STEAM is popular, we believe we are protecting one hierarchical view of education and curriculum. We could similarly (and simplistically), just as easily be advocating for other curriculum typologies, but the Dance chapter authors are not interested in creating more hierarchies.

Our interests are in what pedagogies and curriculum structures work together in engaging children in learning. What helps children become socially empowered and confident to take risks, be creative and innovative in the classroom? This view offers an alternative and relevant means for advancing diverse literacies and using technology and time to better effect. And as this chapter argues, we strongly posit that an arts rich curriculum and pedagogy that has a focus on process and product supports children and teachers to enliven learning and teaching.

Dance literacy is about creating and reading meaning presented by the moving body – a three-dimensional medium. The concepts, skills and processes bound up in developing dance literacy are the very literacy skills that we believe will inform the way forward in education; they are the literacy skills that will make connections with technology and with people.

Summary

In identifying and articulating the meanings and issues within dance literacy, this chapter aims to broaden perceptions of what ‘literacy’ is and what it means to be literate, noting that current education policy at state/territory and federal levels focuses upon improving the literacy skills of all students.

Policy makers and teachers are also concerned with providing opportunities in education for all students to achieve their potential. In acknowledging the various

modes of ‘knowing’, such as dance, all students are given the maximum opportunity to achieve personal and systemic goals. It is important that educators – in their rush to improve students’ literacy levels – remember to acknowledge dance as a literacy, that like reading and writing, it is a means of communicating, expressing, interpreting and valuing ideas, information and feelings.

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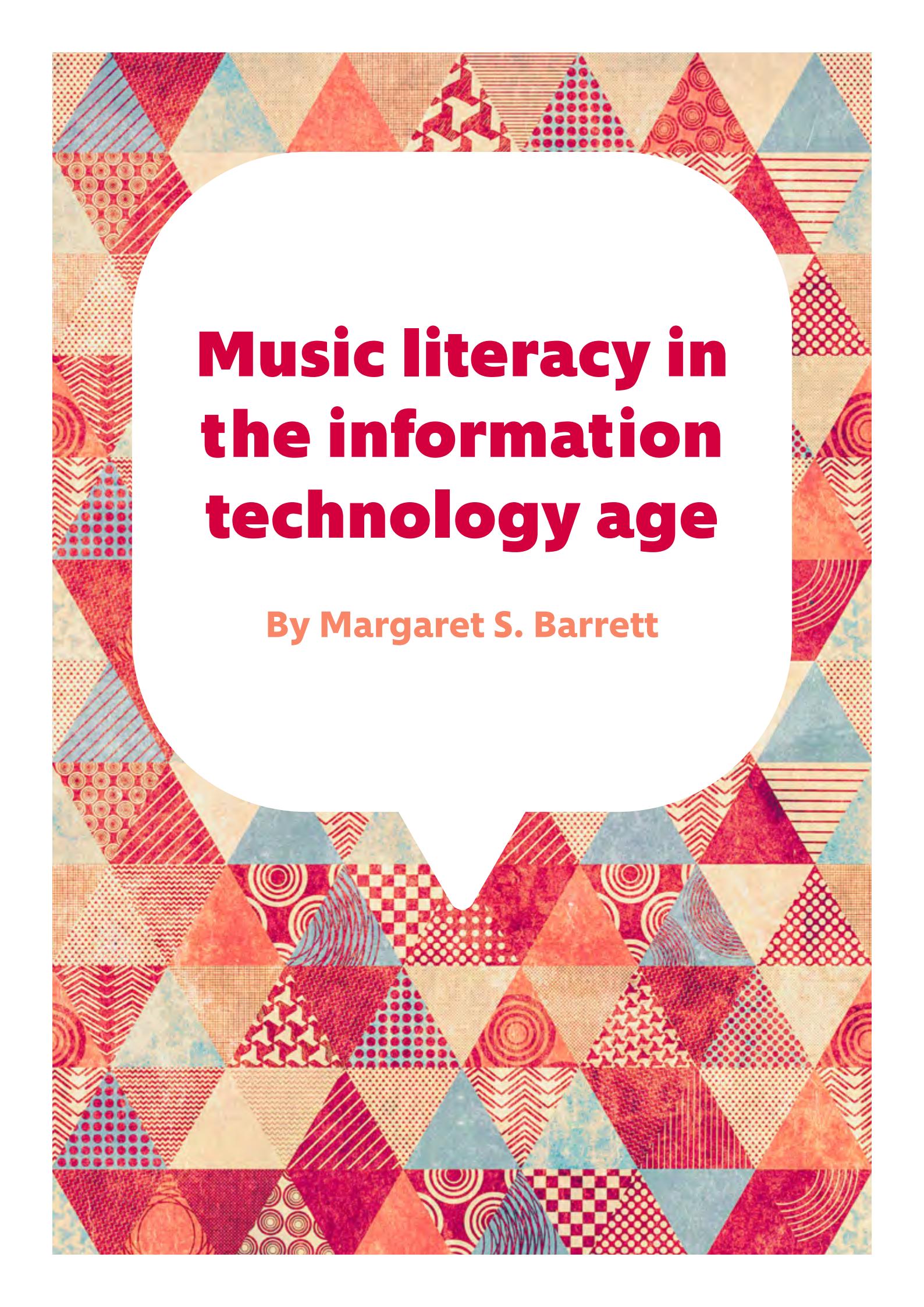
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The background of the image consists of a repeating pattern of triangles in various colors, including red, blue, and yellow. Each triangle contains a different abstract design, such as concentric circles, horizontal lines, or dots. The overall effect is a vibrant, textured collage.

Music literacy in the information technology age

By Margaret S. Barrett

Introduction

As the 20th Century drew to a close, the exponential rate of change was precipitated through scientific and technological breakthroughs in almost every facet of human life, and raised more questions than answers about the nature of teaching and learning. One of the central concerns for educators in the very late 20th Century focused on our definitions of traditional educational concepts such as literacy.

As educators recognise the impact of technological change on society and, more importantly, the impact of such change on the ways in which we perceive, think and act, it is imperative that we expand current definitions of literacy beyond text-based definitions. In order to embrace the full gamut of expression in a technology-based multimedia environment, children need to develop aural, spatial and visual perception to be able to interpret the fine shades of meaning, embodied and symbolised, by multimedia. We must also equip children with the skills and knowledge to use such media for personal expression in conjunction with developing their capacity to perceive and make informed judgments in such an environment.

These factors have been the concern of arts educators for some time, and reflect the well-established role the arts have played in shaping and re-presenting the ideas, values and beliefs of particular cultures. As Green reminds us: “Whilst the space age has widened those very horizons of our world which the nuclear age threatens, the arts and humanities have also been involved, in their own ways, in overturning traditional concepts of meaning and understanding” (Green, 1988, p. 1).

What is literacy?

Olson and Astington (1991) challenge traditional text-based definitions of literacy, and argue that to be literate “... is to be competent to participate in a certain form of discourse, whether one can read or write or not” (p. 711). For these authors, the notion of literacy rests in the capacity to engage in meta-cognition, or ‘thinking about one’s own thinking’. They provide evidence of the proposition that the language we use in critical thinking specifically – terms such as hypothesise, assert, criticise and interpret – although originally developed from the language of text-based thinking, is now deeply embedded in oral language, and as such, forms the basis of any notion of literacy.

It is pertinent to this discussion that the arts generally, and music specifically, engage in critical reflection as a central component of teaching and learning experiences (see Boardman, 1989). This concern is evident in the structure of the nationally developed curriculum framework documents for the arts. Within the common arts strand organisers identified within these documents, those of ‘arts criticism and aesthetics’, ‘making, creating and presenting’ and ‘past and present contexts’ (ACARA, 2015), students in the music classroom are continually engaged in reflective thought processes, processes that are in Olson & Arlington’s view central to a notion of literacy.

Tishman and Perkins refer to the effects of ‘thinking-rich language’ on developing certain habits of mind. They comment that:

... frequent exposure to the language of argumentation, with such terms as premise, reason, conclusion, evidence, theory, and hypothesis, drags learners into the values and commitments of critical analysis. The language of creative problem solving, with expressions such as wild idea, pushing the edge of the envelope, new point of view and breaking set, fosters the mind-set of creative ideation. (Tishman & Perkins. 1997, p. 372).

If we view the creation of certain habits of mind as a central component of literacy, then it becomes evident that each of the arts makes a unique contribution to the development of ‘certain habits of mind’. Whilst Tishman and Perkins use the notion of the ‘language of thinking’ in terms of the language we use to talk about thinking, they emphasise that we “... think in many other languages as vehicles – the language of mathematics, or music, or visual images, if one can call these languages in a metaphorically extended sense ... people think in many symbolic vehicles” (1997, p. 374). Eisner reminds us that “... human products owe their existence not only to the achievements of individual minds, but to the forms of representation available in the culture – forms that enable us to make our ideas and feelings public” (1997, p. 350).

Eisner’s insistence on the integral role of culture in shaping children’s minds is central to this discussion. Not only do we shape our culture through acting upon the materials and ideas of particular forms of thinking within that culture (for example, musical, visual, kinaesthetic, mathematical thinking); crucially, the forms available within the culture, and the presentation of such forms (through the use of multimedia for example), in turn shape us.

Recognition of this symbiotic relationship underlines the importance of educating children to ‘read’ and interpret their culture in all its presentations. This is particularly important in a technology-based multimedia environment where meanings are presented in a range of forms other than the traditionally text based. Multimedia environments have appropriated the materials and ideas of specific art forms to communicate meaning. This use of the materials and ideas of the arts as a means of presenting meaning within a multimedia environment emphasises the need for an expanded notion of literacy to encompass all variations of symbolising and embodying meaning. For the purposes of this paper I shall focus specifically on music and the implications for education in general when we view ‘music literacy’ as a central component of education.

Towards a definition of ‘music literacy’

The notion of ‘music literacy’ has been narrowly defined as the capacity to use conventional music notation in some music education contexts. This emphasis on music notation stems from the Western musicological tradition of score-based analysis in

which the ‘musical work’ is referred to and ‘defined’ via the score. However, as Randell comments “... notation is not sufficient for a definition of ‘the work itself’. Indeed, notation is simply not self-sufficient at all. It must always be decoded by an informed reader who brings to bear on it his or her own experience. And that experience is a product of a parallel oral tradition” (1992, p. 12). Musical notation may be regarded as a means of encoding and storing musical thought. It only acquires musical meaning when realised as musical sound by a musician capable of decoding and interpreting the set of ‘musical instructions’ that is, notation.

Narrow ‘score-based’ definitions of music literacy effectively discount those musical practices (and by implication ‘musical works’) that stem from oral traditions. Furthermore, such definitions of music literacy ignore the contextual aspect of the ‘musical work’, however it is presented. Kerman (1985) asserts that “... by removing the bare score from its context in order to examine it as an autonomous organism, the analyst removes that organism from the ecology that sustains it” (p. 73).

When examining this ‘organism’ in isolation from its ecological context, the ‘score-based’ musicologist is engaged in the analysis of a musical work that is vastly different to that heard by an ethnomusicologist. Operating from a view of music as culturally-embedded, the ethnomusicologist’s analytical framework must acknowledge and provide a means to interpret the contextual features of musical works, as well as address those features that are seen primarily as internal or ‘intrinsic’, and capable of being encoded as a set of ‘musical instructions’.

If we view as a central component of ‘literacy’ the capacity to “participate in a certain form of discourse” (Olson & Asington, 1991, p. 711) it is evident that many musical practices operate beyond text-based notions of music literacy. For example, a competent jazz improviser demonstrates the capacity to participate in the musical discourse of a particular musical genre, a genre that in many instances eschews notation. When we examine musical practices worldwide, issues of encoding and decoding musical meaning through forms of notation (be they staff notation, graphic notation, hand signs, rhythm syllables or other means of visually recording musical meaning) are of varying importance, with some cultures viewing oral traditions as the only means of transmitting musical meaning.

Knowledge of music notation and the capacity to use music notation for a range of purposes (decoding other’s or encoding one’s own musical instructions) is a component of a broad musical understanding in some cultural contexts. In themselves, these capacities are merely tools for the achievement of musical ends. Furthermore, they are tools that facilitate the coding processes, such as the encoding and decoding of particular musical genres, largely those of the Western European tradition. As such these processes are inevitably limited in their broad application. As Eisenberg reminds us, “A musical score is a set of instructions, useful to those who can carry them out” (1988, p. 11). From the above, it is clear that any definition of ‘musical literacy’ must

encompass the capacity to engage in a range of musical processes and practices beyond those embedded in notation.

How do we communicate ideas in music?

Musical thinking reflects the complexity of the art form, in particular the chronological and intangible nature of the art form. For example, unlike more static mediums, such as those of painting or sculpture, the experience of music takes place over a specific period of time and requires the participant to retain large amounts of aural information in memory whilst simultaneously processing further incoming information. Additionally, as an aural art form, music cannot be captured in its entirety through exercising senses other than the auditory.

Whilst recent technological developments may allow us to view a visual display of the relative frequencies of a musical work, this in itself does not constitute a musical experience and does not access the art form for us. In music there is no tangible object to grasp, or to view. To engage in music is to engage in a certain ‘habit of mind’, as the chronological and intangible nature of the art form requires us to develop a ‘music thinking-rich’ language.

Elliott reminds us that a musical practice is “... a multidimensional human phenomenon involving two interlocking forms of intentional human activity: music making and music listening. These activities are not merely linked; they are mutually defining and reinforcing” (1995, p. 42).

When engaging with a musical work as an audience-listener, composer/arranger-listener, conductor-listener, improviser-listener or performer-listener, students are involved in the processes of interpretation and critique. Best argues that artistic feelings are rational and cognitive in character and that understanding and, as importantly, feeling in the arts arises from a process of interpretative reasoning, which is as valid as inductive and deductive reasoning (1992). In Best’s view interpretative reasoning involves “[...] attempting to show a situation in a different light [...]” (1992, p. 8), and is seen as an imaginative and creative enterprise whereby new perspectives, insights and evaluations arise. Furthermore, Best considers artistic feelings “[...] are necessarily dependent upon understanding the relevant art forms” (1992, p. 10), and are founded in and supported by reference to specific instances within those art forms.

The processes of musical interpretation and critique are attendant to the ultimate goal of illuminating an understanding of the musical work and communicating musical meaning, however that may be realised. Engaging in the processes of musical interpretation and critique involve issues such as: analysing the musical structure of the work; taking into consideration performance conventions associated with the work or musical style; preparing the technical forces (including instrumental facility and formal musical knowledge) to realise the musical work; and attending to the

context in which the musical work arises, including knowledge of the composer and what is known of her intentions, and the context in which she works. Through these processes, musical thinking and knowing are manifested in action, specifically those of composing and arranging, conducting, improvising and performing, as well as in words, and through other symbol systems.

Crucially, musical knowledge may be demonstrated as well as articulated (see Barrett, 1996), and may be evidenced in the musical outcomes of participation in composing and arranging, conducting, critical listening, improvising and performing. To return to Elliott, “a performer’s musical understanding is exhibited not in what a performer says about what he or she does; a performer’s musical understanding is exhibited in the quality of what she gets done and through her action of performing” (1995, p. 50).

Whilst Elliott focuses specifically on the performer in the above quotation, I would substitute the words ‘composer’s’, arranger’s’, ‘conductor’s’, ‘improviser’s’ to expand this view to encompass other musical processes. When we move beyond narrow definitions of music literacy that focus purely on using conventional music notation to a broader definition, it is evident that musical literacy should encompass the capacity to listen perceptively and critically to musical experience, and to participate in the music processes of composing and arranging, conducting, improvising and performing. Such listening, whether it takes the form of audience-listening, composer/arranging-listening, conductor-listening, improviser-listening, or performer-listening, is not isolated from considerations of context, and recognises music as a “multidimensional human phenomenon” (Elliott, 1995, p. 42). In such a view music literacy may be defined as the possession of a broad musical understanding, encompassing knowledge of, in and through music. The possession of such an understanding forms the basis of our capacity to participate competently in the ‘certain form of discourse’ that is music.

Music and technology

Music and technology have always enjoyed a strong, interactive relationship, one that many writers have commented on. Wishart, amongst others (see for example Orton, 1992), claims that “Music and technology have always been intrinsically bound up with one another. All musical instruments are technological extensions of our ability to make sounds by blowing, scraping, hitting or otherwise exciting materials in the world around us” (Orton, 1992, p. 565).

Innovations in the means by which sound is produced and manipulated by composers and performers, and received by audiences, may be observed in the practices of musicians across a range of times and cultures. The assimilation of technological advances into music practices may be observed in the acceptance and promotion of new instruments (such as those developed by Stradivari and Guarneri in the 16th and 17th Centuries; Sousa and Sax in the 19th Century; and Moog in the 20th Century) by composers, performers and audiences. Viewed in this context, technology may be

seen as a means by which traditional goals may be pursued in new ways, and/or new goals formed (Moore, 1992).

Eisenberg pinpoints the year 1906 as a watershed in the development of music, and significantly, in the development of public attitudes and tastes in music. In that year the Victor company released the first phonograph commercially available for domestic use. Eisenberg argues that through the introduction of the phonograph, and the possibility of bringing prerecorded music into the home, music effectively became a ‘thing’ rather than a practice in which people engaged. The impact of sound recording in creating a culture in which individuals are able to select from a huge palette of musical possibilities has transformed the ways in which we think about and participate in music. Technological development has transformed views of what constitutes musical experience, and “[...] has made possible entirely new views of what music is, what it can do, and how it can shape people’s thinking” (Orton, 1992, p. 319).

Orton discusses the connection between technological developments within the domain of music and the wider cultural setting, commenting that –

... musical instruments throughout history have both reflected and focused the technical capabilities of their time and culture ... The finished objects, the instruments themselves can be understood to embody considerable musical intelligence and understanding passed down sometimes over generations to augment, extend and develop the complementary creative activities of performers and composers, contributing in turn to the cultural and educational needs of their society. (Orton, 1992, pp. 319-328).

Recent technological developments have encompassed much more than the refinement and development of instrumental resources and have provided the discipline of music with:

- new means of creation through such advancements as Music Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) sequencing procedures;
- new means of notating and publishing (through the ready availability of music notation programs);
- new means of production (through the development of new instrumental sources and sampling techniques and new ways of editing sound including advances in recording technology that allow the piecing together of fragments of many performances to create the production team’s definitive view of the musical work); and
- new means of dissemination through the internet.

Technology has not only transformed the medium within and through which musicians work, it has also radically altered the ways in which musicians work and the ways in which musicians interact in the processes of music making. For example, through communication technology musicians may create music together, despite

being isolated physically. International composition projects have been launched through the internet whereby students isolated by distance may dialogue about their composition projects and work cooperatively in developing new works.

With the ready availability of digital recording and editing technology, composers are able to ‘realise’ their works in performance more readily than was possible previously, and they have increased autonomy and control of their musical practice. Through technological advancement, the ways in which musical meaning is symbolised and consequently analysed and interpreted have changed immensely. Composers may now ‘control’ the entire process of their musical production from composition to publication to dissemination. Indeed, some claim that the advent of computer technology has changed the ways in which composers think (Orton, 1992).

This relationship between advances in technology in the broad cultural setting and specific applications within the art form of music are equally evident in the application of technology to music education. Whilst advances in sound recording technology may be seen to have had the most impact at a broad social level in recent times, within the school setting it is perhaps the introduction of digital technologies that has had the most significant impact.

These technologies have affected the ways in which students define and approach the tasks of arranging, composing, improvising and performing, immeasurably altering the types of learning outcomes that result from interaction with such technologies; for example, sequencing programs that dispense with a paper and pencil approach to composing and arranging, challenging traditional notions of what is to be learnt ‘first’, or what is required as prior knowledge at all, in order to participate in a range of music processes. Through the use of MIDI technology, students are able to work directly with the materials and ideas of music rather than having to work through the intermediary step of encoding musical ideas as notation.

Computer technology and the attendant software are used within the music classroom primarily for two purposes: those of computer as tool; and computer as tutor (Stevens, 1994). In the first of these senses, the computer is used to provide a more efficient means of completing a task through providing programs that focus on notating, sequencing, sampling and accompaniment. In the second sense, the computer substitutes for the teacher through Computer Assisted Learning that provides instruction, exercises, examples and feedback to the student. Such programs are viewed “as particularly helpful as they are time-efficient, avoid peer competition and are generally highly motivating” (Stevens, 1994. p. 53), a view that persists (Ruthmann & Mantie, 2017).

With increasing access to the internet students in the music classroom are also using this medium as a research tool to source information rather than relying on traditional text-based sources and the ‘teacher as oracle’. As students turn to this medium, the development of attendant skills in identifying search categories, pursuing avenues of

inquiry and discriminating between relevant and irrelevant information (in short digital literacy) may be viewed as learning outcomes that arise from the music research task.

Multimedia music programs have led the way in the development of ‘simulation software’ and multimedia packages. Such programs are characterised by the provision of non-linear exploration by the student; recognition of diverse learning styles; manipulation of imagery; and multiple uses of aural and visual resources.

Through such programs students are exposed to a particular way of symbolising meaning that draws on the languages of visual and aural imagery. Rather than viewing a package as primarily text-based, enhanced by supplementation of graphic and aural imagery, often it is the imagery, graphic and aural, drawn from diverse sources (for example, popular culture), that is ‘enhanced’ by the text. Increasingly, meaning is embedded in, and carried on the imagery. Such programs challenge the notion of a text-based literacy and emphasise the importance of viewing literacy as a broad-based cultural phenomenon in which knowledge of the specifics is essential. Cultural references are made through all of the symbol systems available to us, and knowledge of these systems is crucial.

Williams and Webster (1996, p. 18) identify a range of ways in which computers are used within music education, specifically, to:

- Learn about music
- Organise music information
- Publish music information
- Create graphics
- Notate music
- Compose music
- Perform music
- Communicate with musicians
- Create music software
- Conduct historic, analytic, and systematic research
- Play games

In addition to those uses identified above, I add ‘arrange music’ and ‘practise music skills such as aural perception and acuity’. It is evident from this listing that technology has the potential to transform all aspects of music education. In such an environment it is essential that we recognise the potential of technology to facilitate the achievement of music learning outcomes rather than viewing the introduction of technology to the music classroom as an end in itself. Importantly, in acknowledging the pervasive and multifunctional nature of technological innovation in the domain of music education we must also expand our notions of what constitutes ‘musical literacy’ and ‘literacy’ in general.

The problematisation of literacy

The arts have always recognised that communication between individuals and groups is a negotiated process in which discursive and, importantly, non-discursive modes are employed. Within the domain of music, communication of musical meaning may be facilitated through a range of modes including arranging, composing, conducting, improvising, performing and written or verbal discussion.

The individual construction of musical meaning rests in the capacity to listen critically to musical events, as either audience-listener, composer/arranger-listener, conductor-listener, improviser-listener, and/or performer-listener in order to relate present aural experience to knowledge of past events, and the prediction of future events. Critical listening may be described as a complex and recursive cycle of perceiving sounds as music, analysing, describing, comparing, predicting, confirming and evaluating.

Through technology the ways by which meaning is presented, and consequently analysed and interpreted, have changed immensely in the last few decades. Whilst technology has improved access to arts and cultural meanings and increased the diversity of ways in which arts and cultural meanings are presented and symbolised, it is significant that the languages of the arts forms have been appropriated to facilitate the presentation of ‘non-arts’ meanings. This is evident in multi-media packages where aural and visual imagery are employed to illuminate and present ideas, and, in covert and overt ways, influence the nature and level of participant interaction with the material. Music plays an integral role in the presentation of meaning in multimedia environments. The emergence of the new field of Ludomusicology, which investigates the role of music as a central element of game-playing, is one example of this phenomenon (Kamp, Summers & Sweeney, 2016).

This appropriation of the languages of the art forms has brought under scrutiny traditional notions of what it is to be ‘literate’ in the late 20th Century. Smith (1991) claims that ‘culturally literate’ persons are those “... whose education has enabled them to make their way through life with competence and assurance, comprehending and participating in society’s major forms of communication” (p. ix). We can no longer deny that multimedia technology is one of the dominant forms of communication. Recognition of this requires us to ensure that children are enabled to comprehend and participate in this ‘major form of communication’.

Such recognition necessitates that we educate children to perceive, analyse and interpret critically the modes in which meaning is presented in a multimedia environment, specifically, non-discursive modes such as music. In such an environment, education in and through music is essential in developing students’ ‘literacy’.

Music education should not only encompass the development of skills and knowledge that enable the student to participate in the discourse of music and to use this medium

for the purposes of individual and artistic expression, but it should also provide the student with the perceptual and interpretive skills necessary to deconstruct the meanings embedded in the ‘aural imagery’ used in multimedia presentations.

To refer to the nationally developed curriculum for the Arts, through the arts strand organisers of ‘making’ and ‘responding’ (ACARA, 2015), students in the music classroom are encouraged to develop their skills and knowledge in artistic expression in conjunction with their capacity to interpret and interrogate the ways in which meaning is carried by and through the art form of music. Participation in a sequentially developmental music program that addresses all of the arts strand organisers is essential in the development of a ‘literate’ individual.

Values

Any definition of literacy must include some acknowledgment of values, and recognition that these are embedded in non-discursive modes. Hope comments that –

... technology and technique are such central mechanisms in contemporary life that information is easily translated into values without first being filtered through a set of ideas or considered against principles of bodies of knowledge. Images and image making through technical means have thus replaced discourse in many decision-making arenas. (1992, p. 728).

It is interesting to note that through the various theories of musical meaning that have evolved, specifically those of representationalism, expressionism and formalism, music theorists and educators have sought to provide an account of what it is we look for in musical works, and to explore the essence of musical meaning (see for example, Reimer, 1989). More recently such traditional ways of conceiving of and exploring musical meaning have been expanded to encompass interpretations that emphasise the contextual nature of musical experience and interrogate the values and beliefs that are embedded in particular musical practices (see for example, Elliott, 1995 and Elliott & Silvermann, 2016).

It is significant that music educators are committed to and are increasingly practised in the investigation of values as they are embedded in non-discursive as well as discursive modes. Such skills are of critical importance in multimedia environments in which values are carried on and through technology and technique rather than traditional forms of discourse.

Writing at the beginning of the technology revolution in education, Hope (1992) queried a pervasive ‘general faith’ in technology, a view that technology is good and value-free, the application of which is to be encouraged in all avenues. Such a Pollyanna view of technology ignores a number of persistent ethical issues that have arisen in conjunction with technological advances.

In addition to the identification and illumination of values embedded in technology, these issues include: the ownership and protection of copyright in an environment in which ready access to artists' work through the internet has facilitated the copying of work without permission; the continuing controversy over censorship of material published on the internet; the definition of a 'performance' and a 'performer' in an age where digital recording and editing techniques result in the 'performance' being the product of a production team's 'definitive' view of a musical work, rather than that of a musician; equity of access to technology and the discourses that have arisen through technological advancement; the increasing social isolation of students as they work in physical isolation, communicating with peers at distance.

Further to these more broadly-based concerns, teachers face a range of issues associated with the definition and assessment of student learning outcomes as they arise from student interaction with technology in the music classroom. For example, through the development of MIDI and attendant software, students with scant 'formal' musical knowledge are able to produce original compositions (with computer-generated notations) of considerable artistic merit. Are these works to be assessed in terms of their 'cultural capital' or in terms of their presentation of the students' knowledge of theoretical issues? Clearly, there are issues associated with the use of technology in educational and non-educational settings that need to be resolved.

Beyond the examination of ethical and moral values as they are addressed within technology-based multimedia environments, it should be acknowledged that such environments play a crucial role in fostering aesthetic and artistic values. As students interact with technology-based multimedia environments in such processes as accessing information, creating new works, and communicating with others, they encounter increased demands for precision, accuracy, clarity and the effective communication of ideas across a range of media. These demands in turn foster the development of a feeling, respect and concern for values that students later realise are aesthetic and artistic.

Conclusion

In reviewing the state of technology in American schools Kerr (1996) identified a number of emergent themes. These included the caution that technology is not a panacea as "its use does not automatically lead to more, better or cheaper learning" (p. xiv). Kerr also identified the need to examine critically the materials that form the basis of technology-based products, as the simple reconfiguration of materials used in a 'non-technology' sense does not ensure different or better results. Finally, Kerr (1996) emphasised that "technology has social as well as cognitive effects" (p. xiv).

The issues that Kerr raised some two decades ago persist, and emphasise the need for all teachers to develop a working knowledge of the languages of each of the

art forms in order to: develop critical awareness of what constitutes good design in multimedia packages and technology applications; identify and interpret the ways in which meaning is embodied in the languages of the respective art forms; and identify the educational potential of technology-based multimedia in both arts and non-arts learning applications.

Knowledge of the arts underpins children's learning in a multimedia age, and such knowledge must be fostered in an informed and critical environment. Professional development in the arts, and a focus on arts education in teacher education settings, is important as we live and learn in technology-based multimedia teaching and learning environments.

When we define literacy more broadly as the capacity to "participate in a certain form of discourse" (Olson & Astington, 1991, pp. 705-721) and to comprehend and participate in society's major forms of communication (Smith, 1991), it is evident that text-based literacy constitutes only part of such a definition. Recognition of all the discourses through which meaning is presented in a technology-based multimedia environment entails recognition of the unique and vital contribution of each of the arts, and music specifically.

An expanded view of literacy to encompass music and the other art forms acknowledges the key role these discourses play in multimedia presentations in which non-discursive modes are the means by which important ideas in the worlds of business, commerce, advertising and, above all, in politics, are presented. In developing students' capacity to participate fully in the life of work and the work of life, it is essential that we foster students' skills, knowledge and understanding in the languages of all art forms.

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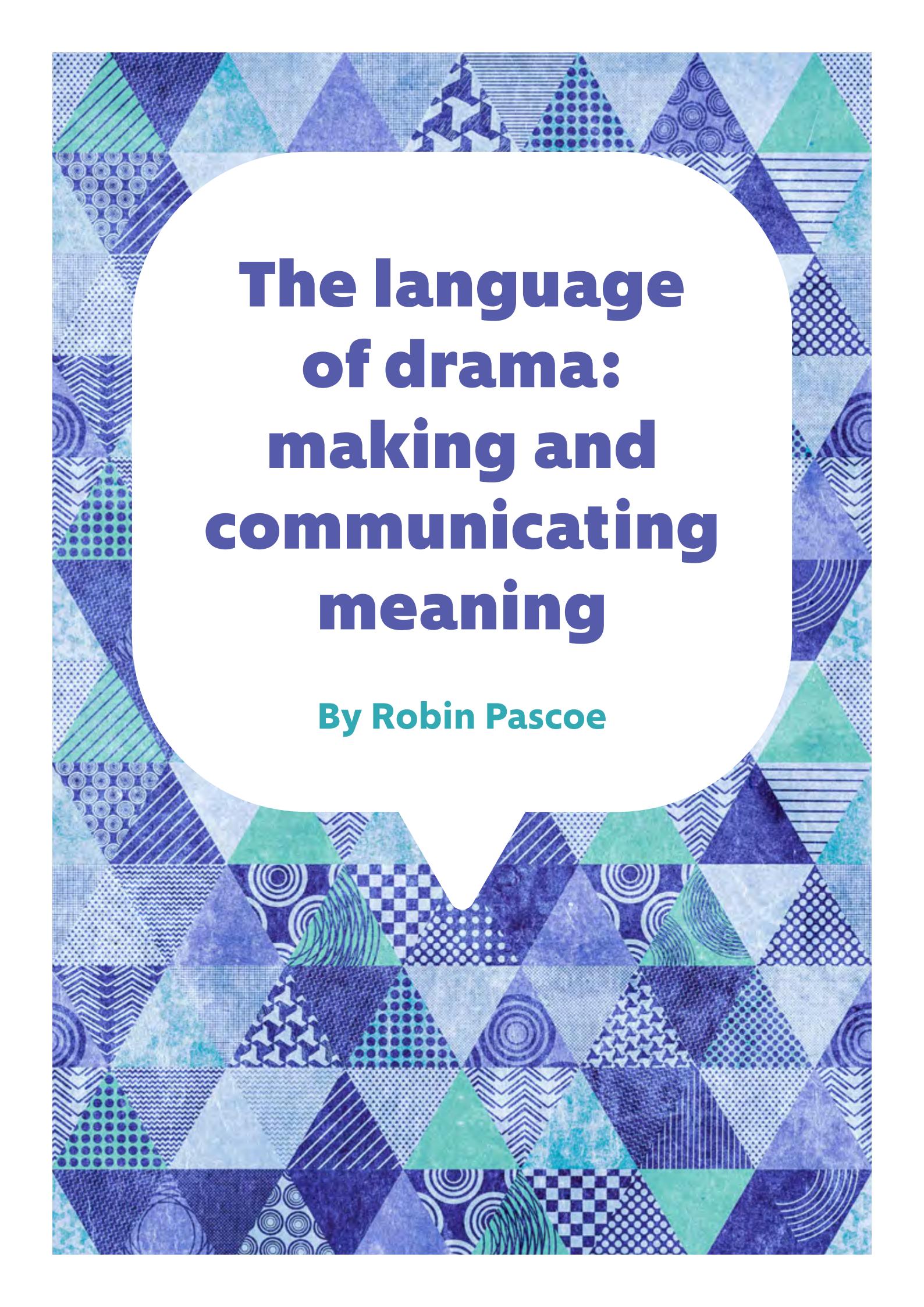
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The language of drama: making and communicating meaning

By Robin Pascoe

Preface to the 2019 edition

Along with the other chapters in *More than words can say*, considering the role of drama and literacy is timely. Drama provides a powerful focus for developing three related kinds of literacy. Firstly, drama is language-rich and contributes to general literacy, providing generative opportunities for using language. Secondly, drama is itself a language – an established form of embodied meaning making. As an arts language, drama is foundational to personal, social and cultural identity and becoming. Thirdly, drama is a vehicle for technological literacy. All three forms of literacy are valuable and necessary learning, having at their heart ways of making and communicating meaning.

The curriculum contexts may have changed since the first edition in 1998, but the fundamental wisdom of drama education practice, richly developed over time, provides a sharp focus for understanding the role drama educators play in the essential work of understanding literacy.

Introduction

A group of kindergarten students play in the dress-up corner of the classroom. They use simple costumes and improvised props as they enter into familiar roles such as shopkeeper, teacher or elder. They use their faces in animated ways and make gestures to support the words they use or the roles they take on. They use movements and their voices to explore familiar human interactions and the world of their imaginations. They talk about how they tell stories through taking on roles.

A group of Year 6 students has made an adaptation of May Gibbs' *Gumnut Babies* (first published in 1916) for performance to the Year 1 students in their school. They have adapted words and ideas from the original text and added a few of their own; they have written songs and music, made costumes and sets, rehearsed and developed performance skills, all for the purpose of communicating through the language of drama. Their play entertains the younger students; it also informs them about the natural world and the ways that we endow animals with human qualities; their work provides models of creative expression and, possibly, a change in the attitudes of their audience to issues such as environmental awareness. They use drama terms to explain their choices and reflect on their drama making.

Another group of students in Year 10 work with scripted drama and improvised drama to explore relationships based on their work with Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, both a version seen in the theatre and the popular film versions. They work as a team collaboratively developing their performance, exploring ideas, developing skills and making connections with the ways performances of this text have changed over time, and which they have researched on the internet through a visit to the Globe Theatre Project in London and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival web sites. They use

language about drama to work cooperatively. They express a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction in being part of creative drama processes, actively respond to and critique their performances and are enthusiastic about the capacity of technology to enhance their learning in drama.

A final year student develops an original solo performance that uses film, dance, music and drama. They work across arts forms and develop new ways of constructing and sharing experience that takes drama into new worlds. Their drama is shaped by the technological world as much as their observed and imagined worlds. They use available technologies such as computer-controlled lighting, sound effects and multimedia. They use rich and varied language, accurate terminology and concepts to critique their drama making and responding.

All these students are using the language of drama – the symbol system of role, enactment, the skills of the art form, the conventions and technologies of drama. They are active meaning makers using language generally. They are arts literate.

Section 1: What is arts literacy – with a drama perspective?

There are [at least] two aspects of students developing arts literacy:

- Students understanding and using arts languages – the specific, unique languages of the arts forms themselves – in making and responding to their arts experiences;
- Students understanding and using spoken and written language in making and responding to the arts, contributing to their overall literacy.

The second, more conventional, aspect is perhaps better understood.

Language and literacy contributions to the arts

Some arts forms such as drama and media are intrinsically language based. They are language rich. Language has a central (though not exclusive) role in dialogue, characterisation and situation/dramatic action.

In exploring and developing ideas in the arts, students use words to express and communicate their concepts. For example, a group of Year 5s might say ‘Let’s make our improvisation about what happened when Reb’s watch was stolen’. Their subsequent work will be a negotiation using language. Another group might write down a chant they have developed. As well as the words of the chant, there might be graphic notation for the rhythm and some notes about the accompanying actions and sounds. Through language students connect sensory, practical and physical experiences with other symbol systems. This isn’t the only way that meaning is made and communicated.

In working with others in the arts, students use language to collaborate and exchange ideas. Many of the processes of the arts rely on language as the form of exchange. Students use language to develop their skills and techniques; they listen to mentors, peers and teachers. They form questions and clarify concepts. Making suggestions and contributions, refining ideas, giving and taking directions: all depend on language, as it is conventionally understood.

Similarly, discourse about the arts – responding to, reflecting on and evaluating arts experiences and works – happens through language. Many of the tasks of responding to drama such as identifying characterisation, themes, the use of rising dramatic tension and climax, can often be language based. There is also the use of specific terminology, contexts and habits of language. Concepts and terms such as alienation, catharsis and improvising have specific meaning when used in the context of drama.

Language is the medium students use for integrating experiences, for showing the inter-relatedness of knowledge, for connecting the personal with broader shared experiences.

Also, language is used to explore the historical, social, political, economic and human significance of the arts. Through language students articulate their understanding of the impact of the arts on themselves and generalise to broader concepts such as the role of the arts on their community and society or the way the arts change over time.

Therefore it can be argued that the arts contribute to the general literacy of students (however that might be defined). This is, perhaps, not different in essence to the contributions that all subjects, learning areas and experiences make. But it is nonetheless important that the contribution of the Arts is recognised and that opportunities are included in the learning programs of all students.

When students work in the arts they develop their capacity to use language in purposeful ways. The arts are language-rich opportunities for developing their own language and for making and communicating meaning. Because many students become vitally engaged and enthusiastic about their involvement in the arts, the opportunities they offer for using language are powerful multipliers of language competence.

Arts languages, arts literacy and drama

Another equally (perhaps even more) important focus is on considering the arts as languages themselves. Arts literacy is competence in meaning making in the arts languages of dance, drama, media, music, visual arts and multi-arts combinations.

Each arts form is an identifiable and unique language in its own right.

This is more than a convenient metaphor or a simple appropriation of the construct of language and literacy to climb on the ‘literacy bandwagon’. This concept is based on

a deep-seated and long argued commitment to a way of constructing a fundamental understanding of learning and expression in the arts.

A language is fundamentally a symbol system that is constructed and used for the purpose of communicating ideas and feelings for making meaning. Language is a bridge between the mind and the body within individuals and between them; it is also the bridge between individuals and groups. It has a central role in identity and becoming – personal identity and becoming and identity in groups, communities, societies and cultures.

While there are many useful ways of conceptualising languages, they comprise elements (sometimes called symbol elements) – such as words, phrases, cueing devices such as punctuation, pronunciation marks such as accents – and the ways that we combine those elements in making and communicating meaning.

These combinations depend on the habits or conventions of use. They are shaped by a range of purposes and intended audiences. They are also structured and use a range of genres or forms that are agreed on by maker and receiver/audience.

Conventions are habits of language, agreed or accepted familiar ways of doing things. While these conventions of using language are often seen as ‘standard’ or widely applicable to whole groups, in reality the idea of there being one standard is contested. There are often many ways of making meaning and these are determined by social or cultural contexts.

What distinguishes any language is the way that symbol elements are adjusted to create and share meaning. Meaning does not lie exclusively in the element or word. Nor is it simply a matter of structure or form or purpose. It broadly encompasses what the maker intended and the ways the receiver understands or interprets as well as shaping contexts and conventional habits of use. Meaning in language then is as much a matter of the intention of the ‘maker’ as the understanding that is constructed by those who ‘receive’ the communication. Meaning, then, is not necessarily static or fixed. Together all involved in communication make their own meaning – construct their own meaning. Communication is the negotiation between maker and audience. The currency of that negotiation is the symbol elements and how they are shaped and shared in conventional ways – ways that are understood by others.

This broad, inclusive and generative concept of arts languages is distinct from designating the arts as languages that advocate a narrow-minded and structuralist approach.

Section 2: Drama as a language

In drama meaning is communicated through role and situation and dramatic action. Bruner (1990) identified three ways of knowing and constructing meaning: the enactive, the iconic and the symbolic. Wagner (1998) in the Lansdowne Lecture at the Second International Drama in Education Research Institute, connected the work of Vygotsky and Bruner and the capacity of drama to pull together these three ways of knowing and constructing meaning to communicate human interactions and experiences through ‘stepping into the shoes’ of someone else.

This drama language has the features of language already outlined earlier: a commitment to making and sharing meaning through using shared elements and conventions in the context of social and cultural forces. Figure 1 shows these components in dynamic interplay.

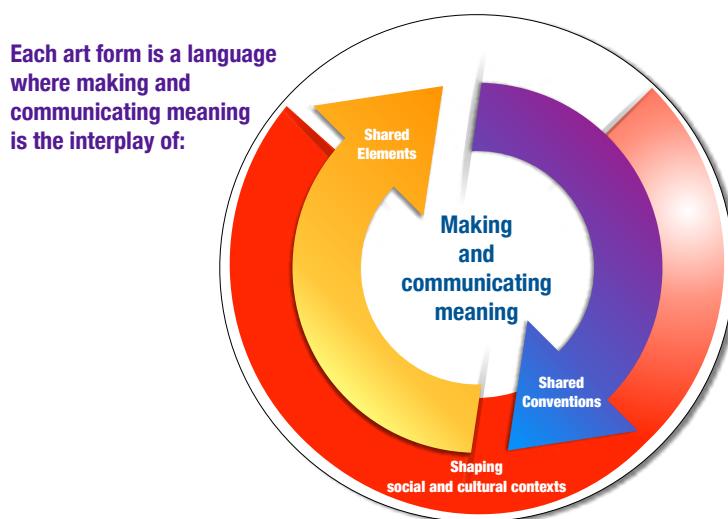


FIGURE 1: A model for language

Shared elements

Over time there has been a range of ways of identifying the building blocks of drama.

Aristotle in *The Poetics* (c. 335 BCE) articulated six Elements of Drama – Action or Plot (*mythos*), Character (*ethos*), Thought/Ideas (*dianoia*), Language/diction (*lexis*), Melody/song/dance (*melos*) and Spectacle (*opsis*). In the Indian context the *Natyashastra*, dated to around the mid 1st millennium BCE, comprehensively describes the theory and practice of various performance arts (Yousef, 1992). Styan (1960) provided an influential mid 20th Century view for drama. Haseman and O'Toole (1986; 2017) in *DramaWise Reimagined* sharpened the focus for drama educators identifying:

The human context (situation, roles and relationships) driven by dramatic tension shaped by focus made explicit in place and time, organised into narrative through language and movement to create mood and symbols which together create the whole experience of dramatic meaning. (p. ii).

These concepts have been embedded in The Arts Statement and Profiles (Curriculum Corporation, 1994) and then The Australian Curriculum: The Arts (ACARA, 2014).

The elements of drama work dynamically together to create and focus dramatic action and dramatic meaning. Drama is conceived, organised and shaped by aspects of and combinations of role, character and relationships, situation, voice and movement, space and time, focus, tension, language, ideas and dramatic meaning, mood and atmosphere and symbol. [See Appendix for fuller description of these elements.]

Heathcote (1995) identified that drama works in the aesthetic territory between light and dark, sounds and silences, stillness and movement, colour and absence of colour, empty spaces and filled spaces.

The Elements of Drama are the fundamental components of the aesthetic experiences of making and responding to drama. They are essential and present in some combination and uniquely mark out the territory of aesthetic understanding that we identify as drama.

In practice, these shared elements of drama language are enacted through, for example, movement and non-verbal embodied communication (facial expression, gesture and posture, whole body movements, placement in space); sounds and silences (verbal and vocal communication) and energy.

Facial expression – the ways that meaning is communicated in drama through the eyes, lips and movements of facial muscles – and gesture, have popular currency. Often called body language, facial expressions and gestures are ‘read’ in everyday interactions between people. They are also an integral part of the language of drama. For example, a frown is commonly a signal for displeasure or questioning. A smile can be broad and open, thin and forced, empty and disingenuous. A raised eyebrow can be considered a question.



FIGURES 2 AND 3: Gesture

In Chinese, Indian or Balinese drama and dance there are long traditions of the use of facial expression and measured gesture. Similarly in Maori traditions there are codified facial expressions. Masks also use emblematic colour and traditional expressions. When these traditional forms are analysed, there is a recognisable codification of symbolic use that is passed from one generation to another. It is formalised and there is ascribed conventional sharing of meaning to those in the culture. There is precision to the angle of an ankle or finger or direction of the eyes. While to people from other traditions these elements do not necessarily carry such clarity, to those who come from the culture there is specific communication. However, it is important to recognise that in Western European traditions – which largely account for much of the drama of students in schools – there is not necessarily this precision of meaning or use.

It is also important to recognise that the meaning ascribed to facial expression and gesture is culturally and socially determined. For example, it is often observed that in the Nungyar Aboriginal community, it is inappropriate for younger people to look directly into the eyes of an older person or authority figure. By contrast, in a Western Anglo-Saxon and European tradition it is expected that a younger person will look directly into the eyes of a person with authority, particularly when being criticised or accused. Similarly, hand gestures can have different meanings in different times or places: when and where I went to school jerking a thumb and clenched fist up and down meant something similar to the two fingered salute rather than a ‘thumbs up’ or ‘everything’s OK!’ message.

Context is everything

In Claire Luckham's play *The Dramatic Attitudes of Miss Fanny Kemble* (1995) there is an insight into a 19th Century view of drama where there was an attempt to codify gesture and meaning in acting, something that Fanny Kemble ultimately rejected in favour of a more truthful approach to acting. Anger or fear or happiness were conventionally indicated by particular facial expressions, gestures or postures. There even exist handbooks of these gestures and poses such as that popularised by Delsarte (1887). A common view of Victorian melodrama reinforces a similar simplified codification of these elements. Early silent movies also drew on this repertoire of stylised movement and use of gesture. To a contemporary audience deeply imbued in realism in drama – or what passes for realism – these early movies and photographs of gesture and posture seem naive and simplistic. Both points of view are probably a reflection of deeply enculturated views of what is appropriate in drama.

Movement and use of space and time are integral to drama. Through movement and the placement of bodies and objects in the performance space the actor and director convey meaning. For example, when wanting to suggest that a particular character has greater importance or higher status, a director might arrange the visual impact of the elements of a scene so that the eye of an audience is ‘drawn towards’ that dominant character. Or, one character may be taller and placed against a much

shorter character for comic or other effect. Relationships between characters are suggested by the ways they physically touch and interact. Movement is often used as the basis for ritualistic elements of drama. Through stylisation and selection (rancourci in the language of classic mime) elements of movement are used to communicate a range of ideas including metaphysical and metaphoric ideas.



FIGURES 4, 5 AND 6: Use of space, time and movement

Often in contemporary drama, the work of Rudolph Laban (1980; Newlove, 1993) in describing movement in terms of body, shape, space and energy is used as a framework for talking about movement. Similarly, a stage manager's prompt copy of a

play in performance is another way of showing the movement patterns for a particular production. These symbols have similarities with more formal approaches to notating movement (such as Laban or Benesh notation).

Sounds – both vocalised sounds and words – and silences are other significant symbol elements of drama as a language. Of course, words and texts are themselves language. Just as gesture and facial expression and movements can and do have expressive qualities when used in drama, so too does sound. In their rawest form, sounds without recognisable words can express meaning in a sigh, a growl, a cry of rage or despair or a laugh. Sounds are particularly powerful when coupled with movement and gesture.

The use of sounds is dynamic in drama. Different energy levels communicate different meanings. The pace of sounds and words, the use of pause, varying pitch and intonation, all contribute to the interactions between ideas and meaning in drama. Sounds are also interactive with audiences: actors vary the loudness and softness, dynamics in response to audience reactions such as laughter or engagement.

This is a brief introduction to some of the elements of drama that are used by those who are literate in the language of drama. Rather than working with elements in isolation, we also shape the social and cultural contexts with drama conventions.

Drama conventions

The conventions or habits of drama are agreed ways of making meaning. They reflect the shaping influence of purpose(s), audience(s), forms and genres and ways of structuring the dramatic experience.



FIGURE 7: Conventions in Drama

The purposes of drama reinforce its status as a language. Drama can be seen to have at least four complementary and overlapping purposes: to entertain, to inform, to express and to change. In talking about purpose(s) in drama, there is an intermeshing of the broad and societal with the personal and individual. This is a hallmark of other languages and therefore significant in constructing our sense of drama as a language.

As in all effective language communication, we vary the ways we communicate in drama according to the intended purpose(s) and audience(s). We shape meaning for specific and intended audiences. For example, when we make a play for a younger audience, the choice of words, stories, themes, characters and purpose reflect the developmental needs of that audience. If we were to reshape that same drama for a different audience there would necessarily be changes.

Finally, in this section on conventions, I highlight the ways that drama uses forms, genres and other structuring strategies. Just as in written and spoken language, where there is a range of identifiable structures and devices that produce specific language registers, so too do these exist in drama. There are two broad traditions of making drama: making your own drama through improvising and devising and interpreting the drama texts of others.

At the broadest levels of categorising forms and genres there are tragedies and comedies (and tragi-comedies); there are also drama forms and genres that come from particular times and places. Sometimes confused with drama forms are drama styles: the distinctive identifying elements of particular dramatic texts. There are three dimensions of style: historical, performance and personal style.

- Historical style – particular distinctive style markers of language, subject matter, themes, approaches to characterisation and dramatic action can be linked to particular times and contexts e. g. the use of emblematic names for characters are a style feature or marker for Jacobean and Restoration drama.
- Performance style – ways of approaching dramatic texts: Two major performance styles are representational and presentational styles.
- Personal style – the distinctive use of voice, gesture, body, posture that can be identified with a particular actor or director.

Style can be applied to performances, direction, dramatic texts, forms and conventions.

In exploring and making drama – drama in the class or workshop – there is a range of other structuring devices usefully explicated by Neelands (2000) that enable students to better explore drama: *context building, narrative action, poetic action and reflective action*.

Within drama texts and scripts themselves there are also ways of structuring role and dramatic action that assist maker and audience to negotiate communication.

For example, in conventionally structured drama there is a pattern of exposition, development, rising dramatic tension, climax and resolution. The elements of drama (character, situation, tension, etc) are combined to shape narrative (story) through using principles of story such as contrast, juxtaposition, dramatic symbol and other devices of story. Similarly, in verse drama, there is the use of rhythmic patterns such as iambic pentameter, caesura and antithesis, to name a few of the many possible. There are other contrasting ways of structuring drama such as episodic and epic approaches in Brecht.

In other words, drama has sets of structures and devices that are the basis of a common, shared language knowledge base. It is this aspect of language that our students need to access in addition to the shared symbol elements. For example, in the 20th Century there has been a strongly dominant commitment to realism as a convention (constantly reinforced by the sorts of drama seen on film and television). This is a fundamental commitment to representational approaches to drama in preference to presentational approaches. Similarly, in Western European drama traditions that have had powerful shaping influences on Australian drama, there are conventional relationships between the space, actors, audiences and meaning in drama.

The conventions of drama are complex and well-developed. They include the agreements we have made about purpose, audience, forms and genres and structuring of dramatic meaning. From time to time, conventions change. For example, the relatively recent moves from proscenium arch stages to open stages, or the moves in acting and directing styles from stylised to naturalistic approaches, reflect shifts in the ways that we think about, construct and communicate drama. Interestingly, amongst Australian Aboriginal people the purposes, conventions, forms and genres may be vastly different. A different sense of performance operates. The separation of audience and performer is not made in the same formal way that happens in many traditional Western theatres; neither is the Western demarcation of art forms as explicit: dance, story and music meld. There are also different purposes for the elements of drama, some associated with ritual and symbolic roles.

Shaping social and cultural contexts

Shared symbol elements and conventions of Drama are strongly determined by contexts.

Drama, like all the arts, finds its purpose and engagement with audiences in two main ways: engaging emotions and engaging ideas. Through a process of identification – a taking on of role or a vicarious entering into the human interaction of someone else taking on a role – we bridge mind and body in direct ways.

Within each of these purposes and ways of engaging can be seen at least three ways of refining a sense of purpose. Drama can take on –

- personal significance – meaning for individuals;
- social significance – meaning for groups of individuals, cultures, sub-cultures, societies, etc.;
- ritual significance – meaning that is metaphysical for individuals and groups.

The energy generated by the interplay of shared symbol elements, conventions and shaping social and cultural contexts determines the nature of drama in particular places and times.

Building this careful case for drama as an arts language then has implications about how we define drama as an art form and as a curriculum.

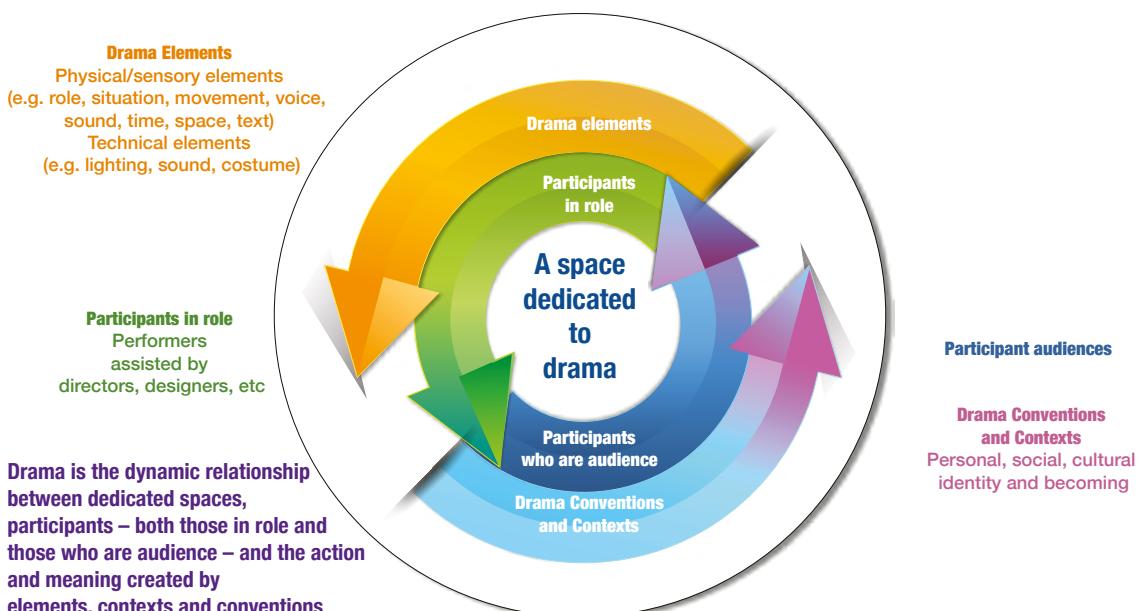


FIGURE 8: Drama overview

Section 3: Drama and technological literacy

The ways that stories are told through drama are changing. Those stories are still as important and so is the telling of them, but the influences of technology are reshaping both the ways that young people make sense of the world and the ways they express themselves.

Old hierarchies and orthodoxies are breaking down as new technologies make fresh links and connections, find new pathways; topics, themes and points of view are different; there are marked shifts along the objectivity-subjectivity continuum; the process of telling the drama story is as important as the dramatic text, all of which probably reflect the influences of the internet, video clips, television story telling and

the blurring of documentary and fictional constructions. There is something more than the tabloid version of a changing informational world.

The production of '*'Scapes*' by Youth Arts Incorporated for the Festival of Perth demonstrated both the potential and the challenges of these shifts. Bringing together young people from the four different arts forms of dance, drama, media and music in a sustained collaboration over 15 months, this project encouraged both development of ideas within specific arts forms but also demanded that participants reach across and make connections with all of these arts forms. A key element in this work was the role of technology.

The work fits in the category described by the awkward but accurate phrase 'hybrid arts'. While there is danger of overstating trends, the work on the stage [can we even use the term 'stage' any more given the use of found spaces and explorations of performance venues?] reflects significant perceptual shifts in drama as a form. '*'Scapes*', for example, was performed in a non-traditional space, the Fly By Night Club in Fremantle, a musicians club in a former army drill hall. The audience was wrapped around the action and video was projected as an integral part of the action.

'*'Scapes*' is an episodic play that follows a journey from the coast inland and, eventually, to the stars. It is linked by film and video sequences. It does not follow conventional character development but plunges the audience into the midst of three stories – or, one story told in three different ways. The story is focused through three 'critical incident' moments of transition: a young man on his 18th birthday on the beach; a young woman in a country town on the verge of leaving the dying town; a brother and sister at the funeral of their father in Kalgoorlie. Dance and music are integral to the piece. The film, dance, music and dramatic action become, in effect, another player in the action.

By nature, this dramatic text is more dynamic, in jargon terms, more interactive. The participants in the making of the piece have an equal role in the creation and sharing of meaning and manipulation of action. Audience members become variously characters in the action – participants in the country dance, mourners at the funeral. The cutting edge of the narrative is audience response – reader response theory. To someone brought up on a diet of the well-made play or the highly crafted and honed play, plays like '*'Scapes*' are notable for their roughness and unfinished qualities.

The nature of the throughline is different; there is a use of stylisation, simplification, repetition, links and timelines that break expectations of linearity. The influences of video clips, filmic editing and connecting devices, differently structured approaches and a refusal to explain every detail are evident. A character in one story thread crosses into another without explanation; there are few concessions to audiences who drift. These elisions of dramatic and narrative structure are familiar to a generation who has a technologically-shaped way of telling and understanding dramatic stories. They are

more anarchic, free form, associational, energetic, tension-ridden and driven – and so too is their drama. There is a generational shift going on. There is a changing of the frame of reference for drama, just as there have been other shifts in drama across its long trajectory in time and place. As we moved from outdoor to indoor theatres or moved from gas to electrical forms of lighting, or as acting styles changed with the introduction of drama, so too are we experiencing shifts in the dominant forces in drama.

Above all, there is a sense of dramatic action happening ‘all at once’. There are conflicting demands for attention in audiences (and actors), multiple storylines and decisions to be made about whether to ‘watch the film’ or ‘focus on the dance’ or ‘let the music just be in the background’. For some members of the audience, this ‘conflict’ is difficult to resolve. But for the young people in this project and for increasing numbers in the audience, this approach is the norm. That is the change wrought by the bombardment of media, multimedia and technologies.

The drama language used in the production of ‘Scapes is deliberately stylised and selectively heightened. There is an intentional disjointing of reality, a conscious move away from the dominant traditions of realism. When this dramatic text is closely examined, there are parallels with the ideas and values of playwrights and directors like Brecht, who over 50 years ago was riding the crest of a similar wave as the developing art form of film was taking hold of popular culture and thinking. Just as Brecht was advocating a similar dislocation of conventions in search of awakening audiences to shifts in perception and a sea change in the way that drama was used as a language, so too is this play signalling something happening.

The arts are, paradoxically, notoriously conservative and dangerously visionary. Often this happens at the same time. It is appropriate that projects such as ‘Scapes question and debate traditional and conventional approaches and ways of working. In affirming the value of conservative approaches to conventions, drama in this new technological world provides stability and continuity. But, in looking forward, we need to recognise the powerful opportunities offered by this changing context. If we don’t recognise the past, we abdicate the long trajectory of learning and tradition that is our art form, drama. If we aren’t involved in the debates about new ways of structuring drama – particularly drama influenced by changing technologies – we lose the ‘street cred’ to critique and contribute.

Drama value adds to technologies

Drama language also has the potential to value add to the technological and ICT world.

In a practical sense, drama language is the language of interaction; it is through the use of the drama symbol elements that human relationships take place. It is important to note that, in effect, the metaphor of interactive multimedia (IMM) is provided by

drama. Just as in drama, in the multimedia environment participants directly engage through the senses, enter into role and identify with dramatic action. Even the terms that IMM uses borrow from drama when they talk in terms of ‘actors’ and ‘action’. This direct borrowing of the terminology of drama cues us to the significant use of the language of drama that is intrinsic in almost every computer game.

Significantly, I believe that drama language is an important element necessary for the development of technology itself. Without the aesthetic understanding and practice of all the arts, technological applications are likely to be driven by the technical. It would be sad to limit the potential of a technologically-driven future to an arid world of binary codes or clichés or simplistic stereotypes. Drama and the other arts can potentially enhance and, I suggest, provide creative and artistically satisfying ways of leading us into a more productive future.

The potential of technology in drama is as yet barely realised by many practitioners and drama teachers. Technology in drama is considerably more than better lighting control boards or computer driven lighting effects. There are fundamental issues to do with the creative integration of emerging technologies in the service of drama.

Literacy for new times

Just as the debate on numeracy and literacy is focused on developing more broadly inclusive ways of considering these issues, so too should the arts and education communities be debating and advocating for a broadly inclusive definition of arts literacy.

In addition to the arts contribution to ‘general literacy’, arts literacy embraces the construction of each art form as distinct arts languages.

Further, there is a need for arts educators to make active links between Arts literacy and other literacy strategies now in place at the bidding of politicians and governments. It is not sufficient for any student to be merely ‘literate’ in the conventional sense of being able to ‘read, speak and write’.

True and lasting literacy for the world our students face includes technological and arts literacy. The arts can contribute so much more than they are currently allowed to contribute.

This chapter develops a model for drama as a language. Any model is just that – a way of expressing in simplified form a complex, dynamic set of elements and relationships. This (or any) model is not drama itself. It is not sensible to replace drama, the art form, with this model which remains a tool for explaining and articulating what I think is happening. This paper then is an explanation of – but not a substitute for – the language of drama. Look to drama itself to see the language in operation. There it will be understood in its living, dynamic form.

The arts as languages connect strongly to emerging understanding of multi-sensory approaches to learning. In his work on Multiple Intelligences, Howard Gardner (1983) provides a researched perspective on the value and significance of students developing their capacity to communicate in multiple modes. The arts are no longer the so-called ‘frills’ or ‘extra-curricular’ activities. They are the heart of the curriculum for all students because they enable us to better understand the complexity of human behaviour and imagination as well as allowing us to rehearse and explore ways of living in an increasingly changing technological society.

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Appendix: Elements of Drama in *The Australian Curriculum: The Arts*

role, character and relationships	role and character: identification and portrayal of a person's values and attitudes, intentions and actions as imagined relationships, situations and ideas in dramatic action relationships: the connections and interactions between people that affect the dramatic action
situation	the setting and circumstances of the characters/roles actions
voice and movement	voice: using voice expressively to create roles, situations, relationships, atmosphere and symbols movement: using facial expression, posture and action in space and time expressively to create roles, situations, relationships, atmosphere and symbols
focus	directing and intensifying attention and framing moments of dramatic action
tension	sense of anticipation or conflict within characters or character relationships or problems, surprise and mystery in stories and ideas to propel dramatic action and create audience engagement
space and time	space: the physical space of the performance and audience, fictional space of the dramatic action and the emotional space between characters time: fictional time in the narrative or setting; timing of one moment to the next contributing to the tension and rhythm of dramatic action
language, ideas, dramatic meaning, mood and atmosphere and symbol	language, ideas and dramatic meaning: the choice of linguistic expression and ideas in drama used to create dramatic action mood and atmosphere: the feeling or tone of physical space and the dramatic action created by or emerging from the performance symbol: associations that occur when something is used to represent something else to reinforce or extend dramatic meaning
audience	experience of participating in the drama

A view of literacy through media arts

**By Roger Dunscombe
and Colin Stewart**

Introduction

Media Arts is a subject and a discipline that allows students to critically engage with and examine the world around them. The world of the student is one that is full of media experiences and usages and it is a world that is mediated by the media and the student's relationship to it. Whether watching television, listening to the radio, reading magazines, comics, graphic novels, zines and newspapers, going to see movies, watching video, playing PlayStation or Nintendo, going online to play video games, participating in virtual worlds or social networking, or looking at advertising billboards and signs, our students are constantly engaging with the media. Much of their world is experienced and mediated via the media.

When asked why they want to study Media Arts, many students do not hesitate. They want to produce their own media products. They want to participate in the massive democratisation of media production that really took off after the arrival of Web 2.0 and YouTube in the first decade of the 21st Century. Some of these students are already what QUT Creative Industries Professor Axel Bruns calls 'prod-users' – users of media who are also producers of media. A Year 7 student with their own YouTube channel is no longer particularly unusual. On the other hand there is also a large number of students who are as engaged by the theory and abstract explorations of their media landscapes, and it is this dichotomy that has been at play from the earliest iterations of media education in Australia.

Teachers of Media Arts want students to both produce and explore media products. When pushed to explain or justify their courses, some will refer to the new 5Cs of the 21st Century skills (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity and ICTs). These are the commonly agreed skills and attributes that students need in the modern world. Media Arts is a subject that covers all of them.

However, most teachers will refer to what is termed media literacy, seeing it as one of the 21st Century literacies that all students need. The idea that there are many 'literacies', in addition to conventional print literacies, gained prominence with the work of the 'New London Group' in the mid-1990s. This group of 10 literacy academics, including Australians such as Bill Cope, Mary Kalantzis and Alan Luke, came up with the concept of 'multi-literacies' in response to the rise of the internet and digital media. Digital literacy, media literacy and visual literacy are among the best known of the multi-literacies. The notion of media literacy underpins the rationales for media education courses around Australia.

Media literacy

The term 'media literacy' is often used analogously to suggest that the cognitive and affective processes involved in 'reading and writing' media are similar to those involved in conventional print literacy, but there is no single agreed definition of media

literacy. The term has been used haphazardly to cover widely divergent perspectives. However, broad definitions of the term have centred upon some common themes, the most common being the view that to be media literate means to be able to 'read' the media, 'write' the media and critically analyse and evaluate the media.

British media education academic David Buckingham (*Media education: literacy, learning, and contemporary culture*, pp. 35-49) sees media literacy as being able to code and decode media products, and also apply higher order thinking skills such as analysing and evaluating. He adds a third aspect to the definition: the ability to participate and have an active relationship to the media and to society. In a report on media literacy to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), Robyn Penman and Sue Turnbull offer the additional possibility that there may be a fourth category of media literacy: as a perspective on the world.

One thing that the New London Group has taught us about literacy is that literacy is a social construct that is situated in the community and exists for a social purpose. Media literacy is no exception to this. As well as seeking to define media literacy, it is worth asking, what is it for? What is its social purpose and how is media literacy situated in society? Certain patterns of thinking, or discourses, have arisen around these questions at different times in the history of media education.

There is widespread agreement amongst media education academics that there are four main discourses that have been prominent in media education since the 1960s. These involve discourses around *protection, discrimination, demystification and participation*.

Protection. The belief that the media can be manipulative and harmful, and that media literacy is needed to protect us, informed many early approaches to media education. The aim of protectionist media education has been to analyse media texts and hopefully inoculate students against being coerced by an all-powerful media or by moral panics in the future. This approach to media education has often problematised the curriculum content around areas of community concern. These include advertising, violence, body image, race, class and sexist gender stereotyping, biased reporting and risk-taking behaviour. Protection was seen as an important purpose for media literacy from the 1960s through to the 1980s. However, it is still a factor in many teachers' reasons for media education. It is also used as simply a rhetorical device for conveying the relevance of media literacy to parents and school administrations.

Discrimination. The discrimination discourse came to the fore in the 1960s and early 1970s, at about the same time it must have become clear that the call to hold back the tide of popular media culture was going to be an exercise in futility. Instead the aim of media education became the development of selective and discriminating media consumption habits in students. To some extent and in some educational jurisdictions the old discrimination discourse may still be operating. Media teachers often teach students about a canon of high quality films, such as the AFI Top 100 Films. However, in contemporary times, it is likely that the discrimination discourse has merged with a newer aesthetic discourse that arises due to the placement of Australian media education in the Arts

learning area. Media syllabuses often refer to the need for students to engage in creative and expressive communication as a function that is central to the arts. The outcome of this has been a tendency to speak of students producing ‘media art works’.

Demystification or critical awareness. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the increasing influence of European structuralism, Marxist structuralism, Post-modernism, feminism and British cultural studies on media studies provided a philosophical foundation for what have been termed the demystification discourses in media education. A key proponent of this way of thinking has been the British media educator Len Masterman.

Denaturalising the media through media education was seen by Masterman as a particularly urgent imperative because of the ideological importance of the modern media as symbolic signification systems. The symbolic images of the media are the tools people use to think with. According to the critical awareness purpose for media literacy, students need to be taught how to critically and actively read the media, as a means of counterbalancing the enormous power of the media to project certain ideological points of view as ‘just the way things are’. Media literacy in this discourse is about understanding what power relationships are involved in the creation of media products, and whose interests are being served by their dissemination. Critical awareness discourses continue to be a powerful motivator in contemporary media teaching.

Participation. Media literacy for participation in shared media communications and involvement in a networked society came to the fore as a discourse in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It is to media theorist Henry Jenkins that the participation discourse probably owes its name. Jenkins argues that the media culture today is much more participatory than it has ever been in the past. Before the arrival of consumer digital media in the late 1990s, opportunities for participation may have existed in an elementary form in certain fan cultures, but participation has now moved in from the fringes to become a more mainstream activity through re-mixes, blogs, citizen journalism, social networking, multi-platform productions and video sharing. A key attribute of the participation discourse has been the focus on media creation and consumption as an aspect of identity formation. In participation discourses, the goals of media literacy are directed towards getting young people to take part in media and culture as actively as possible. This requires a renewed skills focus, as well as a focus on creative processes, contextual knowledge, and critical awareness.

Each of the media literacy discourses can be further traced to the different theoretical positions on communication, and the relationship that each asserts may exist between the media and society. However, classroom practice has had a consistency and a continuity across the history of media education in Australia, despite changes in overarching theoretical discourses about the nature of media literacy. The discourses have provided justifications for practice in the classroom; however the practices themselves have remained relevant to each rationale for media literacy as it arose. Those analysts who have remained close to classroom practice describe within it a continuity across time that prevails, despite periodic change in curriculum theorisation.

Whether known nationally and in different states and territories as Media Arts, Media, Media Production and Analysis, or Film, Television and New Media, the study is a part of the secondary curriculum in all Australian states and territories (although only informally in NSW), and it is embedded in the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts*

from years F–10 in the Arts learning area. It was Western Australia (1974), Victoria (1977), South Australia (early 1980s) and Queensland (1981) that were among the first educational jurisdictions in the world to have fully accredited courses in Media.

Media education: the past

The origins of media education in Australia are somewhat different to those described in the United States and the United Kingdom. In those jurisdictions, the academic literature describes a concern by teachers on the effects of the media and a desire to instil a sense of good taste and discrimination within popular culture.

In Australia, the early impetus for media education came during the late 1960s and early 1970s from two different sources. The first was a set of social circumstances that demanded a response from educators. The second was an increasing enthusiasm for popular culture amongst younger teachers and students.

Social forces from the early 1970s onwards caused Australian education systems to become less academically selective and, as a result, experienced rapid growth as large numbers of students began to stay on at school beyond the leaving age of 15 into Years 11 and 12. The intensity of this phenomenon increased throughout the 1980s.

In its various forms in different jurisdictions, media studies was introduced to appeal to these students and to make learning more ‘real world’. This evolved into the idea that the production of media products provided an alternative form of study that the less academic student could access and hopefully experience some success with, or at least be more engaged with. This was expressed in concrete terms when the federal Labor government in the early part of the 1970s funded TV studios in a number of schools in socially and economically disadvantaged areas.

These media courses were taught as production subjects, and largely by teachers without formal qualifications in media but with a passionate interest in production. In Western Australia, for example, the early media educators Barrie McMahon and Robyn Quin kitted out a truck with media equipment and toured the state, taking media studies classes from school to school.

Increasing interest in popular culture at the same time led to the establishment of film appreciation clubs in many high schools, particularly the larger private schools. This form of media education often started out in English classrooms in the 1960s and 1970s in an ad hoc way. There was no formal curriculum and it tended to favour the critique model. It was usually in a school due to the enthusiasm of an individual teacher.

By the late seventies a number of Victorian universities had begun to graduate teachers with a formal teaching method in media studies. These teacher education courses began to work with early conceptions of a unique subject discipline for media studies, at first based on semiotics, structuralism and early cultural studies.

In the early 1980s came the first formal structures that included Media within a school's curriculum. Media was placed in the Arts, a positioning that has never been a major source of contention in states such as Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia, but has been the site of debate – often lively – at a national level and in some overseas jurisdictions.

In these early stages media had a poor status because it was not counted for university entrance (except in Queensland), it was not available to most academically able students, it often took place in lower status settings such as technical schools and it was largely a production course; one of the dominant academic discourses has been that practical application has never been as valued as theoretical knowledge. These courses were shaped by production, although the second discourse of 'empowerment' was also starting to become evident. Media courses were dominated by the idea of learning through doing, where the *process* of making a product was seen to give an understanding, not only of the product, but of the media itself; that skills would lead to concepts. This has been supplanted today by the notion that the product is a demonstration of the learning: the product is an outcome of the learning and not the learning itself.

This early over emphasis on the production discourse led to a host of problems. It focused attention on the learning as solely doing and it ignored that there *is* and *should be* other learning going on. Students could learn about how to make a media product by making one, but making a product did not cause a student to reflect on the multiplicity of discourses that surrounded that media product. In a student production, the focus was not on the contexts that surround that production – the social values /discourses/ ideologies within and surrounding the text – and this production emphasis did not give students an understanding of the arguments over the perceived power of the medium, the media and the institutional practices. It did not allow a student to acquire the theoretical tools to view the position of a work within a framework of discourses and constructs, including ideas of media independence and interdependence.

By the 1990s the universe changed for media education. In most states the final year certificates placed all subjects as equal for tertiary entrance. Academically able students could choose Media as part their courses and all subjects counted for university entrance. Theory became a dominant part of the course and the emphasis on the practical changed from the *process* being the point – 'learning by doing' – to the product being just one of the outcomes of the learning.

Media education: the present

Media education in Australia looks at four overarching areas:

- The producer – that is, who created the product, for what purpose and under what conditions? The producer is seen as both enabled and constrained by institutional practices.

- Contexts – that is that media texts are produced within a specific context and also received within a specific context; the idea that a media text is a product of the society and the creative field that existed at the time it was made and contains the values, ideologies and discourses of that time.
- The product – that is how the text or product itself communicates ideas or concepts; this includes the language of the medium, codes and conventions of the medium and so on.
- The audience – how the text may be read by diverse audiences and the conditions and contexts of that reception.
- The student as creator.

Once we take into account the above, media education in Australia is structured around five key concepts:

- Media language – how audiences read and make sense of media texts. This encompasses the formal qualities of the construction of media texts, the codes and conventions of media practices.
- Technologies – the qualities of the technologies both inherent and acquired that are used to communicate the stories, ideas or concepts. This can involve learning techniques and skills and creating media products. It also involves learning about the implications of technologies themselves, their affordances and their use by audiences.
- Institutions – media products usually come out of institutions and are often both enabled and constrained by institutional practices.
- Audiences – how media texts and products are received and responded to by individuals and larger groups, and how meaning is created through the interaction between the audience and the text.
- Representations – how a media text is both a construction of a reality and becomes a resemblance of reality itself. Media texts are created through a series of selections and omissions and what they depict is a re-presentation of a selected version of reality.

In essence media education in Australia is about –

- how students engage with and use the media;
- what the implications of this engagement might be;
- how students can be both creators and users of media texts and products.

Today Media Arts is taught in all states and territories in Years F–7 with the exception of New South Wales, and students may elect to take Media across their final two years

of schooling. Media is one of the five disciplines of *The Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (ACARA, 2014).

Media is unique in that, paradoxically, it sits both outside all learning areas but also inside many of them. Media education is a subject or discipline that stands at the intersection of a number of other disciplines. While studying Media, students are using skills and theoretical frameworks from multiple arts disciplines, from language and literary disciplines, from history, philosophy, anthropology and other humanities. Media has in common with other arts subjects a degree of emphasis on the product. Media artworks or productions share the common processes of design, production/creation and critique or evaluation. In theoretical terms an analysis of media texts involves an understanding of the concepts of context and the creative/cultural field under which the text/artwork was produced.

There are also differences in approaches between Media and the other arts disciplines, but it is these differences between the arts that make each of the art forms unique. Similarly, there are apparent parallels between Media and a variety of other subjects, especially within the humanities.

In the case of English, the study of film as text is undertaken, but the approach is markedly different from that of Media. Both may examine the same text but they do so in very different ways:

- English tends to look at a single text in isolation whereas Media tends to examine and link a number of texts through studies of genre etc.
- English usually approaches a text to discover meaning while Media approaches it to see how meaning is created.
- English looks at a text to examine the theme or issue, the personal effect on the viewer and emphasises themes, issues, what the text is ‘about’.
- Media concentrates on the context in which the text was produced and received; how the text is an example of codes, conventions and institutional practices.
- English tends to focus primarily on the text itself and the personal response of the viewer, while Media concentrates on the way the text carries meaning rather than a meaning itself, and on the discourses, contexts and institutional practices that surround the text.

By placing Media within the arts, Australia has recognised that Media shares much in common with other arts disciplines, and that this can allow for both theory and practice to occur. This positioning has also avoided the problem other jurisdictions have found, such as placing Media in the humanities, which then de-emphasises the production component and the fact that media productions such as films, videos, photography and print are art forms in themselves. It has also avoided the problem

of sitting Media outside all learning areas and trying to incorporate Media as a cross-disciplinary domain, where Media is claimed to be everywhere across the curriculum, but is in fact nowhere.

Currently Media Arts is in the Australian curriculum from the early primary years and is theoretically available to students at all levels, although in practice it tends to be most concentrated in the six years of secondary schooling with a lesser peak in the last years of primary. In the primary and secondary years until Year 10 it is part of the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* which has been implemented in all states and territories except New South Wales. This curriculum provides a framework with which teachers can create student learning programs and assess students.

The Arts standards have two dimensions that are common across the five arts disciplines. These are Making and Responding which equate, in essence, to practical work and theoretical work. In Media Arts, theory informs practice as practice informs theory.

Media Arts tends to appear in primary schools as an intense activity over a determined period of time rather than as a regularly scheduled class that occurs over the year, although regularly scheduled classes in Media are not unheard of. Typically, a student in the last years of primary school would study a media text such as an animated film or a magazine, create their own product and then evaluate it. The actual course content would be determined by the teacher, taking into account the published curriculum framework, student interest, teacher expertise, community interests and school resourcing.

This is repeated in the middle secondary years although the proportion of time allocated becomes more, even as students spend a greater proportion of time responding. At this level Media Arts tends to be offered as part of an elective choice at Years 9 and 10. In their final years of schooling – Years 11 and 12 – students undertake the state-based course, such as Media in Victoria or Film, Television and New Media in Queensland.

Media education: the future

The future is bright for media education in Australia, and there are strong Media Arts programs in all states and territories apart from New South Wales. Media teachers will continue to focus on the subject's strengths – content and context – and continue to do what we are doing, which is producing generations of students who are critical consumers of media products, who are aware of the social, political and ideological contexts of their culture, who are aware creators of artworks; students who can critically engage with their culture and students who are active participants in the construction of a media culture.

The media and its products surround our students and our students are active participants in a media culture. It is through the study of Media Arts as a subject or

discipline that we can give our students the tools with which to make sense of, put into perspective, or place within a social and political framework the media culture that they are immersed in. It is also through Media Arts that students can discover and analyse the workings of the wider society and culture that produced these media products. With the rise of new media in particular, students are experiencing online cultures that may be very different to their own.

It is media education that enables students to see the media products they consume, engage with them or participate in them as products, artefacts or entities of a particular culture, revealing the constructions that allow students to gain a deep understanding of the role and products of the media in the creation of a culture or society.

Media Arts is a subject or discipline for a 21st Century education. It is a subject that stands at the intersection of a number of other disciplines.

Students are also generally very engaged in media, seeing it as immediately relevant to their lives and worlds, as preparation for their continuing lifelong engagement with media products and cultures. They see the interconnection across their subjects and schooling that we see – the act of making a media product not only engages students but it serves to illustrate the learning and connections in a concrete way.

Whilst it is vital and necessary to look at media education within the boundaries of specific cultures, media education is equally applicable across cultures. Media education can meaningfully take place in a monocultural setting or across a transcultural setting, as we are increasingly seeing with the internet. The Australian experience is within the context of a multicultural society and media has played an important role in education within this society. But increasingly all of us need to be able to educate students in a media landscape that is transcultural, although it can well be argued that there are dominant cultures and dominant modes of creation and reception in this transcultural world. The world of the internet – the virtual world – is a world where a variety of cultures can meet and optimistically co-exist. Media education provides students with the knowledge, skills, tools and equipment to be active and aware participants in this transcultural world.

Media Arts is a 21st Century subject that is forward looking and forward moving, a subject and discipline that embraces many aspects of our students' education, and indeed their lives.

And it provides a different view of literacy.

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2003 Afterword: the arts and literacy prospectively

By Robin Pascoe

In preparing these 1998 papers for re-publication in 2003 I am struck by their freshness and continuing relevance. Each argues powerfully for the languages of the Arts. Each in its own way makes the case for students learning the languages of the arts forms. Each connects arts literacy with significant reshaping of society, culture and education.

Since 1998 there has been ongoing arts curriculum activity building on the rhetoric of *More than words can say*. For example, the Western Australian Curriculum Framework states:

The arts are a major form of human communication and expression. Individuals and groups use them to explore, express and communicate ideas, feelings and experiences. Each arts form is a language in its own right, being a major way of symbolically knowing and communicating experience. Through the arts individuals and groups express, convey and invoke meaning. Like other language forms, arts languages have their own conventions, codes, practices and meaning structures. They also communicate cultural contexts. Students benefit from understanding and using these ways of knowing and expressing feelings and experiences. (Curriculum Council of Western Australia, *The Western Australian Curriculum Framework*, Perth, 1998, p. 51).

The arts in the New Zealand Curriculum builds on Australian work to explicitly embed the concept of arts literacies as necessary outcomes of contemporary education.

Literacies in the arts involve the ability to communicate and interpret meaning in the arts disciplines. We develop literacies in dance, drama, music and the visual arts as we acquire skills, knowledge, attitudes and understanding in the disciplines and use their particular visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic signs and symbols to convey and receive meaning. For the purposes of this curriculum, developing literacies has been adopted as a central and unifying idea. (*Ministry of Education, The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*, Wellington, 2000, p. 9).

Central to this work is the recognition that each of the arts forms 'has its distinctive body of knowledge with its own concepts, forms, styles, conventions, processes and means of inquiry' (*Ministry of Education, The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*, Wellington, 2000, p. 10). In other words, drama or dance or music or visual arts or media are distinctive arts languages, each with unique qualities and identifiable characteristics – the ways that, say, Japanese is distinctive from French.

What is meant by the term 'arts language'?

Any language is fundamentally a symbol system that is constructed and used for the purposes of communicating ideas and feelings and making meaning. Language is that bridge between mind and body within each of us as individuals; language is also a bridge between individuals and groups. It has a central role in identity – personal, social and cultural identity. At the heart of language is sharing and mediating meaning.

In broad terms, a language is a complex web of interwoven meaning making events and experiences. What makes a language is its coherence and those qualities that

make it distinctive and unique. They enable those enrolled in a particular language to recognise the meaning made and shared.

While there are many more sophisticated ways of conceptualising language, each of the articles in this collection outlines the specific nature of each of the arts languages.

What does this approach mean for us as teachers?

What does the concept of arts literacy mean for my friend Ms Rose who teaches Year 4 students?

Firstly, Ms Rose needs to know and understand each art form as an arts language. She needs to have a practical and conceptual understanding of the symbol elements, codes and how these are shaped through social and cultural contexts. She herself needs to be arts literate.

Secondly, Ms Rose needs to understand ways of engaging her students with the language of each art form. She needs to understand and use pedagogical strategies and practices that support student learning in and through each arts language.

She needs the capacity to support her students becoming literate in the arts.

Ms Rose's students will then have rich texts of arts experiences. For example, in exploring what it means to be an Australian as part of an integrated Society and Environment and English thread, her students use drama and music to explore the ideas and emotions of identity. They step into a range of roles: a convict landing in the First Fleet; an Aboriginal person seeing Europeans for the first time; a post World War Two migrant landing at Fremantle; and a 'boat person' detained. They work with the stories of these roles. They play with the possibilities of using the media or making a dance or visual image about these stories. By explicitly and consciously manipulating these arts languages students come to know and understand better. They recognise that embodied learnings – where concepts, knowledge, understandings and values are practically put into the bodies for learning – are as powerful, if not more powerful, than other ways of learning.

I recognise that this demands more of teachers like Ms Rose in her day-to-day work. This demands more of pre-service teacher education (and of certification requirements). It imposes professional development imperatives on teachers currently working. There are implications for school administrators in terms of the enhanced expectations they must now have of teachers and the learning of students.

There are implications for curriculum designers: they must now fully admit the arts into their formulations of expected curriculum for all students. This will place an increased load on schooling. But to do less is to short change our students.

With an arts languages underpinning, there is a seriousness of purpose and rigour. Having an articulated conceptual framework will lead to a serious questioning of what passes for the arts in some schools now. This is a challenge to fragmented arts experiences, to ‘Kleenex-tissue-arts’ that are a disposable time-filler. This is a challenge to one-off arts experiences.

Above all, Ms Rose and her students need to recognise the connections between the arts and other aspects of the curriculum.

Arts literacies: a context for recognising multiple literacies

I argue the case for our students to –

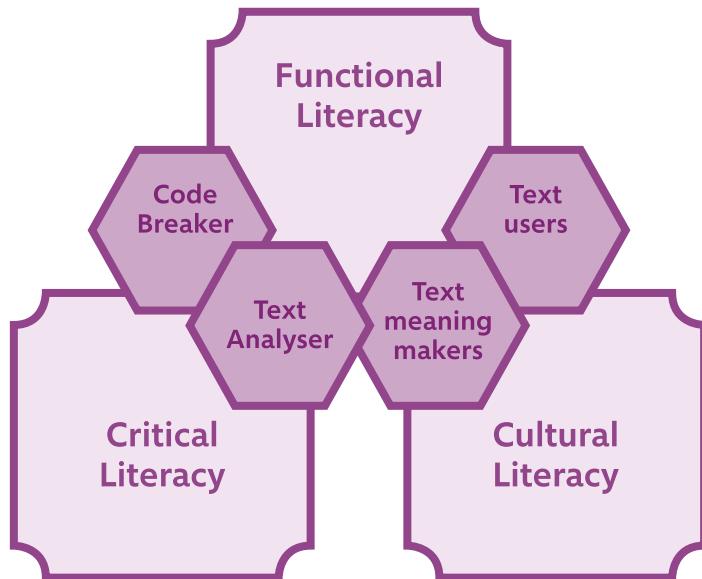
- Develop multiple literacies – including the capacity to be literate in the arts.
- Better understand how each of the arts forms is a language and how we learn, understand and use that language.
- Better understand how working in the arts enhances conventional literacy in students.

To summarise the case for multiple literacies, along with many others, I argue for the need for our definitions of literacy to expand beyond the tabloid imperatives for ‘spelling’ and ‘passing tests’. Just as there is a case to be made for all students to develop what is labelled ‘technological literacy’ (a knowledge, understanding and valuing of technology and technological skills to match) and for students needing ‘cultural literacy’ (a knowledge, understanding and valuing of other cultures and a capacity to express their own culture), so too is there a case for our students developing arts literacy.

Just as we as teachers want our students to competently and confidently show their functional, critical and cultural literacy in language, so too do we want them to be functionally, critically and culturally literate in the arts. Just as we need to have students develop their multiple literate roles as code breaker, text analyser, text meaning maker and text user (concepts usefully developed in Freebody and Luke (1990, pp. 7-16) and others in the New London Group) when it comes to print and other literate experiences, so too do we want our students to be understanding, analysing, making meaning and using the codes of arts languages. We need them to be code breakers, text analysers, text meaning makers and text users.

This then is the notion of multiple literacies.

Multiple Literacies



One key aspect of this approach to multiple literacies is the need to recognise how each of the arts contributes to conventional aspects of literacy. We need our students, our colleagues and our community to understand how, through working in the arts, they can become better in the sorts of literacies that the tabloid press and political over-simplifiers keep demanding.

Through working with each of the arts, students use words to explore and develop ideas. They collaborate using verbal and non-verbal communication. Language is the medium of collaboration, the carrier of historical, social, political, economic and human significance. Some arts forms such as drama and media are intrinsically language-rich opportunities for learning. As such, they can contribute to each student's overall literacy.

That is not the whole picture, nor am I arguing that it is. But it can be a significant contributing factor. When students work in the arts they develop their capacity to use language in purposeful ways. They add to their ‘conventional literacy’. The value of this should not be underestimated.

In short, the arts can be a powerful, purposeful way of using language that supports broader literacy agendas.

Finally, the arts languages connect to emerging understandings of multi-sensory approaches such as that outlined by Howard Gardner in *Frames of Mind* (1993). In the arts students draw on a range of multiple intelligences identified in Gardner's work. For example, drama and dance contribute to interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, kinaesthetic, linguistic and musical-rhythmic intelligences. As intelligence does not have a singular, uni-dimensional face, so must literacy not be narrowly defined.

To argue for the arts as arts languages in the broader context of the need for multiple literacies is to place them at the core of the curriculum for all students. Essentially, to do so recognises that the arts enable us to understand better the complexity of human behaviour and imagination as well as to rehearse and explore ways of living in an increasingly changing, technologically-driven and challenging world.

Conclusion: stretching for arts literacy

This approach to literacy questions and steps beyond the current tabloid preoccupation with literacy only in functional and operational terms (*Melbourne Studied in Education*, 2002). As significant as functional literacy is in underpinning our education and participation in society, it is only ever part of the whole picture. On its own, functional literacy is not enough.

The complexity and richness of our lives demands more than that – however much easier it would be if we could reduce and constrict the term, as some would have us do.

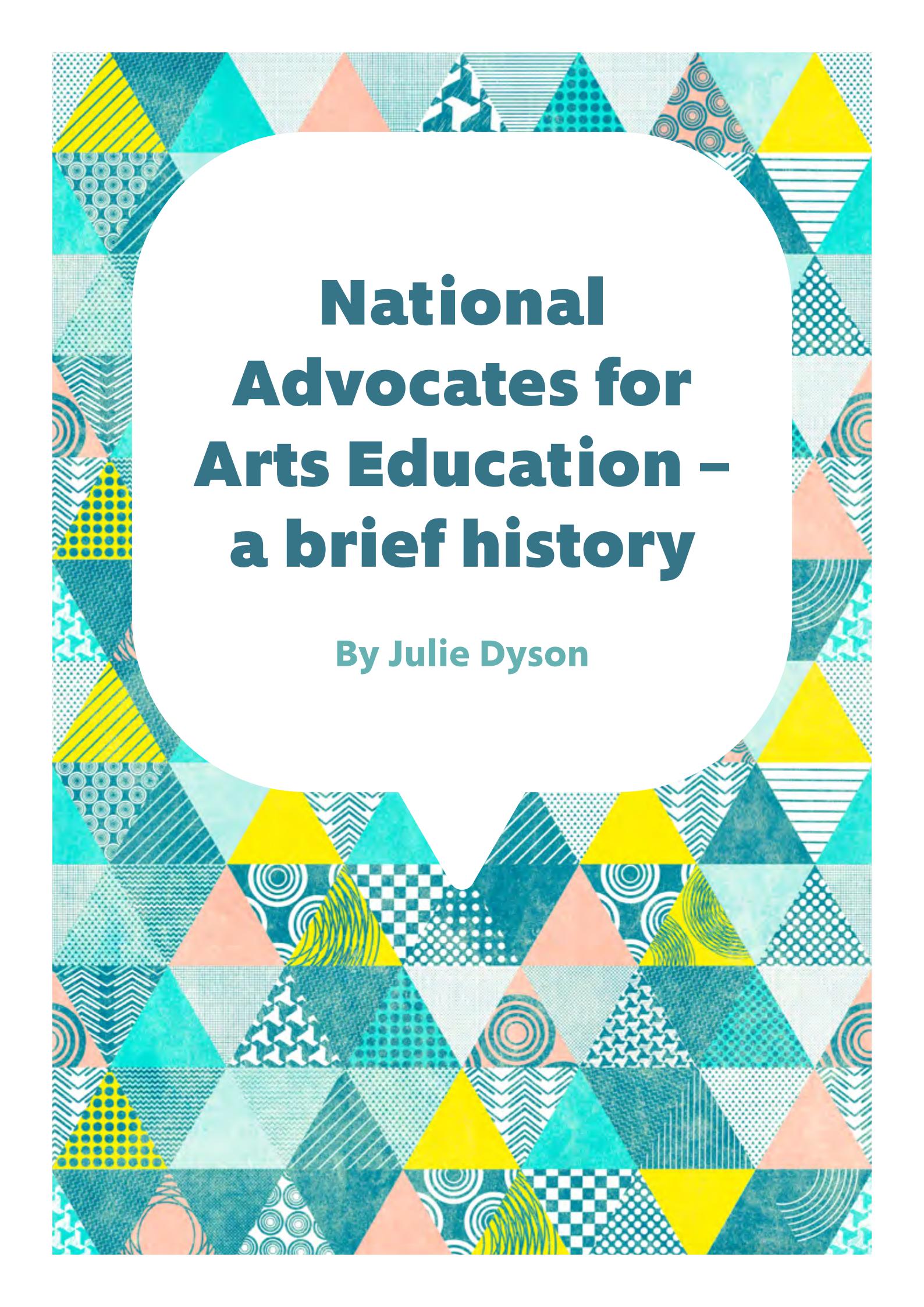
At the heart of a call for arts literacy for all students is the recognition that the sort of literacy we are calling for is necessarily broad, encompassing and ultimately rewarding. In arguing for multiple literacies including the languages of the arts, I am arguing for an education that stretches towards achieving the fullest potential of our humanity.

BIOGRAPHY (2003)

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National Advocates for Arts Education – a brief history

By Julie Dyson

The National Affiliation of Arts Educators – now the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE) – was established in 1989 with the support of the Joint Council of Cultural and Education Ministers. It works with the government of the day, and has been instrumental in ensuring that the Arts are established as separate subjects in the Australian curriculum.

Art form membership is represented by the following peak bodies: Dance (Ausdance National); Drama (Drama Australia); Music (Australian Society for Music Education and Music Australia); Visual Arts (Art Education Australia and the National Association for the Visual Arts) and Media, the Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM).

NAAE had significant carriage of the consultation and writing of the 1992 *The arts – a statement on the arts for Australian schools* and the companion document *The arts – a curriculum profile for Australian schools* (Curriculum Corporation, 1994). Between 1994 and 1996 NAAE was provided with funding from the Department of Education & Youth Affairs to employ a full-time researcher and establish the Australian Centre for Arts Education at the University of Canberra. NAAE maintained its activity after funding ceased, making submissions to federal inquiries, publishing papers and *More than words can say*, and advocating for Australian arts education research.

In 2007, a joint statement was made by the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and the Cultural Ministers Council (CMC) that “All children and young people should have a high quality arts education in every phase of learning” (MCEETYA and CMC, 2007, p. 5).

The Australian Government then began developing a national curriculum, and the NAAE held its first meeting about the *The Australian Curriculum: The Arts* in October 2008 when it became evident that there were no plans to include the arts in Phase 1. The group developed an advocacy plan that targeted significant members of both political parties and wrote a position paper which called for the inclusion of the Arts as a learning area in Phase 2 of The Australian Curriculum. They worked closely with the federal government’s Australian Curriculum, Reporting & Assessment Authority (ACARA), and also made representations to the government for the inclusion of the Arts in the Early Years Learning Framework. On 17 April 2009 it was announced that the Arts would be included in Phase 2 of the Australian Curriculum.

There has since been a long curriculum development and consultation period led by ACARA, and individual NAAE members have played a significant role in developing the initial Shape Paper and then in the writing and revision of the curriculum.

The strength of the NAAE lies in its united voice for all five art forms in the curriculum, at the same time ensuring that each art form is acknowledged as a separate subject with its own curriculum and achievement standards, histories, language, traditions, content and pedagogies. The NAAE does not support a generic ‘arts’ curriculum.

While NAAE continues to play a role in revisions still being made to *The Australian Curriculum: the Arts*, the group has five strategies for action in 2019-2021:

- Advocacy: NAAE will continue to advise and meet with federal decision makers to improve arts curriculum at all levels of education. It will also make submissions to parliamentary inquiries and curriculum reviews.
- Research: NAAE will work with research partners on issues such as creativity, curriculum policy, implementation and evaluation, PISA rankings etc.
- Collaboration: NAAE will build on its strength in collaborating with other key organisations such as ACARA, Australian Primary Principals' Association, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, Australian Council for Deans of Education, Australian Alliance of Associations in Education and the Australia Council to achieve positive outcomes for arts education.
- Communication: NAAE's website will be a communication hub that will encourage sector engagement with NAAE's actions, publications, media releases, current research, case studies of exemplary practice in arts education and its archives.
- Governance: NAAE has revised its constitution to bring it up to date with current practice.

Regular representations about these issues are made to Federal Government ministers; State & Territory education & arts ministers and the Federal Opposition, as well as those organisations listed above.