Date - **Friday, 9 March 2012**

Workshop Time - **12.00pm - 1.30pm**

Workshop session and title -

2.1 **Delve into Drama in the Arts National Curriculum**

Style of Presentation: **Forum**

Presenters: **Christine Adams | Robin Pascoe**

Conference Theme: **Curriculum**

**Purpose:** To help the Drama Australia community understand the ways that Drama is described in the Shape of the Australian Curriculum The Arts ([www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au)). The session is designed to orient participants to some likely outcomes of the Arts National Curriculum and their potential impact. More importantly, the session is a forum to encourage debate, discussion and the sharing of opinions and ideas. (Note: this session will consider only the documents published at the time of the workshop).
Overview

- Set the context
- Explore the Shape Paper
- Open space for dialogue
- Consider some emerging issues
- Implications for Drama Australia

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Taking time to recognise
Who we are and where we are situated
The journey to an Arts National Curriculum

The Arts Development cycle

Shaping process

- Position Paper
  - 2009
- Shape Paper Initial Advice
  - 2010
- Shape Paper
  - August 2011

Writing process

- Appointment of Writers and Advisory Panels
  - July 2011
- Writing Phase One Phase Two
- Two stages-draft documentation
- Consultation and Trialling
  - Second half of 2012

Australian Curriculum

Overview of Curriculum Process

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Schools play a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and well being of young Australians, and in ensuring the nation’s ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion.
8. The *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* will comprise five subjects:
   • Dance
   • Drama
   • Media Arts
   • Music
   • Visual Arts.

9. The Australian Curriculum for the Arts will be based on the assumption that all young Australians are entitled to engage with the five Arts subjects and should be given an opportunity to experience the special knowledge and skills base of each.

   • All students will study the five Arts subjects — dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts — from Foundation to the end of primary school. Schools will be best placed to determine how this will occur.
   • From the first year of secondary school (Year 7 or 8), students will have an opportunity to experience some Arts subjects in greater depth and to specialise in one or more Arts subjects. Schools may continue to offer all Arts subjects. This will be determined by their state/territory jurisdiction and/or the school.
   • In Years 9–12, students will be able to specialise in one or more Arts subjects as part of their overall curriculum package.

What does it mean for teachers and students when there is a *curriculum entitlement* for drama F-6/7?
15. In broad terms, learning in the Arts involves **making** and **responding**. Students learn as artists, by making art works that communicate to audiences. They learn as audiences, by responding critically to the Arts. These actions are taught together as each depends on the other.

16. **Making** and **responding** will provide **overarching organisers** for the Arts curriculum and will provide a **consistent structure for the primary years and for generalist teachers**. Within these broad organisers, each subject in the Arts will have specific terminology, concepts and processes that serve as subject organisers. In this curriculum, **making** will be described in art form-specific ways within each Arts subject. **Responding** will be described in more general terms, which will be applied across the **five Arts subjects**. The curriculum will recognise equally the distinctiveness of dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts. It also recognises connections between art forms.
Making in drama

18. Students will make art works by using the **elements** of an art form. They will work from an idea, an intention, an expressive or imaginative impulse, or an external stimulus. They will imagine, create and design art works. Through **disciplined practice**, students will learn to use and manage the **materials, instruments and skills** of the art form to prepare, develop, produce and present art.

- What are the elements of drama?
- What is disciplined practice for a student who is eight years old?
- What are the materials, instruments, skills of drama?

Often unfamiliar terminology and language use are the result of collaboration across the 6 states and 2 territories rather than new content. What are the implications for drama teachers?

How do we see making in drama now? Would much change?

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19. Students will respond to art works through their senses, thoughts and emotions. They will come to understand and appreciate art works through critical and contextual study. As students begin to learn in the Arts they will respond to what they see or hear in an art work, and express what they feel personally about an art work. As their learning in the Arts subjects progresses, students’ exploration of art works will be deepened through investigation of particular aspects including (but not limited to) those shown in Diagram 1.
Responding in drama

21. The following sample questions illustrate the way students may explore an art work:

- **Meanings**: What meanings are intended by the artist(s) and understood by the audience(s)?
- **Forms**: How have the elements, media and instruments been organised and arranged?
- **Societies**: How does it relate to its social context and that of its audience?
- **Cultures**: What is its cultural context and what does it signify?
- **Histories**: What is its place in terms of historical forces and influences?
- **Philosophies and ideologies**: What are the philosophical, ideological and political perspectives?
- **Critical theories**: What important theories does it include?
- **Institutions**: How have institutional factors enabled or constrained its creation?
- **Psychology**: What processes of the mind and emotions are involved?
- **Evaluations**: How successful is it in terms of its audiences, contexts and the artist’s intentions?

Which of these questions do we use in drama education currently? At which age/stage level?
Overview: Drama F–12

33. In drama, students will explore, depict and celebrate human experience by imagining and representing other people through live enactment. Drama is a collaborative art, combining physical, verbal, visual and aural dimensions. In drama students will experience theatre and develop an understanding of the performer/audience relationship. Learning in drama can be both process and performance. Students will combine the elements of drama to make, present and respond to representations of human situations, characters, behaviour and relationships. They will make drama through dramatic play, role-play and improvisation, structuring the elements into play-building, directing and scriptwriting. In presenting drama they will learn, as actors, to use body and gesture, voice and language, through interpretation and rehearsal processes as well as production and performance. In responding, students will learn about how drama contributes to personal, social and cultural identity. They will study the diversity of purposes, forms and styles in drama and theatre both contemporary and from other times, places and cultural contexts.
The elements of drama

Aristotle’s Elements of Theatre

Aristotle’s famously defined tragedy. Following his definition, Aristotle identified the six constitutive components of a tragedy.

- **spectacle**, which includes the costuming of the actors, the scenery, and all other aspects that contribute to the visual experience of the play.
- **song** and **diction**. **Song** obviously refers to the vocal compositions incorporated into the performance, and **diction** refers to the metrical composition of the spoken lines.

Aristotle moves on to elements relating to the humans represented in tragedy,

- **thought** and **character**. **Character** includes all qualities we associate with individuals represented in the play; the meaning of **thought** is more elusive, but it seems to indicate the processes of reasoning that lead characters to behave as they do.

The final component is **plot**, which Aristotle defines as "the arrangement of the incidents" (51).

These six elements can be organized, as Aristotle shows, under the major categories of medium, object, and mode:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diction</td>
<td>Song</td>
<td>Spectacle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot Character</td>
<td>Thought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The elements of drama**

There are other curriculum versions of the elements of drama

Students use the elements of drama: role and character, situation and human interaction, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts, symbol and metaphor, audience, dramatic tension, and dramatic forms, genres, styles and conventions.

Drama processes combine the elements of drama: role, character and relationships, situation, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts (including exploration of themes, approaches and theories), symbol and metaphor, audience and dramatic tension to create dramatic meaning.

WACE Drama 2012

QSA 2007

Are the different versions of words and concepts that we use across Australia sufficiently similar?

How do we describe elements of drama developmentally?

What are the elements focused on in F-2? What changes as learning becomes more complex?
34. Students will begin to learn and use some of the elements of drama. They will explore and learn about role, relationships and narrative through dramatic play, role-play, improvisation and process drama as they explore and depict stories involving causes and consequences. They will experiment with objects, puppets and images. They will engage in informal and often spontaneous performance to classroom and in-house audiences, using their own language and movement, and sometimes simple props and costumes. Students will reflect on their own work and respond to theatre.
35. Students will learn about and use further elements of drama. They will explore basic dramatic tension, complex role and relationships, and use of space. They will develop awareness of the primary instruments of drama: movement and gesture, voice and language. They will make more intricate improvisations and process drama, and begin to play-build. They will present their performances with limited rehearsal and begin to encounter scripted texts. In responding, students will reflect on their own and others’ drama and begin to learn about diversity of form and style.

Which further elements of drama?

What’s an age and developmentally appropriate way to teach students basic dramatic tension?

What do students need to be taught about form and style?

What are the implications for secondary drama teachers if students arrive in your classes with this content knowledge and understanding?
4.1.3 Styles and their conventions

Dramatic styles have related dramatic conventions that should be used and applied to produce relevant action and meaning. Form and style are interrelated and at times overlap. Form provides structure to organise and represent dramatic action and dramatic meaning.

Style
For the purposes of this syllabus, “style” is understood and defined in relation to heritage dramatic styles and contemporary dramatic styles.

QSA 2007

Heritage styles
Heritage styles arise from historical and cultural characteristics such as language, class, social conventions, setting, and values of a period’s background. These characteristics are made explicit through the dramatic conventions appropriately associated with the style.

Understanding of various styles generally emerges through interactions with playtexts written by playwrights/practitioners of a particular historical era. Styles are an outcome of a combination of conventions.

QSA 2007

Contemporary styles
Contemporary styles arise from an engagement with changing conditions in the world, in particular new class structures, economies, cultural relationships and the collapse of the monocultures of the past. The term refers to texts that are written and created after 1980 by a playwright and/or arts practitioner. Cross-arts forms explore and combine many styles and are often the result of a collaborative process.

QSA 2007

Conventions
Conventions are techniques and strategies used in dramatic action that are linked to particular styles of theatre. They can be defined as indicators of the way in which time, space and presence can interact and be imaginatively shaped to create different kinds of meaning in theatre. Conventions can be used as tools for experiencing and communicating dramatic actions and meanings. The combination and manipulation of conventions transform ideas into drama.

QSA 2007

But what do we teach students about form and style in Years 3/4 or 5/6?

How is form and style described in other syllabuses?

Is this approach consistent across states and territories?

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36. Students will make and present drama exploring ideas and issues, roles, and character. They will work with a range of dramatic tensions, spaces, places and times, and use varied registers of language and movement. They will develop play-building skills and experiment with scripted text, beginning to explore a range of forms. They will begin learning about staging, rehearsal and acting skills, and present informal and formal performances to audiences. Students will experience and respond to a range of drama and learn about theatrical forms, contemporary and historical concepts and conventions.
37. Students will learn to apply all the basic elements of drama, including more complex use of dramatic tension and sub-texts. They will make, refine and present student-devised drama, working in groups and as individuals, and experiment with small-scale scriptwriting. They will explore characterisation in scripted text. In performance, they will use characterisation and contrast, experiment with design, and develop a performance vocabulary as they learn the basic principles of dramatic production. They will present informal and formal performances. Students will begin to learn about contemporary and historical theatrical movements, local and global. They will experience and respond to a diversity of forms and styles, including comedy and tragedy.
38. Students will use drama for exploring and expressing their individual and social identities. They will learn to use symbols, mood, irony and multiple subtexts in making drama. They will experiment with innovative and hybrid forms and performance styles. They will practise directing and production tasks and responsibilities, and refine and practise for their performances. Students will explore and respond to more complex theatre forms and styles from a range of traditions and movements, and begin to develop and articulate a personal framework for critical study.

How is this content different from what you might be teaching now in drama in Years 9 and 10?

What are the implications for senior secondary drama teachers if students arrive in your classes with this content knowledge and understanding?
39. Students will learn to apply and manage all the elements of drama in their drama practice. They will combine the elements with other arts and media in their interpretation and analysis of historical, contemporary and innovative forms, genres and styles. They will make student-devised and applied theatre, using dramatic symbolism for exploring, expressing and communicating ideas and issues. They will practise scriptwriting, dramaturgy, design and scenography, and directing skills. They will explore and practise techniques of acting, both empathic and distanced, and acquire technical and production management knowledge, skills and techniques. They will perform for a range of audiences. They will experience, present and respond to a range of significant Australian and world theatre from diverse times and places, understanding the artistic, social, cultural, and ideological contexts. In responding, students will recognise and articulate the elements, and gain deep knowledge of some forms and genres of theatre and its applications in the community. They will come to understand the cultural, ethical, social and economic roles of theatre in society, historically and in contemporary society.

What are the implications for senior secondary assessment?
In conclusion...

- Our aim was to give voice to the Drama Australia community
- address the current state of knowledge
- highlight emerging issues
- begin the change/adaptation process for drama educators
- prepare the Drama Australia community to engage in the consultation process

What are the questions still to answer for us as members of the Drama Australia community?

How will Drama Australia support primary teachers teaching drama in this Arts curriculum?

How will Drama Australia support drama teachers coming to terms with change in this Arts curriculum?

How will Drama Australia work to answer the unknown questions about senior secondary drama?

How will Drama Australia support the challenges facing teacher education?

Christine Adams Christine.Adams@curriculum.wa.edu.au
Robin Pascoe r.pascoe@murdoch.edu.au

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