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**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**Essay/Assignment Cover Sheet**

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| **Name of Student:** | **\_\_Eimear Rourke\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |
| **Course:** | **\_\_BA Joint Hons Ed & Design\_** |
| **Submission Date:** | **\_\_08/01/2024\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |
| **Lecturer/tutor:** | **\_\_Dr Patsey Bodkin \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |
| **Essay/Assignment title:** | **\_\_Curriculum Studies Assignment\_\_** |
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| **Criteria** | Ex | VG | Good | Fair | Poor | **Comment** |
| Introduction (statement of problem, response to task) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Range and use of appropriate sources |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Development of argument (analysis, interpretation) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Conclusions (application, findings, outcomes) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Presentation, language, academic conventions |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Please tick Y/N for Profile of Needs** 

**General comment:**

**Indicative grade:** 

**Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Copy of this sheet must accompany all written submissions

**Introduction**

‘Curriculum developments at junior cycle offer fresh opportunities for Visual Art teachers to engage in cross-curricular or interdisciplinary planning and classroom practice.’

Within the current junior cycle programme, there are a total of twenty-one subjects available for study. These subjects include the core subjects of English, Irish and Mathematics. In addition to these core subjects, students have the opportunity to take subjects such as Science, Modern Languages (French, German, Spanish, Italian), Art, Craft & Design, Home Economics and Music.



The twenty-one subjects available for study Source: Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)

The potential for Visual Art teachers to engage in cross-curricular or interdisciplinary planning and delivery might initially be obvious with any of the suite of technology subjects e.g. Graphics where students use a variety of media to communicate design proposals and solutions. These subjects and Art share a unique language, also called graphics, and the cogitative and practical skills developed in Art and these subjects are very similar. These skills are also transferrable to other subjects such as Mathematics and Science, but can this extend to other subjects in the Junior Cycle curriculum?

All subjects in the Junior Cycle curriculum have an emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills and are designed to aid the students in the transition from primary school to post-primary school.

The eight key skills in the document are universal and are embedded into the learning outcomes of all subjects including Visual Art. The integration of these key skills into all subjects offers the potential for cross-curricular opportunities and aids improved planning and delivery amongst teachers of different subjects. Art can also assist in encouraging creative, imaginative, and practical responses to core curriculum content.

The Art curriculum is also developed to not only impart knowledge, but to encourage students in a more practical and individual way. This allows for the opportunity to suit the students own individual learning style and needs e.g. Visual learners.

The changes and development of the junior cycle curriculum, introduced the Classroom-Based Assessment (hereinafter, CBA). Art can facilitate collaborative and planned work across the subjects. Within the subject of Art, the generic skills required to do the CBA’s are developed and these are also transferable to other subjects.

Furthermore, CBA’s are practical, they are very much enquiry-based and they can benefit from the visual learning that Art can develop and encourage.

More recently, the addition of teaching of wellbeing has been facilitated through the introduction of the Wellbeing Framework in 2021. This has brought with it opportunities for Visual Art teachers to plan and deliver wellbeing education outside of the classroom and in a collaborative and coordinated way with colleague teachers of other subjects on the Junior Cycle curriculum.

Finally, the Junior Cycle framework includes for the development of optional short courses which are also a feature of the Level 2 Learning Programmes.

**Interdisciplinary planning & cross-curricular teaching – Wood Technology & Visual Art an example:**

A review of the subject specifications for both Junior Cycle Wood Technology and Visual Art shows much potential for cross disciplinary planning and classroom practice. Both share three statements of learning (i.e. SOL 20, 21 & 23) as well as synergies in the key skills development and share the strands of craft and design. Collaboration and interdisciplinary planning could for example involve both the Visual Art teacher and the Wood Technology teacher working together to create a unit of learning. The key skills and content the students develop in both classes could be integrated and blended together to benefit the students overall learning experience of these two individual subjects. This cross-curricular or interdisciplinary planning and implementation will also help students with different learning styles to benefit from the potential to build on the key skills developed in Visual Art (i.e. creating, performing and presenting and thinking creatively and critically) and focus on developing their cogitative and motor skills in Wood Technology (selecting and using appropriate materials, using mathematical and technical skills to create an artefact or product).

An example of where this could be implemented in the classroom is in supporting the student to complete their Wood Technology project. For example, in 2021 the students were given a brief where they had the choice to design an artefact to display a small range of baked goods on a table. The Visual Art teacher could plan and focus the learning within the Design Strand, looking at the development of research and exploration of design concepts and developing design processes skills. This could be expanded in the art classroom to include practice of freehand sketching and creating prototypes all reinforcing the development of the key skills within the Junior Cycle curriculum.

In the other classroom the Wood Technology teacher would focus on the Principles and Practices Strand, where students are facilitated to apply and develop the required practical skills to create a variety of physical models and products using a wide range of materials and technologies.

Whilst not all students would study Wood Technology as a subject in addition to Art, the skills that the students learn within the art classroom by taking this approach to interdisciplinary planning and implementation in the classes are easily transferable to the other subjects that students not taking Wood Technology may be studying, e.g. Applied Technology, Engineering or Graphics.

Whilst the synergies and potential for cross-curricular engagement between Visual Art Teachers and teachers of the suite of Technology subjects, is evident in the framework itself, could the Junior Cycle Framework provide any further and less obvious potential?

**Looking at cross-curricular within Modern Languages and Art:**

The first example is where the Visual Art teacher could collaborate with a teacher in a Modern Languages subject such as French. Whilst the statements of learning of Modern Languages does not align with the Visual Art statements of learning, the teachers of these subjects can demonstrate creativity within their planning and produce a more visual approach to the curriculum content. Using Art within other subject classrooms, gives the opportunity to students who learn in a visual way, to develop a deeper understanding of the learning.

An example is where the teachers could work together to create a number of visual resources to support the learning of the language and the language’s vocabulary in particular. The French teacher could focus the learning on the colours and the corresponding vocabulary, whilst the Visual Art teacher would produce the supporting colour swatches with the English and French words to the side. The French teacher could also work with the Visual Art Teacher to identify suitable examples of a French artist’s artwork as a visual aid to learn about the colour vocabulary.

This approach could equally be adapted where the Visual Art teacher works with the History teacher to illustrate the culture and events of the time via examples of artists artwork.

**Cross-curricular of Wellbeing and Art:**

In 2021, the framework expanded to include for the teaching and learning of Wellbeing in the Junior Cycle curriculum.

Not only does the Visual Art teacher have the capability to blend wellbeing themes into Art lessons and planning themselves, they also have the potential to facilitate and create a more positive and safe environment for the students to learn about both Art and Wellbeing alongside each other.

*Teachers, other than CSPE, SPHE and PE teachers, are encouraged to consider how they can contribute to learning about wellbeing and for wellbeing.*

Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (2021)

An example of where the cross-curricular planning for learning in Art and Wellbeing can be used, is in a group based project, where the students will work together as a team. Students will learn team building skills while using artistic techniques to potentially create a mural for a social area for the students within the school. This mural could also be focused on creating an area for all students to use and feel comfortable within the school environment.

There is also huge potential for Visual Art teachers to facilitate the delivery of a dedicated time slot in the timetable for wellbeing learning, as advice in the Framework of The Junior Cycle document. They are best placed to lead out on the development of the core key skills of being creative, working with others and communicating as well as managing information and thinking.

**Conclusion:**

In summary, the developments in the Junior Cycle curriculum allow and provide possibilities and opportunities for Visual Art teachers to engage in cross-curricular and interdisciplinary planning. Engaging in cross-curricular and interdisciplinary planning does not only enhance the learning experience for students, but also allows for the professional growth and collaboration amongst teachers. It allows for a more integrated approach to learning, equipping the students with the skills and knowledge that go beyond the limitations of individual subjects.

The focus on cross-curricular planning allows Visual Art teachers to integrate key skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving into their lessons. Cross-curricular projects that combine visual arts with other subjects can enhance students' ability to apply their skills in various contexts. Including Art into other subjects in the curriculum, is a beneficial way to keep visual learners engaged in the learning, it shows a visual representation of the core curriculum content.

By incorporating different strategies, Visual Art teachers can contribute to a positive and supportive environment that enhances the wellbeing of students in the classroom. The Visual Art teacher can establish a safe and non-judgmental space where the students can feel comfortable expressing their own feelings and experiences through their own artwork. The cross-curricular of Wellbeing and Visual Art can encourage positive interactions among students through team projects, collaborative activities and peer support.

Bibliography

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