Tuning the undergraduate curriculum in art

Generic competencies

Dr Peter Jordan
Tuning Education in Europe

2001 - ongoing

‘Reflections on HE by stakeholders

Rapid change  Bologna process
Aims

Subject skills

Subject Area

Relationship

Generic transferable skills

Learning outcomes

Generic competencies

Teaching

Learning

Assessment

Best practice
Late twentieth century debate defines context in which Tuning project introduced

Traditional academic Versus Vocationally oriented
Art Education

Traditional academic

- Universities theoretical study (art history)

Versus

Vocationally oriented

- Art schools and ITs mainly ‘applied’ or vocational aspects
Theory

Practice
Practice

Harmonising art education

Theory
Recent Changes in Art Practice

Inspired individual  Pluralist  Flexible cultural opportunist
Fine Art European Forum, 2007
Art version of ‘Tuning’
Degrees
Titles vary – ‘Fine Art’, ‘Art in Society’ etc.

Typical components

- studio practice
- self-directed art projects
- theory and art history
- research and professional practice.
Inclusion of professional practice
Theory more integrated with practice
‘Practice based’ research degrees
Student-centred approach
Impact of technology on learning
Student and staff exchanges
Widening participation
Differences

- Traditional subjects or multi-disciplinary
- Foundation course or direct admission
- Range of institutional providers
- Programme lengths of 3-4 years
- Modularised or not
Learning & Teaching

distinctiveness of studio-centred methods of teaching, learning and assessment
Assessment

- Art studio formative ‘group crit’
- Assessment a learning tool
- Students play an active role in assessment
- Art studio summative final degree ‘show’
- May include evaluative reflective diary
- Criteria: hard-work versus high achievement
- Art Theory - orthodox Humanities methods
Destinations

Art practitioner

Art teacher

Art administrator

Art critic

Art historian

Animator

Pop musician

Photographer

Conservator

Art therapist

Video/film-maker
Tuning’s 8 Generic Competencies

- Capacity for analysis and synthesis
- Capacity for applying knowledge in practice
- Basic general knowledge in the field of study
- Information management skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Ability to work autonomously
- Elementary computer skills
- Research skills
PARADOX Generic Competencies

- Research skills
- Subject knowledge and understanding
- Exercise appropriate judgement
- Act effectively within a team
- Act in variable contexts
- Manage own learning
- Develop presentation skills
- Work effectively, ethically, safely
Research skills
Knowledge in the field
Analysis and synthesis
Interpersonal skills
Knowledge in practice
Work autonomously

Research skills
Subject knowledge
Exercise judgement
Team work
Act in a context
Manage own learning
Generic Competencies in WIT

Undergraduate programmes

- generic ‘stand alone’ modules introduced
  - Critical thinking
  - Research
  - IT skills

Visual art

- generic competencies integrated into subject areas
Degree in Art in Society

Generic competencies were inculcated in curriculum development (1990)

- Art theory
- Multi-media art
- Environmental art
- Performance art
Art Theory

Key Skills

• Analytical skills
• Critical thinking skills
• Research skills
Creative Multi-media Project

Traditional medium (writing) → Translated → New medium (animated sequence)

The Current

A mile or more of sand
When it's hot, the mile is full of cars
The water pulls back
To show the dying jellyfish
I've had dreams of being sucked in by the current
Or smashed by waves off the rocks
There is nothing like lying back on a summers day
But I'll never get in the water

The last time I got in
An old woman got out of her depth
Panicked and screamed for help, what could I do?
I felt paralysed as if the sand was cement
When I could finally move again
She was back to her feet

Key Skills

• Interpersonal
• Interdisciplinary
• Technical
Art and Environment

Key Skills

- Application of knowledge in practical situation
- Inter-personal
- Communication skills
‘Live Art’ Performance

Painting

Interpreted

Interdisciplinary Art, Theatre, Music

Key Skills

• Team-work
Is Art Education at WIT in Tune?

Key Graduate competencies

Interpersonal and interaction skills
Ability to apply knowledge in practical situations
Ability to act as part of a team
Training should be embedded throughout course
Final Questions

Art

- Is art education being tuned too much?
- Are traditional art values in danger?

All disciplines

- Are all disciplines being tuned too much?
- Do generic skills blur disciplinary boundaries?