

CROSSING THE GREAT DIVIDES - Music, Digital Multimedia and VET.

There is little doubt that the merging of technology and the arts will create many challenges and opportunities for music teachers. With greater emphasis being placed on 'essential learnings and key competencies' of curricula, JANE RODDY and her colleagues are treading a path towards outcomes that challenge the traditional choice of tertiary entrance versus vocational training-and cross over several arts strands. -Story by Keith Huxtable.

Most secondary schools today complement their traditional music programs with technology, particularly in the areas of composition, arranging, theory and aural training. Action taken back in the mid-1990s at SA's Golden Grove High School gave a greater curriculum coverage of current technology through an innovative approach to VET, that has enabled music students to gain the skills needed for today's industry careers.

Moving ahead of curriculum development meant considerable research and planning, with very strong support from colleagues and school leaders. In many instances the courses of study required specific submissions to and accreditation from SSABSA and negotiations with local TAFEs and universities, to ensure that appropriate recognition and credits were available to students on completion. The results have so far been outstanding, with student demand far exceeding places available.

Music technology only the beginning

The first step was to devise a course for Years 11 and 12 in Music Technology that would meet SSABSA accreditation and also give unit credits in Music Industry Skills certificates. Rather than deliver a Certificate II course per se, Jane approached the plan from a competency perspective and focused upon the specific skills required to complete tasks or projects. This has allowed in-depth coverage of audio engineering competencies through to Certificate IV level.

From her research and meetings with industry professionals it was more relevant to have students complete the course with a combination of demonstrated skills and a portfolio of work. At the same time, such a course needed to satisfy SSABSA assessment criteria and deliver outcomes that would contribute to a TER and the SACE (SA Certificate of Education). This would give students the widest possible choice in terms of tertiary study and industry options.

The result was somewhat surprising-a course of study accredited by SSABSA under Energy Technology (Open Units), rather than Music. Golden Grove introduced this new Music Technology Course in 1997, with some 50 students initially running off-line; such was the demand. Competency units for Music Technology were selected from the Music Industry Training Package ANTA CUS01 and Music IT (AusMusic) modules.

A unique component of the Music Technology course was the introduction of multimedia early in the first term of Year 1. A project would include digital audio, manipulation of still images, visual sequencing and output to video tape-skills not normally covered in a music course, nor covered in a musical context in other subject areas.

Jane realised quite early that there was great synergy between multimedia and music technology and continued to explore industry developments and trends in how this technology was being used. More importantly, she considered what skills were needed, what opportunities exist for aspiring students, and what were the study options. Jane was also very aware of how students are now more interested and sophisticated in visual literacy and digital storytelling as methods of communication-very different skills, but these days part of a teenager's everyday life.

A natural progression

By 2001 Jane was planning a new course, Digital Multimedia, to further her aim of multi-skilling students in digital literacy, ready for the real world. As current hardware and software standards allow seamless integration of audio and visual content, there are close similarities between audio and visual storage, editing and manipulation. A new computer lab, designed to meet the needs of multimedia, could also accommodate music technology and allow more students to participate.

Again Jane focused on competencies in specific skills rather than delivering a Certificate II in Multimedia. This time Competency units through to Certificate IV level were chosen from the Film, Television, Radio and Multimedia Industry training package (ANTA CUF01) to focus on skills required to ultimately complete a major project to DVD in Year 12. This includes many skills in common with the Music Technology course (such as audio recording and editing, and graphic manipulation) but extends into 2D and 3D animation and digital video production and editing. While such a course concept was a considerable departure from conventional curriculum it quickly gained support from colleagues teaching Art & Design and English, and huge enthusiasm from students, both music and non-music. Another

submission to SSABSA resulted in gaining accreditation for Digital Multimedia under an open unit in Information Technology.

Two years of planning pay off

With Music Technology and Digital Multimedia, the school was now able to offer courses that crossed the traditional subject areas of Music, Art & Design and Media Studies, with up-to-date integration of ICT and meaningful practical outcomes for students. Students from the Music Technology course have received offers from industry employers for part-time work while still studying at Golden Grove. Most students have continued to pursue their studies after Year 12, for example at Adelaide University (Music Technology), Regency TAFE (Cert IV and Diploma, Music Industry Technical Production) and School of Audio Engineering (Cert IV in Audio Engineering)

The first cohort from Digital Multimedia will complete Year 12 in 2004, and already a number have been invited to participate in industry projects. Examples include creation of 3D animation for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation as the basis of a game project, and creation of 3D animated musical instruments for an educational video produced by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

A number of students have chosen to complete short TAFE courses while still studying at Golden Grove. This is encouraged by industry mentors working with students, placing great emphasis on the value of a student's portfolio in obtaining future work.

Benefits for other students

Establishing the new 25-station Music and Multimedia Lab has also provided a number of additional benefits for other students attending Golden Grove Secondary Campus. The facilities are now utilised by:

- Year 8/9 General Music,
- Year 9 Art (stop motion animation),
- Digital Video post-production (for school drama and music productions),
- English, for school magazine production(on CD).

By taking a broader curricula view of music, arts and technology and establishing close links with relevant industry mentors Jane has created many new opportunities for Golden Grove students, in addition to a strong traditional instrumental music program. A great success-just ask the students clamouring to participate!

- Golden Grove Secondary campus includes three schools, which share the Music and Digital Multimedia facilities.

About Jane Roddy

Jane Roddy is an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST1) at Golden Grove High School in SA. She takes pride in the achievements of her students, including Music Technology works accepted for the SSABSA Technology Show 2003; an invitation to year 11/12 students to present to the Queen at the SA Technology School of the Future (2002); and many work placement offers from the music, film and multimedia industries to her students. Jane was short-listed for the inaugural SA Arts Educator's award in 2002, and is actively involved in PD programs at the SA Technology School of the Future.

E-contacts

Jane Roddy

E: jroddy@goldengrovehs.sa.edu.au

T: 08 8282 6400.

ANTA www.anta.gov.au/

Ausmusic www.ausmusic.org.au/

Ausmusic SA www.ausmusic.sa.on.net/

SSABSA www.ssabsa.sa.edu.au

Golden Grove

High School www.goldengrovehs.sa.edu.home/school/

MINI GLOSSARY

ANTA Australian National Training Authority

AST1 Advanced Skills Teacher (accreditation by SA DECS)

AusMusic Nationally accredited Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for the entertainment and music industry.
Also see MusicIT.

DECS Dept of Education and Children's Services (SA)

MusicIT The Music Industry Skills units through to Advanced Diploma level published by Ausmusic

SACE SA Certificate of Education

SAE School of Audio Engineering

SSABSA Senior Secondary Assessment Board of SA

TER Tertiary Entrance Rank

VET Vocational Education and Training