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Dear Gill,

Draft Experiences and Outcomes in the Technologies

I include below the Royal Society of Edinburgh's comments on the draft experiences and outcomes in the technologies. They are necessarily brief in view of the need to meet the Learning and Teaching Scotland feedback deadline and to ensure that they can be as helpful as possible to you and the team dealing with the technologies outcomes.

You will recall that the RSE produced a comprehensive response to the process and outcomes for numeracy, mathematics and science, for literacy and English, for expressive arts and for social studies. One reason for the brevity of this response lies in the way in which we regard the issues we raised in relation to other subject areas to be systemic, and similar to the high level concerns that we have raised both in our earlier responses and in meetings with you and your colleagues. They are also consistent with the concerns of specialists from a range of disciplines and across a range of subject areas with whom we have discussed the draft outcomes. Our comments below, specific to the technologies experiences and outcomes, are particularly convergent to those we made about the expressive arts.

(a) It is not clear where and how the necessary craft skills will be developed (e.g. 'formulae [that] may be used in the context of energy transfer').


(b) It is not clear how a balance will be struck between skills and ethics.

(c) There is, as in all the other documents, a prescriptive assumption that certain ethical positions are not to be questioned (e.g. on 'the importance of sustainable development').

(d) No account seems to have been taken of the fact that, of all areas of learning, electronic skills are those that are now most likely to have been developed to a high level by pupils outwith school. For example, how will their experience of games etc shape pupils' understanding of how to 'explore and use data handling software which allows me to search, sort, calculate, interpret, retrieve or display information'? What area of IT is not about these things? So what areas are to be judged suitable in a specifically educational programme, as opposed to pupils' leisure-time enjoyment?

We hope these comments are constructive and if additional time becomes available in the LTS feedback process, the RSE could provide further detailed comment on the technologies outcomes.

With all good wishes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G S Boulton', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Professor G S Boulton OBE FRS FRSE
RSE General Secretary