



AMPAG: WHO WE ARE

AMPAG, as the representative body of Australia's 28 major performing arts companies, gives its member companies a national voice and presence. It was formed in 1999 because the companies saw a critical need to work together on policy issues across their art forms including those that affected artistic quality and cost/revenue dynamics.

AMPAG's mission is to promote awareness of the contribution of major performing arts to the community and to ensure that these companies are adequately supported by the government. By doing so, AMPAG helps guarantee their long-term success and their accessibility to all Australians.

The companies, through the MPA Education Network, recently endorsed the Australian Curriculum: the Arts and its role in their overall education mission:

We, the Major Performing Arts (MPA) Educators of Australia, support the Australian Curriculum: the Arts in schools.

Our mission is to extend and complement the learning and teaching of performing arts in all schools. By sharing the extensive skills and expertise at our disposal, we are uniquely placed to inspire and enrich the teaching and learning of the arts curriculum.

It is our vision that all students, regardless of location and economic circumstances, have access to the MPA companies and our education programs—programs which model best professional practice and excellence across the performing arts.

AMPAG COMPANIES' ROLE IN ARTS EDUCATION

One in every five Australian school children is reached by major performing arts company education programs each year. The companies work closely with schools and communities to develop the content.

The major performing arts companies performed to 537 000 children and 6000 school performance in 2012. For a list of MPAs, see Appendix 1.

AMPAG RESPONSE TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The reviewers will consider the robustness, independence and balance of the Australian Curriculum, including:

- the process of curriculum shaping, development, monitoring, evaluation and review.
- the curriculum content from Foundation to Year 12 for subjects developed to date, with a particular focus on the curriculum for English, mathematics, science, history and geography.

We believe, in the recent past, the curriculum of arts teaching in Australian schools has not reflected the benefits that can be derived from arts learning. Arts education has been erratic and inconsistent across states, schools and school systems. While the Australian Arts Curriculum defines the parameters of arts education that must be taught in Australian schools from foundation to Year 10, implementation remains the jurisdiction of the states and territories, and we were pleased when Ministers reached agreement on the curriculum in the middle of last year, and their commitment to its implementation. We believe robust, consistent teaching of the arts, with full school and state government support, are essential to extract the maximum benefit from the arts curriculum.

Since 2008 when the Federal Government first flagged its intention to develop a National Curriculum and subsequently released its draft Shape outline, the arts curriculum has developed considerably—for the better.

We have responded both as a group, and as individual companies, to the various iterations of the draft curriculum. These responses were developed throughout the consultation period, and during this time the Major Performing Arts (MPA) Education Network was extremely active in gathering expert advice, studies and research from within Australia and internationally. Sydney Symphony Orchestra's head of education, Kim Waldock, was appointed to ACARA's consultation committee that developed the Music in Curriculum component. Another of our members, Musica Viva Australia, hosted one of the information sessions during the consultation phase, and both the 2012 and 2013 MPA Education Network Forums were dedicated to working through the curriculum drafts and providing feedback that was largely taken on board.

AMPAG did raise its concern previously that there did not appear to be processes in place for auditing whether teachers were teaching the curriculum as required, especially given its implementation necessarily devolves to each state. However, we would be very concerned that any difficulties in monitoring or evaluating the outcomes of the arts curriculum and its implementation resulted in a weakening of the arts curriculum.

Monitoring and evaluation of the performing arts in the curriculum must be multi-layered. Of course the technical aspects can be assessed through formal and informal testing. But the intrinsic values of working and thinking creatively require deeper and ongoing observations and encouragement.

REALISING POTENTIAL

The evidence is thoroughly researched and well documented in Australia and internationally—the benefits of a comprehensive arts education are felt across all learning areas.

It is widely documented in the US, Canada, the UK, Europe and Australia, that students whose learning is embedded in the arts achieve better grades and overall test scores, are less likely to leave school early, rarely report boredom, and have a more positive self-concept than students who are deprived of arts experiences. They are also more likely to become involved in community service. (*The Arts and Australian Education: Realising potential*, Robyn Ewing).

These benefits have been known for a long time. A 2002 study, *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Achievement* (Richard Deasy), analysed 62 earlier research studies that explored the relationship between the cognitive capacities developed through learning and communicating in dance, drama, music and the visual arts, and students' academic and social skills. His major findings on the positive effects derived by those involved in arts-rich education programs included:

- positive achievements in reading, language and mathematics development
- evidence of increased higher order thinking skills and capacities
- evidence of increased motivation to learn
- improvements in effective social behaviours.

A new Australian study¹ based on 643 elementary and high school students from 15 schools conducted over two academic years showed school predictors of academic and non-academic outcomes were arts engagement and in-school arts participation. It was one of the largest studies into the role of the arts on student outcomes ever conducted.

Historically the arts have been pushed to the side in education when other things crowd in ... when literacy and numeracy agendas become more important. But what this research shows is that that's a

¹ *The role of arts participation in students' academic and nonacademic outcomes: A longitudinal study of school, home, and community factors.* Martin, Andrew J.; Mansour, Marianne; Anderson, Michael; Gibson, Robyn; Liem, Gregory A. D.; Sudmalis, David, February 2014

bad choice and the arts should be at the centre of the curriculum because it has benefits across all areas of learning ... My advice to schools would be to consider putting arts at the centre of the school experience and not at the periphery—and to think about how the arts can be strengthened in schools using what's available through the Australian Curriculum.

—Associate Professor Michael Anderson, University of Sydney

REALISING POTENTIAL FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

Providing a quality arts experience in the classroom is especially important for young people from low-socioeconomic groups who may not have had the opportunity to engage with the arts outside school.

More than twice as many 12th grade, high music-involved, low SES students performed at high levels of math proficiency as non music-involved, low SES 12th grade students ... By 12th grade the high-music, low SES students had pulled significantly ahead of the average student in math proficiency (33.1 percent to 21.3 percent). —EB Fiske, *Champions of Change*

REALISING POTENTIAL FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

Noel Pearson, chairman of the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, in an article in *The Australian* on 8 June 2013, emphasised the importance of music education for Indigenous children. He said:

First, our school reform agenda includes the aim to provide our children with a "best of both worlds" education: to celebrate and learn about their own culture and to engage in the cultures of the wider world. ... One of the clear answers [is] the opportunity of learning to read music and to play a musical instrument. If students are not exposed in primary school, they will almost certainly not take up music in secondary school.

Music is critical to education. When I told the founder of Direct Instruction, Siegfried Engelmann, of our plans to introduce his program in Cape York, he exhorted me to ensure we had lots of music in our schools. Music undoubtedly is crucial to the intellectual development of children.

In all the debates about ... literacy and numeracy, there is hardly a word said about music. We need music teachers in disadvantaged schools as urgently as we need maths and English teachers.

My third point is music is both an expression and driver of our creativity as humans.

INTRINSIC BENEFITS OF AN ARTS EDUCATION

Arts education has intrinsic benefits—for example:

- the pleasure and emotional stimulation of a personal, 'felt' response
- captivation by an imaginative experience
- an expanded capacity for empathy leading to the potential for creating social bonds and shared experiences of art
- cognitive growth in being able to make sense of art
- the ability to find a voice to express communal meaning through art.

(Gifts of the muse: Reframing the debate about the benefits of the Arts, K McCarthy, E Ondaatje, L Zakaras, & A Brooks, 2004)

As Dr David Sudmalis of the Australia Council for the Arts said, the arts 'stimulate a way of being' and enhance our ability to consider, reflect, analyse and communicate.

ENSURING ARTS IS TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS

Despite the myriad available evidence of the value of the arts, teaching arts has not been a core priority for some Australian schools. Many schools are data-driven. Their academic emphases respond to results in core testing, Year 12 results, student improvement data etc. And in such a climate, the arts slide down the priority list, despite the clear big picture evidence of its benefits in overall results.

It is worth asking the question, who do parents or teachers go to if the school is not fulfilling the intention of the arts curriculum?

Any school Principal who makes a decision to reduce teaching time in Arts subjects is making a decision not to educate children properly. —
Richard Gill, blogspot,
[http://richardgill.blogspot.com.au/2010_11_01_archive.html]

Quality creative arts engagement can affect the whole school, broadening the school's educational approach, forming cross-curricular links, and enabling it to focus on creativity. It can enhance the school's profile and unify the whole school behind a common purpose, at the same time as creating a positive culture for learning within the school.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH PERFORMING ARTS COMPANIES

We believe a first world, high quality arts education can only be realised with the involvement of live performance. Therefore, delivering a high quality

performing arts curriculum depends on robust, practical partnerships between schools and professional performing arts companies.

A major international study, *The Wow Factor: Global Research Compendium on the Impact of the Arts in Education* (Bamford, 2006), identified that the kind of improved outcomes for students mentioned above (that is, improved outcomes in literacy, in school attendance and engaging otherwise disengaged students) are most likely to emerge from quality arts programs characterised by strong partnerships with external arts organisations and artists.

Partnerships should be considered not only in relation to direct access to professional performances and education workshops for students but also in facilitating teacher training to strengthen generalist teachers' skills and confidence to teach the arts. Several MPA companies have developed specialised teacher training courses and workshops as well as curriculum specific lesson plans and resources including digital apps. Expansion on these activities also well enhance their arts based skills as a tool for other types of learning.

CONCLUSION

The major performing arts companies are united in the desire for sequential and developmental learning pathways in the arts for all Australian students. We believe that the curriculum should enhance and improve upon the existing practices in school arts education.

We believe that teachers should be empowered to deliver the Arts Curriculum through ongoing professional learning in the arts. The adequate training of pre-service teachers needs to be addressed to ensure effective delivery and implementation of a world class Arts Curriculum.

We note that five subject areas have been singled out for consideration by the reviewers: English, mathematics, science, history and geography. We would like to emphasise:

- the importance of retaining the five separate arts areas in their entirety as part of the Australian Curriculum
- the interconnectedness that we have identified between the arts and other learning areas and that has been spelled out in some detail within the curriculum (see Appendix 2).

We would also like to emphasise the international support for the Australian Curriculum: The Arts. *The International Arts Education Standards: Survey of the*

Arts Education Standards and Practices of Fifteen Countries and Regions, prepared by the New York-based College Board for the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, said:

The Australian arts curriculum could be considered as exemplary in the breadth of its scope, the considerable attention to defining its own language, and the lengths it goes to in recognising the differences in abilities and learning opportunities at the different age/grade levels. It considers the importance of the arts in the roles they may play in other parts of the general curriculum: literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, cross-cultural and environmental awareness, social and ethical development. Uniquely among the countries studied, it provides a link for a comprehensive documentation and explanation of the research that informs the curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Therefore, the Australian Major Performing Arts Group:

1. strongly endorses retaining the five discrete subject areas in the Australian Arts Curriculum
2. stresses that experiencing live arts performance is an essential component in arts learning and has a vital role in the education of all young people. Live performance is the core business of MPA companies, and they are in a unique position to partner with education providers
3. supports arts learning through online activity and resources; however, this should be viewed as an adjunct to the role of providing quality live performance experiences for young people
4. believes the major companies can contribute significantly to classroom-based arts learning, bringing a breadth of knowledge and expertise to the delivery of the Australian Curriculum
5. believes resources and processes should be put in place to ensure teachers in all schools are implementing the curriculum as required
6. teachers should be empowered to deliver the Arts Curriculum through ongoing professional learning in the arts in an environment that seeks to encourage access and/ or partnerships with professional arts companies and or practitioners

List of AMPAG member companies & their location

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra	South Australia
Australian Brandenburg Orchestra	New South Wales
Australian Chamber Orchestra	New South Wales
Bangarra Dance Theatre	New South Wales
Bell Shakespeare	New South Wales
Belvoir	New South Wales
Black Swan State Theatre Company	Western Australia
Circus Oz	Victoria
Malthouse Theatre	Victoria
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra	Victoria
Melbourne Theatre Company	Victoria
Musica Viva Australia	New South Wales
Opera Australia	New South Wales
Opera Queensland	Queensland
Orchestra Victoria	Victoria
Queensland Ballet	Queensland
Queensland Symphony Orchestra	Queensland
Queensland Theatre Company	Queensland
State Opera South Australia	South Australia
State Theatre Company of South Australia	South Australia
Sydney Dance Company	New South Wales
Sydney Symphony Orchestra	New South Wales
Sydney Theatre Company	New South Wales
The Australian Ballet	Victoria
Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra	Tasmania
West Australian Ballet	Western Australia
West Australian Opera	Western Australia
West Australian Symphony Orchestra	Western Australia

HOW TEACHING THE ARTS LINKS TO THE GENERAL CAPABILITIES

DANCE

Literacy: Dance has an anatomical, spatial and expressive vocabulary that enables children to identify, recall, invent and critique dance movement activities.

Numeracy: Repetition and recall of movement actions (positions) and sequences (phrases) increases a child's capacity to amalgamate mind/body co-ordination with accuracy and scope for varied application.

Information and communication technologies (ICT): Inquiry into dance has the potential to support and increase a student's knowledge about different dance genre, dance cultures and genre and its status as a universal art form. Dance is currently enjoying increased representation as info-entertainment by way of film and television programs.

Thinking Skills: Dance promotes memory recall in imagery, amalgamation and invention exercises. The co-ordination required for technical and expressive body/mind engagement encourages students to think, respond, recall and expand their physical and artistic capacities.

Creativity: Exploration and imaginative play needs to be central to dance learning regardless of a student's age. Trial and error has the capacity to be challenging, fun and creative. A curriculum that emphasizes the importance of participants as the 'inventors of their own dance' assists in directing the learner to be inquisitive, independent and confident doers and thinkers.

Intercultural understanding: Dance is central to world culture. Australia has a wealth of Indigenous and multi-cultural dance references and performance groups that highlight the significance of dance as a means of telling history and demonstrating practices of various contemporary living.

Ethical behavior: Recognition of commonalities and differences in people and cultural dance practice provides young people with a platform from which to observe, learn and respect others.

Teamwork, self-management and social competence: Dance learning entails individual, pair, small group exercises which promotes co-operative consultation, planning and demonstration /performance. Dance composition provides opportunities for self and co-operative input.

DRAMA

Literacy: In drama, students learn to read, write, listen, speak accurately, flexibly and critically, and to view and create increasingly complex dramatic works as their experience of drama develops.

Numeracy: In drama, students learn to identify proportion, size, duration, standard units of physical measurement for spatial awareness. Numeric tools such as graphs, charts and surveys are used to structure concepts into real drama productions.

Information and communication technologies (ICT): Students can use technology to expand, record, manipulate and demonstrate their understanding and skills in drama.

Thinking skills: Thinking skills are critical to developing understanding in drama, engaging right- and left-brain thinking with problem solving skills and the synthesis of a considerable amount of data. Students are encouraged to be critical thinkers, take responsibility for their own learning and reflect upon their learning processes.

Creativity: Creativity is an essential component of all drama education. An integrated learning curriculum in drama enables students to experience, then demonstrate their understanding by presenting interpretations of established scripts and then applying their learning in the creation of their own dramatic works. This will foster the development of creativity and empower children to move beyond the established and expected form to exploring and creating the new and interesting. The curriculum needs to encourage a variety of stimulating drama experiences, both inside and outside the classroom, drawing upon professional experience of drama practitioners and professional theatre organizations and facilities.

Intercultural understanding: Intercultural understanding can be enhanced if students are exposed to other views of the world through examining the drama, theatre and film of other cultures. Intercultural performance enables diverse responses from different audiences (Zarrilli, 1992). Stories work to convey identity, socially acceptable behaviours and rules within culture. Exploring drama conventions, styles and productions through the ages, from the earliest forms of the Greeks through the Medieval and Reformation and other key periods through to the popular contemporary theatre forms such as verbatim and docudrama, are excellent ways of achieving this. The order of introducing drama in K–6 would not require adhering to chronological developments in drama, but rather linking conventions or styles of drama across curricula activities through thematic units. For example, exploring masks in Greek, Kabuki/Noh and Commedia del'Arte theatre forms and linking to the various uses of masks in social and scientific situations today.

Secondary students may benefit from a chronological approach enabling ease of transfer across schools and states.

Theatre Companies, through the art form, theatre, tell Australian and World theatre stories. Through our education and performance programs, we reach thousands of school students each year; our unique storytelling style enables them to extend their learning outside the confines of their classroom.

Ethical behaviour: Drama is a unique and safe platform for the exploration of Ethics. As stated by Hatherly (2006) '*storytelling is a key communicative device across cultures*' addressed through plot, character, language, dialogue and through the processes of performing and creating as a member of a drama group or a theatrical cast and crew. Stories work to convey identity, socially acceptable behaviours and rules within culture. Drama has been used with adolescent refugees. There is documented evidence of Shakespeare being used in interactive Drama programs with Indigenous groups in Canada (Nolan, 2007) and Alaska (Burgess, 2007; Nolan, 2007) and in bilingual contexts with students in the Marshall Islands, (Garrod, 2005), South Africa (Brockbank, 1987) and in Slavic communities (Bryner, 1941).

Teamwork, Self-management and Social competence: All of these are explicit in all drama making activities. There are many opportunities for students to work collaboratively in performance and creation tasks, as the creating of drama is a co-operative skill requiring doers and listeners. Students manage personal learning as they learn and develop skills with increasing autonomy.

Resourcing: A content and experience rich drama curriculum requires the input of expertise from practitioners at a level beyond that which the average classroom teacher is equipped to deliver. Therefore we recommend that the curriculum clearly state the need for inclusion of additional enrichment activities. Students and teachers are provided with course-linked resources that ensure their excursion to the theatre is at all times relevant to the work their teachers are doing with them in the classroom and of the highest importance to their chances of success in their exams.

MUSIC

Literacy: In Music, students learn to read, write, listen, speak accurately, flexibly and critically, and to view and create increasingly complex musical works as their experience of music develops.

Numeracy: In music, students learn to identify patterns, metre, proportion, size, duration, standard units of measure, group rhythms and beats. Graphs, charts and surveys are used to understand musical concepts such as structure, texture, pitch and instrumentation.

Information and communication technologies (ICT): Students can use technology to record, manipulate and demonstrate their musical understanding and skills.

Thinking skills: Thinking skills are critical to developing understanding in music, as many musical tasks engage both sides of the brain and require considerable problem solving skills and the synthesis of a considerable amount of data. Students are encouraged to be critical thinkers, take responsibility for their own learning and reflect upon their learning processes.

Creativity: Creativity is an essential component of all music education. An integrated music learning curriculum where students experience then demonstrate their understanding by copying and then applying their learning in the creation of their own musical works will foster the development of creativity and empower children to move beyond the mundane to the interesting. The curriculum needs to encourage a variety of stimulating musical experiences – both inside and outside the classroom, drawing upon professional experience of music educators and music makers.

Intercultural understanding: Intercultural understanding can be enhanced if students are exposed to other views of the world through examining the music of other cultures. Studying and experiencing music from a variety of musical cultures and genres, from folk material, through to popular styles, musical fusions and the art music of various countries is an excellent way of achieving this.

Ethical behaviour: Ethics in music can be addressed through lyrics in songs and through the processes of performing and creating as a member of a musical group.

Teamwork, Self-management and Social competence: All of these are explicit in all music making activities. There are many opportunities for students to work collaboratively in performance and composition tasks, as the creating of music via performance is a co-operative skill requiring doers and listeners. Students manage personal learning as they learn and develop skills with increasing autonomy.

Resourcing: A content and experience rich music curriculum requires the input of expertise from practitioners at a level beyond that which the average classroom teacher is equipped to deliver. Therefore we recommend that the curriculum clearly state the need for inclusion of additional enrichment activities being made available to students, such as attending concerts and performances, inviting practitioners into the classroom to work with students and participate in on-line real time workshop activities, as a means of promoting equity across the subject area.