



Review of Australian Curriculum

Response from

Drama Australia

July 2021

For The Arts learning area and Drama subject

[Drama Australia](#) is the peak national body that represents and advocates on behalf of all state and territory drama education associations in Australia. All members of state and territory Drama associations are automatically members of Drama Australia.

Drama Australia represents drama teachers, academics, applied theatre workers and theatre in education practitioners at national arts and curriculum forums and in national and international peak associations. Drama Australia Members Associations are: Drama Territory (NT), Drama New South Wales, Drama Victoria, Drama Queensland, Drama South Australia, DramaWest (WA), ACTDA ACT Drama (Educators') Association, and Drama Tasmania.

The curriculum consultation survey

Curriculum review consultation survey Introduction

The learning area survey gives you the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed changes to any of the following learning areas and subjects.

- The Arts
 - The Arts Foundation – Year 6
 - Dance Years 7-10
 - Drama Years 7-10
 - Media Arts Years 7-10
 - Music Years 7-10
 - Visual Arts Years 7-10

Section 1: Background information questions

Please select which levels you are giving feedback on (Note: options will vary depending on what learning area and subject survey you complete).

- Foundation - Year 6 curriculum
- Years 7 - 10 curriculum
- Foundation - Year 10 curriculum

Indicate that you are answering the survey as an individual.

Individual

Group

Individual response follow up questions	Group response follow up questions
<p>In which state or territory are you based?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Australian Capital Territory <input type="radio"/> New South Wales <input type="radio"/> Northern Territory <input type="radio"/> Queensland <input type="radio"/> South Australia <input type="radio"/> Tasmania <input type="radio"/> Victoria <input type="radio"/> Western Australia <input type="radio"/> National <input type="radio"/> Other <p>Which CATEGORY best describes you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Primary teacher* <input type="radio"/> Secondary teacher* <input type="radio"/> F-12 teacher* <input type="radio"/> School leader – Primary* <input type="radio"/> School leader – Secondary* <input type="radio"/> School leader – F-12* <input type="radio"/> Academic <input type="radio"/> Parent* <input type="radio"/> Student* <input type="radio"/> Employer / Business <input type="radio"/> Other <p><i>*If you select this category as an individual or group you will be asked two additional questions.</i></p> <p>Professional Association</p> <p>In which sector is your school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Government <input type="radio"/> Catholic <input type="radio"/> Independent <p>What best describes your school's location?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Metropolitan <input type="radio"/> Regional <input type="radio"/> Remote 	<p>In which state or territory are you based?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Australian Capital Territory <input type="radio"/> New South Wales <input type="radio"/> Northern Territory <input type="radio"/> Queensland <input type="radio"/> South Australia <input type="radio"/> Tasmania <input type="radio"/> Victoria <input type="radio"/> Western Australia <input checked="" type="radio"/> National <input type="radio"/> Other <p>Which CATEGORY best describes you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> School* <input checked="" type="radio"/> Professional association <input type="radio"/> University faculty <input type="radio"/> Education authority <input type="radio"/> Parent organisation <input type="radio"/> Community organisation <input type="radio"/> Other <p>Please indicate the NAME of the group or institution below. (Note: Schools will not be asked to supply the school name).</p> <p>Drama Australia</p> <hr/> <p>Describe the membership of your group.</p> <p>National association for Drama Education representing approximately 1,000 teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary contexts.</p> <hr/> <p>Number of members/people represented in this response (approx.). Please use numerical values.</p> <p>1,000</p>

Section 2: General feedback

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Introductory elements

Rationale

The rationale is clear about the importance of the learning area/subject	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	..	X	..	..	..

Aims

The aims identify the major learning that students will demonstrate	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	..	..	X	..	..

Organisational structure

The strands/sub-strands provide a coherent organisational structure	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	..	..	..	X	..
The strands/sub-strands and core concepts are clear about what is important in the learning area/subject	..	..	..	X	..

Key connections

The key connections section identifies the most relevant general capabilities	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	..	X	..	..	..
The key connections section identifies the most relevant cross-curriculum priorities	..	X	..	..	..
The key connections section identifies the key opportunities to connect with other learning areas.	..	..	X	..	..

Key considerations

The key considerations section provides important information for planning teaching and learning	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	..	..	X	..	..

Curriculum elements

Year/band level descriptions

The year/band level descriptions provide a clear overview of the learning that students should experience at the year/band level	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	..	..	X	..	..

Achievement standards

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The achievement standards clearly describe the expected quality of learning students should typically demonstrate by the end of the year/band	X	..	..
The achievement standards adequately reflect a clear developmental progression.	X	..	..
The learning described in the achievement standards aligns with the essential content students should be taught.	X	..	..

Content descriptions

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The content descriptions specify the essential knowledge, understanding and skills that should be learned.	X	..
The content descriptions make it clear to teachers what should be taught.	X	..	..
The amount of content can be covered in each year/band. <i>Note: If you answer disagree or strongly disagree to this statement you will be given this follow up question (see below).</i>	X	..	..

What content should be removed or what revisions are needed to make the content more manageable in the learning area/subject curriculum?

Introduction

To develop this response to the Review of the Australian Curriculum, focusing on Drama, Drama Australia engaged a range of members, including primary and secondary teachers, subject heads, school leaders, academics and curriculum experts as well as state/territory association leaders.

We welcome to Review of the Australian Curriculum, including The Arts.

The terms of reference for this review focus on 'reducing, refining and realigning' the curriculum, however the proposed curriculum for Drama goes well beyond that and is almost a complete re-write. The proposed curriculum moves further away from the Abbs (Abbs, 1987; see appendix 1) conceptual framework for Arts Curriculum (using a three-strand approach of Creating/Forming/Marking; Performing/Presenting; and Responding) to a four strand model which is inconsistent with most arts curriculum frameworks in Australia and around the world.

Drama Australia is very concerned about the proposed structure of the Core Concepts and Strands.

The existing Australian Curriculum: The Arts (AC:TA) was Australia's second attempt at a national curriculum in the past 30 years. The parameters ACARA placed on the development of The Arts curriculum limited the scope and potential of the curriculum. Specifically disallowing subject specific Strands, particularly in Years 7 to 10 has been a hugely problematic decision which has reduced the quality of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts. The use of generic arts strands has been criticized by Best (1989, 1992a, 1992b), Robinson (1992) and others. While Drama Australia acknowledges the potential benefit of using generic arts strands across the Foundation to year 6 curriculum, they are inappropriate and problematic in the secondary space, when The Arts are taught by specialist teachers.

Drama Australia met with ACARA on 15 October 2020 to discuss the Drama component of the AC:TA. We identified issues with the existing curriculum, and it is disappointing to see that these key issues have not been addressed in the proposed curriculum.

As mentioned previously, the terms of reference for this review focus on 'reducing, refining and realigning' the curriculum and Drama Australia supports a review of the curriculum. However, it is concerning that the changes proposed in this draft curriculum actually seem to have made the teaching of Drama more complex, while many key problems with the earlier version remain unresolved. For example, in relation to the former concern, where previously teachers had two strands: Making and Responding, they now have four, as well as two sets of key concepts: audience and artist + Making and Responding. This is an overly complex and confusing structure. In relation to the latter concern, relating to errors and inaccuracies, it appears that in many parts of this document, content created for other arts subjects has been copied and pasted into the Drama sections with minor adjustments made. The result is that there are Content Descriptions and Elaborations which now make no sense at all within the context of Drama, creating a series of new problems in terms of the accuracy and usability of the document.

Given these concerns, Drama Australia offers the following feedback and suggested alternatives.

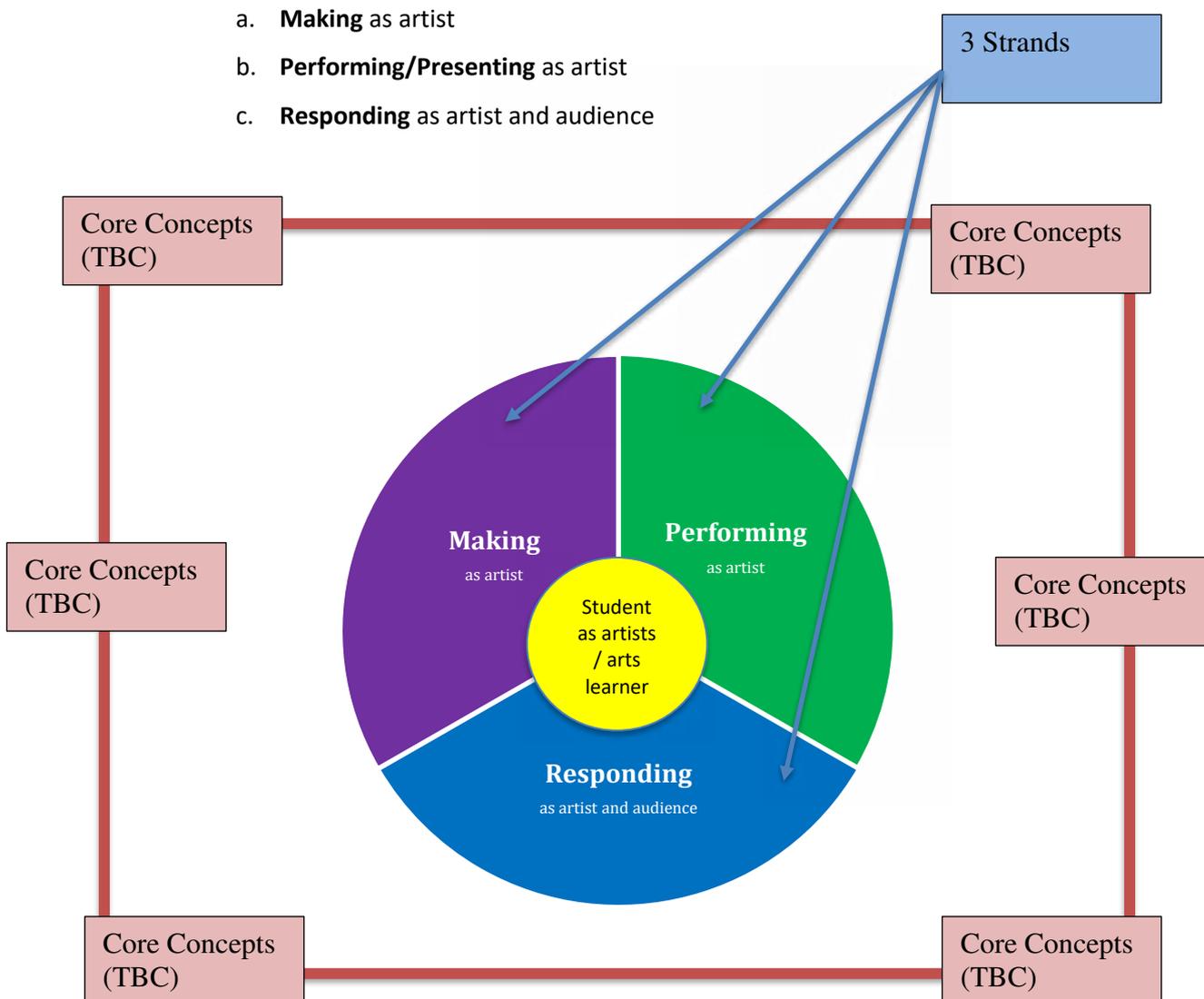
The proposed four strand structure is not appropriate for the subject of Drama. Below are some concerns:

1. The switch from two strands to four has occurred with very little evident consultation, and indeed, their foundation and source is unclear. Drama Australia accepts that 'Making and Responding' were a compromise during the Shape Paper consultation process and that these were still adapted from the Abbs framework. However, for Drama, conflating Forming/Creating/Making with Performing/Presenting has been hugely problematic and terribly confusing. The proposed strands

are the 'threads' in the existing curriculum, however, these (with other areas) are more suited to 'core concepts' rather than organising strands. Drama Australia suggests removing the proposed four strands. What is the research evidence to support their inclusion, and what benefits do they offer? This is a highly important shift that should have been the subject of detailed and extensive consultation. We note that this was not mentioned as a possibility at the Drama Critical Friends Meeting in February, nor to the meeting with Drama Australia board and state/territory representatives in October 202. It is the most significant change to an Arts Curriculum document in decades and will require a complete rewrite of work programs and units for every teacher. How is this shift achieving the goal of 'reducing, refining and re-aligning' the curriculum?

2. The proposed four new strands, as they are currently configured, seem to ignore the Responding domain ... or at least, the Responding dimension is not evident. This is very confusing, especially as Making and Responding appear in the diagram which has been included to provide an overview of the curriculum's structure. The suggested strands should therefore be revised, and Drama Australia strongly recommends that these should be replaced with the internationally recognized framework created by Professor Peter Abbs:

- a. **Making** as artist
- b. **Performing/Presenting** as artist
- c. **Responding** as artist and audience



These are well known to primary and secondary teachers as they have underpinned almost every arts curriculum in Australia over the past 30 years. These strands lend themselves to clearly defined content, learning experiences and assessment outcomes. The adoption of these three strands would be useful refinement of the existing strands of 'Making and Responding'. The Abbs framework works best as strands for organising curriculum, learning experiences and assessment, rather than as 'core concepts'. Drama Australia supports the National Advocates for Arts Education's (NAAE) suggestion that the proposed four strands could be reimagined as core concepts (see NAAE's submission for detail).

- 3. The core concepts of both 'learning by making and responding' and 'learning as artist and as audience' are not 'core concepts' and should not frame the curriculum design. These 'core concepts' do not relate specifically to the proposed four strands. This adds additional layers of complexity to

the proposed curriculum. The core concepts should be swapped with the proposed strands (whoever the strand becoming core concepts is still problematic and needs further refinement).

4. If the Abbs structure is not deemed to be acceptable across the full F-10 curriculum, then Drama Australia strongly argues that it be applied across Years 7-10 where Drama is taught by specialists who need to be provided with the opportunity to work with a curriculum which makes use of drama specific language. The use of generic language and terms are reductive and do not help refine, reduce, or re-align the curriculum. Common organizing strands may be appropriate across the primary years, however, the proposed four strands are inappropriate and confusing for both generalist and specialist teachers. We note that David Best (1989, 1992a, 1992b), Ken Robinson (1992) and others oppose the notion of generic arts strands in curriculum, as does Drama Australia in Years 7 to 10, when the arts are taught by specialist teachers.
5. Should more generic language be required for the primary years, we would like to suggest that the strands are re-named in order to create a clearer alignment and connections between the other aspects of the curriculum (Making and Responding/Audience and Artist). Further, the second strand (Developing skills, practices and ideas) should also include 'knowledge', and this strand occurs across all other domains of learning in Drama.

ACARA's proposed structure lacks coherence and appears to have too many components and concepts. The outcome is a much more cluttered document than the original.

Viewpoints

- The use of the term 'Viewpoints' is problematic in a Drama context as it has a specific meaning (see the work of Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, 2005) relevant to performance, physical theatre and playbuilding approaches. Drama Australia suggests a term such as inquiry lenses, inquiry perspectives or inquiry questions is more appropriate.
- The Viewpoints as they currently stand do not help add clarity to the Drama curriculum and instead add another unnecessary layer of complexity for teachers.

Learning Area, Introduction

- The dot point for Drama is muddled and inaccurate, suggesting that drama is about body language and gesture (potentially suggesting mime?) with no mention even of language. We believe that this dot point needs to be completely rewritten, with the input of drama experts. It cannot progress in its

current format.

- This section also outlines that “In Years 7 and 8, the curriculum has been written to allow students to experience one or more arts subjects in depth.” Why aren’t students entitled to engage in ALL five arts subjects in this band, as it is often the first time they are being taught ALL Five arts subjects by specialist teachers? We note that in Humanities and Social Sciences, all Australian students are entitled to experience ALL the Humanities and Social Sciences in Years 7 and 8.
- The primary school curriculum design, where every student has an entitlement to each of The Arts, is appropriate.

Figure One: Relationship of the core concepts to the content strands

Figure 1 is highly problematic for conceptual and practical reasons including:

- The relationship between the core concepts and the four strands is unclear, and this muddy relationship pervades the entire document.
- The arts learner/student should be at the centre of the model, rather than The Arts.
- The Core Concepts are shown as separate and discrete; there is no sense of blend and overlap.
- The Core Concepts – Making and Responding and Artist and Audience should not be collapsed or compounded; they are discrete yet inter-related components.
- The 5 Arts subjects are missing.
- Subject specific Key Considerations are not included, and yet these are arguably the most important aspect of the curriculum for teachers planning to use the document. In light of its importance, we would also suggest that the term ‘Key considerations’ is changed to ‘Key Content and knowledge’ as this is clearer and more accurate.
- If a diagram is required for consistency across the various curriculum areas, then please revise to provide greater clarity and alignment.

Aims

The Drama Aims need to be completely rewritten.

- This request is based on the inaccuracy of the existing aims. For example, ‘confidence and self-esteem’ are not aims, but rather, are benefits of the subject. The aims should instead be focused on drama as an art form, with the aims being associated with developing children and young people’s engagement as artists and audience. The key goal is to develop children and young people’s artistry and creativity.

- In relation to the Aims section, we recommend that a key aim must be that students develop an understanding of Drama content and the ability to apply Drama knowledge, including an understanding of and ability to apply the Elements of Drama, Forms, Styles and their Conventions’.
- As part of this process, it will be necessary to embed the meanings of ‘Forms, Styles and their Conventions’ etc., with specific attention to locating specific aspects of this within particular band levels.
- Embed ‘skills, techniques and processes’ key to Drama teaching across the curriculum document eg. prioritised as ‘content’ and Drama knowledge and skills - at different band levels.
- Rewrite this section of the curriculum so that it provides a clearer set of statements, especially for the generalist primary teachers and early career teachers. Clearer statements will also ensure that trained Drama teachers achieve greater consistency of practice nationally and in state jurisdictions rather than search other sources for their own interpretation of what is required.
- Include Key considerations/Drama content and knowledge in a Drama glossary, the design of which should involve Drama educators. Drama Education associations are willing to be consulted on the draft glossary.
- Retain the terms ‘Story and Narrative’ from the current curriculum and not change to ‘Principles of Story’

Content elaborations

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The content elaborations provide useful illustrations and suggestions on how to plan and teach the content.	X	..	..
The content elaborations provide a range of contexts that support teachers to meaningfully integrate the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities	X	..	..

Overall feedback

Responding to some overall statements related to the terms of reference for the Review.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The introductory sections provide important information.	..	X	..	..	..
The quality of content descriptions has been improved.	X	..	..
The quality of achievement standards has been improved.	X	..	..
The quality of content elaborations has been improved.	X	..	..
Curriculum content has been refined, realigned and decluttered.	X	..

The revised Australian Curriculum in the learning area/subject is an improvement on the current version.	X	..
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Optional comments:

If you would like to provide feedback about general aspects of the revised learning area/subject that **have improved** and what needs **further refinement**, please use the comments box.

Improvements in general aspects of the revised curriculum

Drama Australia affirms that The Arts should include all five arts subjects and that each of the arts subjects should be treated equally, however, perhaps using common organizing strands across the Visual Arts (Making and Responding) and Performing Arts (Making, Performing, Responding) would be more appropriate, if it is essential to have common strands across The Arts.

- Foundation being its own band and being de-coupled from the F to 2 band for The Arts. This allows for more appropriate learning to be described for Foundation.
- Focus on First Nations content and concepts for more effective Drama practice in the classroom, however, this has not been fully realized.

If you would like to provide feedback about general aspects of the revised learning area/subject curriculum that **needs further improvement**, please use the comments box.

- Overall, the proposed curriculum is less clear than the existing curriculum.
- Content Descriptors for Drama do not outline “Essential knowledge, understanding and skills” for Drama that are appropriate for each band. Some content descriptors and elaborations are inappropriate and not appropriate or relevant for Drama.
- The proposed curriculum for Drama does not achieve the aims of the Review of refining, re-aligning and decluttering the curriculum. The additions of extra layers within the curriculum, such as the proposed new strands make the curriculum difficult to understand and access.

First Nations Content

- While the importance of First Nations content and concepts in our curriculum is of key importance in contemporary Australia, in this current draft there is an overemphasis on this content, and in many places content not related to Drama is included (e.g. “They research the laws and protocols relating to copyright and Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property and consider implications for personal and collaborative practice.” P. 98). This is not essential Drama Content, or even appropriate Drama content.
- There has also been a devaluing of First Nations drama works within the proposed curriculum.

Drama Australia notes that there is an increased focus on First Nations content in The Arts, however, this is inconsistent across other learning areas. For this to be mandated content also assumes that there is an abundance of appropriate resources to support teaching and learning in this area, and that is not the case.

Section 3: Band/level specific feedback

Would you like to give feedback on a specific year or band level?

Yes

No

Band: Drama Foundation

Please add your comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that **have improved**. If you comment on specific **content descriptions or elaborations please reference the code number**.

Improvements:

- Having a separate band for Foundation with common content descriptors and elaborations across The Arts is appropriate and an improvement.
- The focus on play is appropriate in Foundation and could be reinforced even further.

Please add your comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that **need further improvement**. If you comment on specific content descriptions or elaborations, please reference the code number.

Needs further improvement:

- Content Descriptor AC9ADRF01 is far too complex for Foundation.
- Add and emphasize the 'cultivation of imagination' in the first sentence of the band description.
- Emphasise the most important curriculum elements in the second paragraph to reduce what is required.
- Reduce the load in Foundation as the content descriptions as they currently stand are conceptually more challenging than for Band 1-2.
- Reconsider the First Nations statement about 'talking about different ways of seeing' as at this level students are actively involved in playing and doing - not sitting down and talking.
- Include a 'sense of wellbeing and connection' in Foundations as well as in Years 1 & 2 band. Because the importance of The Arts as connector and enabler of wellbeing this also should be included in the rationale and aims.
- The strands are inappropriate and do not refine or declutter the curriculum. They are confusing

and ill-conceived and will be particularly confusing for teachers in the Preparatory years.

Band: Drama Years 1 and 2

Please add your comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that **have improved**. If you comment on specific **content descriptions or elaborations** please reference the code number.

Improvements:

- Separating Years 1 and 2 band from Foundation is an improvement.

Please add your comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that **need further improvement**. If you comment on specific content descriptions or elaborations, please reference the code number.

Revisions to **Band 1-2 Drama** are needed to address the following concerns:

- The band lacks specificity, and in particular, fails to highlight to teachers which elements are the most important to be explicitly addressed in this band. As it stands, the band description is very complex and unclear, particularly the concept of 'practical investigations and inquiry.' Ensure the band description is written with age-appropriate content and approaches.
- Once again, the current organisation is unclear, with the strands being particularly problematic for this age group.
- Drama specific references needed to be added in the first few paragraphs (reference to Visual Arts must be a typo).
- Content Descriptor: AC9ADR2E02 is inappropriate. While a First Nations content elaboration for each content descriptor seems unnecessary. Further, content elaboration AC9ADR2P01_E1 and AC9ADR2S01_E2 do not relate to drama learning.
- Overall, the band description is very complex and unclear, and the content has not been reduced and decluttered.
- Revision of the scope and sequence for F-6 content descriptions is required.
- Content elaborations should more clearly and closely refer to development of the Elements of Drama, provide examples of age-appropriate forms and styles and their associated conventions, and skills of drama.
- There is no connection between the Key Concepts of Making and Responding or the Strands in the Achievement Standards, illustrating that both the Key Concepts and the Strands are inappropriate for Drama curriculum.
- Content elaboration AC9ADR2E02_E2 is far too complex and inappropriate.

Band: Years 3 and 4

Please add your comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that **have improved**. If you comment on specific **content descriptions or elaborations** please **reference the code number**.

- No improvements in this band for Drama.

Please add your comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that **need further improvement**. If you comment on specific content descriptions or elaborations, please reference the code number.

Revisions to **Band 3-4 Drama** are needed as follows:

- Content elaborations refer to imagined resources that do not exist, e.g. “AC9ADR4E01_ E1 and AC9ADR4E01_ E2. Therefore, content elaborations need to be reconsidered.
- The Strands are unclear and do not organise content into a conceptual framework that is useful or clear.
- There is an overemphasis on First Nations content in the Content Descriptors that do not relate to Drama learning. These should be removed.
- AC9ADR4E02_ E3 refers to Dance, not Drama so this should be revised.
- Elaboration AC9ADR4P01_ E4 is very unclear.
- Content elaborations should more clearly and closely refer to development of the Elements of Drama, provide examples of age-appropriate forms and styles and their associated conventions, and skills of drama.
- There is no connection between the Key Concepts of Making and Responding or the Strands in the Achievement Standards, illustrating that both the Key Concepts and the Strands are inappropriate for Drama curriculum.

Band: Years 5 and 6

Please add your comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that **have improved**. If you comment on specific **content descriptions or elaborations** please **reference the code number**.

- No improvements in this band.

Please add your comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that **need further improvement**. If you comment on specific content descriptions or elaborations, please reference the code number.

Recommended revisions to **Year 5–6 Drama** Content Descriptions:

- The achievement standard in 5 and 6 needs to be re-written. It is inappropriate and unclear (e.g. “they describe how drama can maintain, continue and revitalize cultures.”).
- There is no connection between the Key Concepts of Making and Responding or the Strands in the Achievement Standards, illustrating that both the Key Concepts and the Strands are inappropriate for Drama curriculum.
- There is an overemphasis on First Nations content in the Content Descriptors that do not relate to Drama learning. These should be removed, and a First Nations content elaboration should be provided for each strand across each band. AC9ADR6E02, although important, is not core Drama learning.
- The term ‘culture’ is referred to inconsistently and unclearly across the curriculum and the concept of contemporary culture has been ignored.
- Focus more effectively on the creative process, students’ own drama, rather than focus on ‘explore and explain’ and looking at other drama to de-emphasise the focus on discussing and emphasise exploring through ‘doing’ and reflecting upon students’ own work.
- Emphasize that students’ reflection can be undertaken artistically and in an embodied way and through other learning modes
- Reduce the disconnect between elaborations and content descriptions.
- Include ‘analysing, applying skills and interpreting’ Drama so as to challenge learners to higher order thinking and skills.
- Content elaborations should more clearly and closely refer to development of the Elements of Drama, provide examples of age-appropriate forms and styles and their associated conventions, and skills of drama.
- Content elaboration AC9ADR6P01_E3 makes no sense and should be rewritten for Drama Band Years 5-6.

Band: Years 7 and 8

Please add your comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that **have improved**. If you comment on specific **content descriptions or elaborations** please reference the code number.

- No improvements are evident for Drama in this band.

Please add your comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that **need further improvement**. If you comment on specific content descriptions or elaborations, please reference the code number.

Recommended revisions to **7–8 Drama** Content Descriptions:

- Content Descriptor AC9ADR8E02 “research and apply best practice for selecting and using material in drama works considering copyright laws and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protocols” is inappropriate for this level and does not relate to essential drama learning in this band. This might be better places in another curriculum area.
- Reduce some Drama content teaching requirements as early career teachers may be overloaded though knowledgeable/experienced teachers should be comfortable with these requirements.
- Content elaborations should more clearly and closely refer to development of the Elements of Drama, provide examples of age-appropriate forms and styles and their associated conventions, and skills of drama.
- There is no connection between the Key Concepts of Making and Responding or the Strands in the Achievement Standards, illustrating that both the Key Concepts and the Strands are inappropriate for Drama curriculum.
- The strands are unclear and do not organise content into a conceptual framework that is useful or clear for Drama.
- The Band description refers to “screen-based or theatrical forms” and we question the focus on screen-based forms, particularly as drama promotes embodied practices, rather than mediated practice. Further, the band descriptors that refer to ‘screen-based’ work in Band 7-8 and 9-10 are almost identical, however it is not clear how these are developmentally different or what additional skills, understanding or knowledge students will be asked to engage.
- The current elaborations need to be replaced with quality and inspirational elaborations designed by Drama teachers to inspire drama learning. In many cases the existing elaborations appear to be modified from other arts areas.
- Learning in ALL five Arts subjects should be mandated in this band of learning, as this is often the first-time students are taught the arts by specialist teachers with specialist facilities. This is best practice in many schools across Australia.

Band: Years 9 and 10

Please add your comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that **have improved**. If you comment on specific **content descriptions or elaborations please reference the code number**.

- No improvements in this band.

Please add your comments about aspects of the revised learning area/subject for band/level curriculum that **need further improvement**. If you comment on specific content descriptions or elaborations, please reference the code number.

Recommended revisions to **7–10 Drama** Content Elaborations:

- Use of ‘Viewpoints’ for drama is problematic as it has a specific meaning relating to actor training performance, physical theatre and playbuilding approaches (see the work of Anne Bogart). The Viewpoints do not help add clarity to the curriculum and instead add another unnecessary layer of complexity.
- Content elaborations should more clearly and closely refer to development of the Elements of Drama, provide examples of age-appropriate forms and styles and their associated conventions, and skills of drama.
- There is no connection between the Key Concepts of Making and Responding or the Strands in the Achievement Standards, illustrating that both the Key Concepts and the Strands are inappropriate for Drama curriculum.
- The strands are unclear and do not organise content into a conceptual framework that is useful of clear.
- Clarify Australian Drama in Years 9–10 in reference to First Nations and ‘exploring Australian identity’ as this vague statement may be interpreted by teachers to undertake a unit of work based on an Australian playwright.
- The Band description refers to “screen-based or theatrical forms” and this is inappropriate for Years 9 and 10.
- Content Descriptor “evaluate ways drama communicates ideas, intentions and meanings using the elements of drama, conventions and performance styles and collaboration” (AC9ADR10E01) is perhaps one of the clearest content descriptor’s in the drama curriculum, however ‘collaboration’ should be removed from this content descriptor.
- Content Descriptor (AC9ADR10E02) discusses ‘Australian identity over time’ which suggests a particular unit needs to be taught to address this large area. This infers the need for students to explore Australian scripts over a range of time periods. This needs to be revised to be more general and allow for increased flexibility for schools.
- The term ‘aesthetic effects’ is used, however the meaning is unclear.

- Reduce the broad allocation of content elaborations and replace with quality and inspirational elaborations designed by Drama teachers to inspire drama learning.

Final Comment

Significant work is required to bring to the proposed curriculum to improve the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, specifically the Drama curriculum. Drama Australia offers to continue to work with ACARA to refine the proposed curriculum.

Reference List

- Abbs, P. (1987.) *Living Powers: The Arts in Education*. The Falmer Press.
- Best, D. (1989). Feeling and reason in the arts: The rationality of feeling. In P. Abbs (Ed.), *The symbolic order: A contemporary reader on the arts debate* (pp. 70-85). London: The Falmer Press.
- Best, D. (1992a). *Generic arts: An expedient myth*. Paper presented at the The First York Curriculum Conference, University College of Ripon and York St. John.
- Best, D. (1992b). *The rationality of feeling*. London: Falmer.
- Bogart, A. & Landau, T. (2005). *The Viewpoints Book: A practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*. Theatre Communications Group, Inc., New York.
- Robinson, K. (1992). The Arts as an generic area of the curriculum. *Journal of Art and Design Education*, 12(1), 9-26.

Appendix 1

Abbs conceptual framework (Abbs, 1987, p. 58)

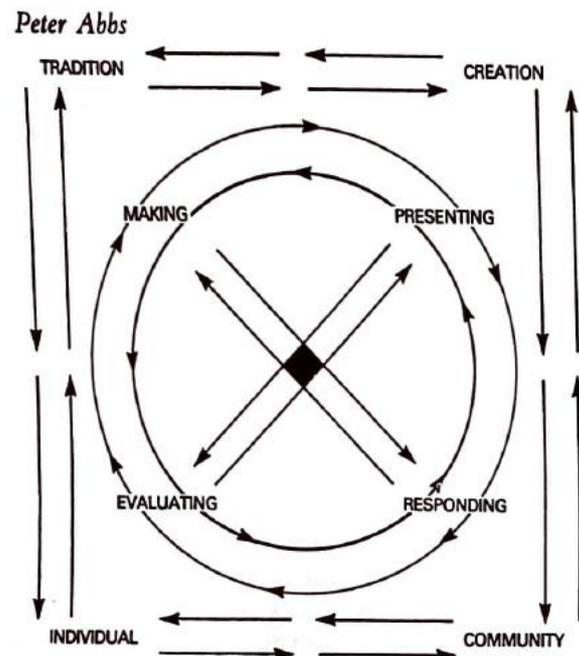


Figure 1 Diagrammatic Representation of the Aesthetic Field