



National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE)

Submission to:

Quality Initial Teacher Education Review

18 July 2021

INTRODUCTION

The [National Advocates for Arts Education](#) (NAAE) is a coalition of peak arts and arts education associations who represent arts educators across Australia. NAAE members are: Art Education Australia (AEA), Australian Dance Council – Ausdance, Australian Society for Music Education (ASME), Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM), Drama Australia, National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA).

NAAE’s submission to the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review is informed by our experiences and research as teachers, pre-service teacher educators working in universities and as arts education stakeholders.

PART A - Attracting and selecting high-quality candidates into the teaching profession

1. How can we further encourage high-performing and highly motivated school leavers to enter Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and choose teaching as a career?

NAAE recommends offering pathways from Years 11-12 study in arts subjects leading into ITE programs that offer arts curriculum specialisations indicated as a requirement (Standard 4: Program structure and content – 4.4 ‘...programs provide all primary graduates with a subject specialisation...’) by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).

2. What changes to admissions and degree requirements, including recognition of prior experience, would better attract and support suitable mid- and late-career professionals from other fields transition into the profession and become quality teachers?

Teaching remains a significant means of employment for professional artists (Throsby 2003) and NAAE recommends investigation of an initiative that encourages professional artists who are interested in a

career change to undertaking a qualification for teaching in schools. Such an initiative would acknowledge the prior study and experience of professional artists, leading to their transition via ITE as quality arts educators.

PART B – Preparing Initial Teacher Education students to be effective teachers

6. What more can we do to ensure that ITE curriculum is evidence-based and all future teachers are equipped to implement evidence-based teaching practices?

Evidence-based practice should align with the eight Learning Areas of the discipline-specific Australian curriculum including The Arts F-10 (Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music, Visual Arts) as agreed by the States and Territories.

As indicated by the AITSL Accreditation Standards (excerpts italicised below) which set out the curriculum and pedagogical studies required in ITE programs, NAAE notes the following from Standard 4 Program Structure and content:

1) 4.2: Initial teacher education programs prepare pre-service teachers for the school curriculum (Footnote 5) and learning areas of their chosen discipline and/or stage of schooling in accordance with Schedule 1.

2) Footnote 5: Curriculum refers to the Foundation to Year 12 Australian Curriculum or alternative curriculum frameworks that have been assessed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) as meeting the requirements of the Australian Curriculum, any curriculum authorised by jurisdictional authorities, and the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. (Program Standard 4)

2) 4.4: In addition to study in each of the learning areas of the primary school curriculum sufficient to equip teachers to teach across the years of primary schooling, programs provide all primary graduates with a subject specialisation through:

a) clearly defined pathways into and/or within a program that lead to specialisations, that are in demand, with a focus on subject/curriculum areas

b) assessment within the program requiring graduates to demonstrate expert content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge and highly effective classroom teaching in their area of specialisation

c) publishing the specialisations available, and numbers of graduates per specialisation through their annual reports.

With reference to these points and earlier research by the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA), NAAE recommends that The Arts should be offered as a curriculum specialisation for primary graduates.

Therefore, the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE) recommends that the ITE Review increases the teaching/study time allocation of Arts Curriculum subjects (Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts) in all ITE courses, specifically in early childhood and primary teacher education courses to adequately prepare teachers to successfully enact the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, as mandated by ACARA and ensure that graduate teachers are ready for the classroom. This increase in time allocation together with providers employing Arts education trained teacher educators will ensure teacher education students develop a deep theoretical and practical knowledge and understanding of Arts Education that is evidence-based. This improvement to ITE programs will benefit Australian students to succeed in the 21st century and be well-equipped for life and work.

NAAE cite the growing body of Australian and International research to unequivocally demonstrate the enormous positive impacts that The Arts (Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Art) can have on students' academic and non-academic success, and this can only be achieved by graduating quality educators who receive quality initial teacher education.

'The Arts' is a key learning area in the Australian Curriculum, which contains five discrete subjects: Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts. Policy documents recognise the central role The Arts play in the lives and education of young people. However, as Bamford (2006) notes, there is often a gulf between education policy and the lip service given to the arts and opportunities for it to be provided within schools.

NAAE believe a key factor in achieving educational success for all Australian students is the provision of quality learning experiences in The Arts at primary and secondary school.

In an economic and educational environment which espouses innovation and 21st Century capacities such as collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, imagination, communication, agility and empathy, the experiences and learning that a properly implemented Arts curriculum offer are

profound. The Arts provide the logical conduit through which these capacities and related skills, in both the social and emotional domains, can be developed. A number of reports (see *The Heart of the Matter* 2013; *Humanities Graduates and the British Economy: The Hidden Impact* 2013; *Australia's Future Workforce? CEDA* 2015), argue that creativity and innovation will be key to successful 21st Century economies, particularly in developing responses to multi-perspective or 'wicked problems' (Rittel and Weber 1973).

Reports note that in the knowledge economy, new workplace skills and the fostering of an innovative, agile and robust workforce will prove to be vital to national and international creative economies. To date, emphasis has been centred on STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) at both school and tertiary levels as a focus of preparing Australian students to be successful in the 21st century economy. However, increasing demand and realisation of the need for creativity and innovation has resulted in recognition that many more disciplines have an essential role to play.

The research: evidence for an increase in the Arts within Initial Teacher Education

If young Australians are to be successful at school and beyond school, we must ensure that they have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that includes quality arts education. Each Arts subject promotes different approaches to creativity, innovation, collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking and communication, and helps young people become more successful learners. However, both the *National Review of School Music Education* and *National Review of Visual Education* illustrate that arts-based instruction in the primary years is strongly linked to socio-economic advantage, meaning that those students from less privileged backgrounds are deprived of arts learning.

Australian and international research has continued to show the multitude of benefits that The Arts can have on student academic and non-academic outcomes (Fleming, Gibson & Anderson, 2016; Martin et al, 2013; Winner et al., 2013; Catterall et al., 2012; Ewing, 2010; Bamford, 2006; Catterall, 2002; Deasy, 2002; Eisner, 2002; Fiske, 1999).

Internationally, several key largescale studies illustrate the unequivocal benefits to student success.

Fiske's (1999) *Champions of Change* indicated that the Arts; provide ways of engaging; those students who were otherwise difficult to engage; connect students to themselves, to each other as well as to

the world; transform the learning environment itself, and importantly; challenge those students who were already successful.

Critical Links (Deasy, 2002) provided a compendium of 62 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. Deasy's major findings on the positive effects derived by those involved in arts-rich (an American term meaning students who have access to quality Arts education) 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; and Improvements in effective social behaviours.

Australian and international case studies of the impact The Arts can have on student academic and non-academic success are vast and well documented. In Singapore where the Ministry of Information, Communication and The Arts (MICA) developed a unique schooling model embedding The Arts across the curriculum showed that "the first cohort of students of the School of the Arts all passed the International Baccalaureate diploma examination, and almost 44% students obtained a score of 40 or above (which places them in the top 5% students taking the examination)" (Winner 2013). The research also showed that, "this is a remarkable academic outcomes the school enrolls about 200 students annually through Singapore's Direct School Admission (DSA) scheme from various academic backgrounds, including students who are (statistically) unlikely to enter university given their score at the Primary School Leaving Examination". A notable Australian study was conducted by Bryce et al. (2004) comparing two Year 4 classes in South Australia. One class engaged a Drama-based artist-in-residence mentoring style program and another class was conducted in a traditional, non-arts based pedagogical approach. The evaluation noted substantial differences between the arts-rich class and the non-arts-rich class. The arts-rich class achieved higher results in all areas tested, including literacy, numeracy, writing and key competencies including problem solving, planning and organising, communication and working with others (Bryce et al., 2004, p. 14).

Australian research illustrates how The Arts contribute uniquely to student success. Ewing's (2010) meta-analysis for the ACER found 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 more positive self-concepts than those students who are deprived of arts experiences".

The NAAE strongly advocates for all Australian students to have access to all five Arts subjects throughout both their primary and secondary schooling as the capabilities, skills and knowledge embedded in The Arts provide a unique suite of experiences that will prepare students for life and work in the 21st Century. This entitlement was endorsed by COAG however currently the agreement to ensure parity of curriculum offerings across all jurisdictions is not being implemented in all states and territories thereby undermining equitable provision for students.

The NAAE advocates for the full implementation of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts in all states and territories in Australia across the primary and secondary years of schooling.

Significantly, there is strong empirical evidence that arts learning and engagement in formal and informal curriculum structures creates profound change for students and school communities around well-being, self-esteem, self-regulation and motivation (see Caldwell & Vaughan 2012; Ewing 2010; McCarthy et al. 2004; Fiske 1999). For example, Martin et al. (2013) suggest that, 'students participating in the arts increasingly saw themselves as part of a larger local community, felt they had contributed to that community, and had a greater sense of meaning and purpose ... participation in the arts has been linked to greater civic engagement' (p.711). Caldwell, Vaughan & Harris (2011) reported on an arts-based program through The Song Room (TSR) intervention in disadvantaged schools and found a range of significant improvements, included: "Improved school attendance (65% less absenteeism with participation in longer-term TSR in comparison to those that have not participated); higher academic achievement (including the equivalent of 1 year gain in NAPLAN literacy for long-term TSR schools compared to equivalent schools); as well as enhanced social and emotional wellbeing".

Most recently, a longitudinal, mixed method study from academics at the University of Sydney in partnership with the Australia Council for the Arts reported on the impacts of the Arts on student academic and non-academic outcomes. The study involved 643 primary and secondary school students from 15 Australian schools. The study (Martin et al., 2013) denotes the positive student outcomes in both academic (motivation and engagement) and non-academic (self-esteem and life satisfaction) as a result of Arts engagement. Importantly, this study also found that Arts learning improved student academic achievement in non-Arts subjects.

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