

VADEA Response to the Australian Curriculum: The Arts Review

Introduction

VADEA NSW has written the following response to the recent public consultation documents, released in April 2021, for the Review of the Australian Curriculum. The documents being specifically addressed here include proposed revisions to the current The Australian Curriculum: The Arts as they appear in the Consultation Curriculum (AC:TA). Some of these revisions are minor, yet most deal with structural and content changes that do not live up to the Review's aims for content to be "refined, realigned, and decluttered".

The document "What has changed and why? Proposed revisions to the F–10 Australian Curriculum: The Arts" provides an overview of the scope of changes in this consultation curriculum and elaborates on the reasoning to support these changes. The aim of the review is to improve the *"structural coherence and clarity of direction for teachers through the content descriptions and achievements standards"* (p.1). ACARA state: *"The proposed revisions make clear the essential arts knowledge, understanding and skills students need to be confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners and active, informed members of the community. These revisions also ensure our curriculum remains world class"* (p.1). VADEA challenge the claim that the existing Australian Curriculum: The Arts (AC:TA) is world class and asserts that the changes made in the consultation curriculum do little to improve its quality and provision for rich Visual Arts content and learning opportunities.

The proposed content organisers, in the form of Strands, do not reflect the needs for an authentically Australian Arts curriculum. VADEA notes the similarities between the current iteration of the AC:TA consultation curriculum and the National Core Standards for the Arts from the United States of America (<https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>). Clearly these Standards- Creating, Performing/Presenting/Producing, Responding and Connecting - have been appropriated in AC: The Arts Content Descriptions. These distinctly American standards for the Arts (Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre And Visual Arts) were established in 2014 and have little resemblance to the high quality creative arts education currently delivered in NSW across four distinct disciplines. American visual arts curriculum has historically prioritised formal elements of art, self-expression, visual culture and process-based learning, which is distinctly different to the intellectual engagement and academic rigour of NSW Visual Arts curriculum.

To date, VADEA has provided ACARA with feedback through a variety of consultation meetings during this review period and has voiced significant concerns about the lack of provision of high quality, Visual Arts discipline-specific knowledge, understanding and skills, as outlined in the AC:TA. Central to VADEA's concerns with the AC:TA is the curriculum structure organisation, beginning with the foundational structure upon which the key curriculum components are built upon. The structural components lack clarity and depth as there is no epistemological framework to support students in exploring the fundamental questions intrinsic to the discipline of visual arts.

VADEA NSW identify a series of key issues in the proposed curriculum and summarise them as:

- Strands/Content Descriptions
 - Process, linear conception of artmaking through the Strands which do not align skills with conceptual knowledge
 - Conflation and misrepresentation of practice in Making and Responding
 - Narrow view of representation in artmaking and forms of contemporary practice
 - Lack of provision for critical interpretation and historical study in which students learn to represent points of view through studying and writing about art
 - Narrow theoretical orientation, student centred curriculum - emphasis on process, student self-expression and intention
- Viewpoints
 - Underutilised, which favour subjectivity and exclude well-defined ideas of the cultural and symbolic value of art
- Core Concepts
 - Learning as Artist and as Audience
 - Omission of the object of study - artwork, and world represented
 - Learning as, at the exclusion of learning about
 - Learning as Making and Responding
 - ACARAs problematic definition of core concepts
- Achievement Standards
 - Alignment issues with Content Descriptions

Curriculum structure

Strands and Content Descriptions

VADEA acknowledges an attempt to clarify the structure of the AC:TA curriculum through a repositioning of organisational elements, as Strands. In the previous iteration, the threads organised the Content Descriptions and were common across the five art disciplines. In the original curriculum the Strands were identified as Making and Responding. Under the review, Making and Responding has been repositioned as Core Concepts, and the organisational elements which inform the Content Descriptions across each subject have been rebadged as Strands. The new Strands are common across all five disciplines, F-10. The original Content Descriptions are represented in this table from the ACARA website:

Table 2: Content descriptions for F–6 and 7–10 in the Australian Curriculum: The Arts

Content description	Foundation – Year 6	Content description	Years 7–10
1st	Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas	1st	Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas
		2nd	Manipulating and applying the elements/concepts with intent
2nd	Developing understanding of practices	3rd	Developing and refining understanding of skills and techniques
		4th	Structuring and organising ideas into form
3rd	Sharing artworks through performance, presentation or display	5th	Sharing artworks through performance, presentation or display
4th	Responding to and interpreting artworks	6th	Analysing and reflecting upon intentions
		7th	Responding to and interpreting artworks

In this review, the four Strands have been titled *Exploring and connecting; Developing skills, practice and ideas; Creating; and Sharing and communicating*, and have been repositioned as content organisers, linked to the Core Concepts, as well as informing Achievement Standards. The use of Strands is consistent with other AC KLAs but the four Strands in the AC:TA F-10 curriculum do not adequately provide foundational positions that can be used as content organisers, due to the limitations of content being explicit knowledge and understanding. That is, the four Strands are more connected to skills and abilities than content and their presentation as a process-based, linear workflow makes for a tenuous starting point that is then developed through Content Descriptions and Content Elaborations.

Indeed, the Review documentation identifies that "the revised strands reflect stages of a creative or artistic process", beginning with the idea and skill development and culminating in presentation and display. What this process-based approach does not consider is how contemporary practice and, more significantly, critical reasoning, is often not linear and the adoption of these specific Strands as key organisers privileges practical making over critical inquiry. The repositioning of Responding to Core Concepts has taken away an important aspect of engagement with art and, as a result, there is doubling up of Content Descriptions between *Developing skills, practices and ideas*, and *Creating*.

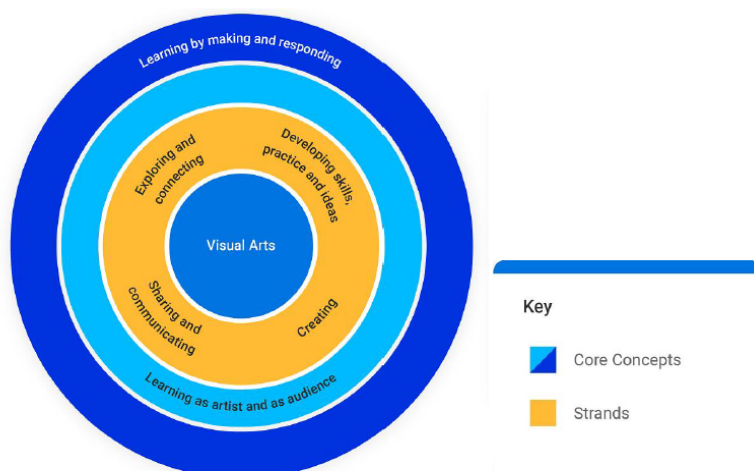


Figure 6: Relationship of the core concepts to the content strands

The move to these Strands is problematic, as they default to a linear conception of artmaking in Visual Arts and could potentially be used by teachers in order to adopt a formulaic approach to artmaking, under the guise of Research > Practise > Create > Exhibit. This process-based approach is similar to one abandoned by NSW in the late 1980s titled PROME. In the 1987 NSW Visual Arts syllabus (BoSE, 1987), Processes are presented as: Perceiving, Responding, Organising, Manipulating and Evaluating (PROME). "Visual Arts is defined as the process of making and interpreting artworks and images." (p. 4). This process-based pedagogy reflects the formalist model of aesthetic inquiry, and did not include the Frames.

In addition, the Strands, which are common across Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts, highlight the problems in a generic syllabus, and an attempt to coalesce these distinct disciplines under one umbrella. Of significant concern is the continuation of generic process-based Strands in Year 7-10, where specialisation typically occurs in the Arts. There is a lack of progression towards substantial and sustained knowledge of content required of 7-10 Content Descriptions, where it would be expected students are engaging in individual subjects and being taught content by subject experts. The proposed curriculum does not allow for deep knowledge and exploration of the specialist field of practice due to the limitations imposed by generic organising Strands.

Table 6: Relationship of the strand organisation to the content descriptions

Strand	Overview of Visual Arts content
Exploring and connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viewing exhibitions of art works in physical and virtual, formal and informal settings and engaging with artists and artists practices Exploring, analysing and evaluating art works and art practices across times, cultures and communities Exploring the significance of visual arts and cultural expressions as visual culture as they investigate visual arts across times and diverse contexts Exploring and making connections between personal visual arts preferences and those of other people across local, national and global contexts
Developing skills, practice and ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experimentation, problem solving, idea generation Manipulating materials, techniques and visual arts processes in multiple visual art forms Understanding, exploring, manipulating and subverting visual conventions and visual arts processes Practicing, reflecting on and developing skills and techniques Documenting thinking on their own visual arts practices
Creating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building, developing and refining ideas for visual art works that communicate artist intentions Manipulating and selecting materials, techniques, visual conventions to communicate ideas and concepts in artworks Refining skills and techniques in a diverse range of visual arts processes Developing personal style and expression
Sharing and communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing artworks for display and exhibition in multiple settings Developing artist statements and ways of communicating artist intentions with audiences Understanding the process of curating and exhibiting as extensions of artworks and artist intentions Seeking and responding to audience feedback or responses Reflecting on and evaluating artist practice

Exploring and connecting

The term *exploring* is open ended and low order, and does not reflect the complex and multifaceted nature of

the critical interpretation of art. This Strand does not adequately account for the rich critical and historical investigation students are capable of from K-10. It defaults to a passive position for arts learning. References to critical and historical study of art are mainly positioned here in relation to students' artmaking, rather than acknowledging art writing as a distinct discipline within the field of visual arts. This is primarily due to the curriculum being student-centred, where the student is positioned as artist and the practice of learning *about* art history and art criticism is underrepresented.

VADEA asserts that greater reference to critical and historical accounts of visual arts practice must be incorporated into the Content Descriptions for *Exploring and connecting*. There is opportunity for this Strand and Content Description to be inclusive of student as Audience. This can be integrated into the proposed Content Description, where students learn to "investigate and explain, as audience..." (Yr 5-6), and "investigate and analyse, as audience...". There is also an opportunity for students to adopt Viewpoints to support their investigations. The term "communicate" should be replaced by "represent", which can be presented in the form of artworks and/or written or oral accounts. Whilst reference to art writing is included in the Content Elaborations, this is optional content and not required, thus denying an important aspect of learning about the arts.

Connecting Vs. Interpreting

In addition, the term *connecting* should be replaced with *interpreting*. Connecting suggests linking things together, identifying relationships and associating things together. This term does not account for the practice of interpreting art, which requires critical thinking and reasoning, which is far more complex than the term *connecting* can account for. In the consultation meeting with ACARA 28/5/21, it was made clear that the Arts leads have identified an issue with the term 'interpretation', as it relates to ICIP Protocols (see below).

However, failure to include the term interpretation is at odds with the Australian Curriculum: History and Social Sciences (HASS) consultation curriculum, where interpretation plays a pivotal role within the curriculum. The term interpretation features 69 times. In the skills strand of the HASS curriculum, Interpretation is included as: *Interpreting, analysing and evaluating information and data – Students explore information, evidence and data to identify and interpret features, distributions, patterns, trends and relationships, key points, fact and opinion, points of view, perceptions and interpretations. Students also identify the purpose and intent of sources and determine their accuracy and reliability.* (p.18, HASS all elements). The curriculum emphasises the skill of critical and historical interpretation, as foundational to the discipline. In History 7-10 it is included as one of the six Core Concepts (see Figure 2 below), and whilst VADEA has an issue with the inclusion of interpretation as a core concept, due to ACARAs manipulation of the term concept to include processes, this is evidence that interpretation is critical in the discipline of History. In this case, the study of the history of art is no different.



Figure 2: Core concepts for History

Interpretation as a Principle of ICIP

The absence of the term 'interpretation' in Content Descriptions was acknowledged by AC:TA leads in a previous consultation meeting (28/05/21). VADEA understands this relates to the interpretation of Indigenous cultural material. The Australia Council's Principles for respecting Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) ([Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts](#)) provides a sound framework for understanding and working with Indigenous cultural material. Most of the Principles cited here address issues that educators face in explaining and working with non-indigenous (and non-Western) material, as well as issues of potential appropriation and misappropriation of content by students, from works generated

by a range of historical and contemporary artists, including social media and the internet.

On the issue of interpretation, it is identified in the Australia Council document as Principle 4: Interpretation "Indigenous people have the right to be recognised and represented as the primary guardians and interpreters of their cultural heritage." The included example from Jonathan Jones is well-presented, as to the application of protocols, including 'Interpretation'. Still, the term 'interpretation' exists within the lexicon of Visual Arts and is applicable in both indigenous and non-indigenous contexts for the analysis and understanding of artworks for cultural meaning. To interpret cultural artefacts is to generate meaning not only of the object but of the cultures and artists which produced it. To leave out the term 'interpretation' altogether from a visual arts curriculum document is to deny students the opportunity to critically inquire about the meaning and purpose of cultural visual artefacts, both within and outside of their own cultural contexts.

The inclusion of ICIP in Year 7-8 Content Description

Content Descriptions in the Australian Curriculum need to inform educators what to plan, teach and assess. Indeed, as stated in the consultation document, "Content descriptions specify the essential knowledge, understanding and skills that young people are expected to learn, and that teachers are expected to teach, in each band."

The Content Description for Year 7-8 Visual Arts, under *Exploring and connecting*, states students learn to: "*research and apply best practice for selecting and using material in visual arts works, considering copyright laws and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protocols (AC9AVA8E02)*". It should be noted the specific wording of this CD is repeated across each subject in the AC:TA. The specificity of ICIP within the year 7-8 Content Description is *inconsistent with all other years, which refer to students learning to: "identify" (Yr 1-2), "describe" (Yr 3-4), and, "investigate and discuss the ways that First Nations Australians maintain, continue and revitalise culture (AC9AVA6E02)" (Yr 5-6), as well as the broader Content Description in Year 9-10, "evaluate the ways that contemporary visual arts and cultural expressions challenge, entrench and celebrate multiple perspectives of Australia's identity over time (AC9AVA10E02)*.

What is absent, or lacking, in the Year 7-8 Content Description and the associated Content Elaborations, is any reference to best practice for all cultural imagery that may be deemed having copyright, or not the intellectual property or original work of the student. If research is identified as an important aspect of Year 7-8 content, the "knowledge, understanding and skills" in research best practice should be clearly articulated and able to be assessed for learning, as it is in other curriculum documents, such as History. The wording of the Content Description should also be considerate of how students can adopt a Viewpoint, such as Cultures and worlds, which would provide appropriate perspectives and contexts in which to view cultural works. Yet, there is an absence of the relationship between Viewpoints and Content Descriptions in the Visual Arts F-10 document. Rather, 'perspectives' is the preferred noun used in content description language.

Further, the draft curriculum's Key Considerations of Connecting learning in The Arts with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures clearly identifies ICIP and protocols to be used by teachers. Key considerations are applicable to all Years F-10 and articulate and elaborate on the considerations stated in the Years 7-8 Content Description. Key considerations should be the area of content that identifies ICIP, rather than the Content Description under *Exploring and connecting*.

Developing skills, practice and ideas

This Strand is concerned with the material practice of students' artmaking, with an emphasis on 'elements, principles, conventions or concepts, skills and processes' and students developing 'capability and confidence' (Australian Curriculum: The Arts – Visual Arts – All elements 7–10, p.4). It is removed from students fostering an authentic conceptual understanding of their practice and disconnected from the study of artists' practice. Higher order terms such as 'analysing' and 'evaluating' are used here but only in relation to students' own artmaking, in the role of artist and audience of their own work (p.4).

It is only in the Content Elaborations that the practice of artists is considered, and this is optional content which “may involve students”. The dislocation from conceptual practice is evident here and this could be further enriched by the inclusion of a theoretical framework to orientate students in their development of ideas, such as the ones briefly touched on by the Viewpoints.

There is an omission of the relationship between Content Descriptions and Materials, Styles and Forms. Rather, the phrase “materials and techniques” are used. There needs to be more explicit reference to forms, and an emphasis on students making and interpreting a variety of forms, including 2D, 3D and 4D. Else, a student may only experience practice in a single form throughout F-10.

The Strand *Developing skills, practice and ideas* is wholly reliant upon artmaking as the product of skill development and practice. The lack of reference to a student representing their understanding of skills, practice and ideas, of other artists, through written accounts, as a result of the exploring and connecting to artists’ practice, is a significant omission and one that VADEA feel strongly needs to be addressed.

Representation of concepts and ideas is alluded to in the Overview by “documenting thinking on their own visual arts practices” but this is limited to students’ own understanding of their practice. By Years 5-6 students would have an increasingly intuitive understanding of their position within a notional artworld and be reliant upon the works of other art practitioners to inform their own practice, as well as the judgements and interpretations of artworks by informed audience members, such as art critics, art historians and most immediately, their teachers.

Creating

The emphasis in the Strand of *Creating* is on process, a task which students undertake in a variety of forms and approaches. Process is repeated here from the previous Strand. There is a lack of differentiation between the strands of *Developing Skills, practice and ideas*, and *Creating*. The Content Descriptions for Year 7-8 refer to students’ “intentions” and creating artworks “that communicate intended concepts”. However, there is no reference to how students construct or form these intentions and concepts. Viewpoints are not mentioned as an aspect of practice which students can adopt in their artmaking and this should be overtly stated in the Content Descriptions, rather than in the optional Content Elaborations.

The areas of Making and Responding are conflated in the Strand of *Creating* e.g. “*plan, develop and refine intentions for visual arts works by investigating visual artists’ practices (AC9AVA8C01)*”. In a curriculum with minimal reference to the critical and historical study of art as a distinct practice in Visual Arts, this lack of theoretical inquiry is concerning, as the investigation of artists’ practice is limited to its role in informing students’ artmaking. This is seen throughout the Content Elaborations, which include reference to both artmaking and activities which resemble an estimation of critical and historical practice. Teachers are left with little clarity in the Content Descriptions, as they do not clearly articulate whether students are required to engage in artmaking or responding to art.

Whilst there is greater reference to how students would develop their conceptual practice in the Content Elaborations, the weakness of the process-based Strands is apparent in *Creating*. In particular, in Years 9-10, when students would be expected to make works of increasing conceptual complexity and sophistication, and exploring a range of viewpoints in developing their artworks, a subjective orientation to content is declared, “*create visual arts works that communicate personal views and intentions (AC9AVA10C02)*”. Art making is also portrayed through a structural lens throughout the curriculum, for instance in Years 3-4 students “*use visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques to create visual arts works that communicate ideas (AC9AVA4C01)*”.

Sharing and communicating

The inclusion of *Sharing and Communicating* as a Strand is problematic for Visual Arts, as it defaults to exhibition and display. VADEA understands this Strand is imperative for the performing arts, however it

assumes that all art is made for sharing with public audiences, and disregards the studio practice component of making by visual artists. The Content Descriptions aligned with this Strand should consider from a critical and historical perspective, the practice of artists who create works for audiences and the art world institutions and agencies which inform our understanding of their practice. This is briefly touched on in Year 9-10 in the Content Elaborations, however this should be more explicit in the Content Description and Elaborations from at least Years 5-6.

There is a default position of the student as curator associated with the Strand of *Sharing and communicating*, which is problematic, as there is a disconnect between curatorial practice, and the newly established core concepts of learning as making and responding and learning as artist and audience. Further, the curriculum document does not inform the students' curatorial practice, nor does it provide links to Key Considerations, such as Materials, Styles and Forms, or Viewpoints, with which to position the student as curator. Indeed, this highlights the problematic nature of a curriculum which aims to structure all five Arts subjects across generic Strands, at the expense of diminishing the inherent practice relevant to each subject individually. Display and exhibition of work beyond the Year 3-4 should transition from a student-focused end process, to the study of exhibitions for the purposes of deeper understanding of visual arts practice.

The Core Concept of *learning as audience* should be more apparent in this Strand, where the student is positioned as both a presenter of artworks and a consumer of artworks. Interpreting and evaluating artworks, exhibitions and participating in the judgement of artworks through multiple Viewpoints would strengthen this Strand across all years, from Year 1-10. This omission, and a reliance on display as end product of process, is incongruent with the acquisition of knowledge about the artworld and its practices.

Summary of suggested amendments for Content Descriptions F-10 Visual Arts

Content Descriptions: Visual Arts -Foundation Year

Strands	Content Descriptions	Suggestions
	Students learn to:	
Exploring and Connecting	explore the ways the arts communicate ideas and meanings for people and communities (AC9AVAFE01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VADEA believes the use of generic Content Descriptions for Foundation is inconsistent with other subjects such as Technologies, where both Digital Technologies and Design and Technology are represented as distinct disciplines from Foundation. ACARA states: "Four content descriptions are provided at Foundation, which can be implemented through each of The Arts subjects or through an integrated approach." (What has changed and why? Proposed revisions to the F-10 Australian Curriculum: The Arts p.1). However, it is VADEAs position that the Content Descriptions should be subject specific, to ensure a high quality progression of learning can be established. <i>create arts works that communicate ideas</i>, Replace 'communicate ideas' to 'represent their world' (AC9AVAF01)
Developing skills, practices and ideas	use play, imagination, arts knowledge and skills to discover possibilities and develop ideas (AC9AVAFP01)	
Creating	create arts works that communicate ideas (AC9AVAF01)	
Sharing and communicating	share their arts works and ideas about arts and cultural experiences with audiences (AC9AVAFS01)	

Content Descriptions: Visual Arts Yrs 1-2

Strands	Content Descriptions	Suggestions
	Students learn to:	
Exploring and Connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore and discuss why, where and how people make visual arts works (AC9AVA2E01) identify ways First Nations Australians use cultural expressions to communicate connection to and responsibility for Country/Place (AC9AVA2E02) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace 'people' with 'artists', replace 'arts works' with 'artworks'(AC9AVA2E01)
Developing skills, practices and ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiment and play with a range of visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques (AC9AVA2P01) 	

Creating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques to create visual arts works to build and communicate ideas and/or reference experiences (AC9AVA2C01) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace 'build and communicate ideas and/or reference experiences' (AC9AVA2C01) with 'represent their world and/or reference experiences' replace 'arts works' with 'artworks'(AC9AVA2C01)
Sharing and communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share and display visual arts works to engage an audience of peers and educators (AC9AVA2S01) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> replace 'arts works' with 'artworks' (AC9AVA2S01)

Content Descriptions: Visual Arts Yrs 3-4

Strands	Content Descriptions	Suggestions
	Students learn to:	
Exploring and Connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore and describe the ways that visual artists use visual arts processes, visual conventions, and materials to represent the world as they see it (AC9AVA4E01) describe ways First Nations Australians use cultural expressions to communicate their connection to and responsibility for Country/Place, Culture and People (AC9AVA4E02) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove 'as they see it', not necessary (AC9AVA4E01)
Developing skills, practices and ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiment when developing confidence with a range of visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques (AC9AVA4P01) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove 'when developing confidence' as the CD does not make sense nor is this appropriate within the structure of the CDs, add 'to explore ideas' at the end of the CD (AC9AVA4P01)
Creating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques to create visual arts works that communicate ideas (AC9AVA4C01) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> replace 'arts works' with 'artworks' (AC9AVA4P01) Change 'to create visual arts works that communicate ideas' to 'to create visual artworks represent ideas about the world' (AC9AVA4C01)
Sharing and communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> display visual arts works to engage an audience and communicate artists intentions (AC9AVA4S01) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> replace 'arts works' with 'artworks' (AC9AVA4S01) Replace 'communicate artists intention' with 'communicate ideas' (AC9AVA4S01)

Content Descriptions: Visual Arts Yrs 5-6

Strands	Content Descriptions	Suggestions
	Students learn to:	
Exploring and Connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate and explain the ways that visual artists represent views, beliefs and opinions for different purposes and in different contexts (AC9AVA6E01) investigate and discuss the ways that First Nations Australians maintain, continue and revitalise culture (AC9AVA6E02) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a significant issue with the progression of learning in the first CD (AC9AVA6E01), as this is more conceptually demanding for students compared to the same CD in Years 7-8. To bring it into alignment with 7-8 and 91-0, this should read 'investigate and explain the ways that visual artists represent a diverse range of viewpoints for different purposes' (AC9AVA6E01)
Developing skills, practices and ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiment, select and apply visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques to represent an idea (AC9AVA6P01) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace 'to represent an idea' to 'to represent viewpoints' (AC9AVA6P01)
Creating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use visual arts processes, visual conventions materials and techniques to create visual arts works that communicate an artistic intention (AC9AVA6C01) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> replace 'arts works' with 'artworks (AC9AVA6C01).
Sharing and communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> curate exhibits of visual arts works to engage with audiences to reinforce artists intentions (AC9AVA6S01) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> replace 'arts works' with 'artworks' (AC9AVA6S01) Replace the word 'reinforce' with 'express' (AC9AVA6S01)

Content Descriptions: Visual Arts Yrs 7-8

Strands	Content Descriptions	Suggestions
Exploring and Connecting	<p>Students learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate and analyse the ways that visual artists, across times and contexts, combine visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques to communicate concepts in their visual arts practice (AC9AVA8E01) research and apply best practice for selecting and using material in visual arts works, considering copyright laws and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protocols (AC9AVA8E02) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an issue of alignment in progression of learning in AC9AVA8E01 and in relation to (AC9AVA6E01). This CD is incongruent with 5-6 and reverts to a structural focus that is not in alignment with 5-6 or 9-10. VADEA recommends removing 'visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques'. It should read: 'investigate and analyse the ways that visual artists, across times and contexts communicate concepts and represent viewpoints in their visual arts practice' (AC9AVA8E01) The following content description for Year 7-8 states "research and apply best practice for respectfully selecting and using material in visual arts works, considering copyright laws and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protocols (AC9AVA8E02)". VADEA supports the foregrounding of protocols for using First Nations cultural and intellectual property in the arts. However, the specificity of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protocols and copyright laws as Visual Arts content in Years 7-8 should be moved to Content Elaborations, with a hyperlink to IC/IP documents. Instead, VADEA suggests this Content Description should continue to build upon content from Year 5-6 and act as a precursor to content in Year 9-10. See previous section above for elaboration on this point.
Developing skills, practices and ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiment with the ways that visual artists select, combine and manipulate visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques to represent concepts in their own visual arts practice (AC9AVA8P01) practise and develop skills in using visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques when planning and developing concepts for visual arts works (AC9AVA8P02) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relate Key Connections of Materials, Styles and Forms to the Content Description, rather than the generic materials and techniques (AC9AVA8P01) These CDs are very similar, there is an opportunity to include interpretation as the other form of skill and practice here, which would be stage appropriate (AC9AVA8P01, AC9AVA8P02). VADEA recommends one CD is for making and one for responding/interpreting. replace 'arts works' with 'artworks' (AC9AVA8P02)
Creating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plan, develop and refine intentions for visual arts works by investigating visual artists' practices (AC9AVA8C01) create visual arts works that communicate intended concepts with a range of visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques (AC9AVA8C02) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> replace 'arts works' with 'artworks' (AC9AVA8C01, AC9AVA8C02) Add 'intended concepts and viewpoints' (AC9AVA8C02) These verbs 'plan, develop and refine' are more closely aligned with 'Developing skills, practices and ideas' (AC9AVA8C01)
Sharing and communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> curate exhibits of visual arts works to engage an intended audience and enhance artists' intended concepts (AC9AVA8S01) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> replace 'arts works' with 'artworks' (AC9AVA8S01) 'Intended concepts' is problematic, as it assumes curators and audiences always know what the artist intended, when in fact the student as curator/audience is interpreting the artwork and inferring meaning. It should state - 'curate exhibits of visual artworks to engage an intended audience and represent concepts and viewpoints' (AC9AVA8S01)

Content Descriptions: Visual Arts Yr 9-10

Strands	Content Descriptions	Suggestions
Exploring and Connecting	<p>Students learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate the ways that visual artists, across times and contexts, express a range of perspectives in professional visual arts practice (AC9AVA10E01) evaluate the ways that contemporary visual arts and cultural expressions challenge, entrench and celebrate multiple perspectives of Australia's identity over time (AC9AVA10E02) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (AC9AVA10E01) needs to account for the cognitive shift from 7-8 more adequately and could be enriched with the inclusion of 'interpret' Replace 'Perspectives' with 'Viewpoints' (AC9AVA10E01) Remove the term 'professional' (AC9AVA10E01) (AC9AVA10E02) is not in alignment with Years 1-6 which explicitly identify First Nation Australians and 7-8 which identifies ICIP protocols and copyright as

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> content (AC9AVA10E02) is aligned with poststructural accounts of visual arts and would allow for critical evaluation, it should therefore be included in Viewpoints
Developing skills, practices and ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiment with a range of visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques when developing technical skills and personal style to represent concepts in their own visual arts practice (AC9AVA10P01) communicate, interpret and build on critical feedback from a range of sources including self-assessment and reflection when planning, developing personal style and communicating concepts in their visual arts works (AC9AVA10P02) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove reference to 'personal style' and 'own' (AC9AVA10P01) Include 'to represent concepts and viewpoints' (AC9AVA10P01) Students will 'build on critical feedback' - this point is better suited against the Sharing and communicating Strand. This CD does not appropriately align with 7-8 CD and does not represent a progression of learning or content (AC9AVA10P02) replace 'arts works' with 'artworks' (AC9AVA10P02) Relate Key Connections of Materials, Styles and Forms to the Content Description, rather than the generic materials and techniques (AC9AVA10P02) Remove 'developing personal style' (AC9AVA10P02)
Creating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate artistic influences to further refine artistic practice (AC9AVA10C01) create visual arts works that communicate personal views and intentions (AC9AVA10C02) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add 'interpret' (AC9AVA10C01), This could be rephrased as, 'Evaluate and critically interpret artists' practice to further develop and refine artistic practice' (AC9AVA10C01) replace 'arts works' with 'artworks' (AC9AVA10C02) Replace 'personal views' with 'Viewpoints' - 'represent Viewpoints and communicate intention' (AC9AVA10C02)
Sharing and communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate and evaluate art exhibits to inform the curating and exhibition of visual arts works for a specific purpose (AC9AVA10S01) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> replace 'arts works' with 'artworks' (AC9AVA10S01). The integration of learning as audience is absent in this CD (AC9AVA10S01). Replace 'for a specific purpose' which is vague and more appropriate for 7-8, with 'to represent a variety of intentions, concepts and viewpoints' (AC9AVA10S01) Replace 'investigate' with 'interpret' (AC9AVA10S01)

Viewpoints

It is the position of VADEA that Viewpoints are an under-utilised component of this curriculum and they could be better integrated to enrich student artmaking and critical/historical interpretations within the Content Descriptions, as opposed to an inquiry tool that will be disregarded by teachers due to their lower level, sub-content position, under Key Considerations, and role in the curriculum. Whilst we support the reduction of these Viewpoints into a narrower group of orientations, compared to the previous provision in the AC: The Arts, the role of Viewpoints as an inquiry tool is unclear. Rather, there is a reliance on descriptive verbs to emphasise the depth of inquiry and interpretation of art, via Making and Responding.

Viewpoints are not referred to explicitly in Content Descriptions or Achievement Standards and there is a lack of consistent language between Viewpoints and Content Descriptions/ Achievement Standards. The term 'perspectives' replaces and often infers the concepts identified by Viewpoints. Content Elaborations do refer to Viewpoints, however as these are a suggestion or guide for teachers, and not mandatory content, there is no guarantee that Viewpoints will be adopted by teachers and students as an inquiry tool. Reference to Viewpoints should be made explicit in the Content Descriptions themselves, particularly when reference is made to student intention or concepts. This will clarify teachers' understanding of how they can foster, develop and guide students' practice in Making and Responding.

NSW acknowledges the similarities between Viewpoints and the Frames, which are an epistemological tool used to provide theoretical orientation in both practical and theoretical accounts of art. Students actively engage with the Frames as a tool to position their critical and historical interpretations of artists, the world, artworks and audiences, and to adopt and apply different perspectives in making art. The Frames are one of the three content areas and play a significant role in the NSW syllabus. Another means to reinforce and clarify the Viewpoints would be to change the list of questions for each category to an explanation or series of statements and keywords. This would mean greater flexibility in their usage, engagement with them as an

epistemological tool to orientate knowledge, rather than as a tool for student self-reflection.

Finally, a poststructural orientation to practice is a significant omission from this new iteration of Viewpoints. This is absolutely necessary in order for teachers and students to engage with contemporary art practices, ideas and issues in the artworks. Consider the practice of contemporary artist Joan Ross - whilst a cultural account of her practice is relevant, her use of postmodern practices including appropriation and satire in her conceptual and material practice are vital in fully understanding the depth of her practice. VADEA recommends a poststructural account be added to Viewpoints to ensure the curriculum can be reflective of contemporary art practices and to ensure students develop critical thinking skills, which is a key element to the General Capabilities.

Core Concepts

The object of study

Of critical concern is the absence of the object of study - the artwork, and the world represented (subject matter) in the core concepts. The artwork, which can be understood as a representational artefact, maintains its meaning of existence in the relationship between the intentionality of the artist and the conceptual schemes of audiences, who draw on their systems of beliefs and knowledge to assign meaning to these artefacts. The AC: The Arts declares students learn as artist and audience, but without the object of study to orientate and ground this relationship, a significant component of Visual Arts is omitted. It should be noted that this content is positioned as “learning AS artist and as audience”, which is problematic, as the student experience is foregrounded at the expense of learning about artists’ practice and the role of audiences from a critical and historical perspective

From the NSW Syllabus: “Artworks are intentionally conceived and made by artists working individually or collaboratively. Artworks have properties and forms that are material, virtual, physical and symbolic that exists in combinations of materials, technical skills, concepts and subjects. Artworks exist as a representation of ideas that reflect such things as personal responses, cultural views, symbolic interpretations and critical reinterpretations of other ideas. Artworks are representations of meanings when viewed interpretively by audiences. The form of production or reproduction affects how audiences view and infer meaning about the work” (Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus, p.22)

In addition, there is a lack of relationship between Content Descriptions and Materials, Styles and Form. There is no explicit mention of the types of forms associated with visual arts practice i.e. 2D, 3D, 4D, in either the making or studying of artworks. This could potentially mean that students do not experience a variety of forms through the study of visual arts F-10. Whilst school context and teacher knowledge and skills will determine the forms taught in making art, the study of artworks can be undertaken in a wider variety of forms.

Furthermore, the omission of the social reality in which artists, artworks and audiences operate, is to deny the constraints of the world as an integral agency in an artist’s practice, which consists of the systematic ideas, conventions and events represented by artists in artworks, theoretical and conventional practices. From the NSW Syllabus: “As such, the world informs the significance of artistic choice and action as well as audience inference of meaning. Artists can also investigate, interpret and represent the world as a material, conceptual and social experience as well as a place of imaginings, intuition and the personal as ideas for representation.” (Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus, p.22)

The AC:TA curriculum does not meet the basic learning needs of children in K-6 who ground their early art understanding in the core concepts of subject matter and artwork before advancing into understanding the role and representational significance of artists and audiences. By reifying the concepts of artist and audience, younger children are not afforded access to representing their naïve beliefs about art, a foundation on which teachers help them build their intentions and beliefs as artists and audiences/critics and develop deeper critical thinking and representational understanding in art. This is evident in the Content Descriptions.

Whilst VADEA understands the Core Concepts will not be an overt structural element in the final published curriculum online, we believe it is imperative that the agencies of the artwork and world represented are included alongside the role of the artist and audience as core concepts. This would accurately reflect the claims made in the curriculum introduction and reflect authentic core concepts, specific to the discipline of Visual Arts and the Arts as a broader group.

Student centred curriculum

The Aims of the AC:TA curriculum openly declare the student centered approach of the curriculum, with emphasis on student life, experience, expression, communication of ideas, imagination and observation about their individual and collective worlds. The proposed changes offered in the Australian Curriculum: The Arts F-10 Review privileges student experience and process over student cognitive development and critical reasoning. This is evident in the content area identified as Core Concepts (*learning by making and responding*, and *learning as artist and as audience*) which does not accurately reflect current academic literature, nor is it consistent with the definition of core knowledge and understanding by educational research.

The AC:TA curriculum presents a narrow view of art primarily associated with a subjective orientation, coupled with a structural aesthetic orientation. This is evident throughout the syllabus and most prominent in the Content Descriptions. This approach, which promotes knowledge, understanding and skills to support and develop students' individual needs, over emphasises the students' sense of self in developing their understanding of practice in relation to artmaking, and there is little acknowledgement of art as a social reality, wherein collective ideas matter. This approach does not allow for deep learning and further enquiry provided for in secondary years' specialisation. This is evident in the list of dot points elaborating on Making, which begins with the statement: 'Making engages senses, cognition, and emotions through...' (p.7).

As previously mentioned, the role of Viewpoints is undervalued in this curriculum, and these could be used to enrich student artmaking and interpretation of art, as they offer a broader range of epistemological traditions which include cultural, structural and subjective orientations. If the Viewpoints were operationalised more explicitly within the curriculum structure, students' artmaking and interpretation of art can have the opportunity to move beyond subjective orientations, to consider broader explanations of practice, meaning and representation.

Misrepresentation of practice

VADEA contends that the repositioning of Making and Responding as Core Concepts in the revised AC:TA curriculum is seriously problematic and misrepresents the very nature of a concept. ACARA has stated that they have developed their own definition of concepts in order to serve the purposes of this curriculum, and VADEA understands that the reason Making and Responding has been moved from an organising Strand to a Core Concept is due to the limitations within the Review scope and structure. VADEA contends that Making and Responding should have remained as organising structures within the curriculum to represent the dual nature of practice in the Arts. Making and Responding are not concepts, despite claims made by ACARA. They are not ontological in nature, instead represent processes in the field of practice of the Arts. Making and Responding are not mental constructs, nor are they limited to the field of the Arts or Visual Arts for that matter.

Following the meeting with ACARA 28/5/21, VADEA understands that Core Concepts will be a background feature of the curriculum and are not overt curriculum structures. This is unclear in the current consultation documents and misrepresents the curriculum. VADEA understands the purpose of core concepts as the integral, key content that is at the heart of the curriculum and underpins all elements. Following this discussion, we understand that the only mandated elements of the curriculum are the Achievement Standards and Content Descriptions (as organised by the Strands).

VADEA contends that Making and Responding should be removed as part of Core Concepts, and they should be overarching structures that sit above the Strands to orientate and organise the two distinct areas of practice within the Arts, that is artmaking and critical/historical studies.

The new Strands, as addressed above, underrepresent the practice of art history and interpretation significantly more compared to the previous version of the curriculum. This is of serious concern, given the first iteration of this curriculum barely included interpretation in the form of critical or historical study of art as a discipline.

Responding

A key feature of the first version of the AC:TA curriculum was the tendency for Making and Responding to be conflated, where the two distinct areas of practice fold in on each other. Unfortunately, this latest review repeats the same mistakes of the first, where the practice of interpretation is conflated with students' artmaking practice. It is incredibly difficult to determine when students will be engaging in which area of practice in the Content Descriptions, as students' engagement with artworks or artists' practice is limited only to its influence on their own artmaking 'as artists'. VADEA were informed at the consultation meeting 28/5/21 that this was intended, that it would allow greater freedom for teachers to interpret the curriculum. The potential ramifications for this are alarming, particularly as this curriculum will be preparing students for 11-12 Visual Arts, which places significant demands on students' abilities to engage in critical and historical study.

Disappointingly, history repeats in this iteration of the curriculum with the blatant disregard for the practice of the critical and historical interpretation of art. When we examine the Content Descriptions, as organised by the Strands, there is incredibly limited opportunity and provision for the engagement of art from a historical or critical perspective. It appears to be limited to the Strand of *Exploring and Connecting*, and even then of the two Content Descriptions, one is strictly limited to learning about the cultural and artistic practices of First Nations peoples. Such an omission of this distinct and critical part of Visual Arts presents a distorted view of the discipline and is incongruent with the NSW Visual Arts syllabus, which acknowledges the interpretation of art as a cornerstone of students' visual arts learning.

The curriculum does not adequately support students' understanding of the practical and conceptual structure of practice in interpreting art from the point of view of a critic or art historian. Students are not explicitly afforded an opportunity to develop their critical skills in constructing interpretations of meaning or forming judgements of value.

It is also unclear how the Core Concept of Responding is articulated throughout the Content Descriptions and Elaborations. The explanation for Responding for 7-10 on p.23 states:

In Visual Arts responding can involve:

- *documenting thinking, understanding and ideas about their developing visual arts practice*
- *investigating, analysing and evaluating artists ideas, intentions, and artistic practice*
- *being curious, wondering, considering multiple perspectives*
- *asking questions, exploring possibilities and ideas*
- *reflecting, critiquing, and evaluating.*

Missing from this account is reference to interpretation and it is largely unclear where art histories, theories and criticism is to be considered within this "Core Concept".

The inclusion of students learning AS audience does little to improve the quality and depth of interpretation within the curriculum. The explanation of students as audience in fact doubles up on the Core Concept of Responding, however it still manages to represent a low order representation of this area of practice in the curriculum as it states:

Students are also an audience for visual arts works created by other artists. They:

- *explore how audiences experience and engage with Visual Arts*

- *make meaning from visual arts they view or perform and from other experiences involving visual arts*
- *engage in interactive relationships with other artists and with audiences*
- *consider how the visual arts works they are experiencing reflect, represent, challenge, confirm or disrupt ideas and understandings held by people, communities and cultures. p.23*

This account does not adequately prepare students for senior secondary in Year 11 and 12. In NSW, art criticism and art history accounts for 50% of the syllabus requirements for students and this culminates with the HSC written examination which requires students to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in interpreting through written accounts of artists' practices, art histories and theories and artworks. Nor does this account for the practice or study of Visual Arts at a higher level including tertiary education or other post-school opportunities. There is little consideration of the distinct and authentic practice of art history and art criticism throughout the curriculum and there is little onus on teachers to engage in this vital practice when the Content Elaborations are suggestions for strategies, not requirements.

Making

The curriculum does not adequately support students' understanding of the practical and conceptual structure of practice in Making art. Process-based accounts of making do not support students to develop intentions informed by beliefs about art, develop material practice and represent ideas and meanings in artworks. As previously discussed, Making is represented as a linear process through the Strands.

The Content Descriptions present a narrow view of representation in students' artmaking. In Years 5-6 students "*experiment...to represent an idea*" (AC9AVA6P01), in Years 7-8 and 9-10 students "*experiment...to represent concepts in their own visual arts practice*" (AC9AVA8P02). In Years 7-8 "*practise and develop skills in using visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques when planning and developing concepts for visual arts works*" (AC9AVA8P02). In Years 3-4 students "*create arts works that communicate ideas*" (AC9AVA4C01), in Years 5-6 students "*create visual arts works that communicate an artistic intention*" (AC9AVA6C01), Years 7-8 students "*create visual arts works that communicate intended concepts...*" (AC9AVA8C02) and Years 9-10 students "*create visual arts works that communicate personal views and intentions*" (AC9AVA10C02). The Arts Content Descriptions repeatedly claim that students will make artworks which represent ideas/concepts/intentions/personal views, however it provides no clear direction in the Descriptions about how this occurs. The Descriptions fail to account for representation in artmaking and this is linked to the failure to include the world represented (subject matter) as a Core Concept in the curriculum.

In NSW, representation is included as an Outcome in Artmaking Stage 4 as "*4.4 recognises and uses aspects of the world as a source of ideas, concepts and subject matter in the visual arts*" and in Stage 5 "*5.4 investigates the world as a source of ideas, concepts and subject matter in the visual arts*". Representation is also part of the Critical and Historical component of the syllabus, where students (4.10) "*recognise[s] that art criticism and art history construct meanings*".

Representation in student artmaking could be enriched through the inclusion of Viewpoints in the Content Descriptions. As previously stated, VADEA is of the position that the curriculum would benefit from Viewpoints as an overt curriculum structure and would provide students' artmaking with significant purpose and orientation when considering, researching and representing subject matter in their artworks. This would ensure that the curriculum would move away from an inherently embodied sense of artmaking and would provide students with a broader framework to represent their world and consider other perspectives, orientations and approaches to artmaking. If Viewpoints are not clearly articulated in the Content Descriptions, Making has the potential to default to subjective modes of expression.

The curriculum currently represents Making in Visual Arts F-10 as:

In Visual Arts making can involve:

- *play, imagination, wonder, ideas and practical actions*

- *exploring, experimenting with and stretching properties of visual arts conventions and materials thinking critically and creatively*
- *learning about and using knowledge, skills and techniques for using visual arts processes, materials and visual conventions*
- *creating visual arts works and exhibits that communicate ideas and intentions*
- *reflecting on learning.*

This explanation stretches across F-10 and is based off a common definition of Making across the arts: *Making engages senses, cognition, and emotions through:*

- *play, imagination, wonder, ideas and practical actions*
- *thinking critically and creatively*
- *learning about and using knowledge, skills, techniques, processes, materials and technologies*
- *creating arts works that communicate ideas and intentions*
- *reflecting.*

This narrow explanation of making in Visual Arts does not reflect the rich and multifaceted practice of artmaking as learning progresses. The first dot point is more appropriate for early years and is not appropriate for students in the latter primary and early high school years. Point 2 and 3 are concerned with structural orientations to artmaking. Point 3 should refer to representation and the world as a source of ideas and concepts. Point 4 is vague and should be further clarified, considering how do students develop a reflective and interpretive artmaking practice in the creation of artworks.

The curriculum's explanation of forms is vague and does not adequately represent forms typically taught in a school context from F-6, nor the specialisations found in 7-10. Students must have experience in creating artworks in a variety of diverse forms and the curriculum needs to be more explicit in stating this. VADEA suggests this could be incorporated into the Achievement Standards.

Achievement Standards

The inclusion of generic, broad based achievement standards that encompass the 5 distinct artforms in Foundation to Year 6 allows schools to report on the arts across forms. VADEA is concerned that when faced with this possibility, schools will be inclined to report on generic Creative Arts forms, as opposed to discipline specific standards. There is also the potential that adequate time and quality teaching within these individual subjects will not occur as there is little impetus for schools to do so, and the Arts will fall victim to poorly planned cross-curriculum projects or activities.

Example of generic Arts Achievement Standard compared to discipline specific Achievement Standard:	
Year 5-6 The Arts Achievement Standard	Year 5-6 Visual Arts Achievement Standard
By the end of Year 6, students describe the ways that artists communicate ideas and meanings through their arts works. They describe the ways that the arts can contribute to maintaining, continuing and revitalising cultures. Students demonstrate safe, collaborative practice. They use elements, conventions, skills and processes to create arts works that communicate their intentions. They present their arts works and share ideas about their arts works with audiences.	By the end of Year 6, students explain the ways that visual artists communicate ideas and concepts in artworks. They demonstrate and describe how the visual arts can be used to maintain, continue and revitalise culture. Students demonstrate developing visual arts practice as they experiment with visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques. They respond to inspiration to create artworks that communicate their intentions, and curate exhibits of artworks to communicate these intentions to audiences and discuss responses to the work.

VADEA is concerned with the alignment between Achievement Standards and Content Descriptions. There is an inconsistency in applying the language defined under Key Considerations, including Materials, Styles and Form, and Viewpoints. This is an error in the draft document and potentially causes a misunderstanding in applying concepts and teaching from the curriculum. There should be clear and explicit links between Content Descriptions, Achievement Standards, Content Elaborations and Key Considerations. In some cases there is inconsistency in the use of terminology such as 'arts work' instead of 'artwork' and 'artist' instead of 'people'.

There is inconsistency when referencing Content Description (AC9AVA8E02) regarding Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protocols within the Achievement of Years 7-8 across the Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protocols Arts subjects, given the Content Description is virtually the same, the expression of this within the Achievement Standard which reflects this is very different in each instance. There are some alignment issues between Content Descriptions and the Achievement Standard in Year 7-8 and 9-10, where the standard refers to students analysing and evaluating artists practice, and this is not adequately reflected in the Content Descriptions. As a mandatory component of the curriculum for implementation by the States and Territories, it is imperative that the Standards and expression of content in the Descriptions are in alignment with each other. VADEA also advocates for the inclusion of 'interpret' in Year 7-8 and 9-10 and in 9-10 the inclusion of the term 'critically evaluate and interpret', to accurately reflect the cognitive shift in critical interpretation that is occurring in students of this stage.

Achievement Standards	
<p>Foundation <u>Note: no subject specific content descriptions</u> <i>By the end of the Foundation year, students use play, imagination, arts knowledge and skills to create and share arts works in different forms. They describe their observations, ideas and feelings about arts works and experiences they encounter at school, home or in the community.</i></p>	<p>Year 1-2 <i>By the end of Year 2, students describe where and why people make and experience artworks and identify how ideas and meanings can be communicated in artworks. Students experiment with visual arts materials and processes. They create artworks that communicate ideas and share their work with audiences in informal contexts.</i></p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VADEA advocate for the inclusion of subject specific content descriptions for Foundation 	<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The term people should be replaced by the discipline specific term 'artist' and 'audience'
<p>Year 3-4 <i>By the end of Year 4, students describe the ways that artists communicate ideas and concepts in artworks created for different purposes and/or at different times and places. Students respond to inspiration and experiment with visual arts practices to develop ideas for artworks. They use visual conventions, techniques and processes to create artworks that communicate their ideas. Students present and share their work and ideas with audiences.</i></p>	<p>Year 5-6 <i>By the end of Year 6, students explain the ways that visual artists communicate ideas and concepts in artworks. They demonstrate and describe how the visual arts can be used to maintain, continue and revitalise culture. Students demonstrate developing visual arts practice as they experiment with visual arts processes, visual conventions, materials and techniques. They respond to inspiration to create artworks that communicate their intentions, and curate exhibits of artworks to communicate these intentions to audiences and discuss responses to the work.</i></p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The standard F-6 Achievement Standard is under the incorrect heading 	<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The phrase 'respond to inspiration' should be replaced to 'respond to their world'
<p>Year 7-8 <i>By the end of Year 8, students analyse the ways that visual artists communicate ideas and concepts through their visual arts practice. They demonstrate and describe how they and other visual artists work within ethical and legal requirements and protocols. Students develop their own visual arts practice as they manipulate visual conventions, materials and techniques to create artworks that communicate their ideas and intentions. They curate exhibits to enhance the communication of artists' ideas and intentions. They analyse responses to the works.</i></p>	<p>Year 9-10 <i>By the end of Year 10, students evaluate the ways that audience perceptions and ideas are challenged through visual arts works and visual artists' practice. They analyse and evaluate the ways that artists communicate concepts in their work and apply this understanding when critiquing their own visual arts practice. Students demonstrate personal style through their developing visual arts practice. They draw on inspiration from multiple sources to create artworks that communicate views, concepts and intentions. Students curate and present exhibitions of artworks to communicate their intentions and engage audiences. They evaluate responses to the works.</i></p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the term 'world and 'interpret': "students analyse and interpret the ways that visual artists communicate ideas and concepts about the world through their visual arts practice" "They demonstrate and describe how they and other visual artists work within ethical and legal requirements and protocols." This sentence is inconsistently used in other arts forms, despite it forming part of a Content Description. For example Drama states "They discuss 	<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Students evaluate ways that..." change to "critically evaluate and interpret ways that audience..." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues of alignment between the first sentence and whether this is accounted for in the Content Descriptions "They evaluate responses to the works." change to "critically evaluate responses to the artworks".

how drama can be used to maintain, continue and revitalise cultures.” VADEA suggests similar language is included across these forms in the Achievement Standard for Visual Arts to maintain consistency, given the Content Description remains the same across forms.

- “Works” in last sentence should be artworks - inconsistent use compared to Achievement Standard in 3-4, 5-6

- Word ‘work’ should be replaced with ‘artworks’ to ensure discipline specific terminology across the year groups.
- Replace *personal style* with *growing autonomy*

Establishing first class, unimpeachable Visual Arts curriculum

VADEA understands that a high quality and conceptually robust visual arts curriculum should consider the artifactuality of artworks, as real objects (Brown, 1993); the ascription of meaning to artefacts; students’ belief systems; representational opacity of artworks and artists’ intentionality; and the agency of the world (Brown, 1999/2017).

According to Clark and Zimmerman (1983), “important art content to be learned in adequate art curriculum should include knowledge, understanding, and skills about art history, art criticism, art production, and aesthetics” (p. 78). Clark and Zimmerman (1978) also state that, “the roles and activities of the professional artist, art critic, art historian and aesthetician be established as models for outcomes of a visual arts education program” and “that the professional practices of experts from these four roles are appropriate sources for the content and design of educational activities unique to the arts” (p. 34).

For educators in NSW, the syllabus has a foundation in three interrelated and integral content areas which represents a continuum of learning from Kindergarten to Year 12. Within this continuum students develop increasing intellectual autonomy as they learn about and apply:

- core concepts of artists, world, artwork, audience and practice in the Conceptual Framework to instances of artworld practice;
- develop understandings of Practice through art making, art criticism and history, and;
- draw on subjective, cultural, structural and postmodern frameworks of meaning to orientate their thinking in the classroom.

The most essential of these is the Conceptual Framework, which represents the ontological basis of our syllabus. This consists of four core concepts -

- a. artist
- b. artwork
- c. audience
- d. world represented/subject matter

The empirical research that underscores the adoption of these domain specific concepts in the Visual Arts curriculum reveals that they:

- represent the basic ideas students typically rely on when drawing on their intuitive theories of art to understand and explain artworld phenomena during the primary school years;
- support students in learning to understand and apply these concepts when talking about, interpreting and making artworks. In fact, students necessarily engage in increasingly more complex explanations of art as they acquire knowledge, skills and understanding of how these concepts are related to one another, and;
- are not discrete entities but function in a network of intentional relations that students draw on when making art as well as interpreting what art means.

These concepts and the relationships between them also support teachers to research examples in the Visual Arts and structure, plan and implement artmaking and interpretive investigations for students in all stages.

When applied in the classroom, the core Visual Arts concepts represent starting points for learning in making and interpreting investigations. These forms of practice in art necessarily involve understanding of the role of artists and audiences respectively and how they engage in transactions with artworks, other artists, other audiences, and the subject matter represented in artworks.

Conclusion

There is a strong impetus in the AC: The Arts to make the curriculum more manageable for primary levels, “as integrated approaches will be easier to identify, plan and teach to progress student learning” (p.8, What has changed and why? Proposed revisions to the F-10 Australian Curriculum: The Arts). As a result, the newly devised organising Strands default to a formulaic, process-based approach to content across the Arts. Whilst this approach may be appropriate in the primary context, the implications for 7-10 are significant and concerning. The curriculum does not acknowledge the inherent cognitive shift across F-10 in making and critical and historical interpretations of art and this is partly due to this problematic organisational structure.

The curriculum does not account for learning in art which entails the development of conceptual and practical knowledge. The lack of any explicit acknowledgement in this proposal that students develop naïve and increasingly sophisticated theories of art and understandings of practice, grounded in the logical constraints of beliefs, practical action and conceptual development, impinges upon the possibility for Visual Arts to be regarded as an academic discipline in the broader curriculum.

The curriculum does not support the development of general capabilities. Without an adequate description of knowledge, skills and values in making and interpretation, students will be precluded from demonstrating competence in literacy skills, the integration of numeracy, developing critical and creative thinking or skills in ethical decision making. The absence of discipline-specific content means students won't have the opportunity to demonstrate competence in art as well as in 21st century skills.

The curriculum does not allow for the development of students' understanding of the important contribution Visual Arts makes to society. Without a feasible and reflexive account of the discipline, this proposal denies students opportunities for understanding how they may aspire to become successful creative contributors to Australian culture as artists, critics, curators, art historians, conservators, researchers in art, art educators and consumers of art beyond schooling. These important aspects of the field of Visual Arts are ignored in this curriculum.

In AC:TA - Visual Arts, the Introduction text pays lip service to the concepts of “artists, visual arts works, world and audience”. Whilst they are highlighted in the Introduction (p.1) they are not adequately reflected throughout the body of the curriculum. In fact, the object of study - the artwork and the world represented are excluded from the Core Concepts of the curriculum. The glaring omission of this core conceptual framework throughout The Arts curriculum is at the heart of the structural issues which plagues it.

Written on behalf of VADEA NSW Members,

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