



BOARD OF STUDIES
NEW SOUTH WALES



Creative Arts K–6

School Planning for the Creative Arts



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The *Education Act 1990* (NSW) sets out minimum curriculum requirements for primary schools. It requires that courses of study must be provided in each of the six key learning areas for primary education for each child during each year. In particular, the Act states that 'courses of study in both art and music are to be included in the key learning area of Creative and Practical Arts'. The *Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus* enables schools to meet this requirement and to broaden students' learning experiences in drama and dance.

The *Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus* is designed to be used by classroom teachers. It is acknowledged that schools may use other staffing arrangements, such as a combination of teachers specialising in one or more of the artforms supporting classroom teachers.

It is anticipated that schools will differ considerably in how they go about their planning for teaching and learning in the Creative Arts. It is also acknowledged that there are many different ways that the Creative Arts may be managed, taught, and organised in schools. The use of specialist teachers, particular school-based programs, and the interests of classroom teachers mean that schools may offer learning experiences in various ways.

The *Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus* is organised in the following way which should assist teachers in their planning. The syllabus contains:

- an aim that encompasses learning that applies for each of the artforms
- objectives for Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance
- an overview of learning in each artform
- stage statements for Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance
- outcomes and indicators for each stage in Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance
- staged content that articulates what students learn to do and learn about (including *Implications for learning and teaching*, with a range of suggested activities entitled *Typically teachers will*)
- a statement about scope in each of Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance
- advice on planning, programming, assessing, reporting and evaluating in the Creative Arts.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following frequently asked questions raise points that schools and teachers may need to consider in their planning for the Creative Arts. The intentions of the questions are to promote discussion amongst teachers about what would be most suited to their school context and the interests of teachers, students and the school community. Each question and the focus for discussion should encourage teachers to consider the range of expertise within their school; students' prior and current experiences and expectations for learning in Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance; and access to and use of resources.

Teachers are encouraged to think about the options and to consider that they may adapt these to a year, stage or a whole-school approach to teaching and learning in the Creative Arts over K–6.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Where do we start? We haven't done much in any of the artforms.
- Why do we need to teach in this area of the curriculum?
- We have done some singing and painting. Is this enough?
- Do all of the artforms need to be taught each year?
- We are offering Visual Arts and Music each for about an hour per week in the school. When and how can we offer opportunities in Drama and Dance without diminishing Visual Arts and Music experience for students?
- How can we ensure adequate scope and sequence of experiences in and across the artforms?
- Across the school there are a small number of teachers with a range of expertise in Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance. How can we maximise this expertise for the benefit of the students and the whole school?
- How can we/I teach each of the artforms?
- We/I know a little about the Visual Arts and/or Music but realise we/I need to spend some more time in these areas. How can we/I do this?
- How can we provide learning opportunities for students in Drama and Dance? How can we plan to develop these over time?
- How can we utilise the support of the local and wider community as a resource for teaching and learning in the Creative Arts?
- How can we assess effectively in each of the artforms?
- How can we report effectively in each of the artforms?
- Where has craft gone?



Consideration can be given to the questions at the level of:

- the whole school
- teachers teaching a stage or year group
- individual teachers.

Where do we start? We haven't done much in any of the artforms.

Focus for discussion

- Read the *Staged Content* in the syllabus together with the *Implications for learning and teaching* sections in each of the artforms for each stage and consider the areas of student need and interest, links to students' prior experiences and resources available.
- Read the *Stage Statements, Outcomes and Indicators* and *Scope in the Artforms* sections of the syllabus and consider factors such as teacher expertise and student interest.
- Consider how you will plan learning experiences for students in Visual Arts and Music throughout each year.
- Give some consideration to how you may introduce Drama and Dance experiences over time by focusing on, for example, particular times in the year for units of work, and relating learning experiences in Music and Dance.
- Think about how you may be able to utilise the interests of the staff to plan an overview for students' learning across K–6 in Visual Arts and Music.
- Work towards long-term goals for this area of the curriculum but be realistic in what can be achieved in the short and longer term.
- Have a number of teachers trial the units in the support documents and keep a journal of what occurred, how students responded and areas where further support is needed. Reflect on these ideas with other staff members and use these ideas to develop professional development plans in the school.
- Document the work of students with, for example, photographs, videos and actual work, over time and have them evaluate what they have discovered, learnt and achieved.
- Seek the advice of those who are more confident in this area to suggest and demonstrate ideas — some team teaching may help.
- Analyse your current resources and consider prints, instruments, other items, materials and resource needs that may assist you in your teaching.
- Use exhibitions, performances and other events to foster interest in students' learning in each of the artforms.

Why do we need to teach in this area of the curriculum?

Focus for discussion

- The *Education Act 1990* (NSW) sets out minimum curriculum requirements for primary schools. It requires that courses of study must be provided in each of the six key learning areas for primary education for each child during each year. In particular, the Act states that 'courses of study in both art and music are to be included in the key learning area of Creative and Practical Arts'. The *Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus* enables schools to meet this requirement and to broaden students' learning experiences in drama and dance.
- Each artform offers students a unique body of knowledge, skills, understanding and values that cannot be accessed through other areas in the curriculum.
- Each of the artforms plays a significant role in how meaning is made in people's lives and provides an opportunity to explore social and cultural values and different forms of communication.
- The artforms provide students with opportunities for personal expression, enjoyment, creative action, imagination, emotional response, aesthetic pleasure and the creation of shared meanings.
- The artforms acknowledge the relationships between the artist (including musician, actor, dancer etc), the artwork (including the music, dance or drama created), the audience for the work and the representation of the world in the artwork.
- Each of the artforms reflects 'real world' experiences and is linked to cultural practices in our own and other societies and cultures.
- The knowledge, skills and values of each artform are discrete and unique. Involvement in one artform cannot be replicated by involvement in another artform. It is recommended that all four artforms are taught over time.

We have done some singing and painting. Is this enough?

Focus for discussion

- In Visual Arts, teachers need to consider the learning experiences they provide for students in making and appreciating, taking into account staged content, outcomes, subject matter and forms. The *Values and Attitudes in the Creative Arts* on page 18 of the *Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus* provide different ways for teachers to approach content and further advice is given in the *Implications for learning and teaching* section in each stage. Painting is one of the forms identified in the syllabus; however, on its own, it does not meet requirements for Visual Arts.
- In Music, teachers need to consider the learning experiences they provide for students in performing, organising sound and listening, taking into account musical concepts and a variety of repertoire. The *Values and Attitudes in the Creative Arts* on page 18 of the *Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus* provide different ways for teachers to approach content and further advice is given in the *Implications for learning and teaching* section in each stage. Singing is an aspect of performing; however, on its own, it does not meet requirements for Music.



Do all of the artforms need to be taught each year?

Focus for discussion

- Visual Arts and Music must be taught each year. This reflects the requirements of the *Education Act 1990* (NSW) and the content in the syllabus.
- Drama and Dance extend the range of creative experiences offered to students.
- There is no requirement that all of the artforms be taught concurrently.
- Links with other artforms and links with other KLAs may provide a means of teaching in which the outcomes and indicators within a unit of work may suggest achievement in one or more of the artforms or an artform with another KLA.

We are offering Visual Arts and Music each for about an hour per week in the school. When and how can we offer opportunities in Drama and Dance without diminishing Visual Arts and Music experience for students?

Focus for discussion

- Initially explore ways that provide opportunities for the linking of experiences, for example, investigate how children can move and respond to music. This could link to the Early Stage 1 music unit *Sing and Move* in the *Creative Arts K–6 Units of Work* support document and the Composing outcome in Dance Early Stage 1 DAES1.2.
- Consider how time is used in this and other areas of the curriculum. Review and reconsider what is of significance to teachers, students and the community to build some time for these newer areas.
- Investigate ways to build links about the selection of subject matter or a theme in one or more of the artforms, eg responses to a special event or an imaginary place may provide the basis for an improvisation in Drama and act as a stimulus for subject matter in Visual Arts.
- Explore how a significant event in the school or community may form the basis of a unit of work that involves Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance activities.
- Begin by allocating an agreed amount of time to these newer artforms and evaluate the significance of experiences offered to students, eg 20 minutes per week over 5 weeks. Try to record the sequence of experiences and reflect on these in a small or large groups — eg through year group meetings, a Creative Arts Committee, a full staff meeting.

How can we ensure adequate scope and sequence of experiences in and across the artforms?

Focus for discussion

- Consider how scope and sequence is discussed in the syllabus — within, rather than across the artforms (refer to *Staged Content* in the syllabus together with the *Implications for learning and teaching* sections in each of the artforms for each stage, together with the *Outcomes and Indicators* and *Scope in the Artforms* sections of the syllabus).

- Within units of work ensure that activities are offered to students as part of a sequence of experiences rather than as isolated or one-off experiences. See the units of work in the *Creative Arts K–6 Units of Work* support document for additional information and examples about sequencing. For example in the Stage 1 Dance unit *Get ready, let's dance* in the *Creative Arts K–6 Units of Work* support document, students engage in the following sequence: explore non-locomotor body movements; explore isolation of body parts; combine non-locomotor movements into a sequence; explore locomotor movements; explore the combining of locomotor and non-locomotor movements into a sequence; and perform and reflect upon their work.
- Ensure that units of work build on previous experiences and further develop students' conceptual understandings and skills in the artforms rather than simply providing more activities.

Across the school there are a small number of teachers with a range of expertise in Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance. How can we maximise this expertise for the benefit of the students and the whole school?

Focus for discussion

- Encourage these teachers to discuss with other teachers, parents and carers the value of children's involvement in Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance as a way of developing conceptual understandings of the world, and as a way of representing children's thinking.
- Encourage these teachers to team teach with other less confident or less experienced teachers and share their knowledge with other teachers.
- Encourage these teachers to discuss innovative approaches to working in the artforms with students and making links with other artforms and other KLAs.
- Consider using these more expert teachers as relief from face-to-face teachers or mentors to guide other teachers in understanding what can be achieved with students in Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance.
- Discuss the issue of setting expectations for students' learning in Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance beyond those of participation. Consider how expectations affect what is taught in other areas of the curriculum and their effects on learning and teaching. Consider these expectations for learning and teaching in Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance.
- Encourage these teachers to share their expertise with others in staff meetings and/or by contributing to a school plan.
- Consider ways that children's work can be presented in the school and local community through exhibitions, arts events, performances and festivals.
- Talk to parents about student learning in the artforms and work towards building a culture of teacher and student achievement in this KLA.



How can we/I teach each of the artforms?

Focus for discussion

- Consider planning for activities over a one or two-year cycle.
- Focus on particular units that provide opportunities for students to engage in learning that challenges and extends them beyond that which they currently know and can do.
- Move away from isolated or one-off activities and concentrate more on experiences that build on subject knowledge, skills and understandings and values and that raise students' expectations about learning.
- Explore meaningful ways to link learning between the artforms and/or with other KLAs.
- Identify teachers with particular expertise who can assist in supporting other teachers to make the learning experiences happen in a positive way.
- Concentrate on one or two of the artforms which may relate to one or more teachers' interest and expertise and use this as the ongoing depth experiences, that is, 'piggy back' other experiences on these.

We/I know a little about the Visual Arts and/or Music but realise we/I need to spend some more time in these areas. How can we/I do this?

Focus for discussion

- Explore the *Content, Outcomes and Indicators* and *Implications for learning and teaching* in the syllabus in the Visual Arts and Music sections. Examine links that you can make between the selection of Subject Matter and Forms in Visual Arts, and Concepts and Repertoire in Music: move beyond isolated or one-off activities, and work towards developing students' conceptual understandings of the artforms as well as developing their skills.
- Consider having a particular focus for units other than that which you may usually do: for example, in Visual Arts develop a unit with a strong focus of looking at and appreciating other artists' work; in Music, have students organise sound to develop their own simple compositions.
- Use the strategies suggested in the *Implications for learning and teaching* section within the *Content* for each artform and each stage to develop your initial ideas.
- Use the values and attitudes referred to in the *Overview of Learning in the Creative Arts* to investigate different ways of generating ideas for units of work, eg begin a unit with a focus on culture in the students' work rather than on self-expression.
- Use the sample units in the *Creative Arts K–6 Units of Work* support document as a springboard for different approaches and as a way to develop plans suited to the needs of your students.
- Seek out some workshops to develop your own expertise further.

- Share ideas, samples of work and resources with friends and colleagues.
- Read articles about the visual arts and music in the daily and weekend newspapers or journals and develop a folder of interesting ideas that could be explored from these.
- Watch visual arts and music programs on the TV to develop your own understanding of the artforms, listen to the arts programs on the radio, and access other information from the Internet.
- Have students write about and annotate their work. They might collect interesting samples, make notes, sketches, keep scores etc of their visual arts and music experiences in a journal, portfolio or diary as a record of their own progress. This self-evaluation can act as a springboard for new ideas and provide the students with a record, along with other work, of what they have learnt. Teachers should assist in this and also collect their own samples of student work etc.

**How can we provide learning experiences for students in Drama and Dance?
How can we plan to develop these over time?**

Focus for discussion

- Use the strategies suggested in the *Typically teachers will* section within the *Content* for each artform and each stage to develop your initial ideas.
- Use the sample *Units of Work* as they are or modify them as required to suit the developmental needs, interests and abilities of your students.
- As in each of the artforms, a sequence of experiences provides a stronger foundation for learning than an isolated or one-off experience. Plan to teach units in a sequential and developmental sense, building on the previous experiences of students at particular points in a year and for a number of sessions over a term or semester.
- Consider how the professional development needs of teachers may be addressed, eg by workshops, inservices, team teaching.

How can we utilise the support of the local and wider community as a resource for teaching and learning in the Creative Arts?

Focus for discussion

- Invite parents, grandparents and carers to talk to children about their artistic interests, including their own work and artists whose work they enjoy.
- Invite parents with a special interest in an artform to model what they can do. These people may be prepared to offer workshops for children.
- Use excursions to galleries, museums, concerts, performances, public spaces and places, and other artistic events as a stimulus and 'real world' experience of the arts for students. Build on these experiences in units of work.



- Invite practitioners such as artists, architects, designers, musicians, actors, dancers, writers and other performers and composers to ‘perform’ for students and/or to talk to children about the focus of their work. Build on these experiences in units of work.
- Survey parents and carers about how they may be involved. For example, a builder in a local area may be able to provide timber or plastic offcuts for sculpture or ‘home-made’ instruments; a person employed in paper manufacturing or a local newspaper may be able to provide paper offcuts, old clothes, fabrics, ribbons and furniture, which may be used for improvisation, mime and other drama and dance experiences.
- Utilise local gallery, museum and other arts organisations’ outreach programs.
- Have students exhibit their work or perform their work in local exhibitions and events.
- Use virtual galleries and other cultural sites on the Internet.

How can we assess effectively in each of the artforms?

Focus for discussion

- Consider how assessing is discussed in the syllabus — within, rather than across the artforms (refer to the section *General Principles for Planning, Programming, Assessing, Reporting and Evaluating in Creative Arts K–6*, pp 103–108 of the *Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus*).
- Use the *Outcomes* in conjunction with the *Stage Statements* in each artform to understand and evaluate student knowledge, skills, understanding and achievement within the artforms.
- Analyse student worksamples by using the sample indicators in the *Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus* as well as indicators specific to the unit of work being taught that display achievement towards the outcomes.
- Investigate using a range of assessment strategies that
 - provide students with opportunities to demonstrate what they know, what they have learnt to do and what they have learnt about the artforms
 - accurately reflect students’ capabilities
 - measure what is intended to be measured
 - foster students’ self-esteem and motivation.
- Ensure that experiences selected for assessment throughout the units of work provide students with a range of opportunities to show their full potential in understanding: Making and Appreciating in Visual Arts; Performing, Organising Sound and Listening in Music; Making, Performing and Appreciating in Drama; and Performing, Composing and Appreciating in Dance.

How can we report effectively in each of the artforms?

Focus for discussion

- Consider how reporting is discussed in the syllabus — within, rather than across the artforms (refer to the section *General Principles for Planning, Programming, Assessing, Reporting and Evaluating in Creative Arts K–6*, pp 103–108 of the *Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus*).
- Make reference to the artforms that students have been working in so that parents and other teachers are conscious of the breadth and depth of learning experienced.
- Refer to the specific learning experiences in each of the artforms: Making and Appreciating in Visual Arts; Performing, Organising Sound and Listening in Music; Making, Performing and Appreciating in Drama; and Performing, Composing and Appreciating in Dance.
- Implement reporting strategies that provide information about student achievement, strengths, needs, and required additional support.
- Comment on the ways that parents can help at home.

Where has craft gone?

Focus for discussion

- Many of the learning experiences traditionally associated with craft and the development of fine motor skills, particularly in Early Stage 1–Stage 2, can be accommodated within forms such as sculpture and 3-D forms, fibre, and ceramics.
- Visual Arts, within this syllabus, encourages teachers to think about subject matter, forms and values in an interrelated way. The selection of subject matter influences what forms may be worked with and the associated values that may be explored. Having young children cut and paste to form a collage or montage may be best developed when it is considered in conjunction with forms such as painting and 3-D forms. In this way the skills activity need not function as an end in itself.
- Traditional techniques used in areas such as weaving, appliqué and other forms associated with craft practice may continue to be offered in visual arts — see the Visual Arts unit *A Vase of Flowers* in the *Creative Arts K–6 Units of Work* support document as an example. Teachers should seek to provide a range of artistic activities across the broad fields of art, craft and design within the visual arts.
- Consider the Visual Arts content, values and attitudes in the *Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus* and discuss how ideas, methods, and materials can be explored by using these. The *Overview of Learning in Visual Arts* (refer to pp 10–11 of the *Creative Arts K–6 Syllabus*), *Content* and the *Values and Attitudes* (p 18) also provide for the appreciation of a wide range of different types of works produced by artists, craftspeople and designers, including works often associated with craft. They offer opportunities for teachers and students to investigate various practices of artists, craftspeople and designers, and to consider audience responses to their work.



- Other craft experiences may be offered in other areas in the primary curriculum. Some focus on designing and making within programs offered in Science and Technology will provide for the development of skills traditionally associated with craft.
- Teachers should also consider how contemporary and relevant their interpretation of craft is. Decisions need to be made about what will be of interest and relevance to students and how their learning connects with real-world experiences.