RATIONAL: DANCE

This rationale complements and extends the rationale for The Arts learning area.

Dance is expressive movement with purpose and form. Through Dance, students represent, question and celebrate human experience, using the body as the instrument and movement as the medium for personal, social, emotional, spiritual and physical communication. Like all art forms, dance has the capacity to engage, inspire and enrich all students, exciting the imagination and encouraging students to reach their creative and expressive potential.

Dance enables students to develop a movement vocabulary with which to explore and refine imaginative ways of moving both individually and collaboratively. They choreograph, rehearse, perform and respond as they engage with dance practice and practitioners in their own and others’ cultures and communities. Students use the elements of dance to explore choreography and performance and to practise choreographic, technical and expressive skills. Students respond to their own and others’ dances using physical and verbal communication.

Active participation as dancers, choreographers and audience members promotes wellbeing and social inclusion. Learning in and through Dance enhances students’ knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures and contexts and develops their personal, social and cultural identity.

AIMS

In addition to the overarching aims of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, Dance knowledge, understanding and skills ensure that, individually and collaboratively, students develop:

- body awareness and technical and expressive skills to communicate through movement confidently, creatively and intelligently
- choreographic and performance skills and appreciation of their own and others’ dances
- aesthetic, artistic and cultural understanding of dance in past and contemporary contexts as choreographers, performers and audiences
- respect for and knowledge of the diverse purposes, traditions, histories and cultures of dance by making and responding as active participants and informed audiences.

Organisation and Content Structure

In the Australian Curriculum, the Arts is a learning area that draws together related but distinct art forms. While these art forms have close relationships and are often used in interrelated ways, each involves different approaches to arts practices and critical and creative thinking that reflect distinct bodies of knowledge, understanding and skills. The curriculum examines past, current and emerging arts practices in each art form across a range of cultures and places.

The Australian Curriculum: The Arts Foundation to Year 10 enables exploration of the dynamic relationships between Arts subjects. This can involve students making and responding to artworks in traditional, contemporary and emerging forms, using materials, techniques and technologies from one Arts subject to support learning in another. In this twenty-first-century Arts curriculum, students explore innovative and hybrid art forms which extend and challenge art making and combine practices of two or more art forms.

Within all Arts subjects, design facilitates the creative and practical realisation of ideas. Design thinking is a fundamental strategy in the experimentation, refinement and resolution of an artwork and takes into account logical, critical and aesthetic considerations. Many different words describe design within the Arts such as choreographing, narrating, devising, constructing, composing and sculpting. Design connects the different art forms so that they inform each other, providing possibilities for students to create innovative and hybrid forms of art.

Strands - Content descriptions in each Arts subject reflect the interrelated strands of Making and Responding.

- Making includes understanding about, using knowledge, skills, techniques, processes, materials and technologies to explore ideas and practices that make artworks and communicate ideas and intentions.
- Responding includes exploring, responding to, analysing and interpreting artworks.

Relationship between the strands: Making and Responding are intrinsically connected. Together they provide students with knowledge, understanding and skills as artists, performers and audience and develop students’ skills in critical and creative thinking. As students make artworks they actively respond to their developing artwork and the artworks of others; as students respond to artworks they draw on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired through their experiences in making artworks.

Viewpoints - In both making and responding to artworks, students consider a range of viewpoints or perspectives through which artworks can be explored and interpreted. These include the contexts in which the artworks are made by artists and experienced by audiences. The world can be interpreted through different contexts, including social, cultural and historical contexts. Based on this curriculum, key questions are provided as a framework for developing students’ knowledge, understanding and inquiry skills.

In Design, students use the knowledge to communicate and express meaning through purposeful movement. Dance practice integrates choreography, performance, and appreciation of and responses to dance and dance making.

Knowledge and skills of Dance

In Dance, students develop kinaesthetic knowledge through the development of dance knowledge and skills and their engagement with the materials of dance. Early sensory experience using the body as the instrument of expression and movement as the medium is fundamental to the development of this kinaesthetic knowledge in dance and contributes to students’ overall aesthetic understanding.

Dances may have a particular ‘look’, ‘sound’ and ‘feel’ that students respond to positively or with indifference according to the engagement of their senses, emotions and cognition. They consider their perceptions of different dances and their notions of what is appealing or not appealing in the bodies, movement, sounds, aural and visual settings of dances they participate in or view.

Through Dance, students learn to reflect critically on their own aesthetic preferences by considering social, historical and cultural influences, and the effects of local and global cultures upon their tastes and decision making. From early family experiences, students’ aesthetic preferences are nurtured by an increasing range of cultural influences. The wider social, historical and cultural contexts for dance present students with differing aesthetic preferences, tastes and viewpoints determined by people and their cultures.

The Arts across Foundation to Year 10: Years 3-6

Through the primary years, students draw on their growing experience of family, school and the wider community to develop their understanding of the world and their relationships with others. In Years 3 to 6, learning in the Arts occurs both through integrated curriculum and The Arts subject-specific approaches. Some of the instinct to play evident in the early years becomes formalised into both experimentation and artistic practice. Students in these years increasingly recognise the connections between the Arts and other learning areas.

While arts in the local community continues to be the initial focus for learning in the Arts, students are also aware of and interested in arts from more distant locations and the curriculum provides opportunities to build on this curiosity. Students learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples tell history through combinations of art forms. They learn that particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories have been recorded and will explore the meanings of stories and styles in which they are told. Students have opportunities to participate in a variety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts forms that are publicly available for broader participation in their community. Students may also extend their cultural expression with appropriate community consultation and endorsement.

Students also study artworks which represent Australia’s connections with other places, the effects of these interconnections and the factors that affect people’s knowledge and opinions of other places.

During these years of schooling, students’ thoughts processes become more logical and consistent, and they gradually become more independent as learners. Students talk about changes in their own thinking, performance or making, giving reasons for their actions and explaining and demonstrating their organisation of ideas. They begin to recognise, appreciate and value the different ways in which others think, act and respond to artworks and consider how practices in the Arts may be enacted and sustained.

Content descriptions in each Arts subject focus on similar concepts and skills that, across the bands, present a developmental sequence of knowledge, understanding and skills. The focus of each content description in Foundation to Year 6 expands into more specific content descriptions for Years 7 to 10 as presented in the table below. For transition purposes from primary to secondary in Years 7–8 and consistency state-wide, generalist primary teachers at Year 7 could focus on the four initial similar concepts and skills eg, the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 6th Content Descriptions, with the deeper and expanded concepts being the focus in year 8 eg, the 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 7th Content Descriptions. E.g. the focus in Year 7 could then be on: 8.1, 8.3, 8.5 and 8.6, and in Year 8: 8.2, 8.4, 8.5 and 8.7.

Learning Area The Arts: Years 3 and 4 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 4, students describe and discuss similarities and differences between artworks they make and those to which they respond. They discuss how they and others organise the elements and processes in artworks.

Students collaborate to plan and make artworks that communicate ideas.

Dance: Years 3 and 4 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 4, students describe and discuss similarities and differences between dances they make, perform and view. They discuss how they and others organise the elements of dance in dances depending on the purpose.

Students structure movements into dance sequences and use the elements of dance and choreographic devices to represent a story or mood. They collaborate to make dances and perform with control, accuracy, projection and focus.
Years 3–4: Level Description: Dance
In Years 3 and 4, learning in Dance builds on the experience of the previous band. It involves students making and responding to dance independently and collaboratively with their classmates and teachers. Students extend their awareness of the body as they incorporate actions using different body parts, body zones and bases. They explore and experiment with directions, time, dynamics and relationships using groupings, objects and props. They extend their fundamental movement skills adding and combining more complex movements. Students use technical skills including accuracy and control, timing, and body awareness to communicate ideas or intentions through dance.

Examples of knowledge and skills in Dance

The following information serves to articulate the main parts of the broader conceptual areas of Knowledge and Skills. These areas of dance include:

- **Body**: The body is moved in a variety of ways, including locomotor and non-locomotor movements, to express ideas and communicate messages.
- **Movement quality**: This includes the use of various movement qualities such as smooth, sustained, and sharp, to convey different meanings.
- **Time**: Time is used to create patterns and sequences in dance, with an understanding of the importance of timing.
- **Space**: Space is used to create different visual and auditory experiences, including the use of positive and negative space.
- **Force**: Force is used to add impact and power to dance movements.
- **Relationships**: Relationships are used to create interactions and groupings within a dance.

**Elements of dance**

- **Body practices**: These include understanding and applying body alignment and expressive skills including projection and focus. As they experience dance, students draw on dances from a range of cultures, times and locations. They explore the dance and influences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and those of the Asia region. Students learn about dance from more distant locations that may be represented in their community. Students learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dances use expressive skills to communicate ideas and tell stories. As they make and respond to dance, students explore meaning and interpretation, elements and forms including shapes and sequences of dances, and social and cultural contexts of dance. They make personal evaluations of dances. Students learn about warm-up and cool down for safe dance practice and care of dress and footwear. Their understanding of the role of the artist and the audience builds upon their experience from the previous band. As an audience, students focus their attention on the performance and respond to the performance. They consider why and how audiences respond to performance.

- **Space**: The three-dimensional space is used to create patterns and sequences in dance, with an understanding of the importance of timing.
- **Time**: The element of time is used to create patterns and sequences in dance, with an understanding of the importance of timing.
- **Force**: Force is used to add impact and power to dance movements.
- **Relationships**: Relationships are used to create interactions and groupings within a dance.
- **Projections**: Projections are used to communicate ideas and connect with the audience.
- **Object manipulation**: Objects are used to create and enhance the visual and auditory experience of dance.
- **Roles and functions**: Roles and functions are used to create different visual and auditory experiences.
- **Music and other sound**: Music and other sound are used to create and enhance the visual and auditory experience of dance.

**Fundamental movement skills**

- **Locomotor movements**: These are used to move through space, including running, skipping, hopping, and jumping.
- **Non-locomotor movements**: These are used to create more complex and expressive movements, including bending, twisting, and turning.
- **Body control**: This includes the ability to control and manipulate body parts, including the head, arms, and legs.
- **Body awareness**: This includes the ability to understand and control the body in relation to space and time.
- **Alignment**: This includes the ability to maintain and control body alignment, including the ability to balance and maintain posture.
- **Spatial relationships**: These are used to create different visual and auditory experiences, including the use of positive and negative space.

**Expressive skills**

- **Projection and focus**: These are used to create different visual and auditory experiences.

**Safe dance practices**

- **Warming up**: Warming up is used to prepare the body for dance, including the ability to control and manipulate body parts.
- **Cooling down**: Cooling down is used to relax the body after dance, including the ability to control and manipulate body parts.

**Choreographic devices**

- **Contrast**: Contrast is used to create and enhance the visual and auditory experience of dance.
- **Repetition**: Repetition is used to create and enhance the visual and auditory experience of dance.

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**Examples of viewpoints and questions within the Dance Content**

- **Making**: Students make and respond to dance, exploring meaning and interpretation, elements and forms including shapes and sequences of dances, and social and cultural contexts of dance. They make personal evaluations of dances. Students learn about warm-up and cool down for safe dance practice and care of dress and footwear. Their understanding of the role of the artist and the audience builds upon their experience from the previous band. As an audience, students focus their attention on the performance and respond to the performance. They consider why and how audiences respond to performance.

- **Responding**: Students learn about warm-up and cool down for safe dance practice and care of dress and footwear. They learn about the role of the artist and the audience. They consider why and how audiences respond to performance.

- **Meaning**: Meanings and interpretations are informed by an understanding of how the elements of dance, materials, skills and processes are used in differing social, cultural and historical contexts.

- **Options and contexts**: Students learn about warm-up and cool down for safe dance practice and care of dress and footwear. They learn about the role of the artist and the audience. They consider why and how audiences respond to performance.

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**Years 3–4: Content Descriptions: Dance**

1. **Improvise and structure movement ideas for dance sequences using the elements of dance and choreographic devices**
2. **Practise technical skills safely in fundamental movements**
3. **Perform dances using expressive skills to communicate ideas, including telling cultural or community stories**
4. **Identify how the elements of dance and production elements express ideas in dance they make, perform and experience as audience, including exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dances.**

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**NB**: It is advised that the ‘Learning in Dance’ two page introduction (Subject, structure) is used along with this ‘explorer’ paper. Download it from the Australian Curriculum website.

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**Source**: www.australiancurriculum.edu.au accessed 22/02/2017