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**Drama rising, starring the Famous Five: Investigating the relationship between current drama practice in Year 1 settings and the new Arts Curriculum**

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drama practice in Year 1 settings and the new  
Arts Curriculum

# Background

## Australian Curriculum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

- 2007 - *National Education and Arts Statement (MCEETYA)*
- 2008 - *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*
- 2009 *Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)* was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

# Problem – the Arts in schools now?

“...in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in western cultures and education systems, the Arts have increasingly been regarded as peripheral, relegated to the margins, the extra curricula” (*Ewing, 2010, p. 1*).

- Usual for one or two of the arts subjects taught;
- During child’s primary school years, he/she may not experience all five of the arts subjects.

## Reasons?

- Self efficacy beliefs;
- School policy and administrative directives;
- Teacher training - lack of sufficient in-service teacher professional learning in the Arts;
- Perceived lack of time.

# Rationale

## *New Arts Curriculum:*

- *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts – Oct 2010;*
- *Shape of the Australian Curriculum Version 2.0 - Dec 2010;*
- *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts – Aug 2011;*
- *The Arts Draft Curriculum – Aug 2012*

All students from Kindergarten to Year 8 will experience and study all **five** arts forms: **dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts** for a minimum of **two hours per week**.

# Rationale

**EYLF** - “extend and enrich children’s learning from birth to five years and through to the transition to school,” (COAG, 2009, p. 5).

**Year 1** - important transition stage for young children in their schooling journey.

**New Arts Curriculum** - “build on the Early Years Learning Framework and are taught using a purposeful play-centred approach” and “enhance play-based learning,” (ACARA, 2010, p. 10).

# Purpose and research questions

## 1. What are Year 1 teachers' perspectives of and practices in drama?

- Why do Year 1 teachers use drama?
- What are the forms of drama used?
- How do Year 1 teachers plan for drama and how often do they implement it?
- What factors support and inhibit the teaching of drama in Year 1?

## 2. What is the connection between drama in Year 1 and the new Arts Curriculum?

- What do Year 1 teachers know about drama in the new Arts Curriculum?
- How prepared are Year 1 teachers for the implementation of drama in the new Arts Curriculum?

# Significance

- Teaching of drama in Year 1 and how this links with the demands of the new curriculum;
- Broader understanding of drama practice in Year 1;
- Advance paucity of research in this subject;
- Year 1 teachers' understanding of proposed Arts Curriculum.



# Design and approach

## Mixed methods:

- Survey - quantitative data results - broad picture of the research problem – sent to 590 DoE schools;
- Interview - qualitative data providing further analysis and extension to the general picture;
- Survey – open-ended questions - expectation that some qualitative data collected concurrently with quantitative data.

# Data analysis

## Phase I:

- Similarities, trends and items of particular significance
- Overall analysis – SPSS

## Phase II:

- Assembling and sorting into themes, clusters and categories;
- Organised and presented for accessible analysis and conceptualisation;
- Interpretation of the data - gaining sense of its meaning.

# Conceptual framework

