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The influence of educational policy on the arts curriculum as experienced by teachers in school contexts: a qualitative meta-aggregative systematic review protocol

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Support - No support.**Review Stage at time of this submission** - Preliminary searches.**Conflicts of interest** - None declared.**INPLASY registration number:** INPLASY202670077**Amendments** - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 20 July 2026 and was last updated on 20 July 2026.

INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective How do qualitative studies describe the ways educational policy has influenced arts curriculum in school contexts as experienced by teachers?.

Rationale To date, no qualitative systematic review has examined how educational policy influences arts curriculum as experienced by teachers, highlighting a significant research gap. Existing literature indicates that research on arts curriculum implementation has focussed predominantly on primary school settings, with an emphasis on music and visual arts. However, there is limited qualitative research across all five arts disciplines, particularly media and dance, and most of the existing research is dated. Furthermore, there is an absence of literature examining how educational policy influences arts curriculum from teachers' perspectives across disciplines. The aim of this project is to synthesise peer-reviewed qualitative findings to address the research question : how do

qualitative studies describe the ways educational policy has influenced arts curriculum in school contexts as experienced by teachers? The study will use the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) meta-aggregative systematic review methodology to identify, select, appraise, evaluate and synthesise qualitative findings from major educational databases. The expected contribution of this project is to provide a comprehensive, evidence-based synthesis of teacher perspectives on policy influence across all arts disciplines, informing future curriculum design, policy development, and research in arts education.

Condition being studied The context being studied is any school settings where teachers interpret, implement and enact arts curriculum.

METHODS

Search strategy ("art* curriculum" OR "art* education" OR ("art* n/3 curriculum") OR ("Art* NEAR/3 education") AND (teacher* OR educators)

AND ("education policy" OR policy OR policies)
AND schools AND qualitative AND implementation.

Participant or population Types of Participants

The review will consider studies involving primary and/or secondary arts teachers, encompassing all year levels from kindergarten through to upper secondary.

Intervention Not applicable.

Comparator Not applicable.

Study designs to be included This review will consider studies that focus on qualitative data including, but not limited to, designs such as phenomenology, discourse analysis, grounded theory, ethnography, action research and feminist research.

Eligibility criteria Only studies that are peer-reviewed, part of the grey literature, published or translated into English between 20016 and 2026 will be included. Studies will be excluded if both qualitative and quantitative data is used, as mixed method research falls outside the scope of the qualitative review protocol (Maeda et al., 2022). Additionally, studies published before 2015 and those that are not peer-reviewed will be excluded.

Information sources Electronic databases- Scopus, ProQuest, Taylor and Francis Online, Wiley Online Library and Google Scholar.

Main outcome(s) The review is expected to generate synthesised, evidence-based generalisations to inform policy decision-making and support curriculum development and enactment across arts disciplines (Yore & Lerman, 2008). The research may provide insight on how educational policy is enacted into arts practice, highlighting patterns of alignment, adaptation and tension across diverse school contexts. The project is expected to qualitatively clarify how media, dance, drama, music and visual arts curricula are encoded and decoded by teachers. The findings may inform future research and practice by identifying common challenges and enabling factors across arts disciplines in the implementation of curriculum, with implications for classroom practice.

Data management Checklists will be scanned and store electronically in an approved ECU SharePoint digital data storage space.

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis The JBI-QARI checklist will be used to assess article

quality (high, moderate, low). A hard copy checklist will be completed for each article, which will then be scanned and stored. Then the JBI-QARI tool in SUMARI will assign plausibility levels (unequivocal, equivocal, unsupported) to each finding, at the data extraction stage.

Strategy of data synthesis Data will be analysed using the ConQual approach, where thematic analysis is conducted of article findings. The author will assess the credibility/dependability of findings.

Subgroup analysis Not applicable.

Sensitivity analysis Not applicable.

Language restriction English.

Country(ies) involved Australia.

Keywords Meta-aggregation; arts curriculum; educational policy; teachers, schools; qualitative; implementation; systematic review.

Dissemination plans It is anticipated the findings of the meta-aggregative systematic review will be disseminated through a quartile-one journal manuscript. For example, Review of Educational Research, which specialises in publishing reviews of educational research literature, is an appropriate outlet (SCImago, 2026). This strategy supports the production of a peer-reviewed publication that presents qualitative evidence transparently and rigorously, thereby enhancing the researcher's publication profile.

Contributions of each author

Author 1 - Adrienne Evans - Conducted the search strategy, screening, appraisal, data extraction and synthesis, and reporting of results.

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