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Assessing Western Australian Year 11 students' engagement with responding in Visual Arts

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ASSESSING WESTERN AUSTRALIAN YEAR 11 STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT
WITH RESPONDING IN VISUAL ARTS

by

Julia Elizabeth Morris

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PREFACE

As a secondary Visual Arts educator I believe in the transformative power of images, and the inspiration gained from exploring new artists and artworks. My interest in visual arts, and responding to visual arts, led me to complete a Bachelor of Arts (Education) and Bachelor of Creative Arts (Visual Arts) after significant encouragement from my own secondary Visual Arts teacher.

In 2012, I was given the opportunity to begin researching within the fields Visual Arts and Education at Edith Cowan University. I have since worked as a significant contributor to an Arts Teaching and Research Group, focussing on pre-service primary teacher engagement across the five Arts subjects: Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts. I have also actively researched and supported the use of online technologies in pre-service teacher education within the University. Recently, I was included in a team that has been mapping the history of Visual Arts education in Western Australia, based on a gap I uncovered in the literature during this doctoral study. I have also been privileged to teach within the University, across primary and secondary pre-service teacher education (including a semester where I coordinated the Visual Arts secondary education course), as well as teaching Visual Arts history within the School of Communications and Arts at Edith Cowan University.

The completion of this doctoral study marks the beginning in a journey of research, teaching, and (a recently-neglected) visual arts practice, which I hope contribute to Australian and international visual arts advocacy.

Julia Morris
23 January 2015

NOTES ON STYLE

Throughout the thesis italicised text is used to denote emphasis or specialist terminology. Within Chapters Five and Six, italicised text is used for interview vignettes, to distinguish participant voices from quoted literature.

Visual Arts has been capitalised when specifically referring to Visual Arts as a school subject or course. Lowercase visual arts are used for when referring to the discipline of visual arts generally, including the practice of visual arts beyond the school context.

ABSTRACT

Responding to visual arts is an important outcome of both the Western Australian and the Australian (F-10) Curriculum in Visual Arts (ACARA, 2014; Curriculum Council, 2008; School Standards and Curriculum Authority, 2014a). Responding is important because it facilitates students' development of visual literacy, or the ability to decode and recode meaning through visual media (Flood, 2004; Flood & Bamford, 2007; Avgerinou & Petterson, 2011). This mixed methods research study investigated Western Australian students' engagement in responding within Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts. A diagnostic instrument was created to quantitatively assess the engagement of 137 Year 11 Visual Arts students. Additionally, 10 students and 11 Visual Arts teachers participated in semi-structured interviews to explain and extend the quantitative findings. Five Heads of The Arts and eight Principals also participated in interviews to position the students' engagement with Visual Arts responding within a broader school context. The findings of this research emphasise the importance of diagnostically assessing students' engagement, particularly within senior school (Years 11 and 12) Visual Arts courses that emphasise responding in student assessment. Additionally, early childhood intervention is important for students to learn the foundational skills and knowledge required to be successful in senior school Visual Arts. In addition, professional learning is essential to support Visual Arts teachers to respond to the increasing complexity of visual culture and critical theory in the curriculum. Professional learning is also important to shift school culture from the perception of Visual Arts responding as part of academic rigour and assessment, to a perception of responding as necessary to students' development as active citizens in a visually saturated twenty-first century life-world.

The declaration page
is not included in this version of the thesis

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GLOSSARY

ACARA — Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

ATAR — Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank.

Anime — Audio-visual animation using Japanese style influences that are mostly produced for film and television.

Art Making
(or Visual Arts Making) — One of two content strands in the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (ACARA, 2014a). The Making content strand relates to any artworks produced by a student, from design to product (ACARA, 2014a).

Art movement — A particular school or style of artworks, often influenced by contextual factors (e.g., Dada artists working during/after World War I had a style that aimed to break with traditional art conventions and media).

Art Responding
(or Visual Arts Responding) — The second content strand in the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (ACARA, 2014a). The Responding content strand relates to the interpretation and evaluation of artworks, both of the students' own works and those by other artists (ACARA, 2014a).

Baroque — An art movement circa 1600-1750 (Kleiner, 2009), defined by exaggerated forms, and grandeur in scale and detail of the artwork. Often associated with Catholic Counter Reformation, as monumental works were designed to evoke an emotional, and spiritual, response from the viewer (Kleiner, 2009).

Conceptual Art — Artworks that prioritise concepts or ideas over the physical aesthetic quality of the work.

Constructivism
(Constructivist) — An art movement circa early 1900s (Kleiner, 2009), which is often linked to sculpture. Defined by physical constructions often using materials from Industrial Revolution or related to industrial themes (Kleiner, 2009).

Contemporary Art — An art movement circa 1990s to present that offers a new perspective or point of view about a theme, often employing new techniques and media in its construction (Australian Government, 2012).

Cosplay — A website forum where people post photos dressed in costumes

based on book, film or videogame characters (Duckie, 2014). It is often linked Japanese anime or manga.

Critical Theory	Theories that provide a framework for how individuals respond to the representation of social and cultural practices, including in artworks (D'Alleva, 2012).
Cross-Curriculum Priorities	Three priorities released by ACARA that are overarching themes for all Learning Areas. These priorities are: *1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures,* *2. Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia*, and *3. Sustainability* (ACARA, n.d.).
Diagnostic Assessment	A type of assessment used to establish students' skills and knowledge prior to a unit of work (Scaife & Wellington, 2010; Kemp & Scaife, 2012).
Elements and Principles	Visual Arts terminology first introduced by Arthur Wesley Dow. The common elements and principles used in secondary schools in WA are: *Elements:* colour, line, shape, space, texture and value. *Principles (organisation of the elements):* balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, patter, rhythm and unity.
Fan Art	Artworks created by fans of a particular work of fiction, usually images of characters or aspects from popular books, films or videogames (wiseGEEK, 2014).
Installation Art	Artworks designed to be installed within a certain location, often site-specific (designed for a certain space) and three-dimensional.
Life-world	A dynamic memory of experiences that contribute to an individual's meaning making, based on their social interactions within culture (Habermas, 1988; Husserl, 1999; White, 1995).
Literati Painters	Academic artists from the South China school who were upper-class due to education, but did not have the prestige associated with being an artist for the Emperor (Honour & Fleming, 2009).
Manga	Comic books or graphic novels with a Japanese stylistic influence.
Media	The material/s used to create artworks (e.g., charcoal, fabric,

etching and oil paint).

Middle School	Years 7-10 in Western Australian schools (i.e., school years for students aged between 12 and 15 years).
Modernism	A period art (encompassing multiple art movements) that reacted to the worldwide changes of scientific Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution (ca. late 1700s to 1960s-1970s). Defined by artists who broke traditional cannons of art making reproduced by academies of art (Honour & Fleming, 2009).
Pre-modernism	A broad term used to describe art movements that existed prior to modernism.
Postmodernism	A period of art (sometimes termed an art movement) from circa 1970s to 1990s, defined by artworks that reacted to the expansion of technology and globalisation (Honour & Fleming, 2009).
Reproduction	A copy of an authentic artwork (e.g., photograph or poster).
Romanticism (Romanticist)	An art movement circa late 1700s to mid 1800s (Kleiner, 2009), defined by its abandonment of scientific themes, instead promoting nature as awe-inspiring and powerful (Kleiner, 2009). It also promoted individuality of style and reaction to landscapes, embracing momentary wonder as opposed to logical reasoning (Kleiner, 2009).
Scaffolding	The process of supporting a student to acquire new skills or knowledge by collaborative interaction with a more knowledgeable other (e.g., teacher or peer) (Vygotsky, 2011).
SCSA	School Curriculum and Standards Authority: Western Australian curriculum department, formerly the Curriculum Council.
Student Engagement	The interest and active participation of students in their own learning, affected by a range of cognitive and psychological factors (e.g., motivation and relationships) (Appleton, Christenson, Kim, & Reschly, 2006).
Studio Ghibli	Production agency for Japanese anime style commercials, feature films and television.
VACoS	Visual Arts Course of Study: Western Australian curriculum taught 2008-2014 (Curriculum Council, 2008).

VARSEI	The Visual Arts Responding Student Engagement Instrument; a diagnostic tool to measure student engagement in Visual Arts Responding and the product of this research study.
Visual Culture	The expanding use of imagery in society, which is particularly emphasised through multimodal technologies (Flood & Bamford, 2007). Additionally, it is the use of images to critique and contribute to society: for example, critiquing representation of class, gender or ethnicity in contemporary artworks (Duncum, 2010).
Visual Literacy	The process of interpreting a visual artwork, both decoding the image to create meaning and then recoding new understandings in creating new artworks (Flood, 2004; Avgerinou & Petterson, 2011).
WACF	Western Australian Curriculum Framework: Western Australian Curriculum taught between 1998-2014 for Kindergarten to Year 10, and 1998-2008 for Senior School (Years 11 and 12).
Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts	A level of study within the Visual Arts Course of Study. Stage 2 is studied by Year 11 students who wish to sit an external responding examination and use Visual Arts as part of their ATAR score for university entrance.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

"Artworks and other visual cultural artefacts always exist in larger social and cultural contexts" (Wilson, 2011, p. 1), so it stands to reason that visual artworks and artefacts will permeate an expanding globalised civilisation from ancient Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works to African, Asian, American and European artworks. Visual artworks have engaged diverse human participation over time: for example, the small fertility sculpture, *Woman from Willendorf* (ca. 30,000-25,000 BCE) found from the earliest civilisations of Austria (Honour & Fleming, 2009) to contemporary multimedia installations that travel the world (Stern, 2011). As vision is humans' primary sense (Arnheim, 1969; Rowe, 2002), the visual arts have fulfilled functional purposes (e.g., ceramic pots and texts in Mesopotamia) and have also been a vehicle through which to develop complex aesthetic discourse. An understanding of changing aesthetic discourse underpins the rationale for having responding to diverse artworks, alongside making artworks, in the Australian Curriculum: Visual Arts:

> Visual Arts supports students to view the world through various lenses and contexts. They recognise the significance of visual arts histories, theories and practices, exploring and responding to artists, craftspeople and designers and their artworks. They apply visual arts knowledge in order to make critical judgments about their own importance as artists and audiences. Learning in the Visual Arts helps students to develop understanding of world culture and their responsibilities as global citizens (ACARA, 2014a, ¶4).

Responding to visual arts includes students, "exploring, responding to, analysing, interpreting and critically evaluating artworks they experience" (ACARA, 2014a, p. 7); however, this strand of the curriculum is also linked to students' art making, as they use their reflections of other artworks to influence their own visual arts practice.

In Western Australia, the Australian Curriculum is in the process of implementation for Kindergarten to Year 10 students (denoted as K-10 in WA, or F-10 in the Australian Curriculum). Year 11 and 12 students complete the WA Visual Arts Course of Study (VACoS), which is based on a similar rationale of responding within the influence of globalisation:

Within contemporary society, there is increasing demand for visual literacy: the ability to perceive, understand, interpret and evaluate visual information. The Visual Arts ATAR course enables students to develop their visual literacy and communication skills and become discriminating in their judgements. Particular aspects of life are understood and shared through visual symbol systems that are non-verbal modes of knowing (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a, p. 1).

The importance of responding in the VACoS is reflected in its assessment weighting: as 50% of students' school-based assessment in Years 11 and 12 (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a). Therefore, engaging in responding has significant implications for students' participation in contemporary Australian and global society and academic achievement within the VACoS.

This research study was motivated by prior research on secondary school Arts (including Visual Arts) teachers' low self-efficacy and discipline content knowledge, including knowledge required for responding tasks (Garvis, 2008; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Paris, 1999, 2008). While Visual Arts teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning in responding have been investigated, the students' collective voice is often unheard. Given the importance of responding in the WA (and Australian) curriculum, this research study sought to discern students' perceptions of their engagement in responding. Additionally, the research aimed to develop a diagnostic instrument to assess student engagement in Visual Arts responding, as diagnostic assessment is used to determine students' learning needs and to monitor teaching and learning over time (Kemp & Scaife, 2012). Therefore, diagnosing factors affecting students' engagement in responding could have implications for planning learning experiences related to students' needs. Furthermore, student engagement is broader than being Visual Arts discipline-related; high engagement in learning has been linked to improved retention, higher social and emotional outcomes and improved academic learning (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008; Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012; Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Furlong & Christenson, 2008; Gray & Hackling, 2009; Jonasson, 2012; Yonezawa, Jones, & Joselowsky, 2009).

In addition to assessing student engagement, this research sought to document teaching and learning in the WA VACoS. In a specific period of transition from a WA specific curriculum to the Australian Curriculum, collecting perceptions from Year 11 students, Visual Arts teachers, Heads of The Arts and Principals, could provide an essential part of a narrative about Visual Arts responding teaching and learning in WA. Furthermore, reflecting on the teaching and learning of responding in VACoS could facilitate an improved implementation of the Australian Curriculum, as recommendations could be made to enhance students' engagement with the new curriculum.

Responding in WA Visual Arts Curricula

Art criticism and history in international curricula (England and the United States of America) informed the inclusion of responding in WA Visual Arts subjects (Boughton, 1989). Prior to 1984, responding was an optional component of Visual Arts in WA, which was wholly-school assessed on art making and included a practical drawing examination (Monk, 1997; Morris & Lummis, 2015). In 1984, Visual Arts achieved status as a tertiary-entrance subject; a decision made on the academic rigour afforded by the addition of a strong responding component to the curriculum, including art criticism and history (Monk, 1997; Morris & Lummis, 2015). In 1986, the first Tertiary Entrance Examination (TEE) for Visual Arts students was conducted. The TEE included photo-recognition questions where students had to look at basic quality, small black and white thumbnail images of artworks and recall the artist, title and medium of the work from their in-class study (Monk, 1997).

Between 1995-1998, the new Western Australian Curriculum Framework (WACF) was implemented across Kindergarten to Year 12 (K-12) (Curriculum Council, 1998). In this curriculum, responding remained an essential part of students' learning and assessment. Two of four outcomes related to art responding: Arts Responses and Arts in Society (Curriculum Council, 1998). Arts Responses assessed students' reflection and evaluation of artworks (both their own and others), while Arts in Society included history of visual arts (both national and international), including the economic considerations of visual arts' role in society (Curriculum Council, 1998). The significant change to responding was its TEE format, in which the photo-recognition questions (where students were given artworks to memorise) were replaced by unseen artworks (Monk, 1997). The generic visual analysis skills taught through Arts

Responses were deemed as more relevant to the Australian life-world, which was expanding with new technologies and visual culture into the twenty-first century (Naylor, 2006; Newbury, 2004). This shift in curriculum shows the difference between a more traditional *art history* approach and a more contemporary *responding* approach, in which individuals' affective reactions to visual stimuli form the premise of their interpretation of artworks. Importantly, the memories of *art history* were still evident in the researcher's interactions with participants in this study.

While the WACF still governs Kindergarten to Year 9 in WA, the senior school courses (Years 11 and 12, and Year 10 in most WA schools) changed again between 2005-2008. By 2008, the Visual Arts Course of Study (VACoS) replaced TEE Visual Arts (Curriculum Council, 2008). The introduction of VACoS aligned with more inclusion of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in WA schools (Curriculum Council, 2000). As workplace learning had increased in schools during the 1990s, the VACoS replaced, "the current fragmented system of Tertiary Entrance Examination Subjects (TEE), Wholly-School Assessed Subjects (WSA) and VET Units of Competency with a single curriculum structure" (Curriculum Council, 2000, p. 5). The VACoS is a two-year long course, completed during Years 11 and 12 (Curriculum Council, 2000, 2008). Within the two-year course, students could opt to study Visual Arts as part of a university-entrance pathway by completing a Stage 2 course in Year 11 and a Stage 3 course in Year 12 (Curriculum Council, 2008). If they did not want Visual Arts to be counted towards university-entrance, Stage 1 courses were offered (Curriculum Council, 2008); however, many WA schools adopted Stage 1 course structures for Year 10 Visual Arts, to familiarise university-bound students with the VACoS prior to Year 11 and 12 studies.

Responding is an essential component of the VACoS. While the WACF outcomes Arts Responses and Arts in Society still governed the content of the new course, the VACoS changed the content names under which these topics were delivered. In the VACoS, the Art Interpretation content area covered similar skills to the WACF outcomes, including: visual analysis, personal response, meaning and purpose, and social, cultural and historical contexts (Curriculum Council, 2008). This Interpretation content was covered through analysis and investigation assessment tasks (Curriculum Council, 2008). Analysis included students' responses, reflections and evaluations of artworks; while

the investigation task centred on an artist case study report, which included biographical information, visual analyses of the artist's works, and specific links between the artist and the student's individual art making (Curriculum Council, 2008). The VACoS students studying Stage 2 and 3 courses also sit an examination based on responding content, similar to the TEE Visual Arts students; however, they also complete a practical examination in which one of their artworks is sent off school premises for external examination (Curriculum Council, 2008). The assessment weighting of art making and art interpretation in VACoS until 2014 was comparatively equal, with responding tasks contributing 40-60% to a student's overall grade for Visual Arts (Curriculum Council, 2008).

In 2015, the Visual Arts course has been divided again, into university-entrance (ATAR) and general courses (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a, 2014b). The ATAR Visual Arts course replaces Stage 2 and 3 VACoS, and the titles of units of study have been adjusted according:

- Stage 2: Units A/B (A for semester one, B for semester two) will be replaced by ATAR Units 1 and 2; and
- Stage 3: Units A/B will be replaced by ATAR Units 3 and 4.

The essential WA content areas have remained the same in the new ATAR course; therefore, the structure of responding tasks remains the same. The difference in the ATAR course is its alignment with the Australian Curriculum, released for Foundation to Year 10 (F-10) in 2014 (ACARA, 2014a). The new ATAR and general courses include the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA, 2014a) general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, which are overarching goals of Australian schooling to prepare students to become, "successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens" (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 8). Additionally, the assessment weighting for art making and responding has been affected, with assessment divided equally between these two content areas; therefore, responding tasks now contribute a fixed 50% to a student's overall grade for Visual Arts in Years 11 and 12 (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a, 2014b). While the content areas for Visual Arts are still termed *art making* and *art interpretation* in WA, the more generic terms of *making* and *responding* are used within this thesis.

These terms have been chosen as they reflect the content across both the WA context and the national context of the Australian Curriculum, which organises the F-10 content through making and responding strands (ACARA, 2014a).

Visual Literacy and Visual Culture

Despite the nuances of both the Australian and WA curricula, visual literacy is a key outcome of Visual Arts learning from K-12. Visual literacy is the ability to decode and recode meaning from complex, diverse visual texts (e.g., advertising and signage, artworks, illustrations within printed texts, and television or film images) (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004a, 2004b). Visual literacy underpins both making and responding to visual arts, "[students] apply visual arts knowledge in order to make critical judgments about their own importance as artists and audiences" (ACARA, 2014a, ¶4).

Visual literacy is often linked to contemporary visual culture, including understanding image-based advertisements and popular culture themes (Carter, 2004; Darts, 2006; Duncum, 2002; Fetherston, 2008): for example, consumer branding, superheroes and the notion of celebrity. Duncum (2002) discussed the expanding visual culture of the early twenty-first century as founded by visual literacy; however, he noted that it was important to consider that visual arts were no longer visually centred, but engaged vision alongside the other senses (e.g., audio-visual installations). Furthermore, visual culture includes the aesthetic discourse confronting cultural beliefs: for example, the post-structural critiques about power and representation could be explored through the visual arts (Duncum, 2010; Freedman, Heijnen, Kallio-Tavin, Karpati, & Papp, 2013; Garber, 2010). Through the relationship of visual arts to cultural studies, there are also important ties to critical theory: for example, if students are critiquing gender stereotypes in visual arts, they may begin to draw on feminist theories to inform their interpretation of artworks. The Australian Curriculum recognises the growing influence of critical theory in art responding through the inclusion of viewpoints in the curriculum (ACARA, 2014a):

> In both making and responding to artworks, students *consider a range of viewpoints or perspectives* [emphasis added] 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 (p. 7).

Exploring a range of viewpoints includes alternative readings of artworks: for example, applying feminist, Marxist, materialist, psychoanalytic and post-colonial theories as lenses through which to explore visual arts.

Student Engagement and Visual Arts

The complexity of visual literacy in both the WA and Australian Curriculum and its rationale as an essential life skill for students in contemporary cultures (ACARA, 2014a; Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a), has implications for student engagement. If students are not engaged in responding tasks, they may not fully understand or actively practice visual literacy and this may limit their agency within their life-worlds (Fetherston, 2008; Freedman, 2010; Freedman et al., 2013; Habermas, 1999; Naylor, 2006; Newfield, 2011; White, 1995). The fixed equal assessment weighting between art making and responding in WA (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a) also causes implications for student engagement in terms of academic achievement.

Student engagement is an abstract construct, with many researchers defining the indicators of engagement differently (Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003), although most studies (post-2000) include a dual cognitive and psychological (or affective) measure of engagement (Appleton et al., 2006; Betts, Appleton, Reschly, Christenson, & Huebner, 2010; Mazer, 2012). In this study, two specific types of student engagement were investigated in this study: cognitive and psychological engagement. Cognitive engagement considers students' ability to undertake and complete school tasks, including assessments (Appleton et al., 2006; Mazer, 2012); while psychological engagement includes factors related school community, interpersonal relationships, and self-efficacy (Appleton et al., 2006; Jimerson et al., 2003; Mazer, 2012).

Despite the complexity of student engagement, assessing the engagement of students in Visual Arts responding could be of increasing importance. Engagement is often linked

to students' prior achievement or experiences (Appleton et al., 2006; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Hattie, 2009; Jimerson et al., 2003; Mazer, 2012). Therefore, Year 11 students' engagement may also be linked to their prior secondary and primary school Visual Arts experiences (as well as home experiences). A growing body of literature suggests generalist primary teachers and some middle school teachers have low Visual Arts experiences and self-efficacy (Alter, Hayes, & O'Hara, 2009a; Bowell, 2011; Davies, 2010; Dinham, 2007; Garvis, 2008; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Lemon & Garvis, 2013; Lummis & Morris, 2014; Lummis, Morris, & Paolino, 2014; Morris & Lummis, 2014; D. Russell-Bowie, 2012; D. E. Russell-Bowie, 2013). If teachers have limited experience and self-efficacy in Visual Arts, they may not engage their students in frequent Visual Arts learning; as self-efficacy theory asserts that an individual with low efficacy will avoid participation in activities where they perceive to have low competence (Bandura, 2012; Bandura & Locke, 2003). Primary and middle school experiences of Visual Arts could have significant implications for Year 11 learning, particularly if students' have had limited experiences due to low teacher self-efficacy. Without prior achievement and experience in responding tasks, Year 11 students may be unprepared to cope with the expanding complexity of visual literacy and visual culture in senior school Visual Arts courses.

The Significance of This Research

This research study provides the often-unheard student perspective about responding in the Visual Arts curriculum. The majority of research in WA and Australia about responding and Visual Arts education has been teacher-centred (Bowell, 2011; Brown, 2006; Garvis, 2008; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Hudson, Lewis, & Hudson, 2011; Monk, 1997; Paris, 1999, 2008). This research aimed to fill the gap in literature by using a student-centred approach, in which the students' perspectives of Visual Arts responding would be triangulated and supported by teachers' reflections.

Additionally, the timing of this research provides an essential part of the narrative about responding in the WA curriculum. As the data were collected between 2013 and 2014, the students' perspective reflects the last two years in which the original VACoS was delivered in WA. In 2015, the new Visual Arts course will be implemented, as the senior school WA curriculum moves to align itself with the Australian Curriculum (F-10) (ACARA, 2014a). Subsequently, reflecting on the strengths and limitations of the

VACoS may help facilitate the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, as schools and supporting organisations (e.g., The Art Gallery of Western Australia) can improve professional learning and supporting resources based on the evidence of the VACoS implementation.

Lastly, the VACoS outlines teachers' summative assessment requirements (Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a); however, it does not prescribe diagnostic or formative assessment for Visual Arts. Creating a diagnostic assessment tool may assist teachers in their ongoing teaching and learning in Visual Arts through measuring students' engagement with responding content: for example, a class with low overall self-efficacy may prompt the Visual Arts teacher to provide additional scaffolding to support students' mastery of small task components. Building mastery may improve self-efficacy; however, the diagnostic tool could be used again after a period of time, to create tangible evidence of the teacher's level of success. A diagnostic tool for Visual Arts responding would likely be the first of its kind, as no discipline-specific student engagement instruments for Visual Arts were found in the published literature.

Research Questions

This study investigated student engagement in Visual Arts responding within the year 11 Stage 2 VACoS. Subsequently the measurement of student engagement was central to the research. In addition, the perceptions of Year 11 students, Visual Arts teachers, as well as Heads of The Arts and Principals, regarding engagement in Visual Arts responding were explored. Four research questions were investigated:

1. How effectively can students' cognitive and psychological engagement in Visual Arts responding tasks be measured?
2. To what extent are Year 11 students (2013-2014) engaging with Visual Arts responding tasks?
   a. To what extent are they engaging on a cognitive level?
   b. To what extent are they engaging on a psychological level?
   c. Do they engage with images based on ACARA's cross-curriculum priorities – fusion with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art (e.g., Norma Macdonald's artworks), Asian art (e.g., Kozyndan paintings) and

art about sustainability (e.g., Christo and Jeanne-Claude's installations)?

Note: These images can be found in Appendix A.

3. What value do Visual Arts teachers place on responding and what approaches are they engaging to teach Visual Arts responding?

    a. How are the Visual Arts teachers' perceptions of art responding supported by their Heads of Learning Area and/or Principals?

4. How can the teaching and learning of Visual Arts responding education be modified to improve the engagement of Year 11 students?

Research Methods

This research employed an explanatory mixed methods approach, in which qualitative data were used to explain and extend the findings of a quantitative instrument (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Punch, 2009; Wheeldon, 2010). As two research methods were used, appropriate theoretical frameworks were employed for each method specifically. The quantitative method used a post-positivist framework, which acknowledges the complexity of the authentic classroom setting in which the data were collected (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The qualitative method used an interpretivist-constructivist paradigm, in which the researcher used her life-world knowledge (as a Visual Arts educator) as a basis for interpreting participant narratives; however, constructivism was used as the researcher and participants actively constructed new knowledge through shared understandings (Janesick, 2000; Miller & Glassner, 2008; Schwandt, 2000).

Two phases of data collection occurred between 2013 and 2014. In 2013, Phase One of the research piloted and collected data from Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts students using the diagnostic instrument created – the Visual Arts Responding Student Engagement Instrument (VARSEI). In addition, interviews were conducted with Year 11 students and Visual Arts teachers, as well as some Heads of The Arts and Principals. Phase Two (2014) repeated the same method of data collection, expanding the total VARSEI participation to 137 students. After Phase Two, a total of 10 students and 11 Visual Arts teachers had participated in semi-structured interviews. Five Heads of The Arts and eight Principals also discussed their perspectives of Visual Arts within the broader school culture. The collective narratives and the VARSEI data were used to reflect on student engagement in Visual Arts responding in Year 11, informed by the home,

primary school and middle school (Years 7-10) contexts, as well as broader curriculum and cultural considerations raised by teachers, Heads of The Arts and Principals.

Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis is organised into seven chapters. This chapter has presented the context of the research study and its significance in contributing to research on student engagement, specifically within senior school Visual Arts responding. The research questions and mixed methods processes were documented.

Chapter Two presents a review of significant literature. The review positions the context of the research within the history of Australian Visual Arts responding education within an international framework. The factors influencing student engagement, such as cognitive and social development are presented, prior to a detailed review of student engagement theories. Visual literacy and the emerging role of critical theory are discussed within the context of Visual Arts responding education.

Chapter Three outlines the theoretical and conceptual framework for the research. Two theoretical frameworks were used in the study, differing for the quantitative and qualitative methods. Post-positivism was used as a framework for the quantitative research, and an interpretivist-constructivist framework was used for the qualitative methods. The chapter also outlines the conceptual framework specific to the research study.

Chapter Four summarises literature on quantitative and qualitative methods, and the explanatory mixed methods approach used for this research study. The research processes used in collecting and analysing data are also documented.

Chapter Five presents the student findings, which were documented from both the quantitative questionnaire and qualitative interviews.

Chapter Six presents the findings of the interview data collected from Visual Arts teachers, Heads of The Arts and Principals.

Chapter Seven discusses the findings presented in the previous chapter. The data analysis is linked to significant literature on Visual Arts education (including responding), student engagement, WA VACoS (Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a) and the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014a). The discussion is organised by the research questions posed in Chapter One.

Chapter Eight presents the conclusions from the research findings, including the development of diagnostic assessment in Visual Arts, early childhood and primary school intervention and the need to change school culture in relation to responding in Visual Arts. Recommendations based on the conclusions are presented, in addition to future research directions to build on the limitations of this research.

Chapter Summary

Chapter One introduced this research study and its significance within the field of Australian Visual Arts education. The expanding presence of visual arts across history, from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works to contemporary visual cultures, underpins the importance of visual literacy and responding in the Australian Curriculum, as well as the WA VACoS. A brief introduction was provided regarding the history of responding across WA Visual Arts curricular, as context for responding's inclusion in legitimising Visual Arts as an academically rigorous subject alongside art making. Each content area (making and responding) contributes 50% to a WA student's overall Visual Arts grade in Years 11 and 12. The broader rationale of visual literacy was provided to position the importance of responding in the curriculum, as visual literacy gives agency to students across a visually saturated life-world. Additionally, student engagement constructs and their potential influence on diagnostic assessment in Visual Arts were introduced.

The significance of this research, including its student-centred approach, reflection on VACoS and development of a diagnostic assessment tool were discussed. These motivations for the research informed the four research questions that were posed regarding the measurement and diagnostic assessment of student engagement, teaching and learning approaches, and improvement of student engagement in Visual Arts responding. The explanatory mixed methods approach undertaken to respond to these

questions was briefly introduced. Finally, the organisation of this thesis was presented as a guide to the documented process and findings of this research.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter One introduced the context and significance of this research, including the importance of responding in Visual Arts curricula and visual literacy in general. The potential implications for students' engagement on visual responding and their development of visual literacy were also outlined, with the creation of a diagnostic instrument being offered as a potential tool for monitoring students' Visual Arts engagement. This chapter presents the literature that informed this research, reflecting three main themes:

1. Visual culture, critical theory and visual literacy;
2. The history of responding across national and international Visual Arts education; and
3. Student engagement and factors affecting engagement.

The literature within these themes provided the framework for this research, and contextualised the discussion of subsequent findings.

Visual Culture, Critical Theory and Visual Literacy

Visual culture, critical theory and visual literacy are important concepts that position contemporary Visual Arts education in Australia. An essential construct of visual culture and critical theory is the notion of life-world (Habermas, 1988; Husserl, 1999; White, 1995). The life-world has its origins in phenomenology, with the life-world as a dynamic memory of experiences that contribute to an individual's meaning making (Habermas, 1988; Husserl, 1999; White, 1995). These experiences are discursive and non-discursive, but always constructed through social interaction of individuals within power and culture (Habermas, 1988; Langer, 1942; Lummis, 1986, 2001; White, 1995). Dewey summarises processes of life-world engagement in his text, *Art as Experience* (1934):

> Experience occurs continuously, because the interaction of the live creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of living. Under conditions of resistance and conflict, aspects and elements of the self and the world that are implicated in this

interaction qualify experience with emotions and ideas so that
conscious intent emerges … There is distraction and dispersion; what
we observe and what we think, what we desire and what we get, are
at odds with each other (p. 35).

The role of visual arts in preparing students for visual culture in their contemporary life-world can be linked back to John Dewey's fundamental inclusion of visual arts into school curricula at the beginning of the twentieth century. Dewey's approach to education was grounded in the fundamental connection of the school environment to the wider social environment. In 1906, he stated that secondary schools in the USA were isolated from life; and to improve education the concept of *individual* must be studied, in terms of psychological development and social relationships (Dewey, 1906). Dewey's methods echoed scientific practices, as he believed the improvement of education relied on assessing the needs of the individual and society, and constantly readjusting education to these needs (Dewey, 1906; Efland, 1990b).

Dewey's argument for visual arts in education originated from the isolation of school curricula from the complex realities of the life-world. For Dewey, visual arts constructed, "a kind of knowledge of Reality, presumably of a higher and truer order than anything of which 'science' is capable" (Dewey, 1948, p. 207). Visual Arts were also integrated in the USA, which expanded manual colleges to prepare manufacturers from the Industrial Revolution (Dewey, 1906). Dewey also recognised the role of visual arts in constructing the life-world, as visual artworks are created from human experiences and responding to artworks influence new perspectives about human experience in the life-world (Dewey, 1934). As the visual arts were (and still are) essential to technical skills and also cultural understandings, Dewey chose to develop and implement a new style of schooling that was not centred on USA students' entrance to colleges (Dewey, 1906). At his Laboratory School, established in Chicago in 1896, subjects were integrated and organised around acquiring particular life skills (Efland, 1990b). In this way, no subject was taught in isolation, as subjects merged and divided to provide authentic experiences (Dewey, 1906).

Dewey's belief of visual arts as essential to both technical skill and cultural understanding also had implications for aesthetic theory (Dewey, 1934). Knowledge and experiences of media skills (e.g., painting and sculpting) were important to

aesthetics, as the media become part of visual arts' meaning making through the way they shape the production of artwork (Dewey, 1934). Similarly, aesthetic meaning is derived from an individual's prior human experiences, which are applied in experiencing an artwork; therefore, there is no one fixed meaning for artworks (Dewey, 1934). These ideas have shaped twenty-first century Visual Arts education and broader cultural theories.

The expansion of visual culture and digital technologies has increased links between the life-world and the school environment (Black & Browning, 2011; Fetherston, 2008). Government and educators have given more consideration to education's potential to develop the whole person: for example, the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) encourages young Australians to be creative and active citizens, in addition to striving for academic excellence. The *Melbourne Declaration* is similar to the goal of Dewey's education, to prepare students for competitive global life-worlds after schooling (MCEETYA, 2008). An individual with visual culture understandings and visual literacy has increased advantages in contemporary society, specifically in communication and cultural discourse.

Firstly, interpersonal communication is, "evolving in and through technology . . . It is the social application of new technological knowledge which has led to profound changes in our daily practices of literacies" (Atkins, 2002, p. 35). Social communication is entwined with technology, which often operate through visual-based media: for example, computers, still photographs, film and television, social media applications and videogames (Fetherston, 2008; Wilson, 2011). By interacting in these spaces, the need to be visually literate has permeated business and personal communication. Additionally, it is increasingly important to be aware that:

> Visual texts - just like written and spoken texts - are constructed using a range of conventions … we are using a number of 'languages' to extract meaning from these conventions, for example, in our interactions with such elements as colour, angles, symbols and visual metaphors (Atkins, 2002, p. 37).

Secondly, culture is interpreted through visual images, which promote certain social values (Duncum, 2010; Efland, 2004). Visual culture may promote hegemonic

ideologies, or they may subvert these ideas through post-structuralism (D'Alleva, 2012; Duncum, 2010; Freedman et al., 2013). By developing an understanding about the cultural theory affecting visual arts, students could be more aware of imagery's manipulation (e.g., propaganda) and feel empowered to contribute to social and culture dialogues (Freedman, 2003b, 2010).

Visual culture is the hybrid space of contemporary popular culture, informed by historical and cultural understandings about human experience (Duncum, 2006a). D'Alleva (2012) extends this definition through stating, "visual culture focuses not on objects but subjects–that is, the ways in which works of art (broadly defined) catch up their creators and viewers in interconnecting webs of cultural meanings and relations of power" (p. 82). Visual culture moves towards visual commentary on various cultural life-worlds. The notion of a masterpiece is of no relevance in responding to artworks; instead the individual considers the commentary it provides on its social, cultural or historical context (D'Alleva, 2012). It is also strongly connected with globalisation and has been evident in past WA Visual Arts education. Rather than being influenced by visual artworks within local contexts (i.e., viewing only Western Australian or Australian artworks), technology has facilitated a liquid modernity that spread from North America and Europe, creating inequalities as it, "drips all over the world" (Connell, 2009, p. 16). While power structures are constantly changing, particularly with the rise of China within the Asia-Pacific region (He & Sappideen, 2013), Western culture has been dominant since post-Industrial Revolution (Connell, 2009).

Western culture suppresses subjectivity and agency through its commodity culture. Commodity culture is a form of Habermas' systemic colonisation; that is, a system that does not allow individual meanings but rather one common meaning that works in favour of the system (White, 1995). The system creates false needs that are both material and emotional, "[as] consumers are first and foremost gatherers of *sensations*; they are collectors of *things* only in a secondary and derivative sense" (Bauman, 1998, p. 83): for example, an individual may feel they must upgrade to the new iPhone 6, satisfying the emotional need for instant gratification and digital *toys* above the material need for a new mobile telephone. However, individuals are never fully satisfied in a commodity culture; as complete satisfaction stops individuals from consuming, thereby collapsing economies and culture (Gartman, 2011; A. Gilbert, 2013). To maintain a

commodity culture, every item for consumption is carefully produced and exhibited in the public arena, with individuals adapting their intellectual and cultural needs to sustain the consumption cycle (Adorno, 1991; Gartman, 2011). In a commodity culture, the vast amount of products steadily increases. Western consumerism operates on a global scale, with individuals working on technology made by multinational corporations, wearing clothes made in Asia, and absorbing media communications from all over the world (Connell, 2009, p. 19). These products are advertised through visual media, from print and television advertisements to online shopping.

Through critical theory, individuals respond to the social and cultural practices presented through visual artworks (D'Alleva, 2012). Critical theory was established between the World Wars, as technological revolution spread modernity across Europe and the USA (Bronner, 2011). Russian formalism began to consider the function and structure of language (specifically poetry), while the Frankfurt School guided critical cultural discourse (Bronner, 2011; Rich, 2007). The Frankfurt School included philosophers such as Theodor W. Adorno, who informed the discussion of commodity culture and technology, and Jürgen Habermas, who wrote about the life-world (Adorno, 1991; Bronner, 2011; Habermas, 1988, 1999). Critical theory, from a Frankfurt School perspective, investigated:

> [The] ways in which thinking was being reduced to mechanical notions … and aesthetic enjoyment was becoming more standardized … Alienation and reification were thus analysed in terms of how they imperiled the exercise of subjectivity, robbed the world of meaning and purpose, and turned the individual into a cog in the machine (Bronner, 2011, pp. 4-5).

The fear of losing subjective and aesthetic experience, explained in critical theory, contrasts Dewey's concern for visual arts education in the early twentieth century. Dewey (1934) advocated visual arts education to increase individuals' knowledge of culture, through both an understanding of technical skills and personal response to artworks, based on prior experiences and beliefs. Ten years later (*Dialectic of Enlightenment,* 1944) as German immigrants in the USA, Adorno and Horkheimer began to critique the destruction of subjective response to visual arts (in addition to philosophy and religion) by scientific enlightenments that established an absolutist dogma (Bronner, 2011).

Critical theory has also evolved into structuralist and post-structuralist theories. Whereas critical theory reacted to modernism (mid-1800s to mid-1900s) and the increase of technology and consumerism from the World Wars period (Headrick, 2009), post-structuralism critiques modernist theories. From the 1950s and 1960s, post-structuralism has continued to investigate culture as a governing structure (D'Alleva, 2012): for example, the revisions of semiotics in literary theory. Semiotics, as outlined by the structuralist Saussure, had a signifier (word or form) that stood for a signified (concept) (Eagleton, 2011): for example, the signifier *brush* stands in for the signified object, a handle glued to a number of bristles that are either natural or synthetic. In post-structuralism, meaning is no longer fixed by structure and every theory is, therefore, dynamic (D'Alleva, 2012). In terms of semiotics, two distinguishing features of signs (*signifier* and *signified*) became three (*representamen, interpretant* and *object*). The post-structural model of Peirce (three parts) defines a different process than Saussure's fixed structure, explained by D'Alleva (2012):

- The representamen is the form of the sign (e.g., a red light at an intersection);
- The object is the thing that the sign refers to (e.g., cars slowing to a stop); and
- The interpretant is the reading or sense made from the sign (e.g., the idea that a red light means cars must stop at the intersection).

In addition to defining this three-part process for interpreting signs, many *types* of signs were discovered by Pierce (D'Alleva, 2012). Following the principles of post-structuralism, the list of signs created by Peirce may not be exhaustive, as the signs may change over time (dependant on culture). However, the three most common types were *iconic, indexical* and *symbolic* (D'Alleva, 2012; Eagleton, 2011):

- The iconic was representational of its object (e.g., a photograph of a person looks like the same person);
- The indexical was linked in some way to its sign (e.g., smoke as a sign of fire); and
- The symbolic is a completely arbitrary creation (e.g., letters and numbers).

Literary theory has been used as an example of the difference between structuralism and post-structuralism because it also applied to visual arts responding. The advent of

Peircean semiotics changed the interpretation of artworks: for example, iconographic analysis is related to finding iconic (representative) figures in artworks, such as identifying that a Madonna is commonly depicted in blue, sometimes with an infant Jesus, often surrounded by a halo of (inferred) light, and often enthroned. A semiotic reading would continue to determine the relationship of Mary to other parts of the artwork, and connotations for the interactions of these signs (D'Alleva, 2012).

Semiotics was not the only theory to influence the visual analysis of artworks. Foucault's theory of knowledge and power influenced many post-structuralists. Foucault theorised that:

> Power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (Foucault, cited in Van Krieken et al., 2006, p. 352).

In this theory, analysis of current culture can be systematically mapped from present choices back through past choices (D'Alleva, 2012). However, these historical choices were socially constructed; therefore, political forces that control the dissemination of knowledge to individuals controlled the hegemony of culture (Van Krieken et al., 2006). Foucault began to expand the themes explored as social constructs, including sexuality and insanity, which had been previously considered as innate and fixed concepts (D'Alleva, 2012). Foucault's writings influenced other post-structuralists: for example, his exploration of bisexuality (Windschuttle, 2013) is connected to other theories of sexuality, including Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Intersex (LGBTI) studies.

Post-structuralist feminist theory also draws on linguist, Jacques Derrida, who theorised that cultural understandings are products of certain meaning systems (Eagleton, 2011): for example, a patriarchal society could be deconstructed using binary oppositions; if man is the first principle, then woman is the opposite or *other* (Eagleton, 2011). As long as woman is maintained as man's opposite, the cultural system can function (Eagleton, 2011). However, feminist theories intercept this logic and begin to draw on ideas of *play* (Bowden & Mummery, 2009). If men are the first principle, or close to the centre of the meaning system, then women are further away (the opposite) (Bowden &

Mummery, 2009; D'Alleva, 2012). Therefore, women can start to manipulate and subvert meaning as they are not as close to the centre of meaning; they can play (Bowden & Mummery, 2009; D'Alleva, 2012). Therefore, post-structuralist feminist readings of visual artworks can begin to ask questions such as: does the subject matter support stereotypical depictions of women in the culture? Do female artists support or subvert the dominant depiction of women? Is the female artist working in isolation or with others? Where is the artwork exhibited, in comparison to the location of similar artworks created by males?

Critical theories have continued to evolve, exploring topics such as: feminism, queer (LGBTI) theories, discourse (Foucault and power/knowledge), post-colonialism and postmodernism. Postmodernism theory in itself is concerned with similar ideas as the Frankfurt School, although Baudrillard's simulacrum is one significant addition. Simulacrum is the concept that there is no original, only copies that are the same as preceding copies (e.g., the same printed page of text) (Ostergaard, Fitchett, & Jantzen, 2013). As visual culture increases the images and technology circulating in society, Baudrillard argues there is no longer a representamen (the form of the sign that can be interpreted) as the form of signs are fluid and rapidly changing (Flood & Bamford, 2007; Ostergaard et al., 2013). Therefore, the individual loses the ability to be an interpretant, since the representamen becomes *truth* in itself.

The complex and ever-expanding critical theory discourse is implicit in the structure of the WA VACoS and Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014a; Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014b). An understanding of critical theory is linked to the notion of visual literacy, or the ability to: decode and recode meaning from images (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004b). It is a reactive process, resultant of visual imagery stimuli; as well as being a productive process, in which individuals put imagery back into visual culture (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Black & Browning, 2011; Flood, 2004b; Freedman, 2003a). Flood (2004b) supports visual literacy as a productive process that, "is also about the individual's response to that culture through the making or creating of objects" (p. 72).

Visual literacy differs from language literacy in that there are no rules for *reading* an image (Flood, 2004a; Freedman, 2010); it is highly unlikely that an image can be read

from left to right, and from beginning to end. However, there are questioning frameworks that can be applied to guide responding to artworks (e.g., describe what you see? How does the subject matter make you feel?). Critical theory can also guide interpretation (e.g., how would a feminist respond to this artwork?) (D'Alleva, 2012). The viewer reads the image through both formal elements and principles (e.g., line, shape, balance and unity), and through personal experience (Flood, 2004a). In essence, the viewer plays an integral part in constructing the meaning of a visual artwork, similar to Dewey's (1934) approach to visual arts meaning as dynamic and individually constructed. Flood's (2004) research described one visual literacy process of responding to an image:

> Each of the individuals undergoes a process of identification of the whole **…** and then the components of the imagery presented **…** Each then investigates the content in terms of the message **…** They then evaluate and make judgments regarding the aesthetic qualities **…** They then reflect upon the image in terms of using or interpreting content (p. 78).

While Flood's (2004) research emphasised individual's process of responding to authentic visual arts, Flood and Bamford (2007) have also considered the additional literacy required to be considered visually literate in a digital culture. The authentic experience of being in front (or walking around) an artwork may not always be possible in the digital age (Flood & Bamford, 2007). Even historical knowledge is constructed through digital media, for example:

> The 9/11 Twin Towers disaster was watched *live on TV* as it happened all around the world. The news commentators saw the Towers fall at the same instant as the viewers and reported the events in horrified voices to people sitting in their homes in Australia and Thailand. New Yorkers watched it in the virtual while it was occurring outside their windows. Many people recorded their personal experiences and feelings about it on the Web for us all to visit and see … We are *taken live* to the action and it enters our lives as reality even though it may be occurring half way around the world (Flood & Bamford, 2007, p. 95).

A visually (and digitally) literate student understands the manipulation of images in visual culture, and they can read the subtext of advertisements and videogames that engage audiences emotionally as they display hegemonic values (Flood & Bamford,

2007). Simulation is another concept introduced by Flood and Bamford (2007), in which students actively participate in digitally mediated experiences that they make meaning from, and that they can use to create artworks. An example of simulation could be computer-based games or Internet-based applications, such as the Polyvore collage creation application (Wilson, 2011). Importantly, through simulation students are able to explore being a participant in visual arts. Moving from passive viewer to active participant is a critical feature of audio-visual installation artworks, as participating in the artwork places individuals into a duality: both subject in visual arts and viewer of visual arts (Stern, 2011). Students who are visually literate should be able to apply Flood's (2004) processes, across both traditional and emerging technologies, to construct meaning about the complexity of fluid visual culture discourse (Black & Browning, 2011; Duncum, 2010; Flood & Bamford, 2007).

While it is important for students to be able to decode and make meaning from artworks, a significant component of visual literacy (and agency within visual culture) is being able to contribute to cultural discourse (Flood, 2004b; Flood & Bamford, 2007; Freedman, 2003a, 2010). Without making visual arts, the critical commentary of culture is lost (Freedman, 2010) and students cannot practice constructing their own meanings and reflections (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011). When exploring issues-based curricula (such as investigating critical theory in visual culture), art making can provide a method of problem-solving ideas about society (Freedman, 2010). It is also a process of assimilating new ideas into students' own personal identities (Freedman, 2010): for example, a student exploring power may use scaled drawings to represent ideas about him or herself in relationship to other power structures, such as school, family, friends, and external organisations (e.g., in comparison to the power of multinational corporations). Students respond to others' artworks to stimulate their own art making, thereby enhancing their learning about contemporary issues within visual culture (Black & Browning, 2011; Freedman, 2010; Freedman et al., 2013).

Connell (2009) proposes: "Creativity, as we encounter it in arts and design, is not opposed to the social, to the world of institutions; it is inherently a realm of social action" (p. 24). Through becoming visually literate citizens, who practice visual literacy in both responding and making visual artworks, students are given agency to enact change in social action. Visual culture and critical theory encourages the addition of

new texts and cultural understandings in the contemporary life-world, providing a rationale and challenge for visual literacy. However, the importance of visual literacy to participation in the life-world has changed over time, as has the inclusion of responding to facilitate Visual Arts learning within schools. The next section of this chapter documents the history of responding in Visual Arts education, providing a chronology of how visual literacy and visual culture came to influence contemporary WA VACoS (Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014b) and Australian Curriculum: Visual Arts (ACARA, 2014a) content.

The History of Responding Across National and International Visual Arts Education

The current WA Visual Arts Course of Study responding curriculum has been influenced by international practices, with literature stating, "the past one-hundred years Australian arts education has demonstrated three clearly identifiable phases similar to the development evident in Britain, [and] America" (Boughton, 1989, p. 197). This historical review includes England, the USA and Australia post-1930, reflecting (for the most part) post-World War II society. World War II had a significant impact on all cultures and influenced visual arts practice in these countries: for example, through the use of art therapy to treat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Waller, 1992). This period of time reflects the ever-increasing development of technology, which was accelerated during war times, and which in turn increased consumerism (Headrick, 2009). Furthermore, England and the USA share traits of Australian culture in that they are both Western, English speaking countries. However, a review was also conducted on post-1960s Visual Arts education in Finland and the Republic of Korea (South Korea). These countries present a contrast to Australian Visual Arts education, and both countries have achieved international recognition for students' academic performance (Y. Lee, 2010). Subsequently, it was anticipated traits of successful Visual Arts education could be discovered through investigating Finland and South Korea. The historical review of Visual Arts education is organised chronologically by decade. The figure below provides a brief overview of the history included (Figure 1).
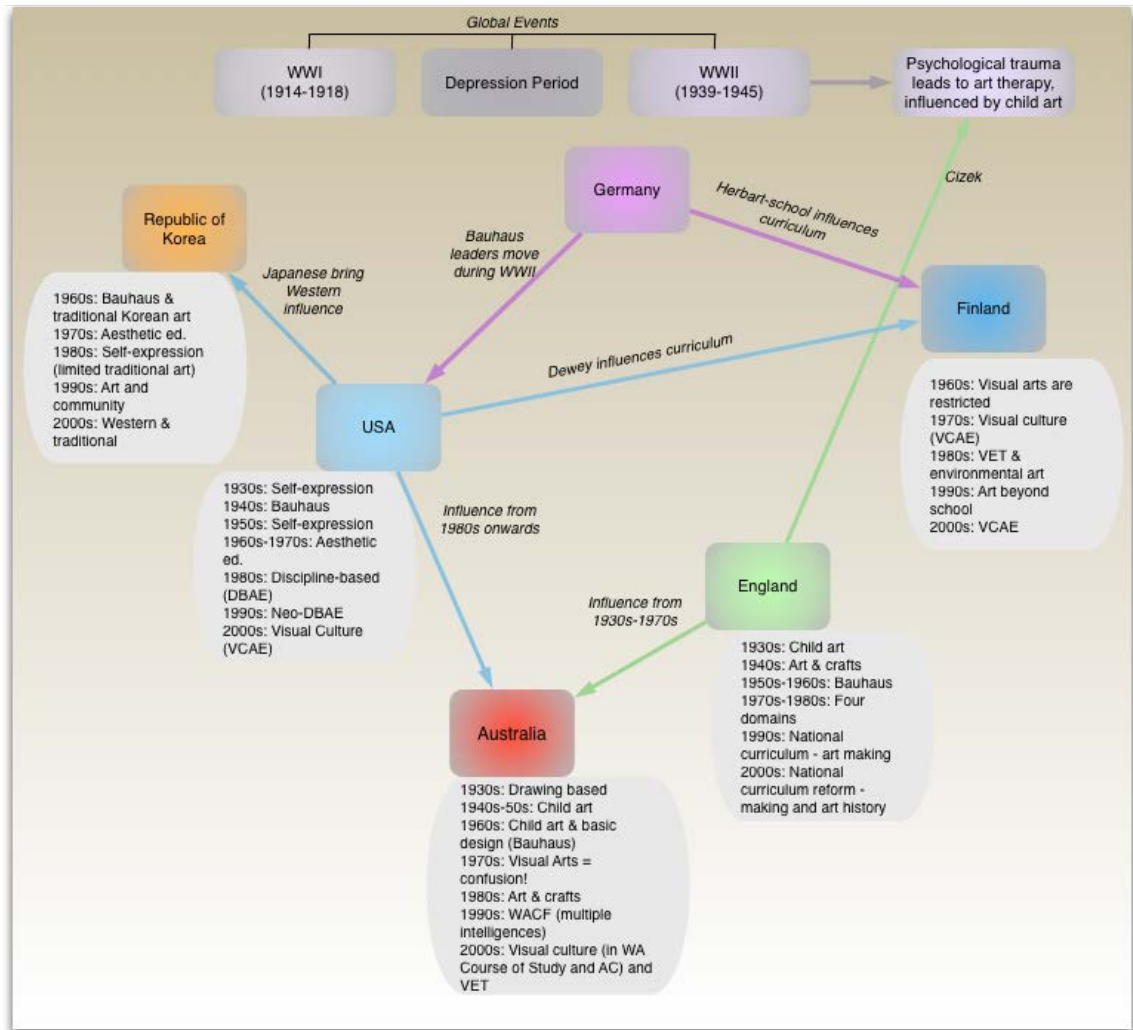
Figure 1. *Overview of the History of Responding in Visual Arts Education.*

1930s

During the 1930s child art became popular in England due to the blurred boundaries between child and adult art, resultant of the avant-garde works of the early 1900s (Efland, 1990b; Macdonald, 1970). Advocates of child art were called *the progressives*, who supported the theories of Rousseau that formal education conflicted nature, and subsequently teachers should not intervene in children's creation of visual artworks (Macdonald, 1970). Franz Cizek formalised this idea in his *Jugendkunstklasse* (Juvenile Art Class) at the Vienna Realschule, by not giving direct instruction to his students (Macdonald, 1970). Cizek's students produced visual artworks similar to art of the early nations, symbolist as opposed to realist in style (Efland, 1990b; Macdonald, 1970). In 1908, Cizek's class contributed to an exhibition at the International Art Congress, marking the introduction of Cizek's child art to England (Macdonald, 1970). Francesca

Wilson increased Cizek's popularity through her promotion and exhibitions of his students' works until 1935 (Macdonald, 1970).

Despite the popularity of Cizek, Marion Richardson is described as the pioneer of child art in England. Richardson studied at the Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts, during which time she adopted the *shut-eye* drawing method from the headmaster Catterson Smith (Efland, 1990b; Macdonald, 1970). The shut-eye method involved the student carefully studying an image on a slide projected for a short period of time, before closing their eyes and using mental imagery to sketch the image on paper (Efland, 1990b; Macdonald, 1970). The drawing was finished with the student's eyes open. The effect of Catterson Smith, "impressed upon her [Richardson] the ideas that one should rely on one's own visual powers rather than skill of hand and that one should never begin a drawing until one has a clear image of the subject" (Efland, 1990b, p. 200).

Richardson began teaching Visual Arts at Dudley Girls' High School, where she practised mental imagery with her students (Macdonald, 1970). However, she did not have the resources to project images and instead improvised by creating word pictures. Richardson would describe images to her students, particularly her younger students, and they would begin to draw once they had visualised the drawing from her speech (Macdonald, 1970). Through this technique she noticed child-like art could be maintained into adolescence, which was a longer period of time than Cizek's methods (Macdonald, 1970).

While the progressive Viktor Lowenfeld did not influence child art of the 1930s, his stage theory aligns with child art ideology. Cizek and Richardson's child art aligned with the scribbling, pre-schematic and schematic stages found in *Creative and Mental Growth* (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). Once children reached the *gang age*, a time where they are drawn to realism (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987; Macdonald, 1970), their art did not fall into the category of child art as defined by educators in the 1930s. Interestingly, Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) stated that, "instead of giving support to this awakening feeling for group cooperation and the discovery of social independence, both parents and teachers often try to counteract it" (p. 306). The negative impact of adult intervention supported Cizek's belief that instruction extinguishes child creativity (Macdonald, 1970).

Visual Arts in early 1930s USA was severely marginalised. According to a survey conducted by the USA Office of Education in 1933, after the Wall Street Crash (1929) a number of schools eliminated or significantly reduced their arts programs (Efland, 1990b). Subsequently, two endeavours were undertaken in order to re-establish the value of Visual Arts in the curriculum: the first being creative self-expression, a USA version of child art, the second being the Owatonna Project.

The USA's creative self-expression was a form of child art with a higher level of teacher intervention, "[as] through each medium of self-expression children develop the ability to express themselves honestly, creatively, and to grow as persons only to the extent that the teacher's attitude and procedures provide for them" (Rugg, 1931, p. 242). The leaders of creative self-expression in the USA were Florence Cane and Victor D'Amico. Cane was influenced by Freud's concept of repression, and sought to introduce materials that would ensure students had a positive Visual Arts experience (Efland, 1990b). However, while she gave freedom of materials, she provided structure by choosing the subject matter for her lessons (Efland, 1990b). Victor D'Amico also encouraged creative self-expression, but with the teacher as a leader who encouraged students to see their experiences as inspiration and by making Visual Arts an authentic subject with ties to their everyday life (D'Amico, 1936; Efland, 1990b).

Just as D'Amico sought to relate Visual Arts to students' lives, the Owatonna Project sought to link visual arts to the wider community. During the Great Depression, the progressives argued for the integration of curriculum, an approach that was similar to the Waldorf schools of Germany and Switzerland and founded on the work of Rudolph Steiner (Efland, 2002). The argument for integration was founded on the belief that, "teachers should attempt to relate instruction in art to such fields as history, geography, social studies … [with an integrated approach] grounded in the need for social cohesion brought on by the Great Depression" (Efland, 2002, p. 104). The Owatonna Project included the trial of a curriculum integrating Visual Arts into other subjects, and where students' artworks reflected everyday life, based on surveying the role of visual arts in the community (Efland, 1990b). The Owatonna Project developed a highly authentic curriculum that integrated Visual Arts learning within everyday life, yet after World

War II the approach was criticised for relegating Visual Arts to service in other subject areas (Efland, 1990b).

Australia was relatively slow to adopt the developments made in England and the USA. While South Australia was aware of Cizek and the international success of child art, it was not reflected in their curriculum (Boughton, 1989). Western Australia did recognise self-expression in their curriculum, although it was through the minor word change of *geometric* to *pattern making* in their Visual Arts syllabus documentation (Mandelson, 1985). Australia's economic background in manufacturing industries compelled a drawing based curriculum (Boughton, 1989). A drawing course developed by Frederick Woodhouse, the superintendent of drawing in New South Wales included, "five main forms of drawing: objects, memory, design, geometric and scale drawing" (Boughton, 1989, p. 198). This course was similar to the South Kensington ideology, to teach drawing with the goals of increasing trade and employment, and promoting social values (Baynes, Langdon, & Myers, 1977; Boughton, 1989).

1940s

By the 1940s, and with the onset of war, England saw a revival of the Arts and Crafts movement. During this period handicraft increased, with practical crafts being produced in all Schools of Art from 1948 (Macdonald, 1970). While The Arts remained a part of secondary school curriculum, the Norwood Report did not advocate the inclusion of external examination for these subjects, instead urging The Arts to keep, "[a] more generous scope … [and to] pay regard to environment and to local activities and crafts" (Norwood, 1943, p. 125). The inclusion of environmental and local factors suggested a continued popularity of linking The Arts to community life, as demonstrated in the Owatonna Project.

Some problems faced in Visual Arts education were a lack of qualified teaching staff, room and equipment; a reflection of the times (Norwood, 1943). However, despite the concern for The Arts, it is unclear whether Visual Arts were valued as a subject in their own right or for skills that could be applied to other subjects. The Norwood Report suggested The Arts provide enrichment to modern life; the report also adds that visual arts training would assist students in drawing the, "sketches and diagrams necessary in Biology, Geography" (Norwood, 1943, p. 126).

Despite the increase in handiwork and craft, the child art movement of the 1930s had not yet finished. Post World War II child art, psychoanalysis, psychology and occupational therapy ideas were used in forming the field of art therapy (Karkou & Sanderson, 2006; Waller, 1992). Art therapy, coined in 1942, was used to treat soldiers and prisoners of war who had returned with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Waller, 1992). Adrian Hill, a Visual Arts lecturer who had tuberculosis, discovered practising visual arts helped relieve his anxieties and boredom during hospitalisation, and he began to share this practice with other patients (Waller, 1992). The psychoanalyst, Irene Champernowne, also advocated the use of visual arts in therapy by employing artists to work at her Sussex practice (Waller, 1992). Champernowne practiced Jungian theory, in which visual arts were used to access the realm of unconsciousness as well as for its transformative properties (Karkou & Sanderson, 2006). The use of visual arts practice for transformation and rehabilitation is still widely documented in contemporary society, particularly for disadvantaged or at-risk groups (Erickson & Young, 2010; Learmonth, 2009; Wiley & Jee, 2011).

The Bauhaus movement was popular in 1940s USA. Following the war, New York became a prominent location in the art world (Efland, 1990b). Many German masters had migrated to the USA during the late 1930s due to the closure of Bauhaus schools in Germany by Hitler whose, "Nazis associated the modern artist with their prime enemies, the Bolshevik and the Jew" (Foster & Pincus-Witten, 2011, p. 185). Subsequently, Bauhaus leaders Walter Gropius and Josef Albers introduced their ideology to the USA. While the masters taught the basic design course at higher education institutions, their ideology had an effect on secondary education in Visual Arts (Dorn, 1994). The main concept promoted was Bauhaus as a pedagogical approach that advocated critical visualisation of objects (Lerner, 2012). The basic design course taught by the Bauhaus masters was based on solving visual problems and included exercises in using form, materials and composition, and experimenting with them in a way that allowed personal discovery (Lerner, 2012; Macdonald, 1970). The course also introduced visual language as a means to analyse images in solving design problems (Cross, 1983; Lerner, 2012).

The 1940s witnessed the rise of child art in Australia. Boughton (1989) suggested the 1937 New Education Conference significantly influenced the popularity of child art. The conference toured all major Australian cities, included a number of international speakers and resulted in curriculum developments for some states (Boughton, 1989; Godfrey, 2004). The New Education Conference influenced reform in New South Wales, particularly in examinations, "external examinations were both unreliable and unsuitable to assess students, particularly in the first three years of adolescent education and therefore it was necessary to involve teachers directly in the assessment process" (Godfrey, 2004, p. 51). He also stated the international speakers of the conference, mostly progressives, argued for more teacher involvement in assessment and a broader syllabus to prepare students to enter the democratic society (Godfrey, 2004).

The development of Australian Visual Arts State curriculums in the 1940s was also attributed to Australian recognition of Herbert Read and Viktor Lowenfeld, with their new conceptualisation of Cizek's philosophy (Boughton, 1989). It is likely the New Education Conference was a part of Australia's acceptance of child art as it brought many international progressives to Australia and targeted a large audience, with the total number of delegates reaching approximately thirty six thousand (Godfrey, 2004). In addition, Godfrey (2004) noted media interest in the conference gave the general public a greater awareness of the conference proceedings.

1950s

Visual arts production remained prominent in England, as the design revival in 1940s education transitioned into the Bauhaus-inspired design movement of the 1950s. Leaders of the Bauhaus-inspired basic design courses included Victor Pasmore and Richard Hamilton at Newcastle, and Tom Hudson at the Leeds College of Art (Macdonald, 1970). The basic design course echoed the Bauhaus ideology: remove the student's preconceptions of art and instead focus on the basic elements of art, discovery of art processes and materials, and the student's personal growth as an artist (Macdonald, 1970). Hudson's basic design course was similar to a discipline-based approach, incorporating both new technologies and art criticism (Macdonald, 1970). Pasmore and Hamilton also incorporated new approaches to Bauhaus in basic design. While both teachers rejected realism, their views on abstraction diverged (Yeomans, 1992). In the 1950s, Pasmore was moving towards abstraction in a way that imitated the

Bauhaus ideology (Yeomans, 1992); while Hamilton was inspired by science and nature, leading him to move from abstraction into processes of analysing the visual world (Yeomans, 1992). In this way, Hamilton began to introduce art criticism in context, beyond the formal elements discussed by Pasmore.

In the USA, creative self-expression was still prominent due to Viktor Lowenfeld and Herbert Read. During the war visual arts had served as a reminder of democracy and the freedom of self-expression (Efland, 1990b). English academic Sir Hebert Read led the *peace movement* in arts education at the end of the war. This movement reasoned child art comprised, "symbols said to exist in a collective unconscious shared by all human beings to provide the ground both for the integration of personality and social harmony" (Efland, 1990b, pp. 232-233). Read's analysis of child art supported art pedagogy of 1950s USA suburban schools; that personal growth of middle-class white families could be achieved through creative self-expression. Lowenfeld's *Creative and Mental Growth* book contributed to the success of creative self-expression in the 1950s by providing a rationale that supported teachers in determining Visual Arts activities relative to the students' stages of cognitive development (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987).

However, despite the success of Lowenfeld and Read there was criticism of the progressives. Some educators believed that creative self-expression had led to the anti-intellectualism of Visual Arts education and encouraged a knowledge-based Visual Arts education (Dorn, 1994; Efland, 1979, 1990a). Calling for educational reform was Manuel Barkan, who like Dewey (1906), believed that the social environment provided a number of learning opportunities for children, and that through interaction with others children would grow as social beings (Efland, 1990b). The importance of the social environment in Barkan's argument was in opposition to progressives like Lowenfeld and Cizek, who believed that teacher interaction was detrimental to creative expression (Efland, 1990b). By the end of the 1950s, "American educators entered a period of professional soul-searching … once again subjects such as art had to be defended" (Efland, 1990b, p. 237).

In 1950s Australia, the momentum gained by the New Education Conference had slowed, and Australians were also defending the place of Visual Arts in education. Major issues included the distance both within and beyond Australia, which limited

communication and resulted in a lack of knowledge about current visual arts practices (Dimmack, 1955). Other problems in Visual Arts education included a lack of well-trained teachers, materials, equipment and locations to practice Visual Arts (Dimmack, 1955). Nevertheless, the effect of the 1937 Conference was evident in each state operating independent departments of education to oversee curriculum and administration in their state (Dimmack, 1955). Curriculum was also reformed subsequent to the conference, and in most states had been modernised to, "cater for individual differences [in prescribed examination] by including two parts, one stressing practical activities, the other history and appreciation" (Dimmack, 1955, p. 4).

However, despite the inclusion of history and appreciation in secondary Visual Arts examinations, Australia did not follow the USA in a bid to make Visual Arts more knowledge-based. At a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) seminar held in Melbourne in 1954, Australian educators showed a resounding commitment to progressive education, which was believed to be influenced by the popularity of child art in the 1940s (Boughton, 1989). The culture of Visual Arts education in Australia was clear: "It is considered natural that the pattern of Art Education here should follow the English. We are of English stock; our way of life is English" (Dimmack, 1955, p. 19).

1960s

After World War II Finland became a technological society, and subsequently educators were forced to justify the place of traditional Arts and Crafts in the curriculum (Garber, 2002). The subject Visual Arts was called *Visual Skills* and they were offered to the upper classes of Finnish society (Kairavuori & Sintonen, 2012). Prior to the 1970s class structure divided Finnish education: for example, "[offering] secondary schools for the wealthier and folk schools for labour families" (Pohijakallio, 2010, p. 67). This separation perpetuated class division in Finland, as children from lower socioeconomic areas were disadvantaged by the education system (Vitikka, Krokfors, & Hurmenrinta, 2012). However, educational reform began in 1968 with the provision of the Basic Education Act, which stated, "all children should attend the same school for the first nine years of education" (Vitikka et al., 2012, p. 84).

The Basic Education Act 1968 almost combined Visual Arts and Crafts into one subject, as was the case in other Nordic countries (Pohijakallio, 2010). The subject of Crafts included handiwork and textiles classes; traditionally seen as a skills-based subject (Garber, 2002). Visual Arts became grounded in popular theories of the time, such as Marxism and semiotics, which influenced the curriculum into taking a more cultural and analytical approach to Visual Arts (Pohijakallio, 2010). This philosophy of Visual Arts education was then combined with a dual pedagogical approach. That is, teaching philosophy was based both on the German Herbart school, which advocated a subject content based approach to education; and Dewey's child-centred approach with learning as the outcome of education (Vitikka et al., 2012).

The Japanese colonisation of Korea lasted from 1905 to 1945 (Park, 2009); however, Japanese influence on the South Korean Visual Arts curriculum lasted well into the 1960s. Subsequently, Visual Arts education in South Korea inherited many Western ideas that were being taught in Japan (Park, 2009). During the 1960s, South Korean Visual Arts students experienced a Bauhaus education, as in the: "Second Curriculum (1963-72) in South Korea, media and experiments with actual materials, plastic studies of composition, and the understanding of function of objects were emphasized" (Park, 2009, p. 189).

Despite the implementation of a Bauhaus-inspired curriculum, the government also effected a number of policies to, "counteract these foreign influences and to restore traditional Korean values" (Kim & Geahigan, 2004, p. 70): for example, traditional South Korean visual arts are based on a subjective process of achieving unity and a relationship with nature (Sung & Kim, 2005). The traditionalist reaction by the government was most likely a result of the rapidly changing South Korean society. Also, during this period South Korea changed from an agricultural economy to an industrial one and, "with greater prosperity, more people were exposed to the mass media. The widespread availability of radio, television, and magazines brought profound changes to the traditional Korean value system and social order" (Kim & Geahigan, 2004, p. 70).

Due to the new prosperity of South Korea, secondary schools could not cope with higher student enrolments, and vocational colleges were established to accommodate for

reductions in upper-secondary level Arts and Social Sciences (Seth, 1997). Again, The Arts were not an educational priority; similar to the period before industrialism, when limited Arts activities were taught due to the cost of materials (Kim & Geahigan, 2004). Further problems with the Visual Arts stemmed from the dual curriculum, which promoted both Bauhaus and traditional Korean values. Furthermore, while some pre-service Visual Arts teachers were taught progressive ideas by Americans in the 1950s, the Japanese had trained older teachers who were active in schools; this meant progressive education was not integrated in the classroom (Kim & Geahigan, 2004; Paek, 2006).

In 1960s England, the basic design movement continued. However, The Coldstream Report released in 1960 by the National Advisory Council on Art Education had significant implications for basic design courses in England (Candlin, 2001). Specifically, the report identified the need for responding to be taught alongside practice in Visual Arts education, and broadcast basic design as the national Arts pedagogy (Yeomans, 1992). Despite the Coldstream Report, responding and making were not integrated in the curriculum. Candlin (2001) recounted division between responding and making due to the vague definition of *visual arts history* in Visual Arts education. In reality, Visual Arts responding was taught through independent courses: for example, feminist studies courses (Candlin, 2001).

The Coldstream Report (1960) was a source of contention between Victor Pasmore and Richard Hamilton at Newcastle University; Pasmore had a position on the committee that produced the report and Hamilton did not agree with the report's recommendations (Yeomans, 1992). Their own teaching practices were also shifting, and this may have also contributed to their disagreement. During the 1960s, Pasmore worked alongside his students using the classroom to research his own creative practice, grounded in form, sculpture and architectural design (Yeomans, 1992). Hamilton chose to separate his creative practice from his teaching, and his classes became more connected to urban images that through, "enlargement revealed the inner landscape of the object and the character of the marks" (Yeomans, 1992, p. 75). Nevertheless, the basic design courses demonstrated support in the shift towards aesthetics in Visual Arts education, as was practised in their discussion and critical attitude within art making (Macdonald, 1970; Yeomans, 1992).

Curriculum reform in 1960s USA was based on a scientific model, in which all discipline areas had content knowledge, skills or inquiry methods, and scholars who supported the theoretical underpinning of the discipline (Efland, 1990b). The term *discipline* had come both from science and Jerome Bruner's theory that subject disciplines were studied by scholars beyond the school institution, and therefore had more relevance than school subjects (Efland, 1990b). The discipline approach to Visual Arts education was termed *aesthetic education*. This was both an overarching term for all The Arts, including music, drama and dance; but also referred to making meaning from the arts and an awareness of art history (Efland, 1990b; Smith, 1989). Two projects were undertaken to formalise aesthetic education, the Aesthetic Education Program by the Central Mid-Western Regional Educational Laboratory (CEMREL), and the Kettering Project led by Elliot Eisner. Both projects were aimed at elementary school level.

The Aesthetic Education Program arose from a paper delivered by Manuel Barkan at the second Penn State Seminar, titled *Curriculum Problems in Art Education* (Kern, 1984). In this paper Barkan outlined the need for content knowledge to underpin Visual Arts education, and called for regional centres to develop a new an aesthetic education curriculum (Kern, 1984). Mirroring concepts in the Owatonna Project, the planning phase report authored by Barkan:

> [Sought] to clarify the concept of aesthetic education and to locate such an education within the context of general education in a democratic society. The report drew attention to the role aesthetic education could play in fulfilling a national goal of transforming the quality of life (Kern, 1984, p. 220).

The connections of aesthetic curriculum to the democratic society and in transforming lives, bears similarity to the arts-community connection established in the Owatonna Project. However, the Aesthetic Education Program also sought to produce a curriculum and materials for implementation in schools. Phase One of the program was to develop curriculum guidelines, and involved a number of Visual Arts specialists from Ohio State University consulting to determine the key concepts of an aesthetics curriculum (Kern, 1984). This approach also reaffirmed the need for specific materials to assist in

the unit writers of the aesthetics curriculum: for example, instructions for the writing of the materials, descriptions of underpinning concepts in education, philosophy and aesthetics, and exemplars of classroom activities (Kern, 1984). The aesthetics curriculum was introduced into secondary schools in the 1970s.

The second project to influence aesthetics education was Elliot Eisner's Kettering Project. Funded by the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, Eisner led the development of an early childhood curriculum aimed at a generalist teacher who wanted students to be competent in teaching The Arts (Eisner, 1968). Eisner determined three domains that could be used to facilitate visual arts learning for young children: *productive domain*, expressive art making; *critical domain*, knowledge of the qualities of art; and the *historical domain*, knowledge of art and social culture (Eisner, 1968). These domains were subsequently broken down into concepts, principles and objectives. Eisner (1968) provided the example of line (a concept), which can convey emotion (a principle), and which can be used to create an expressive drawing (an objective). While the Kettering Project intended to simplify Visual Arts education for young students, it had repercussions in the wider educational field. Specifically it emphasised the issue of assessment of curriculum reforms, as the project's outcomes were derived from assessment of previous practice; and also emphasised the issue of depth versus breadth in Visual Arts education (Eisner, 1968).

Despite the disciplined approach to Visual Arts education, the establishment of the American Art Therapy Association (AATA) in 1969 recognised a place for progressive ideas. Like British art therapy, American art therapy also stemmed from child art. It had begun in the 1930s, when Margaret Naumburg introduced drawing into her psychology practice after watching her sister, Florence Cane teach (Waller, 1992). Courses had been founded since the 1940s to combat PTSD in the aftermath of war (Junge, 2010); however, it was not until the late 1960s that an association was established and guidelines written for art therapy students (Agell, 1980). Art therapy courses were mostly based on Freudian psychoanalysis, but adapted by Naumburg for art therapy (Junge, 2010); and Jungian theory was also prominent (Stoll, 2005). The establishment of the AATA began a culture of art therapy in America that is still practised in contemporary society.

Like the duality of the USA, Australian Visual Arts was in a state of uncertainty in the 1960s, showing both progressive and discipline based approaches. It is important to note that the discipline approach evident in Australian education was not derived from Barkan's aesthetic education in the USA (Boughton, 1989), and more closely mirrored the British basic design movement in its studio specific approach. Just as basic design had supported personal discovery in form and media (Macdonald, 1970). Australian Visual Arts education showed an emphasis on producing artworks, and in senior years specialising in studio disciplines (Boughton, 1989; Collings et al., 1985). The curriculum also mirrored basic design as it included acquiring visual arts language skills and responding to the works of artists to develop a critical attitude (Boughton, 1989). However, despite a disciplined approach and some experiments with aesthetics, themes remained grounded in creativity and expression (Boughton, 1989).

1970s

During the 1970s, Finland implemented the Basic Education Act 1968. Children were provided equal education regardless of wealth, with the education system being government funded (Pohijakallio, 2010; Vitikka et al., 2012). However, it appeared Visual Arts was not secure as an independent subject within the curriculum. In the early 1970s, "Finnish media campaigned to preserve art as a subject in schools with the view to pursuing the new approaches as opposed to integrating art with crafts" (Pohijakallio, 2010, p. 68). The media campaign was successful, and meant Visual Arts remained a separate subject to Craft (Pohijakallio, 2010).

A visual culture approach to Visual Arts was maintained in Finnish education. As a Marxist welfare state that promoted educational equality, Visual Arts analysis turned to critical inquiry. Critical visual studies became political and based in semiotics, as Finnish Visual Arts teachers emphasised the possibility of manipulating and indoctrinating through pictorial language. There was a concern for how mass media shaped people's view of the world in ways they did not control. The ability to *read* pictures critically became a central objective of Visual Arts education (Lindström, 2011, p. 11). The visual culture philosophy was evident in the outcomes of the curriculum (Pohijakallio, 2010):

- Making images (drawing and creating structures);

- Mass communication (visual communication and media);

- Environmental education (both urban and rural);

- Art history;

- Writing; and

- Integrated arts (theatre based arts).

The explicit inclusion of media, environment and communication emphasised the cultural and contextual approach taken by Visual Arts educators in Finland.

In South Korea, the Visual Arts became popular again due to a better supply of visual arts equipment, specialist publications on The Arts and the need for designers to keep up with the export industry (Kim & Geahigan, 2004). Since becoming an industrial economy the standard of education had risen, and South Koreans were demonstrating an interest in both traditional Korean and Western arts (Kim & Geahigan, 2004). Again, Western Visual Arts education was reflected in the Korean curriculum with, "a discipline-based approach to learning and teaching reflecting the general curriculum reform movement that arose in the United States during the 1950s" (Kim & Geahigan, 2004, p. 74). The curriculum covered both USA and Korean arts, and traditional Korean visual arts were included in textbooks as, "the appreciation of natural beauty was to encourage an understanding of divine providence and moral truths" (Park, 2009, p. 189). However, Western images, not Korean artworks, were emphasised in art appreciation; and art appreciation lessons were uncommon occurrences (Kim & Geahigan, 2004).

Major educational changes occurred in England during the 1970s, changes initiated by Brian Allison. Allison was a Professor of Education at Leicester Polytechnic who noticed that Visual Arts was treated as a series of oppositions: theory versus practice, child art versus basic design, and so on (Allison, 1978). His argument, in essence, was a marriage of visual arts production and theory in education. The educational reform in the USA, based on the scientific approach was translated in the desire to, "identify and formulate theories which would illuminate art education practices in the UK" (Allison & Hausman, 1998, p. 123). Allison, as chairman of the National Society for Art Education (NSAE), formulated this theory when the NSAE developed a Craft

curriculum, supported by extensive analysis of the core principles of Visual Arts education (Allison & Hausman, 1998). This curriculum is known as the Four Domains (Allison, 1982):

- The expressive/productive domain: concerned with acquiring an understanding of materials, conventions and processes that aids communication;
- The perceptual domain: concerned with development of skills and techniques;
- The analytical/critical domain: concerned with aesthetics and the language of visual arts; and
- The historical/cultural domain: concerned with historical and cultural contexts, and they have influenced visual arts.

Allison's four domains marked a significant change in Visual Arts education as they have underpinned the English curriculum from the 1970s through to the current curriculum.

In the 1960s, Barkan had argued that USA Visual Arts education was, "well beyond the threshold of a period of accelerated transition … [and] the next decade will bring some truly fundamental changes" (Barkan, 1962, p. 12). However, the discussion was over by the 1970s and a new curriculum had been implemented. The aesthetics curriculum was not well received in California, despite a field of scholars agreeing on the model by the end of the 1960s:

> California art educators' dilemma with the new framework was most recently identified in a survey of first year implementation results … it would appear from the implementation report, [arts teachers] do not understand nor empathize with most of the disciplinary notions advanced (Dorn, 1972, p. 26).

As the curriculum was implemented, Visual Arts teachers had no choice but to implement the program. Dorn's response to the dissatisfaction of Visual Arts teachers was to propose a new rationale for Visual Arts responding; suggesting the 1970s should be a time when practice was privileged over responding, and in which only responding that had practical outcomes should be disseminated (Dorn, 1972). He argued that educators need to accept Visual Arts as a discipline, and that it was futile to expect students to be historians, as it was not a reflection of reality beyond the school

environment (Dorn, 1972). In this way, Dorn mirrored Bruner's belief that subjects studied by students should reflect the disciplines studied by scholars beyond the school institution (Efland, 1990b).

The 1970s marked a time of confusion and ambiguity in the Australian arts. Visual Arts educators were trying to define The Arts in the curriculum and discussed the commonalities of The Arts subjects, which were to be addressed by the Australia Council-Schools Commission Study of Education and the Arts report (Richardson, 1978). Donald Richardson, a member of the South Australian steering committee, highlighted a number of issues within The Arts. Firstly, teachers were not quick to support defining The Arts' role within education and a number of responses to the committee were from professional arts associations (Richardson, 1978). Second, an integrated Arts approach was still advocated by primary teachers, bringing into question the suitability of teaching fundamental ideas, "[emotively] rather than through rational techniques" (Richardson, 1978, p. 57). On the other hand, The Arts were also regarded as play, despite a large number of teacher responses defining visual arts as fine arts, although popular culture artworks were marginally recognised (Richardson, 1978). The breadth of Visual Arts education definitions by teachers and professional associations was an indicator of the confusion of arts practice in schools. Richardson (1978) also noted community arts was a popular term among responses; perhaps a response to the Owatonna approach, or the more recent Aesthetic Education Program. In the least, the ambiguity and confusion in responses indicate Australia was struggling to define The Arts and their place in education.

1980s

The most significant change in 1980s Finnish education was the increased power to educational municipalities, who were authorised to structure education based on local students' needs (Vitikka et al., 2012). In a 1985 reform, class streaming was discontinued and all students were encouraged to achieve to the best of their ability (Vitikka et al., 2012). Vocational education at the completion of basic education was encouraged, including specialised courses in The Arts (Aho, Pitkänen, & Sahlberg, 2006). There is little documented about Finnish Visual Arts education during this period. However, literature suggests environmental art was popular: "When the new expressionist painting, earth and environmental art emerged in the 1980s, all of which

had initially escaped galleries, they were greeted as a breath of fresh air by art educators" (Pohijakallio, 2010, p. 72). Where an environmental approach to visual arts was absent, a formalist approach similar to the 1970s was taken (Pohijakallio, 2010).

During the 1980s, traditional Korean visual arts and nature were marginalised in the curriculum. Korean Visual Arts education still mimicked the Japanese, a progressive self-expressionist approach to Arts education (Park, 2009). Korea was not unfamiliar with progressive education, since the Americans had introduced it to them around the time of the Korean War (1950-1953) (Park, 2009). The move toward a child-centred pedagogy stemmed from the confusion of the early 1980s; during which natural beauty was minimised in the Visual Arts, and used only to demonstrate knowledge of discipline-based elements and principles (Park, 2009). Unlike other countries that were moving towards a formalist Visual Arts education, Korea instead adopted the freedom of self-expressionism and brought creativity closer to nature again.

In England, the 1970s Craft curriculum (four domains) was the first topic of the *Journal of Art and Design Education* published by Allison and the NSAE. The journal was a means of publicising theory, as at the time, "there were few, if any, publications or other means to disseminate and exchange ideas" (Allison & Hausman, 1998, p. 123). Allison's article presented the dilemmas of curriculum writers in Visual Arts education, namely the definition of visual arts' purposes and content. He argued curriculum writers must consider the broader fields of visual arts and design in identifying the purpose of Visual Arts education, and then develop content to achieve this purpose (Allison, 1982). Allison's four domains provide his purpose for Visual Arts education, in which he interconnected the domains to represent the complexity of visual arts (Allison, 1982). While the domains themselves do not change between the 1970s and 1980s, the concept of the four domains co-existing was an addition of the 1982 article.

It is possible that the interconnectedness of the domains stemmed from Allison's dissatisfaction that art was not regarded as an intellectual subject in England (Allison, 1984), as he noted, "there is a dominance of art making, and aesthetic knowledge is anticipated to be a natural consequence of the child's studio art practice" (Allison, 1984, p. 65). Perhaps the dominance of art making led Allison to connect the

analytical/critical and historical/cultural domains to the practical domains, in an attempt for theory to occupy a greater place in (and justify) Visual Arts education.

The 1980s was a pivotal time for visual arts education in the USA. In 1983, the J. Paul Getty Trust established the *Getty Center for Education in the Arts*, which would sponsor discipline based art education (DBAE) (Efland, 1990b). W. Dwaine Greer coined the term DBAE, derived from the 1960s ideas of Barkan and Eisner (Efland, 1988, 1990b). DBAE was comprised of four disciplines: studio, history, criticism and aesthetics (Greer, 1987). Despite including four disciplines it is, "not implied that children should mimic critics, historians, aestheticians, or artists" (Greer, 1987, p. 233). The DBAE was more of a directed, holistic approach to the Visual Arts. Each of the four disciplines in DBAE is separated in content concepts (what) and inquiry concepts (how) (Greer, 1987). For example, in art criticism students are expected to determine subject matter, content, meaning and justification of works of art; acquired through description of content, analysis of form, interpretation and evaluation (Greer, 1987). The scaffolding of both the content and inquiry concepts was designed to give practical applications to the literature on aesthetic curriculum (Greer, 1987).

The aim of DBAE was to teach these disciplines, "interactively to build an increasingly developed understanding and enlightened appreciation of works of art" (Greer, 1987). Greer's description of the purpose of DBAE implies that the study of Visual Arts is only aesthetic. Eisner (1987) expanded on this description, labelling the purpose of Visual Arts education as to learn visual art's language, "it is by learning these languages that they gain access to the kind of experience that the forms make possible" (p. 9). In the above statement Eisner describes visual literacy, as students learn the characteristics of visual arts that will allow them to make sense of all forms of visual arts. However, Eisner's goal of visual literacy also had its critics. Hamblen (1987) cited her concerns that the art criticism approach of DBAE may limit students appreciation of visual arts if multiculturalism (and feminism) was not integrated into the visual artworks studied, and suggested that DBAE was too standardised and required the addition of reflexivity to its curriculum.

Curriculum reform also occurred in Australia during the 1980s. In Western Australia reform began in 1984 with the Beazley Report, which indicated that *Practical and*

Creative Arts should become part of the core learning areas in schools and the provision of designated arts schools for gifted and talented students (Beazley, 1984). In 1986, the Australian Institute of Art Education released a National Policy that was subsequently endorsed by all Australian states (Boughton, 1989). The National Policy divided Visual Arts into two learning outcomes: reflecting and responding to art, and art making (Boughton, 1989). These outcomes were developed into State curricula, and were interpreted distinctly by each State.

The curriculum developed in Western Australia echoed the DBAE. While Boughton (1989) argues that the DBAE had little effect in Australia, it is likely that it influenced the Western Australian Arts and Crafts curriculum as a result of Jean Rush presenting, "the principles of the DBAE proposals at a national conference in Perth" (Boughton, 1989, p. 208). The five outcomes of the 1987 Western Australian secondary Visual Arts curriculum were studio, visual literacy, visual enquiry, art criticism and art history (Boughton, 1989). Although art criticism and art history were DBAE disciplines, in Australia these outcomes had significant impact on senior school Visual Arts students. As the Tertiary Entrance Examination (TEE) afforded university entrance, Visual Arts responding was a key component of the senior Visual Arts curriculum and examination, as it demonstrated that students had the intellectual rigour to succeed at university (Boughton, 1989; Morris & Lummis, 2015).

1990s

The early 1990s was a dark period for the Finnish economy; the collapse of the export industry to Russia, high international interest rates and high unemployment rates lead to an economic depression (Kiander & Vartia, 2011). At the same time, "the number of art lessons at comprehensive school had decreased alarmingly" (Karppinen, 2008, p. 84). It was also during this time that *visual skills* were renamed *visual arts* (Kairavuori & Sintonen, 2012). Multicultural classrooms were established in the larger cities, and inclusive education policies were discussed (Saarnivaara & Varto, 2005). However, regardless of the economy and poor student numbers, Visual Arts education (and craft education) remained part of the compulsory curriculum for basic education. Visual arts education was also strengthened outside the school environment, with the passing of the Basic Education for Children in the Arts Act. This Act saw provision for students to extend their visual arts education through voluntary classes outside of school hours

(Karppinen, 2008). It was established due some students not having enough in-school time to fully, "extend their skills of expression and creativity, or . . . who need arts to express themselves in a purposeful way" (Karppinen, 2008, p. 84). This extra time for visual arts may also be attributed to teachers; who, due to the decentralised education system, were able to respond to their students' needs and use the significant funding per pupil that was allowed despite the financial crisis (Aho et al., 2006).

Korea also experienced change through their sixth curriculum reform in 1992; however, the role of nature remained prominent in visual art (Park, 2009). Korea began to integrate ideas that were long established in the USA, namely that of visual arts and the community. *Art in daily life* was part of the Korean Visual Arts curriculum, derived from Dewey's reconstructionist view of visual arts and a positioning of visual arts as a subject for life-long personal development (Park, 2009). Like child-centred art, which became popular in the previous decade, reconstructionism was also first introduced to Korea during the early 1950s. Art appreciation was still included in the curriculum, influenced by DBAE (Paek, 2006). However, it has been observed that art appreciation remained limited in the classroom, in favour of more practical activities (Paek, 2006).

The practice of critical activity had increased in England's Visual Arts education during the 1980s; however, it was with the implementation of the National Curriculum in 1992 that Visual Arts making and responding were united (Allison & Hausman, 1998). Unlike the DBAE, which was heavily grounded in literature (Greer, 1987), the English National Curriculum, "resulted in an art education more heavily dependent upon pragmatism and practice rather than theoretical exposition" (Allison & Hausman, 1998, p. 125). Yet, despite its focus on art making, the curriculum was not well received. The English curriculum was described as holding on to a view of visual arts from the nineteenth century, which failed to recognise its complexity of visual arts (Hughes, 1997, 1998). It was criticised for not incorporating the current technological and multicultural climate into its activities, and thus appeared devoid of reality in its approach to education (Hughes, 1998). Also, despite the long history of design education in England, design was relegated from Visual Arts and placed as part of technology studies; aggravating the argument regarding lack of depth in the Visual Arts curriculum (Hughes, 1998).

Unlike England's new curriculum, the USA encouraged the inclusion of postmodern theories into its Visual Arts curriculum. The principles of DBAE were still prominent in the 1990s, but they were also updated to reflect postmodern society through neo-DBAE. As Hamblen (1988) had previously stated:

> For DBAE to be a viable instructional option in our pluralistic, multicultural, and rapidly changing society it needs to be contextually interpreted and developed according to the teaching values of individual teachers and to the needs of specific student populations (p. 35).

While neo-DBAE could not provide the individualised approach Hamblen supported, it gave teachers some direction for utilising a DBAE approach in postmodern Visual Arts education. Freedman (1997) described neo-DBAE as a *decentralised curriculum*. It becomes aware of the place of mass media and technology in students' lives, and of the individual cultural identities and experiences students bring to the four disciplines (Chalmers, 1992; Efland, 1996; Freedman, 1997). Neo-DBAE also reflected an understanding of art as sociocultural because, "[an] appreciation of the formal qualities of art is not the same thing as understanding art" (Chalmers, 1992, p. 17). Freedman (1997) summarised the rationale for Visual Arts to be decentred and contextually driven:

> Students interact with such fragmented, often contradictory, multi-disciplinary and inter-cultural images daily through the mediation of technology … they [students] made conceptual connections between fine art and popular culture that illustrate the collapse of boundaries between art forms. (p. 24)

Australia continued to undergo educational reform well into the 1990s. The Australian Education Council produced the *Arts Profile Statement* to describe the progression of Arts education from Year 1 to Year 12, with achievement levels to assess the complexity of skills and knowledge across these year levels (Boughton, 1997). These documents underpinned the Western Australian Curriculum Framework (WACF) and describe four learning outcomes for The Arts learning area: which included Visual Arts, alongside Dance, Drama, Media Arts and Music (Curriculum Council, 1998). The WACF is still currently taught in WA, up to Year 10.

The four WACF learning outcomes suggest a balance of making and responding. *Arts Ideas* and *Arts Skills and Processes* are the two art making outcomes. In Arts Ideas students create original visual artworks from their own ideas, interpretation of previous art works or concepts, and through the process of developing ideas in production (Curriculum Council, 1998). In Skills and Processes, students use technology and traditional conventions to develop technical visual arts skills (Curriculum Council, 1998). *Arts Responses* and *Arts in Society* comprise the responding component of the WACF. Arts Responses addresses DBAE's art criticism skills of responding, reflecting and evaluating visual arts (Curriculum Council, 1998); while Arts in Society reflects art history in its development of valuing both international and Australian visual arts, and the awareness of social, cultural and economic contexts of visual arts (Curriculum Council, 1998).

It is possible to argue that the level of constriction of England's national curriculum mirrored the level of ambiguity within Australia's *Arts Profile Statement*. Of great concern was the assessment of visual artworks, in which the progressive levels provided a sketchy outline rather than, "a definitive framework appropriate to all cases of student work" (Boughton, 1997, p. 202).

2000-Current

Finland has achieved recognition for a successful model of education, due to its high Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) ranking (Caldwell & Vaughan, 2011). The current *National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004* positions Visual Arts both inside and outside the classroom. Visual Arts is used as a broad learning area that includes, "architecture, audio-visual arts, pictorial arts, and arts and crafts" (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010, p. 6). Visual Arts and Craft have remained two subjects in the curriculum, with additional specialised centres for students to complete voluntary enrichment classes in visual arts and craft (Finnish National Board of Education, 2010; Garber, 2002). Visual Arts-based activities external to school are popular, with artists organising community-based projects that are site-specific, resulting in local murals and other group artworks (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2008).

The Finnish Visual Arts curriculum is based on visual culture. Visual Arts are designed to, "support the development of the pupils' visual thinking and aesthetic and ethical

awareness, and to make pupils capable of their own visual expression … understanding the manifestation of visual culture in society" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004, p. 234). These ideas are exemplified in their learning outcomes of, "visual expression and thinking; artistic knowledge and cultural expertise; environmental aesthetics, architecture, and design; and the media and visual communication" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004, p. 235). These outcomes show the emphasis on environment and community that have been prominent in the history of Finnish education, particularly throughout the 1980s.

While education in Finland has received acclaim in the recent years, Korean education has become unstable as it tries to span both Western and Korean cultures (Park, 2009). Sung and Kim (2005) state that Korean visual arts is marginalised, favouring an, "attachment [to Western visual arts, which] results in an unbalanced view that is presented to students' about their own values and identities" (Sung & Kim, 2005, p. 18). Some academics promote a return to traditional Korean art that explores, "the substances of humans and nature. This kind of aesthetic attitude and aesthetic experience promotes one's perception directly and looks critically at modern society's materialism and spiritual poverty" (Sung & Kim, 2005, p. 19). This approach describes an adaptation of visual culture based on Eastern philosophies.

The Korean education system in general has also changed, with emphasis on both diversity and competiveness. Teacher education courses have instilled the value of high academic achievement in national and international testing (C. Lee, Kim, & Byun, 2012), as opposed to the experiential learning advocated by Dewey. Visual Arts education was fragmented, trying to encourage *art as cultural experience* (Dewey, 1906, 1948) while maintaining academic competitiveness. However, during the mid-2000s (2003-2007) another reform of the Korean curriculum was released, which has resulted in increased status for Visual Arts and more authority for individual teacher autonomy to balance the cross-cultural focus of Korean Visual Arts (Paek, 2014). Additionally, community art (similar to Finland's model) is becoming popular in South Korea: for example, community based visual arts schools, known as *Art Hakwons,* are providing kindergarten to secondary school students with opportunity to engage in art making outside of school (Shin & Kim, 2014).

The twenty-first century has resulted in a lot of debate surrounding the national curriculum in England. In the mid-2000s there was still frustration at the limiting boundaries of the curriculum, heightened by the, "government's expectation in England that secondary art teachers contribute to, amongst other, the 'literacy' and 'thinking skills' strands of the National [curriculum]" (Cunliffe, 2005, p. 200). Cunliffe (2005) further stated that a fundamental problem of education in England is the lack of unity between government initiatives and the industry bodies who govern teaching and assessment standards in schools. Subsequently the reforms were not being established in practice.

Despite the negative attitude towards England's curriculum, there is progress towards a new reform. In 2011 an expert panel was convened to review the national curriculum and provide a framework for a new curriculum. In December 2011, Art and Design was recommended as compulsory during stage four (senior school), as it maintains a balanced curriculum and benefits the wider community (Oates, 2011). However, in 2013 only stage one through stage three of *Art and Design Programmes of Study* were released (Department of Education, 2013). The final programmes are particularly concrete; emphasising mastery of visual arts skills, such as drawing and art history, and making little mention of creativity across the stages (Department of Education, 2013). Visual Arts and Design teachers within the National Society for Education in Art and Design were strongly against the National Curriculum programmes as:

> The final version is neither inspirational nor aspiration and certainly not 'world class'. The final version does not describe the unique nature, depth, breadth and future of the subject, nor fully meet the needs of children and young people living and engaging in the 21st century (National Society for Education in Art and Design, 2014, ¶2).

This critique motivated the Society to publish their own curriculum materials to support Visual Arts and Design teachers across the United Kingdom (National Society for Education in Art and Design, 2014).

Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) has been the dominant pedagogy in twenty-first century USA, although it was initially derived from neo-DBAE and postmodern considerations (Cherry, 2004). Like other community-based approaches to visual arts,

VCAE is concerned with authentic content in Visual Arts education. VCAE encompasses all visual texts, from the historical pre-modern to popular culture forms (Anderson, 2003; Duncum, 2010; Efland, 2004). The pedagogy itself focuses on how art functions within society. Rather than having a discipline base, VCAE is based in social, cultural and economical contexts (Freedman, 2003b): for example, VCAE questions how cultures, "represent race, class, gender and unequal power" (Duncum, 2002, p. 20).

Academic consensus has defined principles of VCAE, but has only recently begun to outline strategies for effectively implementing these principles in Visual Arts teaching and learning. Initially, VCAE raised more questions than answers, as there is no universally accepted canon of artists to draw on, and no organisation to control visual arts in a globalised visual culture; therefore, teachers had no guidelines about *correct* content to include in Visual Arts education (Smith-Shank, 2008). Instead, individual teachers have the agency to make decisions about which visual arts are privileged and which are marginalised. Freedman (2003a) suggested that VCAE should use visual arts making for both personal expression and a vehicle for social commentary. Freedman's model could prove detrimental if social commentary was promoted over aesthetic quality in art making. As Eisner (1987) asserted, the *language of visual arts* (an understanding of elements and principles, and how to manipulate media effectively) is important; without this language students cannot effectively decode images, or encode their own artworks with rich cultural symbols and meaning.

With the continuing expansion of multimodal technologies, new practical applications for VCAE (e.g., videogames and multimodal technologies as media to use in art making and responding) are presenting some authentic examples of VCAE in practice (Black & Browning, 2011; Patton, 2014). However, similar to recent Australian experiences, the *No Child Left Behind* policy had marginalised The Arts to improve students' literacy and numeracy outcomes (Sabol, 2013; Spohn, 2008). The reduction of Visual Arts learning is promoted through government policy; which states that although *art* is a core subject for all students, no formal assessment is mandated for the subject (Motto, 2010). As a result, some USA states are moving towards the *handmaiden* approach, as they actively train teachers to use visual arts as a pedagogical tool to support core subject

areas (e.g., English, Mathematics, Sciences and Social Sciences) (Vitulli, Pitts Santoli, & Fresne, 2013).

Australia has also emphasised the importance of literacy and numeracy through the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), part of the national plan to ensure students meet internationally-competitive educational outcomes (ACARA, 2014c). However, NAPLAN testing is *mostly* confined to primary schools (ACARA, 2014c), and therefore, would likely have a more significant impact on primary visual arts learning.

The most significant change for secondary school Visual Arts responding was the introduction of the Visual Arts Course of Study (VACoS), implemented between 2005 and 2009 (Stephens, 2006). It changed senior school (Years 11 and 12) education and coincided with the introduction of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE). Under WACE students could work towards receiving the traditional certificate of education to satisfy university entrance; however, students could also use the certificate to achieve Vocational Education Training (VET) qualifications, as the VACoS integrated VET competencies within its courses (Curriculum Council, 2000, 2011).

While still maintaining the outcomes of the WACF at its core, VACoS outlined two essential content areas for instruction: art making and art interpretation (responding). Art making included activities supporting, "inquiry, visual language, visual influence art forms, media and techniques, art practice, presentation, and reflection" (Curriculum Council, 2008, p. 4). These activities encompass both the Arts Ideas and Arts Skills and Processes of the WACF, and are structured to follow the progression of art making from initial ideas to a *final product*. Content for art interpretation included, "visual analysis, personal response, meaning and purpose, and social, cultural and historical contexts" (Curriculum Council, 2008, p. 4). These types of interpretation tasks build students' visual literacy by exploring cultural and social implications of visual arts beyond the analysis of style and artistic conventions (Atkins, 2002; Efland, 2004).

Art interpretation is the culmination of Arts Responses and Arts in Society outcomes, and still reflects the DBAE criticism and history disciplines. However, it is important to

recognise that while the structure of DBAE is still inherent in the Western Australian curriculum, the current pedagogy is more in line with VCAE. The focus themes for the VACoS, which are fixed themes for Visual Arts teachers to interpret, include: differences, identities, commentaries and points of view (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a, 2014b). Through these focus themes, the VACoS emphasises post-structuralism, as students' explore concepts of representation in contemporary society (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a, 2014b). Visual arts education students are also increasingly directed to interpret a balance of contemporary and traditional works, and this practice is evident in the image selection for recent WACE Year 12 examinations (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2013).

In 2015, the VACoS is being replaced by the choice of a Year 11 ATAR Visual Arts course or a General Visual Arts course (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a, 2014b). The dominant change between VACoS and the 2015 courses is the separation of ATAR (counted towards university entrance) and General (wholly-school assessed) Visual Arts students (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a). The ATAR syllabus reflects the content of Stage 2 (Year 11) and Stage 3 (Year 12) detailed in the original VACoS; while the General syllabus reflects the content of the Stage 1 units (Years 11 and 12) that did not include an examination component (Curriculum Council, 2008). This model is different to the theory that originally underscored VACoS, in which VET competencies were integrated into courses so that students would study the same course regardless of their aspirations post-schooling (Curriculum Council, 2000, 2011). The content of the new 2015 Visual Arts courses are very similar to VACoS, but have been updated to reflect the Australian Curriculum: Visual Arts (ACARA, 2014a), which has recently been released for students from kindergarten to Year 10. While the majority of the curriculum remains the same, teachers are required to align their teaching and learning with the cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities (Figure 2, overleaf) (ACARA, 2014a).
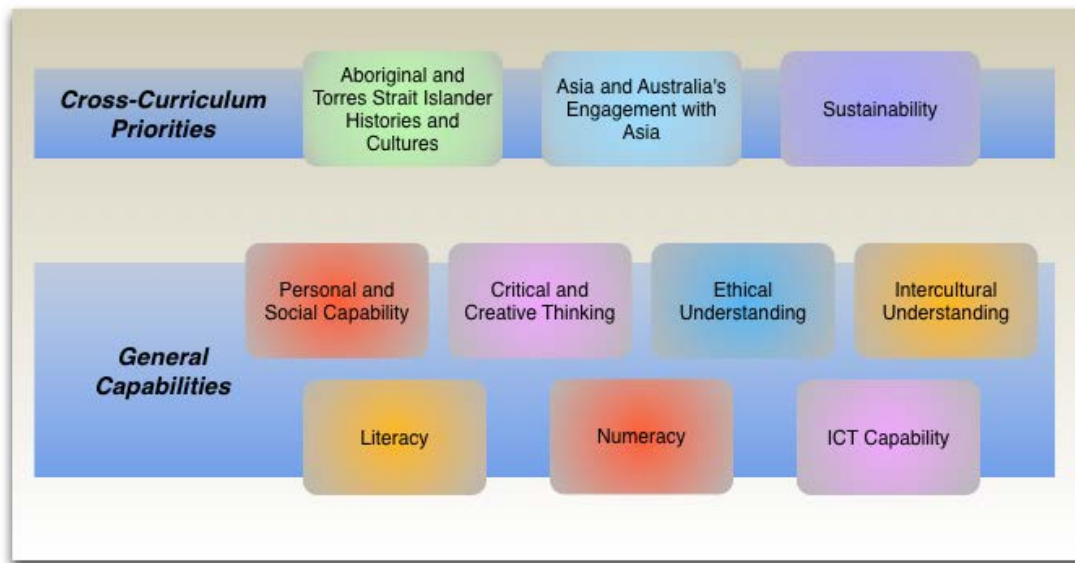
Figure 2. *Australian Curriculum: Cross-Curriculum Priorities and General Capabilities (ACARA, 2013, n.d.)*

In 2014, the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (F-10) was published (ACARA, 2014a). The Australian Curriculum organises Visual Arts content under two strands: making and responding. However, responding becomes more integrated in art making through the inclusion of *viewpoints* (ACARA, 2014a). Viewpoints include students' consideration of media to construct meaning, or critical theory links to construct post-structural readings of society through visual artworks (ACARA, 2014a). The Australian Curriculum's inclusion of critical theories and shifting viewpoints (ACARA, 2014a) indicate that the curriculum positions itself in the reality of a global context, as well as the principles of VCAE. The addition of cross-curriculum priorities, general capabilities and the increasing emphasis on critical theory and visual culture in Visual Arts education adds further complexity to the curriculum. While they may be important to student development and the realisation of the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA, 2008), these additions further crowd the curriculum, in which the arts are often overlooked due to the national concern for literacy and numeracy standards (Heyning, 2010). Therefore, the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, and also the revised Years 11 and 12 Visual Arts syllabi in WA, may provide some challenge for Visual Arts teachers (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014).

Student Engagement and Factors Affecting Engagement

There is no universal definition for student engagement in education, or conclusive method for measuring engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Harris, 2011; Lovelace, Reschly, Appleton, & Lutz, 2014; Mazer, 2012; Yonezawa et al., 2009). Difficulties arise in defining and measuring student engagement due to the breadth of its observable attributes; however, it is beneficial to measure several types of engagement to construct a more holistic view of student engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Yonezawa et al., 2009). The literature includes four types (or variations) of student engagement: *academic, behavioural, cognitive* or *psychological* engagement (Furlong & Christenson, 2008; Harris, 2011; Lovelace et al., 2014). Academic and behavioural engagement emphasise basic factors affecting engagement: for example, academic engagement includes in-class participation and completion of assigned work (Furlong & Christenson, 2008; Harris, 2011). Behavioural engagement can be defined as being on-task during lessons, school attendance and students abiding by school regulations (Fredricks et al., 2004; Furlong & Christenson, 2008; Harris, 2011). These observable indicators are linked to basic understandings of engagement as they do not consider students' authentic participation: for example, a student may appear to be on-task as they are not disrupting the class, but they may not be completing the work assigned by the teacher.

Cognitive and psychological engagement are more complex types of student engagement because they imply advanced knowledge acquisition. Advanced knowledge acquisition is the ability to apply learnt knowledge to a variety of problems or contexts, to use knowledge to derive personal understandings about the world, and to identify where one's own gaps in knowledge exist (Efland, 1990b). Advanced knowledge acquisition is closely linked to Dewey's philosophy of education, which prepared students for their life-world beyond schooling (Dewey, 1906). It also links closely to the *Melbourne Declaration*, which states that students should be prepared to become active citizens in the twenty-first century Australian and global life-worlds (MCEETYA, 2008). Also, the behaviours exhibited in academic and behavioural engagement only apply to students within the school environment, while those listed within cognitive and psychological engagement take a more holistic view of a student's skills and knowledge, related to both home and school.

A total of nine factors were determined for the initial construction of the Visual Arts Responding Student Engagement Instrument (VARSEI). Five factors were linked to cognitive engagement and four factors were determined for psychological engagement (Figure 3, below).
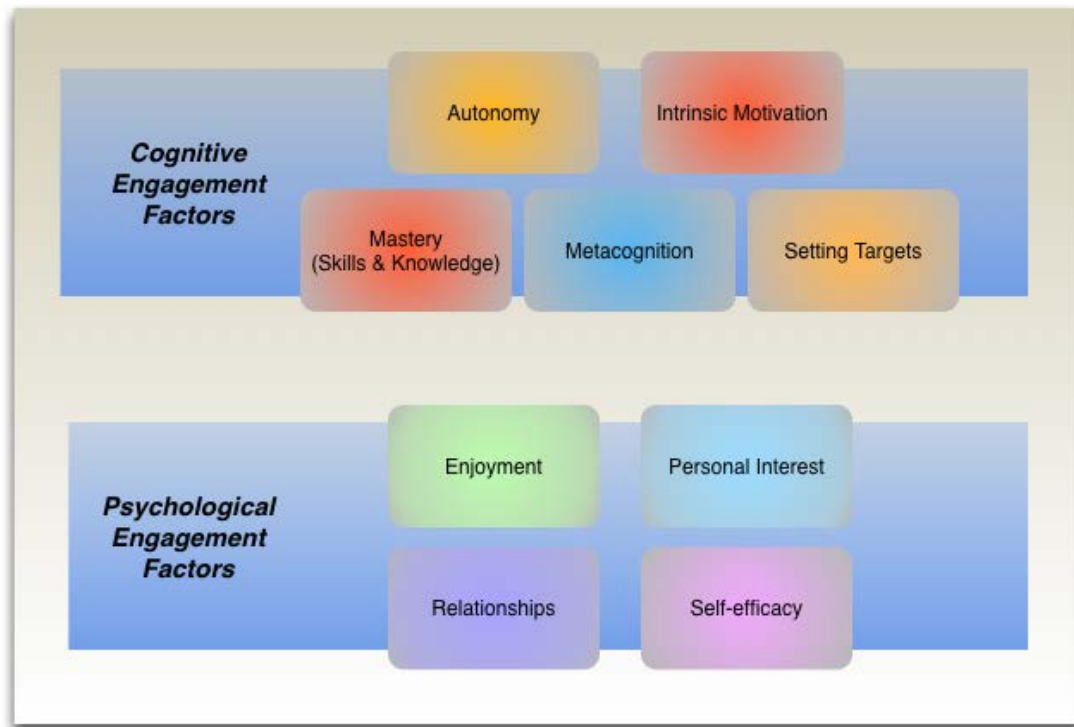
Figure 3. *Cognitive and Psychological Engagement Factors for the VARSEI.*

Cognitive Engagement

Five factors were initially included in the cognitive engagement scale of the VARSEI: autonomy, intrinsic motivation, mastery of skills and knowledge, metacognition and setting targets.

Autonomy was defined as the internalisation of information or processes, and their integration into their self-identity (Moller, Deci, & Ryan, 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2006). Autonomy is closely linked to students' need for competence and relatedness within self-determination theory (Moller et al., 2006; Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2006; Winchmann, 2011). An autonomous student makes decisions about their learning in relation to his or her authentic beliefs and interests (Dodge & Kaufman, 2009; Winchmann, 2011): for example, in Visual Arts

this could be a student who chooses to study artists who reflect their own interest in Australian urbanisation or other themes. An autonomous student will engage in this learning despite external motivations, because the authentic learning provides greater reward (Reeve et al., 2004; Winchmann, 2011). In Visual Arts, teachers may provide students with a choice of artists to study; however, the autonomous student is likely to suggest an artist not on the pre-determined list, but someone who interests them personally.

Autonomy is greater than students' independence in learning; it is the connection between learning and personal motivation (Mandigo, Holt, Anderson, & Sheppard, 2008; Moller et al., 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2006; Winchmann, 2011). Students' competence (mastery) also increases their autonomy, as if a student feels success they are more likely to engage in ongoing learning (Deci & Moller, 2007; Lummis & Morris, 2014; Moller et al., 2006). As they engage in ongoing learning, a positive feedback loop is sustained and the students' interest (e.g., visual arts) becomes aligned within their self-identity (Deci & Moller, 2007; Dodge & Kaufman, 2009; I. Gilbert, 2013; Moller et al., 2006; Winchmann, 2011). In addition to competence, students' sense of relatedness to a topic (e.g., visual arts) through relationship is important (Deci & Moller, 2007; Pomerantz, Grolnick, & Price, 2007). Relatedness within self-determination theory focuses on students' wellbeing through feeling socially connected through a topic (Deci & Moller, 2007; Pomerantz et al., 2007): for example, a student who has engaged in craft making activities at home or who visited art galleries with family members, and has positive memories of these experiences, may have a higher sense of relatedness to visual arts because their social needs are met through these activities.

Intrinsic motivation was defined as students' motivation to learn for knowledge, to accomplish and to stimulate their senses (Carbonneau, Vallerand, & Lafrenière, 2012). While intrinsic motivation is a multidimensional construct that is typically simplified within research (Reiss, 2012), various types of intrinsic motivation were included in the VARSEI. Ryan and Deci (2000), proposed a continuum of human motivation. Students who completed tasks based on compliance were externally regulated and furthest from a sense of intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Soenens, & Matos, 2005). Closer to intrinsic motivation were students who did not have

a personal interest in tasks, but who could recognise the importance of the learning achieved (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste et al., 2005): for example, the student who does not like writing may not be interested in writing an artist case study report, but they may recognise the importance of learning about other artists to their own visual arts making. Finally, students who are intrinsically motivated complete the tasks because they feel a sense of interest and satisfaction, as learning is connected to their self-identity (Carbonneau et al., 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste et al., 2005).

The three aspects of intrinsic motivation defined by Carbonneau et al. (2012) were motivation linked to knowledge, accomplishment and sensory stimulation. The connection to sensory stimulation was considered important for visual arts, as artworks engage the senses to evoke emotive responses from viewers (or participants in the case of some installation works) (Bullot, 2013; Eisner, 2002; Stern, 2011; Unrath & Luehrman, 2009; Zupancic, 2005). The remaining two motivation types, knowledge and accomplishment, were more common in motivation research. Intrinsic motivation linked to knowledge, or students' desires to learn and understand, is most closely linked to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This type of motivation is also closely connected with students' autonomy and need for competence, as their motivation to know about a topic is related to their internal interest in it (Deci & Moller, 2007; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009). Motivation for accomplishment includes students whose motivation is driven by challenge and success (Carbonneau et al., 2012). These students may be more goal-oriented, as they are motivated to improve their mastery of skills and knowledge (Ames, 1992; Carbonneau et al., 2012; Reiss, 2012; Skinner et al., 2009). It is also important to consider that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation could simultaneously affect a student's engagement in Visual Arts responding (Reiss, 2012): for example, a student may like drawing and enter a drawing in a competition. The act of drawing may be intrinsically motivated; however, the competition may provide extrinsic motivation to produce this drawing. The student may complete the drawing through exploring new themes (knowledge motivation) or new media and techniques (accomplishment motivation). Therefore, measurement instruments or research need to consider the complexity of motivation as a factor in student engagement.

Mastery of skills and knowledge was defined through visual literacy, an outcome of mastery in Visual Arts responding. Therefore, mastery was defined as the ability to deconstruct images, make meaning from images, determine a personal response to imagery, and to use interpretation to construct new imagery (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004b). Visual literacy in a contemporary society includes students' ability to decode and recode information from multimodal technologies in everyday life (e.g., advertisements or the Internet), in addition to artworks (e.g., audio-visual installations or woodblock prints) (Burgess & Addison, 2004; Flood, 2004b; Flood & Bamford, 2007; Freedman, 2003b; Wilson, 2011). It is also linked to the previous discussion on visual culture earlier in this Chapter. However, visual literacy is no longer limited to the Visual Arts classroom, but also integrated within the English Learning Area of the Australian Curriculum through multimodal text study and the literacy general capability (ACARA, 2013, 2014b). As the connection between Visual Arts and English skills increases, more students may experience vertical décalage; that is, a period where children can think abstractly for some subjects, but not for others (Piaget, 1950). In terms of Piagetian theory, the student is half in formal operational stage and half concrete operational (Krause, Bochner, & Duchesne, 2003; Piaget, 1950): for example, a student may be in the formal operational stage in terms of visual arts knowledge (perhaps a result of exposure to visual arts exhibitions and activities from a young age), but who is still in concrete operational for language literacy. This student may not communicate their ideas with the expected level of complexity required in senior school Visual Arts due to their lower level of functioning in language literacy.

Metacognition was defined as: "The act of monitoring cognitive performance, which serves as input to self-regulation of cognitive behaviours" (Wiley & Jee, 2011, p. 6). Three common types of metacognitive knowledge were included in the VARSEI: knowledge of self, task knowledge and strategic knowledge (Tarricone, 2011). Metacognitive knowledge of self is related to students' awareness of their own goals, motivations, and areas of strength and difficulty in learning (Proust, 2010; Tarricone, 2011; Wiley & Jee, 2011). This type of knowledge may also extend to knowledge of self in relation to others: for example, a student may have a better understanding of his/her motivation if they compare his/her own reasoning with other students' reasons for engaging in a task (Tarricone, 2011). They may assimilate ideas gained from reflecting on relationships and lived experience different to their own in explaining

personal motivation or learning experiences (Proust, 2010; Tarricone, 2011). Task knowledge relates to the objectives of specific tasks and an awareness of task complexity and context (Tarricone, 2011). Metacognitive task knowledge is used when a student determines if they have completed a task in accordance with its objectives, and uses memories of past tasks to compare achievement (Proust, 2010). Task knowledge is the awareness of student and teacher expectations and the outcome of learning, which may also be linked to intrinsic motivation through a sense of purpose (Proust, 2010). It could also be linked to mastery of skills and knowledge in Visual Arts, as the process of visual analysis linked to visual literacy (decoding and recoding visual images) is objective of most Visual Arts responding tasks. Strategic knowledge is the knowledge of appropriate methods to complete tasks and the transferability of these skills, as well as how to adapt learning methods to meet the required outcome of a task (Tarricone, 2011). In Visual Arts responding, strategic knowledge could include knowing how to effectively research visual artists and artworks using the Internet and print-based texts, as well as how to write visual analyses.

Metacognition is important to cognitive engagement because it provides students with self-regulation skills linked to autonomy. It has also been linked to creativity and agency (Chambon, Filevich, & Haggard, 2014; Fox & Christoff, 2014). Metacognitive processes are used to evaluate the spontaneous creative ideas produced by students' minds (Fox & Christoff, 2014), which could align with task knowledge, as students must evaluate their thoughts in relation to the expectations of the teacher and task. Chambon et al. (2014) also suggest that metacognition could be considered as agency, if an individual is aware of acting with agency. If the intention is to perform a change action, then the monitoring of the same action constitutes metacognitive agency (Chambon et al., 2014). This argument is similar to the notion of reflexivity in visual culture, the ability to be aware when individuals are being subtly manipulated by other individuals or larger organisations (Duncum, 2006b, 2010; Freedman, 2003b; Giddens, 1991; Jenkins, 2004). In addition to agency, metacognition has also been connected to increased academic achievement, as students are more aware about how they learn and what they need to improve (Hudesman et al., 2013).
Setting targets was defined through goals for learning, goals for challenge or for personal growth (Hinsz & Jundt, 2005; Locke & Latham, 2006; Song & Grabowski, 2006). Goals for learning are focussed on learning outcomes (Song & Grabowski,

2006): for example, mastery of previously unknown skills and knowledge, or furthering their understandings about particular topics. Goals for challenge are linked to improving achievement (similar to students who are motivated by accomplishment), or competition (Hinsz & Jundt, 2005). These students may also be motivated by mastery, but are specifically motivated by mastering difficult tasks or by outperforming others or self (Hinsz & Jundt, 2005; Song & Grabowski, 2006). Goals for personal growth are most closely related to autonomy and metacognitive literature, in that these students set targets for their own well-being or interest and may improve their self-knowledge through reflection on their goals (Locke & Latham, 2006; Proust, 2010). Personal growth goals are often macro-goals that have an effect on other goals or are linked to emotion (Hinsz & Jundt, 2005; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012): for example, avoiding failure or anxiety could be a goal linked to self-efficacy.

While these factors were investigated individually in the literature, there are many common traits between them. Together, these factors generated the cognitive engagement scale of the VARSEI. However, cognitive engagement is only related to students' skills and knowledge processes of learning. Psychological engagement was also included in the VARSEI as this related to students' affective engagement of Visual Arts responding.

Psychological Engagement

Four factors were initially included in the psychological engagement scale of the VARSEI: enjoyment, personal interest, relationships and self-efficacy.

Enjoyment was defined as students' affective response to the subject, skills and knowledge (Appleton et al., 2006). Students' emotional response to learning can have significant implications for the time it takes to build intrinsic motivation and student autonomy (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012). When students feel positively towards their learning they may increase self-efficacy and competence responses (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012), whereas negative emotions towards learning could facilitate examination anxiety or feelings of hopelessness (Ely, Ainley, & Pearce, 2013; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012). Students who enjoy learning are often more motivated to continue engaging in it (Fredricks et al., 2004; Hipkins, 2012). The concept of enjoyment is often linked to self-determination and self-efficacy theories. If students

experience success in a subject or task, they are more likely to sustain engagement and feel a sense of competence, which is manifested as enjoyment of the specific subject or task (Bandura, 2012; Ely et al., 2013; Hipkins, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2006).

Enjoyment can also be linked to neuroscience. Novelty is experienced when brain function increases due to unfamiliar information (Longstaff, 2000; Menon, White, Eliez, Glover, & Reiss, 2000). Through novelty, more neural networks may be established and brain efficiency may improve (Longstaff, 2000; Willis, 2008). Novelty associated with, "choice, interest-driven investigation, collaboration, intrinsic motivation, and creative problem solving are associated with increased levels of such neurotransmitters as dopamine, as well as the pleasurable state dopamine promotes" (Panayotics, Thanos et al. cited in Willis, 2008, p. 427). The increase of dopamine and serotonin released maintains students' motivation and enjoyment of learning (Gilbert, 2013).

Personal interest was defined as students' perceptions of relevance, relatedness to future, exposure to subject and the time invested in Visual Arts (Appleton et al., 2006). Interest was a slightly deeper concept than enjoyment, as enjoyment is not necessarily related to the learning itself: for example, Hipkins (2012) noted a student may enjoy a class because they do not have to work too hard rather than enjoying the topic being studied in that subject area. In contrast, personal interest occurs when learning is motivated by an intrinsic interest (Appleton et al., 2006). Interest is a dynamic concept, and students may have varying levels of interest at any one time (Ainley, 2012): for example, a student may be interested in visual arts, but they may dislike writing, and therefore, dislike responding tasks. Students' interest may increase if they feel the task is of relevance to other tasks and any goals they have set (Eccles, 2007). A sense of relevance linked to personal interest may also be driven by intrinsic motivation, as this too is reliant on students' values and interests (Moller et al., 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2006). Relevance is mostly connected to classroom learning: for example, a student may like painting, but does not like responding to paintings as they do not feel a connection between making and responding in Visual Arts. However, the extension of relevance in personal interest is relatedness to future aspirations, and often in secondary schools, to careers (Davis & McPartland, 2012). Establishing connections between task objectives and students' lives within and beyond the school context also builds interest

within the subject area (Shernoff, 2013): for example, engaging in community service through school experiences. Exposure to experiences and time invested in Visual Arts were the final characteristics of personal interests. These indicators connected personal interest to intrinsic motivation and relationships. Intrinsic motivation is affected by competence and social relationships (Deci & Moller, 2007; Pomerantz et al., 2007): for example, students who have a history of engaging in visual arts at home may feel more interested due to previous positive experiences. As interest grows, the time spent engaging in a subject also increases (Appleton et al., 2006; Davis & McPartland, 2012; Eccles, 2007).

Relationships were defined as those with peers and the Visual Arts teacher, and which supported the student as an active participant in their learning, in an environment they felt they belonged in (Appleton et al., 2008; Gray & Hackling, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000). These types of interpersonal relationships are often termed social relatedness in self-determination and student engagement theories. Social relatedness begins when a child is young, as they establish feelings of support and connectedness to their family (Pomerantz et al., 2007). If a young child completes certain tasks with their family, the positive feelings associated with the sense of connectedness are often extrapolated to the task being completed (Fredricks et al., 2004; Pomerantz et al., 2007). Within the school context, peers and teachers can have a similar effect on students' engagement. Positive relationships, where the student feels supported and adequately challenged as an individual, have lead to increased retention and academic achievement (Cornelius-White, 2007; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Gray & Hackling, 2009). Relationships are also important because students who report high mastery and interest in learning often report higher feelings of mutual respect between student and teacher (Dodge & Kaufman, 2009; Gray & Hackling, 2009; Osterman, 2000). Relationships with student peers also affect engagement, as peers can either increase students' feelings of belonging and interest in learning, or they can hinder students' engagement through socially marginalising students within classrooms (Juvonen, Espinoza, & Knifsend, 2012). Cognitive engagement factors, such as mastery, are improved when students of mixed abilities work collaboratively; however, explicitly teaching collaborative learning and monitoring peer behaviour is important to its success (Song & Grabowski, 2006).

Self-efficacy was a particularly complex factor affecting engagement; however, it was defined through evidence of solution-based problem solving, a proactive and positive attitude, and belief that the student was performing to the best of his/her ability (Bandura, 2012; Bandura & Locke, 2003; Martin, 2007). Self-efficacy is increased when students feel a sense of success or competence when completing a task (Bandura, 2012; Bandura & Locke, 2003; Deci & Moller, 2007). However, self-efficacy can also be diminished when students feel a sense of failure or isolation (Ainley, 2012; Bandura & Locke, 2003; Garvis, 2008; Vansteenkiste et al., 2005). Self-efficacy, like many of the other engagement factors, is affected by prior achievement (Hattie, 2009). Prior achievement either supports a positive feedback loop in which motivation increases and students maintain learning, or it perpetuates a negative cycle in which participation decreases (Bandura, 2012; Bandura & Locke, 2003; Lummis & Morris, 2014; Morris & Lummis, 2014). When students have increased self-efficacy, they are more likely to be resilient to challenging tasks (Martin, 2007). As task complexity increases, students with higher self-efficacy will remain focussed on problem solving, as opposed to being worried about the complexity (Martin, 2007). They may also be more comfortable with the notion of achieving to the best of their ability, as opposed to engaging in competitive accomplishment goals (Hinsz & Jundt, 2005; Song & Grabowski, 2006). If students have low self-efficacy, they may have increased anxiety and disengage from learning (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012). Disengagement may have serious impacts for cognitive engagement and mastery, as unused neural pathways are *pruned* as part of neuroplasticity (Willis, 2008). The function of neuroplasticity increases brain efficiency, as it relates to the brain's ability to make stronger pathways between neurons when the connection is frequently used, and the *pruning* or destruction of pathways that are weak or unused (Longstaff, 2000; Willis, 2008).

These fours factors affect students' psychological engagement. While they are not focussed on the cognitive process of learning, including learning in Visual Arts responding, psychological factors affect students' preparedness to learn and their social interactions in the school environment. Subsequently, both cognitive and psychological engagement is needed for students to engage in advanced knowledge acquisition (Efland, 1990b). Similarly, both types of engagement are required to fulfil the active and prepared citizens described by the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA, 2008).

A Reflection on the Importance of Student Engagement

Student engagement is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, engagement in education can influence students' perception of learning as important and achievable (Ames, 1992; Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012). A number of studies have also linked student engagement with higher retention rates and academic performance (Appleton et al., 2008; Gray & Hackling, 2009). However, a very important outcome of student engagement is that it supports self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which has been referred to throughout this Chapter section.

Self-determination theory suggests that through relatedness, competence and autonomy, students can internalise their regulation and realise a sense of self-identity (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2006). By actively considering the factors that affect engagement, teachers may facilitate increased engagement and self-determination in their students. The importance of self-determination is closely linked to the *Melbourne Declaration* (MCEETYA, 2008), which encourages active, creative citizens to be international leaders. It is also connected to the purpose of arts education outlined by the *Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2010), which, "agreed that arts education can make a direct contribution to resolving the social and cultural challenges facing the world today" (p. 2), specifically, "peace, cultural diversity and intercultural understanding as well as the need for a creative and adaptive workforce in the context of post industrial economies" (p. 2). These documents outline the essentialness of visual arts understandings in contemporary life-worlds, and the importance of students' engagement in actively learning through the arts. Students require self-determination to be active citizens, as teachers will not always be able to intervene and support students in their contributions to their life-worlds. Therefore, through successfully engaging students, Visual Arts teachers can prepare them to be critical and active citizens in the twenty-first century.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Two presented significant literature related to this research. A discussion of visual culture, critical theory and visual literacy underpinned the significance of this research within twenty-first century life. The contemporary life-world is saturated with imagery that students must negotiate as global citizens, and these ideas are reflected in

both Australian and international education statements (e.g., the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008)). Critical and post-structural theories used to critique society have been assumed into visual analyses practices, and influence students' response to their life-world. Visual literacy, the ability to decode and recode through imagery (including multimedia) (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004b), underscores the importance of actively contributing to the life-world through visual arts.

A history of responding within national and international Visual Arts education was also introduced. This history demonstrated the connections between Australian Visual Arts curricula and other countries, mostly the USA and England. Korean and Finnish Visual Arts curricula were also discussed (post-1960) to contrast the Western dominant discussion. The collective history of these five countries demonstrated the increased emphasis on responding in Visual Arts from the 1930s to present. In Western Australia, responding as part of the curriculum has been particularly significant post-1984, when Visual Arts was made a Tertiary Entrance Examination (TEE) subject.

In addition, student engagement was discussed as the central construct of this research. The cognitive and psychological types of engagement were presented as they implied advanced knowledge acquisition (Efland, 1990). While engagement itself cannot be measured, a number of factors that contribute to student engagement were discussed. Five factors were initially determined for cognitive engagement: autonomy intrinsic motivation, mastery, metacognition and setting targets. Four factors contributed to psychological engagement: enjoyment, personal interest, relationships and self-efficacy. These factors have significantly contributed to students' levels of engagement in past research studies, and were used to construct the initial Visual Arts Responding Student Engagement Instrument (VARSEI). Lastly, the importance of student engagement in Visual Arts was presented. High engagement promotes the skills required in self-determination theories. Self-determination is students' ability to integrate skills and knowledge into their identity and enact these through daily life (Deci & Moller, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2006). Through engagement, students may integrate visual literacy skills that are essential to their participation in the life-world, as critically aware citizens who actively contribute to image making and communication in the twenty-first century.

Chapter Three positions the theoretical and conceptual framework of this study, underpinned by the literature that was presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Introduction

Chapter Three describes the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the research. As the research sought both to measure student engagement and to collect student narratives in Visual Arts responding, the researcher employed a mixed methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative data. Subsequently, the researcher chose to use different frameworks appropriate to each method of data collection.

This chapter discusses the rationale for choosing multiple theoretical paradigms for the research. The post-positivist paradigm is discussed in relation to the quantitative research methods undertaken in the research and the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm is discussed in relation to the qualitative methods. The post-positivist and interpretivist-constructivist paradigms are the focus of this chapter, with quantitative and qualitative methods discussed in the next chapter. The conceptual framework used for the research will also be presented and discussed in relation to key literature.

Choosing the Research Paradigms

The researcher's decision to use two research paradigms was founded on the expectations of the research outlined in the research questions. As the research sought to investigate how year 11 students' engagement could be *measured* and the extent to which the students currently engage with Visual Arts responding, the researcher determined a scientific post-positivist paradigm was necessary to support the measurement of student engagement. However, as the research questions also asked *how* the teaching and learning of Visual Arts responding could be improved, qualitative methods were required to uncover rich life-world narratives of students and school staff in relation to their experiences with Visual Arts responding. Subsequently, the researcher needed a theoretical paradigm that supported a more interpretivist-constructivist view, in which the data could be interpreted without the strict parameters of scientific measurement.

The researcher acknowledges the paradigms employed in the research differ both ontologically and epistemologically. Post-positivistism stems from an empirical bias, in

which scientific evidence is used to explain phenomena (Cohen et al., 2011). Ontologically, the researcher is an objective facilitator of independent experiments to prove or disprove theory (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Interpretivist-constructivism, "begin[s] with individuals and set[s] out to understand their interpretations of the world around them" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 18); in which the researcher is part of the interactive process of developing knowledge (Bell, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Despite the opposition in the paradigms, the researcher actively sought to use these differences to triangulate the research findings and to move between macro and micro views of student engagement in Visual Arts responding, to ensure the complexity of the Visual Arts classroom was considered in the research conclusions.

The Post-Positivist Paradigm

The post-positivist framework differs from a traditional positivist view in that it recognises the complex nature of the world, and allows "tentative speculation in which multiple perspectives and multiples warrants are brought forward by the researcher" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 27). A post-positivist approach acknowledges the active involvement of the researcher in shaping and developing research, and the multiple and subjective nature of research findings (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). An important distinction between positivism and post-positivism is the latter's acceptance of multiple realities: "post-positivism argues for the continuing existence of an objective reality, but adopts a pluralistic view of multiple, coexisting realities rather than a single reality" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 27). However, the post-positivist paradigm still retains the, "conventional benchmarks of 'rigor': internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity" (Guba & Lincoln, 2000, p. 170). The post-positivist paradigm also remains grounded in the creation of theory and verification of theory through multiple methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

There are a few challenges in employing an empirical framework to an educational setting. Firstly, the strict experimental conditions of positivism do not suit the complexity of factors in an active teaching and learning environment: for example, each individual child, the teacher, resources, set-up and location of the classroom, timing, prior events of the school day, family and community influences, and more would have to be considered as variables in an experiment. Subsequently, the post-positivist

paradigm's acknowledgement of the subjective and multiplicity of realities supports a quasi-experimental situation in which the participants are observed in the, "naturally occurring treatment groups" (Punch, 2009, p. 213), or the naturally complex classroom environment. Consequently, a challenge for post-positivism is the ability to retain its empirical and scientific rigour, while acknowledging the complex nature of reality (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Cohen et al. (2011) summarise the following issues with scientific-based paradigms:

- A reductionist view of nature: in which theories do not examine the true complexity of life and human interaction;
- An objective view of the human population: in which theories constructed regarding human nature undermine individuals' unique behaviour and thought (the capacity for subjectivity);
- A dehumanising effect: in which the use of statistics can be seen to depersonalise the data and research findings; and
- An elevated epistemology: in which the historical dominance of scientific theory can be seen to marginalise other paradigms.

Some of these issues have been counterbalanced by the use of a mixed methods approach, in which the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm was also engaged. The elevated epistemology of scientific paradigms has been debated over a long history, and the wide acceptance of both qualitative and mixed-method approaches suggests the elevation of positivism is a modernist idea (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The Interpretivist-Constructivist Paradigm

The interpretivist-constructivist paradigm supports the qualitative methods of the research, to study, "a social setting to understand the meaning of participants' lives in the participants' own terms" (Janesick, 2000, p. 382). The interpretivist paradigm is premised on the inherent meaning of social interaction (Miller & Glassner, 2008; Schwandt, 2000). As such, the researcher must interpret their own and others' life-worlds through intersubjective interactions based on shared cultural understandings (Schwandt, 2000). In addition to interpretivism, constructivism was also applied. The

constructivist paradigm was engaged as it is premised on the active nature of knowledge construction, through which models and theories are constructed to understand human experience (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Schwandt, 2000). Both the interpretivist and constructivist stances in qualitative inquiry are discussed below.

Schwandt (2000) outlines three features of interpretivism:
1. A view of human action as meaningful;
2. A commitment and respect of the life-world; and
3. A desire for human subjectivity to contribute to knowledge as a scientific endeavour.

Interpretivism is grounded in *Verstehen,* defined as, "an empathetic identification [of the researcher] with the actor [participant]" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 192). To actively empathise with the participant in interpretivism, the researcher must be aware of their self or *sense of being* (Heidegger, 1996; Lummis, 2001). An understanding of *being* means to understand the self in relation to the world and within the structure of the world (Heidegger, 1996; Lummis, 2001). Knowledge of *being* is implicit in interpretivism, as the researcher's subjectivity actively contributes to the construction of knowledge through social interaction with others (Cohen et al., 2011; Schwandt, 2000). Without knowledge of *being*, a researcher cannot fully engage in *Verstehen* or reflect critically on how the self impacts on the construction of knowledge.

Schwandt (2000) also states "respect of the life-world" (p. 193) as a feature of interpretivism. The concept of life-world relates directly to *sense of being*. As discussed in the literature review, the life-world encompasses all of an individual's experiences and knowledge of the world as constructed through shared interactions (Habermas, 1999; Husserl, 1999; White, 1995). Without an understanding of the life-world of the research participants, the researcher cannot interpret the participants' narratives in context.

In parallel to interpretivism, the researcher used constructivism to inform the study. Constructivism is the active construction of knowledge in which models and theories are socially constructed to explain life-world experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Schwandt, 2000). Like interpretivism, the researcher actively constructs

knowledge with the participants through interactions in constructivism, contrasting the post-positivist paradigm.

Constructivists view reality as being constructed by community consensus of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 2000). The idea of making meaning in itself is central to the constructivist epistemology, and the way meaning-making is altered as a result of assimilating new knowledge with previously held understandings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 2000). The notion of constructivism as knowledge *made* implies the scepticism of a true reality as discussed by Gergen (1997). Gergen (1997) states there is no one single reality, and that individuals shift reality through constantly reflecting on and updating knowledge through social processes. Reality is, therefore, a shared collection of social understanding and subjective (Gergen, 1997; Schwandt, 2000). The multiplicity of realities discussed by post-positivism aligns with the scepticism of the *real* by Gergen (1997), suggesting there is more than one true reality or that reality is a dynamic concept. However, the difference between the paradigms is that post-positivism still searches for foundational knowledge about reality (there are still objective *truths* to be uncovered through experimentation) whereas constructivism is anti-foundational (*truth* is never permanent) (Guba & Lincoln, 2000).

Like post-positivism, there are a number of criticisms for the interpretivist-constructivist approach. The largest criticism is determining the rigour of research defined by subjective reasoning and a *false consciousness* that leads to invalid findings (Cohen et al., 2011). If the researcher's perception is incorrect, the findings will be skewed or incorrect altogether (Bell, 2010; Cohen et al., 2011). Another criticism is the researcher's relationship to the participants. The researcher must be aware that due to the social nature of the research there will always be a power relationship between researcher and participant, and as such they must be careful not to impose their beliefs and knowledge onto research participants (Bell, 2010; Cohen et al., 2011; Miller & Glassner, 2008). Also, as discussed previously, the researcher must have an adequate understanding of their life-world and that of their participants, in order to ensure their own experiences do not skew the research and to appropriately contextualise participants' narratives (Cohen et al., 2011; Schwandt, 2000). Within the context of this research study, a mixed methods approach was chosen to position the interpreted qualitative data within the quantitative findings, to enhance the transferability of the

findings. Furthermore, the researcher triangulated the findings between different participant groups, and used member-checking to ensure the participants' narratives were correctly interpreted by the researcher. A complete discussion of credibility assurances in qualitative research will be presented in the next chapter.

In the research study, the researcher mindfully employed *Verstehen* to engage meaningfully with the participants, and used the data from these interactions to guide the construction of theory of student engagement in Visual Arts responding. One difference between interpretivism and constructivism is the idea of social action, "from the overturning of specific unjust practices to radical transformation of entire societies … [and also in] internal transformation, such as ridding oneself of false consciousness" (Guba & Lincoln, 2000, p. 174). In this sense, the researcher used constructivist theory to motivate the development student engagement in Visual Arts responding knowledge, to prompt reflection on past Visual Arts education curriculum and the critical analysis of new Visual Arts curriculum materials, namely the National Curriculum senior school Visual Arts course.

The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework visually represents the relationship of main theories in the research study (Punch, 2009). The conceptual framework for this research project (Figure 4, overleaf) shows the relationship between contexts, student engagement and student outcomes of engaging in Visual Arts responding. The concepts presented in the framework are subsequently discussed in relation to significant literature.
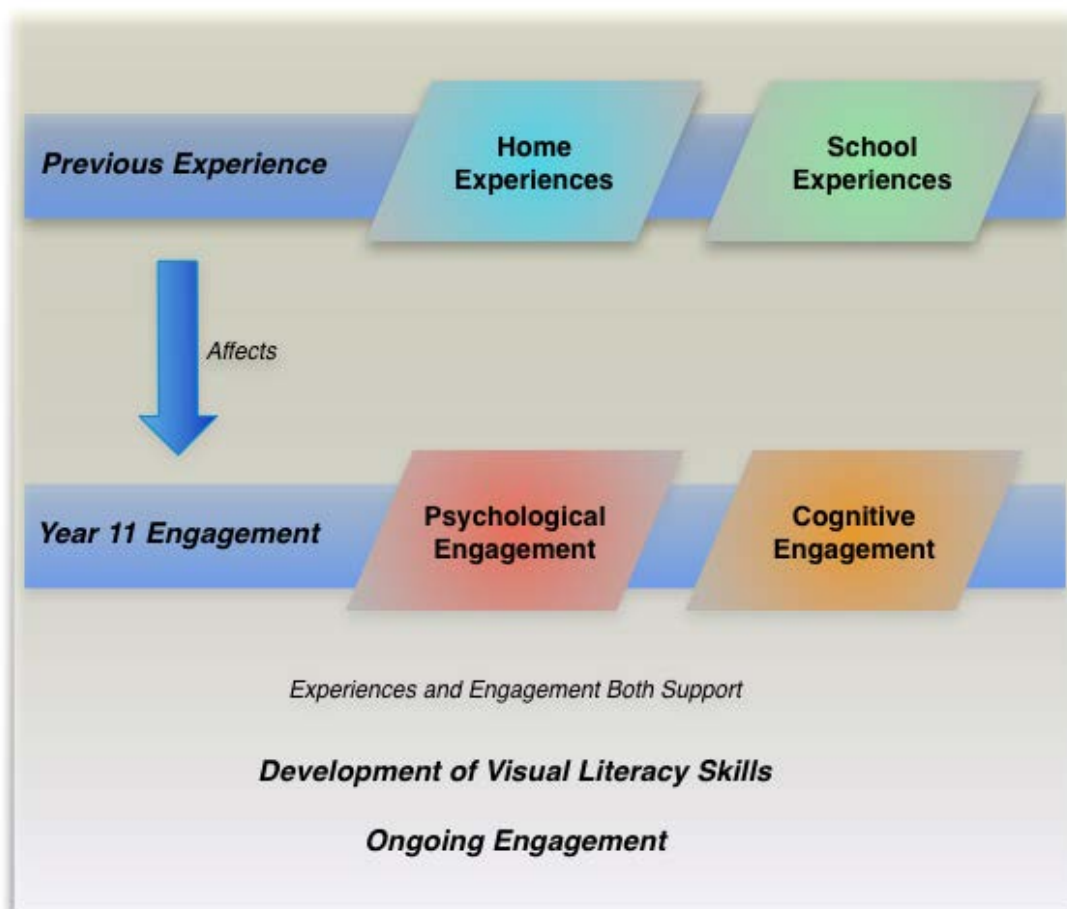
Figure 4. *The Conceptual Framework for Student Engagement in Visual Arts Responding*

The literature noted the impact of two significant contexts on student engagement: home and school (Appleton et al., 2006; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Fredricks et al., 2004; Furlong & Christenson, 2008; Gonski, 2011). Previous research indicates socioeconomic status, academic achievement, family culture and school culture impact on student engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Gray & Hackling, 2009). These contextual factors are implicit in the researcher's framework, although the emphasis is on Visual Arts specifically. There is evidence that supportive social interactions at both home and school have a significant influence on their achievement, both personally and academically (Appleton et al., 2008; Bandura, 2001; Yonezawa et al., 2009). It was hypothesised increased exposure to Visual Arts at home would result in students' valuing Visual Arts and increased student engagement in Visual Arts responding at

school, although this study sought to determine if measurement could be achieved prior to actively testing this hypothesis.

This research's focus was primarily on measuring student engagement in Visual Arts responding, as characterised by cognitive and psychological engagement. These constructs are latent traits that cannot be measured directly, but they can be measured through observable indicators. The literature suggested student engagement is challenging to measure due to the breadth of observable indicators, and as such the researcher chose to measure indicators of both cognitive and psychological indicators to achieve a more holistic view of student engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Yonezawa et al., 2009). The indicators of cognitive and psychological engagement were chosen because they imply advanced knowledge acquisition, which is using skills and knowledge in application to varying contexts and to identify gaps in skills and knowledge required to complete tasks (Efland, 1990a). Not all indicators relate directly to advanced knowledge acquisition, but influence students' ability to acquire knowledge: for example, enjoying Visual Arts responding may lead to positive emotional connections being established in the brain as a result of dopamine release, and allow knowledge to be remembered more successfully through neuroplasticity (Willis, 2008).

Cognitive and psychological engagement cannot be measured independently (Appleton et al., 2006; Fredricks et al., 2004; Martin, 2007; Mitchell & Carbone, 2011). Positive psychological engagement can impact on students' cognitive engagement: for example, positive relationships where students feel supported by their teachers and peers, and in which they build self-efficacy through success may increase their ability to master skills and knowledge. The converse is also possible: if students are not given opportunities to be autonomous in the classroom, they may feel decreased enjoyment through having limited control over their learning experiences. Historically, research on student engagement always considers both cognitive and psychology in measuring engagement holistically and accurately (Appleton et al., 2006; Fredricks et al., 2004; Martin, 2007; Mitchell & Carbone, 2011).

Increased student engagement should lead to the achievement of teaching and learning goals (Fredricks et al., 2004). Visual literacy is one goal of Visual Arts responding

education, as determined by both literature and the research findings. Visual literacy, as discussed in the literature review, is the ability to deconstruct and make meaning from visual stimuli, and to build imagery to contribute to visual culture (Flood, 2004b). Like advanced knowledge acquisition, visual literacy requires higher order thinking to deconstruct visual stimuli according to contextual knowledge and to apply subjective meaning to images, in addition to synthesising imagery with their personal identity (Flood, 2004b). As much of contemporary Western culture is based on visual stimuli, particularly with technology permeating everyday life, students are required to read signs and symbols in a variety of mediums and with reference to different cultural constructs dependent on author and audience (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011).

In addition to supporting visual literacy acquisition, students who are engaged in successful learning experiences may experience ongoing interest and engagement in Visual Arts responding. Increased and sustained interest may be linked to neuroplasticity, as discussed previously. Alternatively, students who have negative experiences in Visual Arts responding may not prioritise learnt knowledge and this may result in the pruning of these neural pathways and the loss of this knowledge (Willis, 2008). Student engagement research also suggests that self-efficacy built through mastery in cognitive development leads to increased motivation for academic achievement, with students who experience success having a greater chance of remaining at school and motivated to improve their skills and knowledge (Dodge & Kaufman, 2009; Furlong & Christenson, 2008; Gray & Hackling, 2009; Yonezawa et al., 2009). There is potential for these outcomes to then influence the home and school contexts, although evidence was not found to support a cyclical model in this research.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Three outlined the rationale for choosing a post-positivist paradigm for quantitative research methods and an interpretivist-constructivist paradigm for qualitative methods due to the two types of research questions used in this study. The strengths and limitations of these paradigms were presented, as they determined the necessity for two paradigms to be used. The post-positivist paradigm was appropriate for gathering breadth of data that could be used to determine the current level of engagement and teaching methods being used in responding in the Stage Two VACoS in WA. The interpretivist-constructivist paradigm allowed the researcher to complement

the breadth of quantitative methods with qualitative interviews, in which rich narratives were constructed to give depth to the analyses emerging from quantitative data. The conceptual framework for the research was presented as a visual representation of the research concepts, based on significant literature. In the next chapter, a detailed review of mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative methods are presented, in addition to the research processes undertaken in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCESSES

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the two theoretical frameworks for the study, with the post-positivist paradigm being discussed in relation to the quantitative research methods and the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm being discussed in relation to the qualitative methods. Subsequently, a mixed methods approach to conducting research is outlined in this chapter, explaining respectively both the strengths and limitations of quantitative and qualitative methods. The types of mixed methods approaches are also discussed, including the explanatory approach used within this research study based on the intent of the research questions. Consequently, a detailed description of the research processes is discussed.

Mixed Methods Approach

Both post-positivism and interpretivist-constructivist paradigms have been discussed in relation to the research study. The paradigms were engaged for the quantitative and qualitative methods, respectively. A mixed methods approach was chosen due to the nature of the research questions, requiring both measurement of student engagement and the explanation of student engagement through the interpretation of participant narratives. Mixed methods is a relatively new approach (Creswell, 2014), in which researchers state collecting, "both types of data [qualitative and quantitative], together, provide a better understanding of [the] research problem than either type by itself" (Creswell, 2005, p. 510). The advantage of a mixed methods approach is the ability to generalise using frequencies and trends from quantitative data, creating breadth of results; while the qualitative data will generate narratives that engage with the complexity of the research problem (Creswell, 2014). Another significant advantage of the mixed methods approach is the ability to triangulate between the types of data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2014), as well as deeper data analysis through comparison (Cohen et al., 2011).

There are some limitations to a mixed methods approach, despite the benefit of mixed methods combining the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods (Punch, 2009). There can be tension between the types of data, determining priority and sequence of

data collection, and ensuring compatibility between paradigms in the research (Creswell, 2014). Denscombe (2008) identifies pragmatism as the agreed upon philosophy for mixed methods. In a mixed methods approach, pragmatism can be regarded as a fusion that eliminates weaknesses, but it can be exploited as an "approach in which 'anything goes'" (Denscombe, 2008, p. 274). Bryman (2007) extended Denscombe's warning, adding that mixed methods research reporting needs to demonstrate the necessity of both methods and to integrate the data to represent the whole study. He notes in some research studies the quantitative and qualitative results are written for separate audiences, or one paradigm is ultimately emphasised (Bryman, 2007). For the necessity of mixed methods to be determined, both the strengths and limitations of quantitative and qualitative approaches must be understood.

Quantitative Methods

Quantitative research methods are linked to the positivist and post-positivist paradigms, in which scientific evidence is used to explain phenomena (Cohen et al., 2011). In quantitative research, "numerical data … are analysed using mathematically based models (in particular statistics)" (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2000, cited in Muijs, 2011). Numerical data are not limited to data that have absolute values, but can also include data where numbers are substituted for more complex concepts (Muijs, 2011): for example, when a Likert scale is used the selection of number one may be understood to mean *I (the participant) strongly disagree with the statement I have just read*. Therefore, quantitative research may include processes where data are turned into numerical information, in which the data are the characteristics of people or events (Creswell, 2014).

In educational research, it often happens that the numerical data are collected and analysed to explain a latent trait. A latent trait is when the concept being measured is not observable (Punch, 2009). Therefore, instruments are designed to measure, "observable indicators (often called 'items') which can be used to infer the presence or absence of the trait – or, more accurately, to infer the level or degree of the trait which is present" (Punch, 2009, p. 239). To infer the level or degree of a trait requires a rating scale such as the Likert scale, in which ratings are equated to numbers: for example, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The strength of a rating scale is its ability to determine precise changes in the presence of the

latent trait and, therefore, measurement and systematic analysis can occur (Muijs, 2011).

Quantitative methods can impact on research design. While quantitative methods may traditionally be associated with empiricism and scientific experiment, in education it is more likely to find quasi-experimental or non-experimental research design (Punch, 2009). In quasi-experimental and non-experimental research, the researcher has no control over the participants' interaction with the independent variable (the causal variable) (Creswell, 2014). In quasi-experimental research, the researcher does have control over when to measure the dependent variable (the effect variable); in non-experimental research, the researcher does not have control over when to measure the dependent variable (Creswell, 2014). However, in both types of research design the researcher maintains control over the covariates, or the control variables (Punch, 2009). In these research designs, the argument for cause and effect may be diminished if there is limited ability to control the relationship of the independent to the dependent variable (Punch, 2009). Educational research presents a challenge to these research designs due to the complex nature of the classroom, and the large number of variables in the classroom environment on any given day (Cohen et al., 2011; Punch, 2009). While quantitative methods have benefit in measuring traits and explaining latent traits in terms of items, the researcher must be cognisant of control variables and the observable degree to which an independent/dependent variable relationship exists.

Validity is a key concept in quantitative methods, specifically related to the instrument used to collect the data. For the findings to be accurate, the instrument being used must ensure valid and reliable data are gathered. Validity is the assurance the instrument measures the concept it is intended to measure (Creswell, 2014). Punch (2009) states the three main types of validity in latent-trait theory are:
1. Content validity;
2. Criterion-related validity; and
3. Construct validity.

Content validity relates to the instrument containing a comprehensive breadth and depth of items relating to the latent-trait (Cohen et al., 2011). While it is impossible to test complex traits in their entirety, items need to cover a wide range of issues across the

latent-trait definition (Cohen et al., 2011). Punch (2009) suggests content validity can be improved by developing a definition of the latent-trait, and then developing indicators that, "sample from all areas of content in the definition" (p. 246).

Criterion-related validity is when, "an indicator is compared with another measure of the same construct in which the researcher has confidence" (Punch, 2009, p. 247), and can be further reduced into concurrent and predictive validity. Concurrent validity is when data measuring the same latent-trait, but collected using two different instruments show similar findings (Cohen et al., 2011). Predictive validity is when data collected in the present are found to correlate with data collected in the future resulting in the first set of data having strong predictability (Cohen et al., 2011).

Construct validity is the comparison of an instrument or findings against theory (Punch, 2009). Theory may be a wide range of published literature or previous findings (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014). It is challenging to establish construct validity as the researcher has control over what to include as theory in proving the construct being measured, and may also include findings examples to falsify the researcher's conceptions (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014).

Reliability is also used to ensure quantitative methods will be consistent in their measurement (Creswell, 2014). There are two main types of reliability: stability and internal consistency (Punch, 2009). Stability means the instrument is consistent over a period of time (Cohen et al., 2011; Punch, 2009). To prove stability, the researcher would design a test-retest situation in which the instrument would be administered and then readministered to the sample participants at a later date (Cohen et al., 2011). The time elapse between testing is vital to ensuring stability as the participants should not remember their actions in the first test (which may occur if tests are administered in a short space of time), or be affected by changing external factors (which may occur if the tests are administered too far apart) (Cohen et al., 2011). Stability can also be proved by repeating the test on a similar sample: for example, by administering a questionnaire simultaneously to two groups of similar students (Cohen et al., 2011).

The other type of reliability is internal consistency that is concerned with, "the extent to which the items are consistent with each other [in measuring the latent trait]" (Punch,

2009, p. 245). To demonstrate internal consistency the instrument is measured through the Cronbach alpha. A Cronbach coefficient alpha test is frequently used for multi-item scales as it determines the reliability of one item against the other items in the scale (Cohen et al., 2011). A coefficient alpha above 0.70 is acceptable as a guideline (Muijs, 2011). The demonstration of reliability and validity ensures the accuracy of the research instrument being used, and strengthens the findings of quantitative methods.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research can be linked to an interpretivist-constructivist paradigm, in which the researcher is an active participant in the construction of knowledge. In qualitative methods, the researcher is often described as a *bricoleur* who takes information from a variety of sources and pieces it together to form a complete description of the phenomena being investigated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The emphasis in qualitative methods is on the joint construction of knowledge by the participant and the researcher, as the researcher actively interacts with the participant to create shared understandings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Silverman, 2004).

The strengths of qualitative methods include its naturalistic design, "studying people in their natural settings, without artificially contriving situations for research purposes" (Punch, 2009, p. 117) and the relationship between researcher and participant. In postmodern qualitative design knowledge cannot be separated from context or the impact of socio-cultural practices on the participant and the researcher gains a holistic view of the research context (Punch, 1998). Furthermore, the interaction between researcher and participant in real time allows the researcher to shift the conversation's focus based on information raised by the participant, thereby increasing researcher sensitivity to the participant's individual narrative (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The social interaction between participant and researcher also affords the opportunity to investigate more complex phenomena, as the researcher can be empathetic to the participant's narrative through shared human experience (Schwandt, 2000).

While the researcher's active involvement is a benefit of the qualitative method, it is important the researcher is aware of her subjectivity and its impact on the findings. As the researcher actively interprets the narratives of the participants and constructs models of knowledge based on the same narratives, limitations of both the interpretivist and

constructivist paradigms are inherent in qualitative methods. The researcher must have a comprehensive understanding of their own and participants' life-worlds to position new knowledge constructions, and be aware of *false consciousness* when subjectively interpreting themes from data (Cohen et al., 2011; Gergen, 1997; Heidegger, 1996). False consciousness could occur in education research if a teacher-researcher applies his or her teaching philosophy to research data: for example, a teacher who follows social-constructivist approaches in his/her own practice may promote similar approaches in his/her research findings.

Similar to quantitative methods, researchers should ensure credibility, transferability and dependability when they report research findings. Validity in qualitative research is often described as credibility (internal validity) and transferability (external validity) (Merriam, 2009). Credibility refers to the researcher's interpretation matching the understanding of the participants or the, "factual accuracy of the account" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 181). Transferability refers to the generalisability of the findings to communities or events outside of the research context, which may be determined by experience or theoretically (Merriam, 2009). However, the determination of both credibility and transferability is dependent on the subjective reasoning of each individual encountering the research.

The dependability of qualitative research is concerned with, "consistency and replicability over time, over instrument and over groups of respondents" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 201). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggest dependability can be achieved by:

- Stability: would the interpretation of the data have been the same if the researcher conducted the study at a different time?
- Parallel forms: would the interpretation of the data have been the same if the researcher had placed their focus on different phenomena when interacting with participants?
- Inter-rater reliability: would the interpretation of the data have been the same if another researcher conducted the study (within the same parameters)?

Again, the determination of dependability is reliant on subjective reasoning. As such, a number of measures can be taken to ensure the credibility and dependability of qualitative research. Some strategies to increase credibility and dependability include:

- Triangulation;
- Self-reflection;
- Member checking;
- Audit trails; and
- Sampling sufficiency.

Triangulation is the use of multiple methods to ensure an in-depth understanding of the research topic (Cohen et al., 2011; Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000). Triangulation can be achieved through checking theory between multiple participant groups, using multiple researchers to gain different perspectives, checking new research findings against literature, or engaging in different research methods: for example, interviewing and observation (Cohen et al., 2011; Fine et al., 2000).

The researcher may also use self-reflection to crystallise their ideas about the research findings and to document their observations as a record of the research process (Janesick, 2000). Self-reflection can be conducted through journal or memo writing, field notes or audio recordings to document important information and thoughts about the research process (Janesick, 2000).

In addition to self-reflection, participants and/or a critical friend can undertake member checking to ensure the credibility of the research (Janesick, 2000). In member checking, participants may read the research material to review the researcher's interpretation or an independent person may read the field notes and transcripts to check for dependability (Janesick, 2000).

An independent person may verify the research through the audit trail (Cohen et al., 2011). An audit trail is the record of the research: for example, information regarding the development of research materials or instruments, the raw data material and any analysis documents and process notes or self-reflections constructed by the researcher (Cohen et al., 2011). These records increase the *confirmability* of the research (Cohen et

al., 2011). Lastly, sampling sufficiency is ensuring the sample size is large enough for the researcher to reach saturation; that is, new data fits the analysis of previously collected data (Janesick, 2000). Theory cannot be generated until the data reaches saturation (Janesick, 2000).

Types of Mixed Methods Approaches

Mixed methods research should combine the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Punch (2009) states four main research designs in mixed methods:

1. Triangulation;
2. Embedded design;
3. Explanatory design; and
4. Exploratory design.

Triangulation and embedded designs use both methods that directly support each other, either in merging both types of data in the discussion of results or embedding one type of data within the results of the other to strengthen the research (Punch, 2009). Explanatory and exploratory designs use one method to build upon the results of the other: for example, "first-phase quantitative results guide the selection of subsamples for follow-up in-depth qualitative investigation in the second phase" (Punch, 2009, p. 296). Exploratory designs are the opposite of the explanatory approach in that they use qualitative findings to determine the construction of quantitative instruments and investigation in a second phase (Punch, 2009).

The research questions determined an explanatory mixed methods approach for this research study. As the research questions *how* the teaching and learning of Visual Arts responding could be improved, the researcher needed to use qualitative methods to gather rich narratives about current experiences in Visual Arts responding. However, these narratives needed to be compared against a *measurement* of students' engagement in order to make recommendations for improvement. Subsequently, quantitative methods were employed first to gain a measurement of student engagement in Visual Arts responding over a larger sample of students. From these quantitative data, the researcher could contextualise and make comparisons with the qualitative data, gathered from a range of participant groups. However, while data were analysed using an

explanatory method, it is important to note that not all the quantitative data collection occurred prior to qualitative data collection. To minimise disruption to Year 11 Visual Arts classes, the researcher conducted the student questionnaire and interview simultaneously. In this case, a brief analysis of prior quantitative data (from other participant schools or the pilot test) was used to guide the student interview. The research processes used in this study is presented in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

The Research Setting
Selecting the Sample

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the research project, specifically homogenous sampling. Purposive sampling is generally used in qualitative research projects, as the researcher chooses participants to build a sample that meets their inquiry needs (Cohen et al., 2011). The strength of purposive sampling is that the selection of participants is designed to be specific to the researcher's purpose, improving the depth of the study; however, the breadth of the study is often more limited as the sample may not be representative of the larger population (Cohen et al., 2011).

Homogenous sampling, a type of purposive sampling, was used in this research study as samples were chosen for their similarity (Cohen et al., 2011). This type of sampling was used so research findings could be generalised to populations meeting the same criteria used to determine the participants in this research study. However, the research findings are not necessarily accurate for populations not meeting the sampling criteria.

Five criteria were used to limit the sample. Not all of the criteria regarded similarity between schools; some criteria were included to ensure breadth was maintained due to the mixed methods nature of the study. The following sampling criteria were applied:

1. The school taught at least one Year 11 Stage 2 Course of Study (CoS) Visual Arts class: this level of study is aligned with the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) and, therefore, is underpinned by university entrance and the tradition of a responding-based examination;

2. The Visual Arts teacher had been practising for at least two years: previous research (Paris, 1999, 2008) has demonstrated graduate teachers do not have established strategies for teaching Visual Arts responding and often have limited

self-efficacy in teaching the responding component of Visual Arts, and as such were considered to provide inadequate reflection on student engagement across the CoS or the WACF;

3. The schools had an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value between 900 and 1200: ICSEA values are determined by ACARA for the *My School* website to reflect the educational advantage of a student based on parents' education and occupation (ACARA, 2012), with values between 900-1200 providing greater generalisability of research findings;

4. The sample schools demonstrated equality across the government, independent and private sectors: the range of sectors contributed to the generalisability of results and provided an opportunity for comparison between teaching practices in each sector;

5. The schools were located within the Perth metropolitan area: this criterion was established to ensure the researcher could be present for data collection and to maintain regular contact with the sample schools.

The sampling criteria ensured the similarity of the schools for a greater chance of reaching saturation in analysing qualitative interviews; however, criteria three and four established differences within the sample to maintain breadth and comparison across quantitative data. However, the sampling criteria also limit the generalisability of the study to schools with the same criteria.

Sample Size

The researcher collected data across two phases. In the first phase, schools with an ICSEA value between 1050 and 1200 were approached and data were collected in terms two and three of 2013. In the second phase, schools with an ICSEA value between 900 and 1050 were approached, with data collection occurring in term one and two of 2014. The data sets from each phase of collection were combined to achieve the final sample size. In total, 15 schools participated in the research study: six from the Department of Education (DoE), five from the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) and four from the Catholic Education Office of WA (CEOWA).

Four participant groups were determined from each of these schools: Year 11 students, Visual Arts teachers, Heads of The Arts and Principals. A summary of participant group

numbers according to school sector is listed in Table 1 (below). To maximise questionnaire responses from Year 11 students, classes with 10 or less students did not complete the qualitative interview.

Table 1. *Cross-tabulation of Interview Participants by Group and School Sector*

	DoE	AISWA	CEO	Total
Visual Arts student	5	4	1	10
Visual Arts teacher	4	4	3	11
Head of the Arts	2	2	1	5
Principal	4	2	2	8
Total	15	12	7	34

Year 11 Visual Arts students in the Stage 2 CoS were chosen due to the increased emphasis on responding in the Stage 2 course, as a result of responding based examinations in Visual Arts for senior school students. Year 12 students were not selected due to the researcher's hesitation to increase stress or discomfort on students undertaking WACE examinations in Visual Arts. The Year 11 Visual Arts students were the primary source of data for the research as it emphasised students' engagement in responding. In addition to the interviews, 137 students participated in quantitative data collection, by means of an online questionnaire. Ten participated in semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher; these students did not complete the questionnaire.

Visual Arts teachers were approached to participate in the research due to the triangulation they could provide for student data. Visual Arts teachers are integral in actively teaching responding-based tasks to the student participants, and their interviews provided important contextual information for student data. Most teachers (n=11) participated in a semi-structured interview with the researcher.

Heads of the Arts and Principals were also invited to participate in the research. The Principal and Head of the Arts interviews were conducted to determine the role of the Visual Arts in the broader school culture, and to examine if these aligned with teacher and student perceptions. Five Heads of the Arts participated in the research by giving a five to ten minute interview. Of the Principals (or Acting Principal for one school) invited, eight participated in short interviews that also lasted between five and ten minutes. The Heads of the Arts and Principal interviews were all conducted by

telephone at a time designated by the participant. The small sample sizes of these participant groups limit generalisability of their ideas; however, the themes were retained to triangulate the perspectives of the remaining participants.

Ethics

All human research has an ethical aspect as it is premised on human interaction and subjectivity (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007). Ethics clearance was obtained from the following stakeholders: Edith Cowan University's Human Research Ethics Committee, the Department of Education WA's Research and Policy Evaluation Accountability Department and the Catholic Education Office WA. The Principals of AISWA schools are entitled to make an individual decision regarding their participation in the research without the consent of any governing body.

Christians (2000) states four main ethical considerations for research projects:

1. Informed consent: participants must be informed of the research processes and consequences prior to volunteering to participate in the research, and their participation must be voluntary rather than coerced;

2. Deception: participants must not be deceived at any time, including ambiguity in the research;

3. Privacy and confidentiality: participants or locations must be de-identified to avoid any, "unwanted exposure. All personal data ought to be secured or concealed" (Christians, 2000, p. 139). Data should be stored securely and de-identified to ensure participants' privacy;

4. Accuracy: the researcher must ensure data are valid and reliable, and avoid "fabrications, fraudulent materials, omissions, and contrivances" (Christians, 2000, p. 140).

The researcher made contact with the sample schools through an initial information letter mailed to the Principal of the schools. In some cases, the researcher conducted follow-up telephone calls to ensure the Principal had received the letter and to answer any questions regarding participation not outlined in the letter. The information letter outlined the research processes for all participant groups involved, and invited the school to participate. A copy of the information letter can be found at Appendix B. An informed consent document was issued with the information letter, and returned to the

researcher if the Principal agreed for their school to participate in the research. A copy of the informed consent for the Principal can be found at Appendix C. If the Principal agreed to participate, information letters and informed consent documents were emailed to the Head of The Arts and the Stage 2 Visual Arts teacher. Again, these parties were sometimes telephoned in conjunction with receiving the invitation email and attached information letter and consent document (Appendices D & E).

The Visual Arts teachers were given copies of the Year 11 student and parent/guardian information letter and informed consent document to distribute to their Stage 2 Visual Arts students (Appendix F). In some cases the teacher requested electronic copies of the documents to be sent electronically to parents/guardians, as per school protocol. The remaining schools received printed copies of the documentation. As Year 11 students are generally between 15-16 years of age, it was necessary to receive parental or guardian consent for them to participate in the research. Despite the research being centred on Visual Arts responding from a student perspective, it is necessary to question how the research affects the student participants due to power relationships and the legal status of students (Punch, 2009). Students are both submissive to adults (teacher and researcher) who hold power in guiding their participation in learning and research, and are not legally able to give consent (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007; Punch, 2009). However, as the students are nearing 18 years of age, the researcher deemed it appropriate they give signed consent alongside their parent or guardian. The students returned the informed consent documents to their Visual Arts teacher prior to data collection. The researcher counted the number of students and consent forms prior to collection, and asked for verbal confirmation of their informed consent document being returned to the teacher.

Privacy and confidentiality were maintained in reporting through the use of pseudonyms assigned to the schools and participants. The pseudonyms were also used on both hard and soft copy data to minimise identification of participants. The hard copy data and all consent documentation were kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's secure postgraduate laboratory space at Edith Cowan University. Soft copy data were kept in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer. The data were only made available to the researcher and supervisors, and the respective participant (in the case of interview transcripts). In addition, an external agent provided transcription services; this

agent was an approved contractor of the University and signed a confidentiality agreement prior to transcription services, ensuring that confidentiality of participant information was maintained.

Quantitative Methods
Background

In explanatory mixed methods research design quantitative methods are employed prior to qualitative. The research questions dictated an explanatory method to measure the level of student engagement in Visual Arts responding, prior to recommending how teaching and learning in Visual Arts responding can be improved. However, it was not always possible to ensure quantitative data were analysed prior to conducting interviews in the same participant school. The researcher used previous schools' data or pilot data to inform interview data collection, and analysis of the complete data set followed an explanatory method.

There is no consensus on defining and measuring student engagement in the research community (Fredricks et al., 2004; Harris, 2011; Martin, 2007; Yonezawa et al., 2009). Only one published instrument measuring student engagement was located during the literature review, and although it was relatively valid and reliable it was not subject specific (Appleton et al., 2006). Also, the instrument focussed on classroom or school-based experiences and did not measure external factors influencing student engagement; for example, it contained items such as, *other students care about me*, but did not include items relating to the home context (Appleton et al., 2006). Consequently, the researcher chose to develop a new student engagement questionnaire that was specific to measuring engagement in Visual Arts responding, including gathering information on previous and current Visual Arts experiences both in and outside of school. The aim of a new instrument and quantitative data collection was to accurately measure students' engagement in the Stage 2 Visual Arts responding course as a benchmark for recommendations and future practice.

Questionnaire Construction

The Visual Arts Responding Student Engagement Instrument (VARSEI) was constructed based on the Appleton et al. (2006) student engagement instrument, literature on student engagement and visual literacy, the researcher's knowledge of

Visual Arts responding as a secondary Visual Arts teacher and Visual Arts curriculum documents (a complete copy of the original VARSEI can be found at Appendix G).

The questionnaire was constructed in five sections:
  A. Demographic information;
  B. Personal interest in Visual Arts;
  C. Primary school Visual Arts;
  D. Middle school Visual Arts; and
  E. Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts.

The first four sections contained nominal items that provided a context for the last section of the questionnaire. Demographic information such as age, gender, parents' occupations, language spoken at home, cultural background and Year 11 subject selection were obtained to determine characteristics of the sample. Section B (Personal Interest) included questions on students' visual arts practice outside of school, both in making and in responding to artworks: for example, how often do you attend art exhibitions? Some questions in this section also include family interest in visual arts: for example, do you or your family talk about art at home? Section B collected information on students' intrinsic and home contexts.

In contrast to Sections A and B, the next two sections collected data on students' school experiences in Visual Arts. Section C (Primary school Visual Arts) focused on pre-primary to year six experiences; including questions about Visual Arts specialist teachers and activities participated in during primary school Visual Arts. Section D (Middle school Visual Arts) focused on years seven to 10 Visual Arts experiences. Section D collected data about time spent on making artworks and responding to visual artworks, responding to Australian artworks, responding to international artworks, and skills and knowledge practised in Visual Arts responding activities.

The last section (Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts) comprised Likert scales rating students' cognitive and psychological engagement. Cognitive engagement was defined by the following five characteristics: intrinsic motivation, setting targets, knowledge and skill mastery, metacognition and student autonomy (Appleton et al., 2008; Fredricks et al., 2004; Furlong & Christenson, 2008; Harris, 2011; Martin, 2007). Psychological

engagement was defined as student interest in learning, enjoyment, positive relationships, and self-efficacy (Appleton et al., 2008; Fredricks et al., 2004; Furlong & Christenson, 2008; Harris, 2011; Martin, 2007). These observable indicators are defined in Tables 2 and 3 (overleaf).

Table 2. *Definitions for Cognitive Engagement Factors*

Factor	Definition
Autonomy	The internalisation of information or processes, and their integration into their self-identity (R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2000)
Intrinsic motivation	Students' motivation to learn for knowledge, to accomplish and to stimulate their senses (Carbonneau, Vallerand, & Lafrenière, 2012)
Metacognition	"The act of monitoring cognitive performance, which serves as input to self-regulation of cognitive behaviours" (Wiley & Jee, 2011, p. 6)
Setting targets	Setting goals for learning, to challenge or for personal growth (Hinsz & Jundt, 2005; Locke & Latham, 2006; Song & Grabowski, 2006)
Skills & knowledge	The ability to deconstruct and make meaning from images, determine a personal response to imagery, and use response to construct new imagery – the skills and knowledge of visual literacy (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004)

Table 3. *Definitions for Psychological Engagement Factors*

Factor	Definition
Enjoyment	The affective response to the subject, skills and knowledge (Appleton et al., 2006)
Personal interest	Perception of relevance, relatedness to future, exposure to subject, time invested in subject (Appleton et al., 2006)
Positive relationships	Relationships that are supportive and respectful, which include the student as an active participant in their learning in an environment in which they feel they belong (Appleton et al., 2008; Gray & Hackling, 2009; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2000)
Self-efficacy	Evident in solution-based problem solving, a proactive and positive attitude, and the belief that one is performing to the best of their ability (Martin, 2007)

The indicators in Tables 2 and 3 above (five measuring cognitive engagement and four measuring psychological engagement) were mapped to questionnaire items in the last section (Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts). Five or six items were listed against each of the indicators, with each item measuring a dimension of the indicator stated in the literature. A framework of item numbers and assessed dimension is presented in Table 4 (overleaf). An extended table of indicators and item statements can be found at Appendix H.

Table 4. *Questionnaire Construction Framework*

Observable Indicator	Item No.	Dimension of Indicator Assessed
Autonomy	1	Self-determination (R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2000)
	2	Ability to make decisions (Reeve, Bolt, & Cai, 1999; Reeve, et al., 2004)
	3	Offers opinion and direction; uses their preferences (Reeve et al., 1999; Reeve et al., 2004)
	4	*Choicefullness* of actions (Dodge & Kaufman, 2009)
	5	Self-determination (R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2000)
Intrinsic motivation	6	Learning for challenge (Carbonneau et al., 2012)
	7	Learning for experience (Carbonneau et al., 2012)
	8	Learning for understanding (Carbonneau et al., 2012)
	9	Learning for understanding, challenge (Carbonneau et al., 2012)
	10	Learning for understanding (Carbonneau et al., 2012)
Metacognition	11	Procedural knowledge (Tarricone, 2011)
	12	Declarative knowledge (Tarricone, 2011)
	13	Declarative knowledge (Tarricone, 2011)
	14	Self-regulation strategies (Tarricone, 2011)
	15	Procedural knowledge (Tarricone, 2011)
Setting targets	16	Learning-goal orientation (Song & Grabowski, 2006)
	17	Performance-goal orientation (Song & Grabowski, 2006); emotional-goal orientation (Hinsz & Jundt, 2005)
	18	Learning-goal orientation (Locke & Latham, 2006; Song & Grabowski, 2006)
	19	Emotional-goal orientation (Hinsz & Jundt, 2005)
	20	Learning-goal orientation (Song & Grabowski, 2006)
Skills & knowledge	21	Visual Arts terminology (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004)
	22	Value judgements (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004)
	23	Visual artwork construction, skills and processes (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004)
	24	Investigate message and meaning of visual artwork (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004)
	25	Reflection and interpretation (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004)
Enjoyment	26	Enjoyment of task (Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009; Smith-Shank, 2008)
	27	Enjoyment of social interaction (peers) (Appleton et al., 2006)
	28	Enjoyment of social interaction (teacher) (Appleton et al., 2006)
	29	Enjoyment of task (Skinner et al., 2009; Smith-Shank, 2008)
	30	Enjoyment of task (Skinner et al., 2009; Smith-Shank, 2008)

Observable Indicator	Item No.	Dimension of Indicator Assessed
Personal interest	31	Interest in viewing (real-life works) (Appleton et al., 2006; Dinham et al., 2007)
	32	Interest in reading (through media) (Appleton et al., 2006)
	33	Interest in viewing (through media) (Appleton et al., 2006; Dinham et al., 2007)
	34	Interest in viewing (real-life works) (Appleton et al., 2006; Dinham et al., 2007)
	35	Interest in viewing (real-life works) (Appleton et al., 2006; Dinham et al., 2007)
Positive relationships	36	Respect and responsibility (Gray & Hackling, 2009)
	37	Relationship with peers (Furlong & Christenson, 2008; Marks, 2000)
	38	Sense of belonging (Appleton et al., 2006; Marks, 2000; Osterman, 2000)
	39	Relationship with peers (Furlong & Christenson, 2008; Marks, 2000)
	40	Respect and responsibility (Gray & Hackling, 2009)
Self-efficacy	41	Solution-oriented problem solving (Martin, 2007)
	42	Belief in success (Martin, 2007)
	43	Proactive mentality (Martin, 2007)
	44	Belief in success (Martin, 2007)
	45	Proactive mentality (Martin, 2007)
	46	Belief in success (Martin, 2007)

Three further Likert scales were included in the last section:

- *I like writing*

- *I like History, in general*

- *I like digital media tasks*

These items were included as literacy, historical knowledge and technology impact on skills and knowledge required for Visual Arts responding, and are assessed skills in the VACoS.

Section E of the questionnaire used a six-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, agree and strongly agree. A six-point Likert scale was used to eliminate students' ability to select neutral if they do not have a strong opinion, encouraging them to think critically about their engagement in Visual Arts responding.

However, the selection of slightly disagree or slightly agree demonstrated the indicator was a non-influential factor in engaging students.

Aside from the Likert scales, Section E contained one more question. The final question was an image-based question, in which students were presented with 12 images to rank from most to least preferred. Three images were selected by the researcher for each of the three cross-curriculum priorities of ACARA: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and Sustainability (ACARA, n.d.). The remaining three images were modernist artworks:

1. *Glass fish,* Alexander Calder (Constructivism);
2. *Rain, Steam and Speed,* William Turner (Romanticism); and
3. *The Kitchen Maid,* Jan Vermeer (Baroque).

The inclusion of these images was to gauge students' initial aesthetic responses to different art movements. During the questionnaire construction process the researcher engaged several Visual Arts teachers to act as critical friends, to explore what data would need to be collected for the instrument to be valuable for teachers. Visual Arts teachers suggested students were apprehensive to respond to contemporary artworks from a range of cultural backgrounds and preferred responding to what they perceived to be *traditional* modernist artworks. With the inclusion of ACARA's cross-curriculum priorities, the researcher decided to gather diagnostic evidence of student preferences as an initial indication of the types of works that engage students' interest.

Validity

As previously discussed, validity is the instrument's ability to measure the concept it was designed to measure (Creswell, 2014; Punch, 2009). As homogenous sampling was employed, the researcher determined external validity, the generalisability of findings would only be valid for samples matching the sampling criteria (Punch, 2009).

Content validity relates to the breadth and depth of items relating to the latent-trait (Cohen et al., 2011). In student engagement, content validity is challenging to achieve due to the breadth of construct definitions. Therefore, the researcher analysed common traits across student engagement literature, and focussed the items on agreed indicators of cognitive and psychological engagement. By using consensus in the literature, the

researcher was able to, "sample from all areas of content in the [consensus] definition" (Punch, 2009, p. 246) of cognitive and psychological engagement.

Construct validity is the comparison between theory and the instrument (Punch, 2009). Cohen et al. (2011) are sceptical of establishing construct validity due to the researcher's ability to include or preclude certain literature or findings. However, as no subject-specific measure of student engagement had been published, a wide ranging literature review considering multiple theories of student engagement and findings from generalist student engagement instruments was vital to the construction of the VARSEI. Consequently, all items confer with the literature on student engagement and aligned responding with the VACoS expectations.

Criterion-related validity could not be established for the instrument as there is no evidence of another Visual Arts specific instrument measuring student engagement to test concurrent validity, and the demographic differences between the two data collection groups prevented the ability for conclusively determining predictive validity.

Piloting the Questionnaire and Reliability

The instrument was piloted to ensure internal consistency, and to have Year 11 students assess the instrument for face validity. In March 2013, the researcher piloted the instrument with three Perth metropolitan schools, across all three sectors. The students participating in the pilot were Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts students from schools with an ICSEA value of 1000 – 1150. Subsequently these students were deemed to be a similar sample to those participating in research study. A total of 31 students completed the questionnaire, which was administered online through Qualtrics. The researcher emailed the questionnaire link to the Visual Arts teacher, who then made it available to the students through email or the school's web-based learning management system. Some students completed the questionnaire on school-based computers, while one class completed the questionnaire on school-issued iPads.

The researcher asked students to fill out a brief feedback form to determine any comprehension issues or errors in the instrument, and the time taken to complete the instrument. Only minor issues were reported (see Appendix I). A glossary was added for some Visual Arts terminology, some nominal questions had *Other* or *None* options

added to expand students' response choice, one spelling error was noticed and fixed, and parent/guardian fields were combined to minimise ambiguity: for example, mother/guardian occupation. The average time taken to complete the questionnaire was 25 minutes. However, some students noted Section E was too long, and subsequently the researcher added page breaks to visually alter the appearance of the Section.

To demonstrate internal consistency the instrument was measured using Cronbach coefficient alpha to determine the reliability of multi-item scales (Cohen et al., 2011). A coefficient alpha above 0.70 was acceptable as a guideline (Muijs, 2011). The instrument returned a high reliability score of 0.94, and no items were omitted. Stability was not explicitly measured in the research study and although data collection was repeated, the demographic differences (ICSEA values) between the two data collection groups prevented a conclusive comparison of data between the sample participants. To determine consistency over time the research would need to be repeated with students matching all the sampling criteria.

Administering the Questionnaire

The researcher administered the questionnaire to the phase one sample between mid-June and August 2013, corresponding with terms two and three of the WA school academic year. Seven schools participated in phase one of the data collection; however, only six classes participated in the questionnaire due to a low return rate of informed consent documents in the seventh school.

The students received the link via email from their teacher, or by logging onto the school's learning management system at the beginning of the lesson. The researcher gave a brief explanation of the research study and gave verbal instruction to follow written prompts on the questionnaire, to work independently and to answer honestly, as their responses would be anonymous. The teacher maintained supervision while the students completed the questionnaire, but did not assist the students in completing the questionnaire. In the first phase of data collection, no technical issues with completing the online questionnaire were encountered.

The phase two data collection was administered to eight schools, using the same process as the first phase. The data collection occurred between terms one and two of the school

academic year, between March and July 2014. No issues arose during the second phase of data collection.

Coding and Analysing the Questionnaire Data

Responses from both Phase One and Two students were entered and analysed in SPSS 21 software. As the instrument measured both cognitive and psychological engagement, the two constructs were analysed and reported independently. An explanation of the analysis and findings is provided in Chapters Five (students) and Six (teachers and administrators).

Exploratory Factor Analysis

As the questionnaire was a new instrument, the data from Phase One and Two were used to complete an exploratory factor analysis. A factor analysis was conducted to ensure the instrument measured nine differentiated indicators of cognitive and psychological engagement. The presence of differentiated indicators would support the validity of the instrument.

Frequencies and Means

Frequencies and mean scores were reported to demonstrate the significance of both contextual factors on student engagement, and statistical relationships between student engagement indicators. Items with high means or strong frequencies suggested significant items to be examined by the researcher as areas of success or requiring improvement in engaging students in Visual Arts responding.

Qualitative Methods
Background

Interview data were collected and analysed to determine *how* teaching and learning in Visual Arts responding could be improved. While it was not always possible, as per explanatory mixed methods guidelines, for the interview to take place after quantitative data were analysed, the data from previous schools was rudimentarily examined to inform interviews conducted at the subsequent school.

Interviews were conducted with four groups of participants, and the various experiences were interwoven to construct students' perspectives of Visual Arts responding in the Year 11 Stage 2 VACoS.

Interview Participants

In qualitative research, information is gathered from a variety of sources to form rich descriptions of the investigated phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). While the emphasis of the research study was on student perceptions, both students and a number of other participants were also interviewed to contextualise the student data. Year 11 Visual Arts students were interviewed for their perceptions of learning responding in the VACoS. Additionally, the researcher asked the students about their home and intrinsic contexts, as these were determined as important factors in positive student engagement at school (see Conceptual Framework, Chapter Three). Students were also asked specifically about the VACoS to give reflection on the success of the course in engaging students in responding.

The Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts teachers were interviewed to triangulate the student responses and provide further information. The Visual Arts teachers described their teaching program in the Stage 2 VACoS and critically examined their own and the students' abilities in teaching and learning Visual Arts responding.

In addition to interviewing the Visual Arts teachers, Heads of The Arts and Principals were interviewed. As positions of leadership in the school, the Heads of The Arts and Principals were interviewed to gather a perception of the value of The Arts, and Visual Arts in the wider school community. These interviews provided important information on the school context.

Structure of the Interviews

The structure of the interviews varied between the four groups of participants (copies of all interview scripts can be found at Appendix J). The Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts students participated in an interview of approximately 20 minutes, which was conducted while the remainder of their class completed the online questionnaire. The student interviews were conducted in the Visual Arts teacher's office, or in an unused classroom close to the Visual Arts classroom. The interviews followed the structure of

the questionnaire, beginning with personal interests in Visual Arts before discussing school-related Visual Arts and responding. Personal interest was used as an icebreaker to the interview.

The Stage 2 Visual Arts teachers participated in interviews of approximately 40 minutes, conducted in their office, Visual Arts classroom or school staff room, as chosen by the Visual Arts teacher. The teacher interviews began with personal Visual Arts questions relating to teachers' own visual arts practice and preferences before discussing their Year 11 classes specifically. The Heads of the Arts and Principals participated in a shorter telephone interview, lasting approximately 10 minutes each. These interviews gathered information of the teaching background of the participant, before asking more general questions of the role of The Arts and Visual Arts in the school.

Credibility and Dependability

External credibility, or transferability, relates to the ability for research findings to be generalised to other contexts (Cohen et al., 2011). In this research study, transferability was theoretically determined through homogenous sampling by which the findings could be generalised using the sampling criteria. However, the study would need to be repeated to evidence the transferability of the findings.

Dependability and internal credibility were determined through:
- Triangulation;
- Self-reflection;
- Member checking;
- Audit trails; and
- Sampling sufficiency.

The researcher used a range of interview sources to triangulate data, as well as triangulating interview themes against questionnaire data. The researcher kept memoranda throughout data collection and coding, and used these memorandums for ongoing reflection of data and subjectivity. The researcher engaged in critical discussion of reflections with the research supervisors, who actively undertook member

checking on occasion. The researcher's memorandums and planning serve as an audit trail to which the research process can be evidenced and repeated in future. Lastly, the researcher completed a significant number of interviews to ensure sampling sufficiency across all participant groups.

Interview Procedures

As the structure of the interviews varied between participant groups, the procedures were also varied. Students were randomly selected for interview by the researcher from the returned informed consent documents. After the researcher's explanation of the study, the teacher approached the selected student and asked them to meet the researcher personally, while the other students began the questionnaire. The researcher then invited the student to participate in an interview lasting the same length of time as the questionnaire, assuring the student that the interview was voluntary and they did not have to participate if they didn't want to. All students agreed to the interview. The researcher then took the student to the designated location, establishing rapport with the student by engaging in general conversation while relocating. The interview followed the structure discussed previously in this chapter, prior to the student being returned to class accompanied by the researcher.

The Stage 2 Visual Arts teacher was interviewed on a separate day to data collection with his/her class. The researcher met the teacher at his/her school and conducted the interview in a location of their choice. For all the teachers the location of the interview was their office, their classroom (if not in use) or the school staff room. The researcher briefly explained the purpose of the research and the requirements of their own and their students' participation. The interview began with discussion about the teacher's own preferences in making and responding to Visual Art and their teaching background. The interview then moved to discussion on the Year 11 Stage 2 VACoS specifically, with the teachers explaining their approaches to teaching Visual Arts responding and their own reflections on responding within the course.

The Heads of The Arts and Principals were contacted by telephone or email to arrange an interview appointment time via telephone. The researcher conducted the telephone interviews, beginning with an explanation of the research background. The participant was then invited to share their teaching background, prior to discussing the role of The

Arts within the school. The researcher also asked the Heads of The Arts and Principals about the importance of responding in senior school Visual Arts courses, and the role of Visual Arts specifically in the wider school community.

All of the interviews were audio recorded by the researcher. With the exception of the student interview participants, all participants were reminded they would receive a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy and they would have the ability to amend or add to the content on the transcript. All participants member checked the transcripts and returned them to the researcher. Student participants did not member check their interview transcripts due to the added inconvenience of extra participation time and the logistical difficulties of sending and receiving transcripts from students directly, as moving these transcripts through the school would compromise student confidentiality.

Coding and Analysing the Interview Data

There are a number of approaches to coding qualitative data. Essentially, coding can be classed in two categories (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994; G. W. Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Stake, 2010):

- Deductive: examination of data within a theoretical framework; and
- Inductive: themes emerge from the data directly.

For this research study, an inductive process was used to code the data. As little research on students' perceptions was evident, there was a risk of deductive coding limiting the themes arising from student data. Inductive coding allowed the interview data to be the focus of creating themes, until saturation was determined. This process was undertaken using NVivo software, which was also used to produce coding matrices for each participant group; namely, Year 11 students, Visual Arts teachers, Heads of The Arts and Principals.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Four outlined the mixed methods approach used for the research. Quantitative and qualitative methods were explained independently, presenting an argument for using both types of data to answer the research questions. Quantitative methods gave the research a baseline of the current educational experiences of Year 11 students in the

Visual Arts. Qualitative methods elicited rich narratives from a range of interview participants, elaborating on the quantitative findings as defined by the explanatory mixed methods approach. The researcher presented the methods used for the research study, including ethics, instrument construction, data collection and analysis processes. The construction of the VARSEI is particularly significant as there was not a questionnaire to measure subject-specific student engagement. The findings from these methods will be discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

CHAPTER FIVE
STUDENT FINDINGS

Introduction

Chapter Four presented the explanatory mixed methods approach of this study, including the strengths and limitations of the methods and details of the two phases of data collection, 2013 and 2014. Chapter Five introduces the findings from the Visual Arts Responding Student Engagement Instrument (VARSEI) completed by 137 students and 10 interviews conducted with Year 11 students.
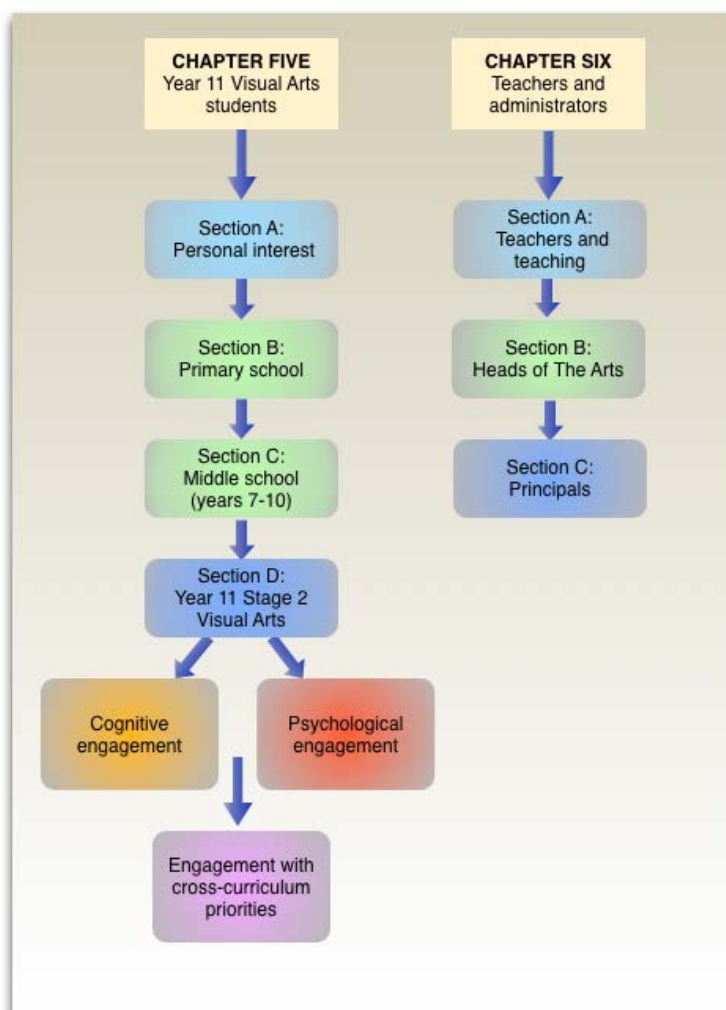
Figure 5. *Organisation of Chapters Five and Six.*

Figure 5 (above) shows the findings divided into two chapters, Year 11 students (Chapter Five) and Visual Arts teachers and administrators (Chapter Six). The findings

were organised in this way to emphasise the perceptions of the students, who were the focus of the study. Chapter Five has four sections (A-D) that follow the structure of the VARSEI instrument. Section D is the focus of the chapter as it presents the Year 11 findings, from cognitive and psychological engagement, and students' responses to artworks reflecting the cross-curriculum priorities. The quantitative and qualitative findings will be presented together for the student participants, as the qualitative analysis was used to extend and explain the quantitative findings.

Demographic Data

Demographic data were collected prior to the four sections of the VARSEI: personal interest, primary school, middle school and Year 11 Visual Arts. The quantitative findings for each section are presented first, with the qualitative findings providing additional explanation of students' experiences and engagement with each context.

Demographic information was collected from all Year 11 students (N = 137) in the sample. Most students were 16 years of age (78.8%), although 16.7% of students were 15 and 4.5% were 17 years old. The sample was mostly female (75.8%), with males comprising 24.2%. None of the students who completed the VARSEI identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; however, 67.9% of students had at least one parent born overseas and 26.5% of students spoke a language other than English at home. United Kingdom, South-east Asian and African countries were most commonly listed as countries of origin for students' parents. The most common languages (other than English) spoken at home were Asian-based languages (9.5%), including Vietnamese (5 students), Filipino dialects (4 students), and Mandarin or Cantonese Chinese (4 students).

A majority of the student sample attended Department of Education (DoE) primary schools (56.8%), followed by Catholic school attendance (27.3%) and Independent primary schools (20.5%). The remaining students were home-schooled or attended primary schools overseas (6.1%). Additionally, the students were asked to list the subjects they were studying in Year 11, excluding the Stage 2 Visual Arts course. A breakdown of the subjects is provided in Table 5 (below). This breakdown includes students studying Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses that are school-based.

Table 5. *Ranking of Students' Year 11 Subjects by WA Learning Area*

Learning Area	Number of Students Enrolled
English *compulsory	137
Society and Environment	154
Science	130
Mathematics	118
Technology and Enterprise	70
The Arts	63
Health and Physical Education	37
Languages Other Than English (LOTE)	17

The demographic information showed the multicultural nature of the sample. Additionally, the range of subjects studied showed the varied interests of the Year 11 students; however, Society and Environment subjects were the most popular. Also, some students studied more than one Arts subject: for example, some students studied both drama and music in addition to visual arts.

Section A: Personal Interest

Section A of the instrument focused on students' engagement with visual arts external to the school context. Items explored students' art making external to school and family participation in visual arts based activities: for example, visiting art galleries or watching arts-inspired films and television programs.

Table 6. *Students' Art Practice Outside of School by Studio Discipline*

Studio Discipline	Percentage (students)
Digital media	11.80
Drawing	36.80
Jewellery/metalwork	3.30
Painting	27.40
Printmaking	3.80
Sculpture/ceramics	1.90
Textiles	10.40

Students identified the studio disciplines they practised at home (Table 6, above). Drawing was most commonly practised, closely followed by painting. It is also likely that materials and space required to complete drawings and paintings were more easily accessed within the home context. The specialist equipment and tools required for disciplines such as ceramics, metalwork and printmaking likely minimised students' participation in these disciplines at home. Students also offered other art making

activities as text responses (i.e., students wrote additional activities that were not listed within the predetermined options), which included: card making, Internet-based cosplay, fashion, oil pastels/shading and photography. The increased use of digital media (11.80%, third behind drawing and painting) and the introduction to cosplay, a website forum where people post photos dressed in costumes based on book, film or videogame characters often linked to Japanese anime or manga (Duckie, 2014). This emphasised the growing use of technological platforms in students' art making (Freedman, Heijnen, Kallio-Tavin, Karpati, & Papp, 2013).

In addition to art making, students also selected their preferred art movements. From this list, percentages were created to rank the art movements from most to least favourite. The five highest and lowest ranked art movements are listed in Table 7.

Table 7. *Summary of Students' Five Most and Least Preferred Art Movements*

Most Preferred Movements	Least Preferred Movements
Fantasy/Surrealism	Byzantine and South American (tied percentage)
Pop Art	Native North American
Contemporary and Realism (tied percentage)	Colonial Australian
Abstraction	Polynesian
Impressionism	Celtic

The most preferred movements generally had American or European origins: for example, Surrealism began with French painter-poet Andre Breton's manifesto in 1924, following de Chirico's fantastical paintings from the 1910s. Surrealism was further popularised by Salvador Dalí into the 1970s, with his style being appropriated widely in print media and film (Kleiner, 2009; National Gallery of Victoria, 2009). The lowest ranked art movements were those from the first nations: for example, Polynesian art, which focuses on tribal patterning and traditional materials such as wood and bone carving. The dominance of American and European art movements reflects past Australian curriculum content, with a significant focus on westernised art. However, with globalisation and the Australian Curriculum shifting towards Australia's engagement with the Pacific nations (ACARA, n.d.), creating interest around Southeast Asian and Pacific arts practices may be of increased importance in education.

While students ranked art movements from a pre-determined list, they were also able to list any other movements in which they were personally interested. Other movements that students were engaging in included cartoons, *fan art*, graffiti (or the more recently popularised street art), tattoo, and "*what comes from my own head*". Cartoons are likely linked to the Japanese anime and manga that was alluded to through students' engagement of cosplay as art practice. Fan art is a similar art movement, based on artworks created by fans of a particular work of fiction, usually images of characters or aspects from popular books, films or videogames (wiseGEEK, 2014). Interestingly, while street art has been recently recognised as a legitimate art movement, following the success of Bansky, Stormie Mills and others, students still refer to the movement as graffiti. Street artists and some city Councils note a hierarchy of street art, with tagging (signing names or symbols on public property) being criticised, but accepting larger-scale, technical murals (McGaw, 2008; Young, 2010). Highest honour is given to works that show intricate shading and visual imagery on a large scale and artists often add to existing works, constantly increasing the complexity of city spaces (McGaw, 2008). Therefore, it is unclear if students are interested in the tagging or lower forms of street art (often termed graffiti due to the negative connotation), or more privileged street art that contains more imagery (given the term street art to combat the negative connotation of graffiti). Two students also listed tattoo art, suggesting that students are looking beyond *traditional grounds* for art: for example, works on canvas. Instead, the interest in street art and tattoo may suggest students are looking at more innovative ways of displaying art, such as in public or on the human body. Lastly, imagination may still have a role in influencing students' works, as one student wrote that they respond to, "*what comes from my own head*". It is unclear whether these ideas are issues-based (e.g., thoughts about social injustices) or visually based (e.g., memory of a pattern or technique seen at another point in time). Either way, it is likely that what comes from students' heads is subconscious representation of artworks and visual imagery previously encountered.

While it was evident that students had clear ideas about the disciplines they engage and the art movements they are interested in, approximately half of the student sample also read about visual arts (49.5%). Students used a wide variety of platforms to read about visual arts, most commonly engaging websites and blogs (Table 8, below). However,

when the categories of print media (journals, books, magazines and newspapers) are totalled, two thirds of the students still engage printed text alongside digital media.

Table 8. *Ranking of Students' Responses to 'Where Do You Read About Art?'*

Reading materials	Percentage
Websites/Blogs	29.2
Magazines	19.7
Books	19.0
Art Journals	13.1
Newspapers	13.1
Other (additional texts listed by students)	5.8

With the Internet linking social media platforms to visual imagery, such as cosplay, Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, Pintrest and Tumblr, students have a variety of websites to access beyond traditional websites (e.g., those belonging to artists, art critics, art enthusiasts or art galleries). The fact that approximately half of the students actively sought reading material on visual arts was positive in terms of enhancing literacy skills, but also in terms of expanding knowledge about artworks and artists so that they may improve critical reflection skills when interpreting and responding to artworks. Furthermore, students listed the average time (per week) they spent reading about visual arts:

- Less than one hour: 63.5%;

- Less than two hours: 30.2%;

- Less than 3 hours: 3.2%; and

- More than 3 hours per week: 3.2%.

The majority of students engaged in two or less hours per week. Given the academic pressures of Year 11 and extracurricular activities, it is positive to see students engaging in any extra reading for visual arts (or any subject area). Furthermore, content area reading (CAR) and discipline literacy reading have been linked to improved disciplinary knowledge and writing practices (Billman & Pearson, 2013; Stewart-Dore, 2013); therefore, personal reading about visual arts may have benefits for the standard of visual arts students' schoolwork.

Students also responded to items about their families' engagement in visual arts, including art exhibition attendance, viewing or reading about visual arts, and owning

original visual artworks at home. The students indicated low attendance at visual arts exhibitions with their families (Figure 6, below).
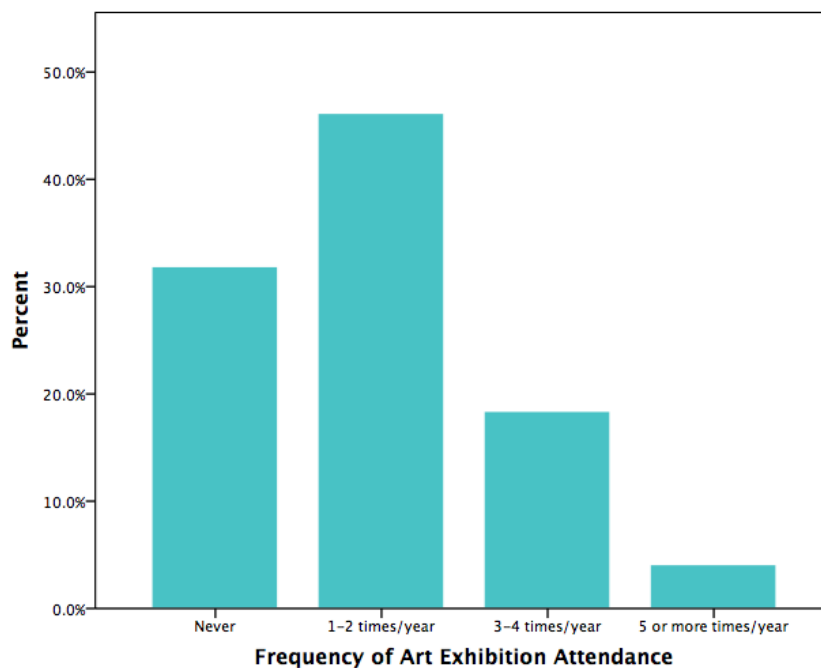
Figure 6. *Frequency of Students' Art Exhibition Attendance Outside of School.*

Some students responded that they never go to art exhibitions with any family member (31.7%), while the majority of students only visited one or two exhibitions per year (46.0%). Less than 25% of students viewed exhibitions more than three times per year. It was evident that students were not engaging with original artworks, and may be reliant on reproductions of artworks for inspiration in both art making and responding. Reliance of printed or Internet-based reproductions of artworks may have consequences for students' study: for example, some websites do not display images with appropriate contextual information or even the name of the artist (e.g., if a person reposts an image on social media); therefore, limiting the amount of background information a student requires to analyse and interpret artworks. Students may not be able to effectively interpret an artist's intention if they do not know the context in which the artist works, or have knowledge about the artist's previous artworks, preferred subject matter or style.

While students may not have been viewing art exhibitions with families, 44.3% of students' families owned original artworks that were displayed in their homes. These

students were able to look at original artworks on a daily basis. Some students also spoke about visual arts with their families (45.4%). Therefore, these students could engage in critical reflection on their preferred visual arts externally to the school context, and may receive different opinions about the purpose and value of visual arts, as opposed to the perspective of their visual arts teacher who has specialised educational expertise in the discipline. Approximately one third of students (30.5%) also watched art programs or films at home either on television or online.

To support the quantitative findings, three main themes were coded from the qualitative data about family and personal interest in visual arts:

- The practice of *casual art*;
- Exhibitions and travel; and
- Visual arts advocates in the family.

While it was apparent that students were engaging in art making external to school, and therefore may be responding to art in these practices, the interviewed students did not view their artworks as finished products of value. The theme of *casual art* or art that is done as a relaxation process, as opposed to a product-oriented process, was emphasised by most students. The idea of *casual art* came from Isabel who said, "*I won't specifically make anything amazing outside of school. If I do anything it would just be in a little sketch book, just casual drawings.*" Isabel really emphasised the process rather than focussing on the product of her home art practice.

Some students had an interest in the outcome of their art making: for example, Cy spoke about how he works on developing technical observation skills through his home arts practice, "*I also like to draw and paint at home too. At the moment I've been doing [spontaneous] self-portraits. They've been kind of abstract.*"

Elizabeth discussed how her school practice directly inspired the art making she engaged in at home:

> *For instance, a few years ago we started doing lino printing [in class] and I quite liked that. So, my parents and I bought some lino blocks and tools, and I just carved stuff and made some lino prints*

> *for fun … if I'm procrastinating or bored, or have in mind to produce something, I will practice art.*

Mario and Damien were students who epitomised casual art. Mario described how his home art practice was a form of relaxation: "*I feel it's a bit [like] unwinding from all the schoolwork and stuff, so I try to do that every day really.*" However, what really made Mario's practice process-driven was the outcome of his works:

> *I just draw and see if something comes of it, and then I start to progress it and see how it turns out. It would most likely end up scrunched up in the bin, but that's the real practice.*

Damien, who also engaged in craft-based activities like Christmas card making with his family, described his art practice, "*I draw but I wouldn't really call that studio practice. I just sort of draw stuff … and I have painted some things, but not anything big. Probably nothing worth looking at.*"

Exhibitions and travel linked closely to family engagement in visual arts. Students often participated in gallery visits when they were travelling within or beyond Australia. Damien discussed visiting the National Gallery of Australia and how special exhibitions, like the Museum of Metropolitan Art (MOMA) collaboration with AGWA, attracted his family to galleries:

> *If we are travelling we go to arts [exhibitions] … we went to Canberra and went to the National Art Gallery there, but not [generally] … sometimes we do, like we have been to one to see… there was a New York exhibition at [the Art Gallery of WA].*

Elizabeth recalled being able to complete an image analysis on a tapestry that she had seen in Europe: "*I'm quite lucky … we travel quite a lot and we are able to go and visit different galleries and see different things.*"

Some students also visited local Perth galleries. Kate discussed how visiting AGWA with her father enhanced their common interest in visual arts:

> *This year it was [WA Year 12] Perspectives [exhibition in Northbridge]. We really like things [like that: for example, if*

there's] ... something special on at the art museum, we'll go because we just ... I don't know. I think we like looking at amateur work because we go 'ooh, we do stuff like that'; whereas, with big artworks, sometimes I feel - I think I know more than [my dad]... [from] doing the [Stage 2] class.

The word *sometimes* was often linked to gallery visits with families, suggesting students did not visit galleries often enough to have a significant memory of when exactly they had last visited; however, every student recalled one specific exhibition that they had vivid memories of, regardless of how long ago they had visited it.

Lastly, students discussed having visual arts advocates in the family. Sometimes the family advocate was somebody with their own arts practice, while other times it was somebody who filled the house with artworks. Some students were not impressed with the art making their parents engaged in: for example, Adrian said, "*my mum, like, tries to paint ...*" Family advocates who modelled their own art practices particularly influenced Damien and Mario. Damien had two artists in his extended family:

My close family [like] my mother and father aren't [interested in visual arts] ... My brother loves art ... My grandmother was [an artist]... she painted and drew. She went to an art school and she was good at art. And my aunty is also an artist, sort of hobby-wise ... not as a job.

Mario also had significant influences in his sister and granddad:

My sister has attempted to do [art] professionally ... [she had] an exhibition, but only acquired enough money to pay off the materials ... [Granddad] does it mostly as a hobby, but he does try to focus on horses ... he does large wooden sculptures ... drawing and painting with watercolours.

Artistic family members also surrounded Helene, who said, "*My family have always been really artistic. It's just that family influence [that grew my interest in visual arts] and the fact that I probably have too much to say [about the world]*."

Though the majority of students had artists in their immediate or extended families, other students discussed how original art at home inspired them. Mario, whose

granddad sculpted and painted horses, discussed how he collected his granddad's work. Mario said:

> *I have quite a few of his paintings ... Yes, [art is in my bedroom] strictly. [I collect] anything that I find interesting. I do like landscape pictures ... that kind of subject matter of nature ... I like to capture that in my bedroom.*

While Mario had artworks confined to his bedroom space, Elizabeth discussed how her whole house is a gallery space, which was also linked to her family's Asian heritage:

> *There are heaps of nails in the walls because ... my parents and my brother, we just like living with art ... My mum ... has a lot of painters and writers as friends ... so we have quite a few of their artworks on our walls, and we have a lot of photographs ... [we also have] carved sculptures going up the stairs and things, which is a bit random. My parents have worked quite a lot overseas so they collect art from different cultures... not just paintings but things, but like, we have chests - Korean chests - and just a whole bunch of cultural items.*

It was evident from the interviews that the students had significant exposure to visual arts within their home context, particularly in making art or in watching the art practices of family members. The exposure to visual arts beyond the school context could increase students' awareness of art making (technical skills) and history (contextual knowledge) that could have benefits for their school-based Visual Arts responding activities.

Section B: Primary School

Primary school teachers may facilitate students' first structured learning experience with the visual arts. Surprisingly, despite the growing body of literature on the loss of primary visual arts specialists (Bowell, 2010; Dinham, 2007; Lummis, 1986; Morris & Lummis, 2014), 57.4% of students had a visual arts specialist teacher in primary school. The majority of visual arts specialist teachers were female (70.7%), compared to 18.3% of specialists who were male. The students also indicated the types of activities they participated in during primary visual arts, regardless of whether or not a student had a specialist visual arts experience (Figure 7).
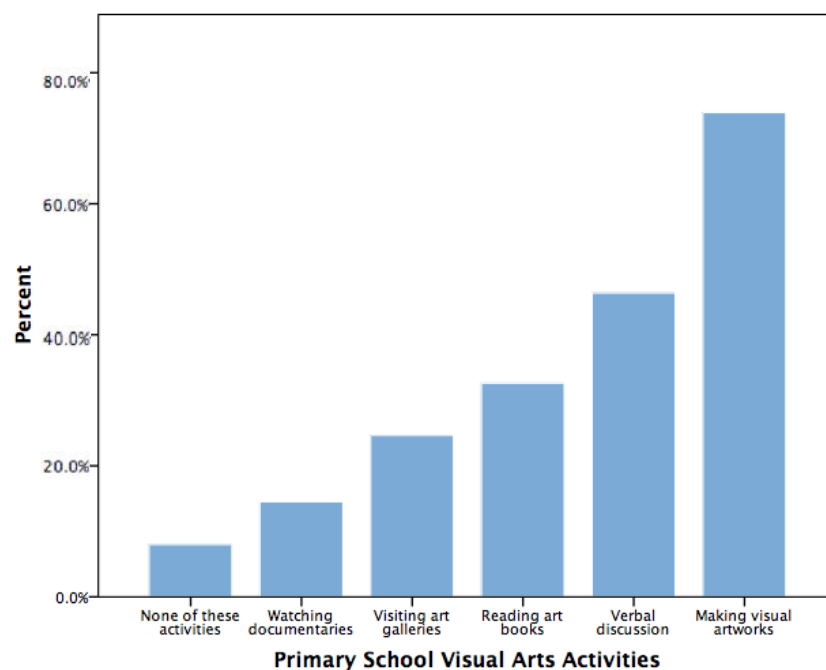
Figure 7. *Frequency of Primary Visual Arts Activities Experienced by Students.*

Making art was most common, as would be expected in the primary school context, due to the kinaesthetic and expressive benefits of engaging in visual arts (Laird, 2012; Lummis, 1986; Smithrim & Upitis, 2005; Speck, 1999). Verbal discussion about visual artworks, which can be linked to Visual Arts responding activities, was the second most engaged activity at 48.5%. However, it can be assumed that these discussions were based around either the students' own art making or reproductions of famous works, as gallery visits were much lower on the list of primary school visual art activities (25.8%). With only a quarter of students visiting an art gallery during primary school it is likely they missed out on the experience of being about to, "get up close to see the works for their whole composition as well as their texture and brushstroke …

[facilitating] innovative and concrete ways to view, think about, and discuss art"
(Unrath & Luehrman, 2009, pp. 46-47).

Despite the majority of students having some visual arts experiences, 8.3% of students stated they did not participate in any of these activities. Some students did note participation in other activities, external to the choices provided on the VARSEI. Art responding activities included live artist talks and visiting the school art exhibition, while additional art making activities included class murals, crafts and finger painting.

Very few of the interviewed students recalled any participation in primary school visual arts activities, and most stated they did not have clear memories of any primary school art. Damien stated how he did not remember engaging in visual arts during the school day; however, he did, *"after school art lessons."* Kate was the only one of the 10 interviewed students with definitive memories of her primary school experience. Kate described how her:

> *Catholic primary school art was very strict. We went into the class
> in silence … When I went to my next school, a government school,
> there was no art teacher … I think primary school is very strict, but
> I guess they are teaching you the techniques. I just think [there is a
> need for] some more creative freedom.*

Section C: Middle School (Years 7-10)

Given the high percentage of students who were engaged in predominantly art making at primary school, middle school (Years 7-10) could be the first formal engagement with art responding tasks. Every student in the sample had completed some visual arts study at a middle school level (N = 137). From their experiences, 11.5% had only male teachers, 63.4% had only female teachers, and 25.2% had a mixture of both male and female teachers. Unlike the primary school findings, approximately half of the students (51.9%) indicated they had a balance of both art making and art responding during their middle schooling. Of the remaining students, 42.7% indicated they participated mostly in art making and 5.3% listed art responding as being the task on which they spent the most in-class time. As students spent more time on responding during middle school, in comparison to primary school, it was unsurprising to notice a larger percentage of students had attended gallery exhibitions as part of their study. Compared to 25.8% of

primary students, 55.8% of students had visited at least one gallery during their middle school Visual Arts course.

In addition to gallery visits, the Year 11 students also indicated the art movements they had studied in-class. They responded to specific items on both Australian arts and international arts, as both of these are listed as outcomes of the WA Curriculum Framework (WACF) and the Visual Arts Course of Study (VACoS) (Appendix I). While VACoS is the senior school course (Years 11 and 12), many schools offer a modified version of the course (Stage 1) for Year 10s so they may become accustomed to the assessment requirements and language of the units: for example, the Arts in Society outcome (WACF) is called Investigation in the VACoS.

Approximately half of the sample (52.3%) remembered studying Australian art during their middle schooling. Figure 8 shows that Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander art was most commonly studied (25.8%), followed by contemporary Australian art (22.7%) and abstraction (21.2%).
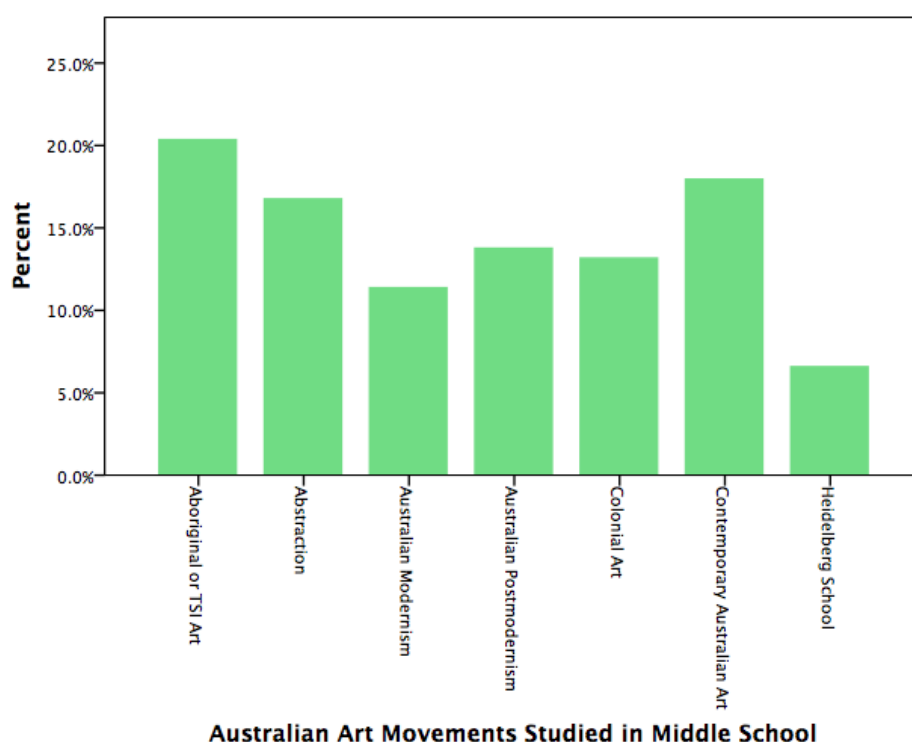
Figure 8. *Frequency of Australian Art Movements Studied during Middle School.*

Aboriginal art is likely to be chosen for an Australian influence as it is native to Australia, showing stylistic influence from the early Pilbara cave paintings in WA to Geoffrey Bardon's work in central Australia (Jorgensen, 2007). Robert Hughes termed Aboriginal art as the last great art movement of the twentieth century (Gough Henly, 2005). As *Valuing Australian Arts* (one aspect of the WACF outcome Arts in Society) links Australian art practice to Australian culture, it is expected that Aboriginal art practices would be included for both their unique stylistic representations of Aboriginal Australian culture. The focus on Aboriginal art may also be tied to the incoming cross-curriculum priorities and educational focus on closing the gap, which had received significant media attention in recent years. The least studied Australian art movement was the impressionist Heidelberg School (8.3%); however, students' text responses identified post-impressionism as an art movement that was studied. Post-impression, being slightly more recent in history than Heidelberg reinforced the contemporary nature of the Australian art movements most commonly taught during middle school.

In addition to the aspect *Valuing Australian Arts*, visual arts students also study international art practice as part of the aspect, *Valuing the Arts* (also part of the outcome Arts in Society). As international art practice includes many different art movements across history, the researcher decided to organise students' international arts study by geographical location. The WACF outcome Arts in Society also includes studying social and historical contexts (Curriculum Council, 1998) and, therefore, it was anticipated that students would know the geographical location where art movements originated. In the event that students did not know, the researcher was available to assist them in completing the questionnaire; however, no student required assistance during the data collection.

The most commonly studied international art practice was Western European visual arts (Figure 9, overleaf): for example, art movements from Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Given the popularity of French art movements (e.g., Rococo, Romanticism and School of Paris) and Italian innovations (e.g., Futurism, Renaissance and Romanesque), and these countries' influence on training artists through academies and apprenticeships (Kleiner, 2009), it was anticipated that European visual arts would dominate middle school responding (17.81%).
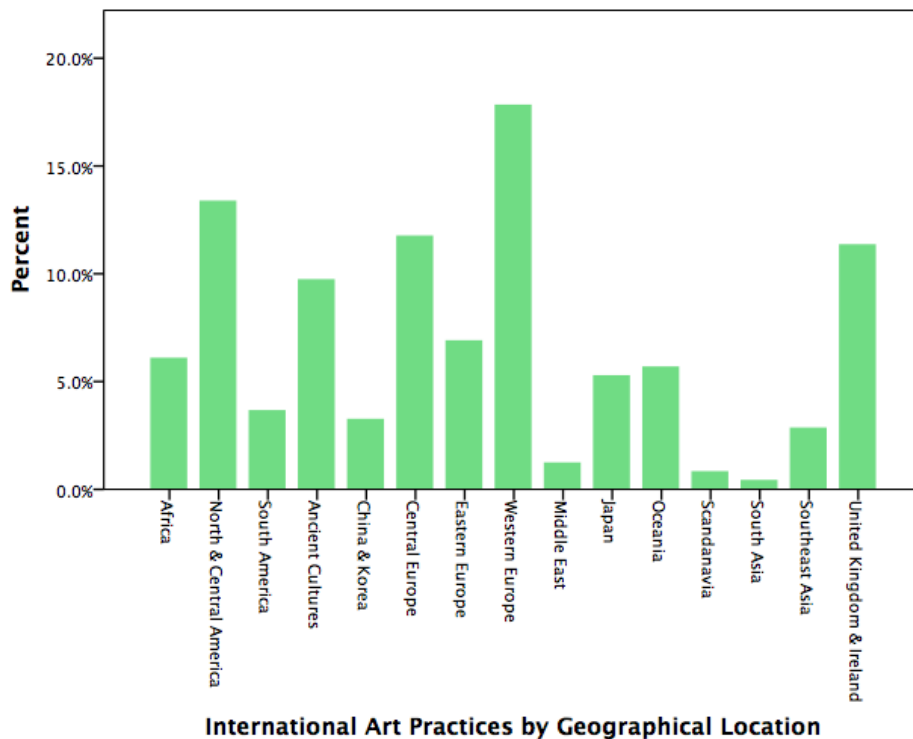
Figure 9. *Frequency of International Art Practices Most Commonly Studied during Middle School.*

North and Central American visual arts were also commonly studied international practices. This region included Canada, the USA and Mexico. A large number of American artists have become popular throughout the periods of modernism (e.g., Andy Warhol and The Factory), postmodernism (e.g., Barbara Kruger) and contemporary era (e.g., Damiàn Ortega). It was anticipated, due to the prominence of American artists and Australia's close relationship with the USA, that arts practices from this region would be widely taught. Middle Eastern and Scandinavian visual arts were studied least; however, Asian and Oceanic visual arts were also very limited in middle school, with Oceania cultures of New Guinea, Pacific Islands and New Zealand arts being taught to 5.67% of students. Given Australia's recent move towards cross-curriculum priorities of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures (ACARA, n.d.), it is interesting to note the absence of these arts practices across the majority of the students' study. From Figure 9, it appears that the majority of these Year 11 students ($N = 137$) had middle school visual arts responding tasks that privileged a westernised canon of arts practice.

Students also identified the aspects of visual analysis they covered when responding to artworks in middle school. The aspects of analysis that were listed had been based on common visual analysis frameworks (e.g., Feldman, Marsh and Taylor) and visual literacy literature (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Chung, 2006; Flood, 2004b; Newfield, 2011). The most common aspects of visual analysis discussed in middle school were: responding to visual elements of an artwork (59.1%); considering culture, context and time period of an artwork (55.3%), and considering how other artworks/artists influence students' own visual arts practice (54.5%).

Less than half of the sample (49.2%) explicitly discussed the use of specific arts terminology, such as the elements and principles (like line, shape, colour, unity or balance), or made judgements about the value or success of an artwork (45.5%). As visual arts terminology is the language of analysing visual imagery, it was anticipated that explicit teaching of terminology would be much more frequent in middle schooling. Similarly, making judgements about artworks is the basis of understanding how to incorporate artist influences in one's own practice, as an artist generally draws on the successful aspects of other works and apply similar techniques to his/her own work. Regardless, the percentages of visual analysis skills taught in middle school showed that less than two thirds of students felt they were taught skills necessary to analyse and critique visual artworks: for example, discuss the subject matter of the work, identify elements and principles in the work and discuss how these shape the meaning of the work, identify external influences (both other artists and social/historical factors) that may have impacted on the work and make judgements about the success of the artwork using evidence from the previous discussion (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004b).

In addition to analytical skills, discussion of visual arts' purpose was also explored. Students indicated if they had studied the following roles or values of the visual arts:
- To entertain and engage: 58.3%;
- To create or reflect: 58.3%;
- To transmit values and culture: 54.5%;
- To record history: 37.9%;
- To mourn or celebrate: 25.8%;

- For rituals or ceremonies, including religious: 23.5%; and
- To sell: 21.4%.

Over half of the sample had explored visual arts' role in entertaining or engaging the viewer, creating and reflecting, and transmitting culture. More historical purposes, such as recording history: for example, portrait painting prior to the advent of the camera, were less frequent. Perhaps most significantly, the least discussed purpose of visual arts was to create items for sale. Therefore, the economic aspect of visual arts as a commodity may not be realised by most Year 11 students. Given that economic considerations are another aspect of Arts in Society it is teachers' imperative to discuss the economic value of having visual arts in modern society. Students also discussed other purposes of visual arts they had studied, in addition to the purposes that were pre-determined on the VARSEI. Students also indicated knowledge of visual arts' role in criticising hegemonic social practices or values and to shock viewers, which was most likely linked to similar ideas about social commentary: for example, some students were discussing how scientific practices in the Enlightenment were depicted in artworks during the 18th century.

Similar to primary school experiences, the interviewed students did not share many memories from middle school Visual Arts. Kate was willing to discuss her middle school experience:

> *I went to [a government school] for a couple of years. They have a really good course, but it was very tribal, year 8 was very tribal. Year 9 I took art again, but I was home-schooled then, so it was harder … [My next school had] a very [high] New Zealand [population], so again, it was really tribal. I think they incorporate the culture of the people attending. Before Year 11 I knew a couple of elements and principles. I knew a couple of techniques. I knew a few artists' names out there. I think there's a lot less theory. I learnt lots of skills … since I got to Year 11 I have been hit with this theory.*

Elizabeth also made a short comment on the minimal amount of responding activities she encountered in middle schooling:

> *In previous years [I didn't study art theory], because it's not as important, ... art isn't a [university entrance] course like 2A/B or 3A/B, art history wasn't as important. So apart from modernism I don't know too much about art movements, maybe a little bit about Romanticism... I don't know! I really don't know!*

Implicit in these interviews was a sense of middle school visual arts as emphasising art making, and Year 11 visual arts as the beginning of *serious* art responding study. Kate also reflected on the links between school culture and content covered in Visual Arts courses; therefore, it is possible that different schools emphasise different cultural arts practices when they do incorporate responding tasks, which may impact on students' breadth of knowledge when they enter Year 11. Lastly, while Kate discussed her lack of theoretical knowledge, in terms of elements, principles and techniques, she also discussed the contradictory idea of primary and middle schools' focus on teaching visual arts skills. Therefore, it is likely that Kate was experiencing a broad range of techniques in her art making, but not acquiring the language with which to actively discuss these techniques and identify them in the work of other artists.

Section D: Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts

This section summarises the exploratory factor analysis undertaken to test the VARSEI as a valid and reliable instrument to measure student engagement in Visual Arts. Subsequently descriptive statistical findings determined from the final VARSEI are presented and supported by qualitative analysis. The two scales of cognitive engagement and psychological engagement are considered separately with comparison between the scales being discussed in the subsequent chapter (Chapter Seven: Discussion).

Exploratory Factor Analysis on VARSEI

The construction of the VARSEI was explained in Chapter Four. The instrument contained a total of 25 items measuring cognitive engagement and 21 items measuring psychological engagement. The VARSEI measured engagement from the perspective of the Year 11 students. The six-point Likert scale (including slightly disagree and slightly agree options) was coded so that a higher score was representative of increased engagement.

An exploratory factor analysis was initially conducted to determine if the items were clustering appropriately for each type of engagement. A factor analysis was used as it was assumed that there would be some correlation between indicators of each latent trait (Ho, 2006; Sharma, 2007). Prior to the factor analysis, a Spearman's rho correlation matrix was produced for the six-point Likert scale. A Pearson's R correlation was not appropriate due to the ordinal variables (Choi, Peters, & Mueller, 2010; Göb, McCollin, & Ramalhoto, 2007). While many researchers prefer polychoric correlations due to the increased versatility for extended testing (Appleton et al., 2006; Basto & Pereira, 2012; Choi et al., 2010), the small sample size and pilot nature of the study supported the use of Spearman's rho correlations for the factor analysis. Two factor analyses were performed on the research: one on the cognitive engagement scale and the other on the psychological scale.

A principal axis factor analysis was conducted on 15 items of the cognitive engagement scale with oblique rotation (direct oblimin), after 10 items were removed due to very low correlation (under 0.3). Oblique rotation was chosen due to the interrelated nature of the initial subscales: intrinsic motivation, setting targets, metacognition, skills and knowledge, and autonomy. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO = 0.86, with all individual items having KMO values ≥0.75, which was greater than the acceptable limit of 0.6 (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). An initial analysis was conducted to obtain eigenvalues for each factor. Three factors had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1, and explained 47.90% of the variance. Kaiser's criterion is accurate if there are fewer than 30 items and the communalities after extraction are greater than 0.70 (Field, 2013). While there were fewer than 30 items in this scale, there was only one communality greater than 0.70; therefore, the scree plot was also examined to determine the extraction of variables. The scree plot was also ambiguous, with points of inflection at both four and six (See Figure 10).
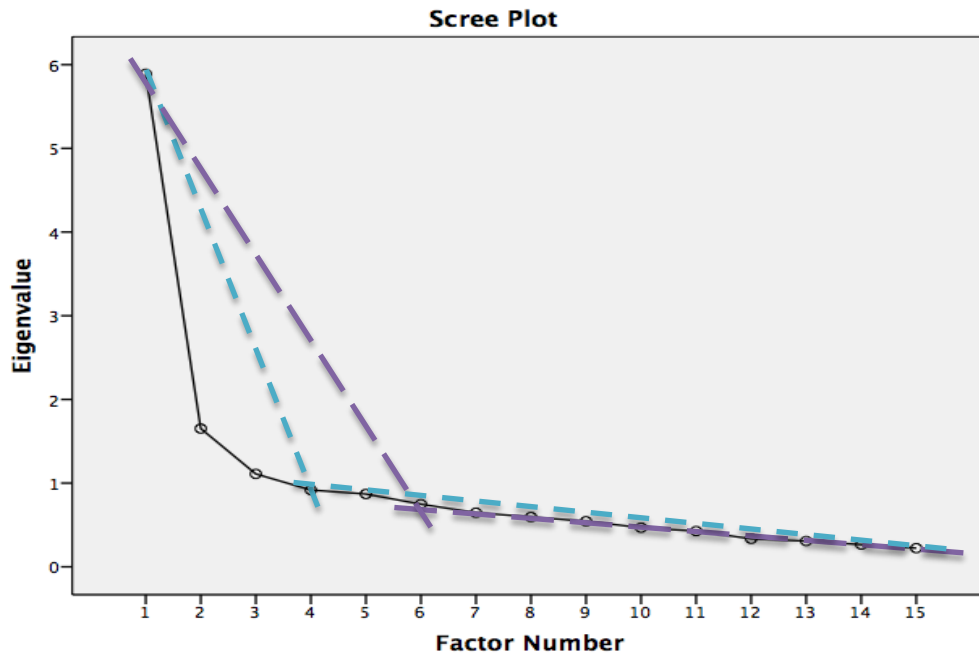
Figure 10. *Scree Plot for VARSEI Cognitive Engagement Scale*

Based on analysis of the scree plot, either three or five factors could be retained. The researcher retained three factors due to convergence of the scree plot and Kaiser's criterion on this value. Table 9 shows the factor loadings after rotation. Generally, items with a loading of less than 0.30 would be ignored; however, as this was a new questionnaire, items very close to the 0.30 loading were still included.

The items that clustered on the same factor suggested the following representations:

- Factor one: intrinsic motivation;
- Factor two: metacognition; and
- Factor three: autonomy.

Table 9. *Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis Results for the VARSEI Cognitive Scale (N = 137)*

Item	Rotated Factor Loadings		
	Motivation	Metacognition	Autonomy
I like being challenged to make meaning from visual artworks	**.58**	.17	-.09
I enjoy experiencing new artworks	**.59**	.03	.039
I like learning about myself by studying other visual art/artists	**.55**	.04	.04
I like learning about history through studying other visual art/artists	**.76**	.06	-.15
I want to learn about visual artists	**.78**	.01	-.11
When I see visual artworks I know what to do to understand its meaning	.10	**.69**	-.02
When I see visual artworks I know what knowledge I will need to analyse it	.02	**.89**	-.08
I know where to get information I need to help me analyse visual artworks	.05	**.61**	.17
I can explain how different techniques influence the meaning we make from visual artworks	-.05	**.63**	.22
I view others' visual artworks to influence my own visual arts practice	.39	.05	**.29**
Studying visual arts theory will help me in the future	**.65**	-.14	.25
I make decisions about what visual artworks I want to view	-.04	.16	**.60**
My teacher lets me view visual artworks I am interested in	.21	.13	**.49**
I think it is important to study visual artists/artworks	**.61**	-.03	**.32**
I am responsible for my own learning in visual arts	.08	.14	**.29**
Eigenvalues	5.39	1.20	.60
% of variance	35.96	7.95	3.99
α	0.85	0.84	0.73

A Cronbach's alpha reliability test was conducted to confirm the factors retained. Intrinsic motivation and metacognition both had high reliabilities, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$ and 0.84, respectively. Autonomy had a slightly lower reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$; however, as it was above the 0.70 value often used in psychology and education research (Cohen et al., 2011; Drost, 2011; Kline, 1999), the scale was considered reliable.

The factor analysis process was repeated on the psychological engagement scale. A principal axis factor analysis was conducted on 13 items of the psychological scale, 8 were removed due to low correlation from the Spearman's rho matrix. Similar to the cognitive scale, oblique rotation (direct oblimin) was chosen due to the interrelated nature of the variables: enjoyment, personal interest, positive relationships and self-efficacy. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO = 0.87, with all individual items having KMO values ≥0.83, which was greater than the acceptable limit of 0.5. Two factors had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1, and explained 50.29% of the variance. While there were fewer than 30 items in this scale, only one communality was greater than 0.7. Again, the scree plot was also examined to determine the extraction of variables. The scree plot showed a point of inflection at three; subsequently two factors were retained (See Figure 11).
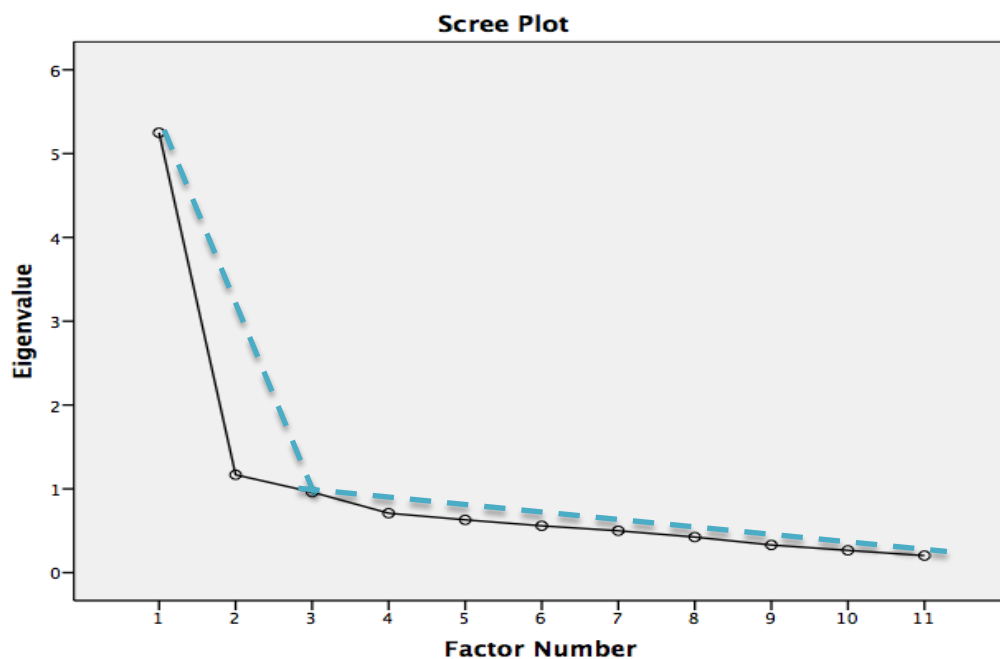
Figure 11. *Scree Plot for VARSEI Psychological Engagement Scale*

Factor loadings after rotation were determined for the two retained factors (Table 10), with only item loadings greater than 0.30 included. The items that clustered on the same factor suggested the following representations:

- Factor one: self-efficacy; and
- Factor two: student-teacher relationship.

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Table 10. *Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis Results for the VARSEI Psychological Scale (N = 137)*

	Rotated Factor Loadings	
Item	Self-efficacy	Student-teacher relationship
I enjoy visual arts because I like my teacher	.00	**-.83**
I enjoy writing about visual art I have created	**.78**	.11
I enjoy talking about visual art I have created	**.76**	.06
I feel like my teacher respects me	-.05	**-.88**
I feel like I belong in my visual arts class	**.48**	**-.33**
My friends encourage me to achieve to the best of my ability in theory tasks	.40	-.25
My teacher encourages me to achieve to the best of my ability in theory tasks	.16	**-.67**
I do not give up when visual arts theory tasks become challenging	**.48**	-.21
I can express my opinions about visual artworks without fear	**.58**	-.04
The skills I learn from studying visual arts theory help me in everyday life	**.55**	-.04
I believe I am achieving to the best of my ability in visual art theory	**.71**	.01
I enjoy visual arts because I like my teacher	.00	**-.83**
I enjoy writing about visual art I have created	**.78**	.11
Eigenvalues	4.77	0.76
% of variance	43.36	6.93
α	0.86	0.85

One item, *I feel like I belong in my visual arts class*, loaded highly on both factors; however, this was anticipated due to the interrelated nature of psychological variables. A Cronbach's alpha reliability test was also conducted on the psychological engagement subscales with both scales returning high reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$ for self-efficacy and $\alpha = 0.85$ for student-teacher relationships. Interestingly, the student-teacher relationship subscale was negatively loaded, which suggested that agreeing to these items negatively impacted student-teacher relationships and could possibly contribute to reducing engagement.

After the factor analysis, variables were transformed to fit the new model. Summing the total of each subscale produced an overall scale total that was then transformed into ranges that would meet the initial six-point Likert scale: for example, the highest value achievable on the cognitive scale (16 items) was 96, so 0-16 was recoded as 1, 17-32 as 2, and so on, until all values were recoded between one and six. The same rule was applied to transform the psychological engagement scale so that he two scales could be compared.

Cognitive Engagement

According to the instrument, three factors affected students' level of cognitive engagement: intrinsic motivation, metacognition and autonomy. The descriptive statistics for these factors and an overall score, scaled to equate to the six-point Likert scale, are presented in Table 11. The six-point scale used the following code: *1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree, and 6 = strongly agree.* The scores in the final column (overall score scaled) can be equated back to this code. However, given the different number of items in each subscale, the total score achievable for each scale differs (i.e., the motivation scale scores out of 42, metacognition out of 24 and autonomy out of 30). Measures of central tendency for individual items can be found at Appendix L.

Table 11. *Summary of Central Tendency for VARSEI Cognitive Scale (N = 137)*

		Motivation Summed	Metacognition Summed	Autonomy Summed	Overall Score Scaled
Mean		31.20	17.55	22.86	4.92
Median		32.00	18.00	24.00	5.00
Mode		33.00	19.00	25.00	5.00
Std. Deviation		5.73	3.27	3.87	0.76
Range		25.00	17.00	18.00	3.00
Minimum		17.00	7.00	12.00	3.00
Maximum		42.00	24.00	30.00	6.00
Percentiles	25	26.50	16.00	21.00	4.00
	50	32.00	18.00	24.00	5.00
	75	36.00	20.00	25.00	5.00

The overall scaled score showed that students agreed with the items (*M* = 4.92, *SD* = 0.76), indicating they are cognitively engaged in their Stage 2 Visual Arts responding

tasks. In fact, the minimum score given on the overall cognitive scale was a 3.00, equating to a *slightly agree* response. The low standard deviation suggested the level of engagement was relatively consistent across all students and subscales. The mean of each subscale was divided by six (number of Likert response categories), which produced a value that was comparable across subscales. Students indicated the highest engagement with autonomy, followed by intrinsic motivation and metacognition. The mean of 22.86 for autonomy was closer to an *agree* response (4.57). The mean of 31.20 for intrinsic motivation corresponded to a response between the *slightly agree* and *agree* categories (4.46). A mean of 17.55 for metacognition was slightly lower, corresponding closer to a *slightly agree* response (4.39). Students also recorded the highest range of scores within the metacognition subscale, suggesting students' ability to think metacognitively is varied. However, the items in the subscale could have also affected the range of scores for metacognition:

1. When I see a visual artwork I know what to do to understand its meaning;
2. When I see a visual artwork I know what knowledge I will need to analyse it;
3. I know where to get information I need to help me analyse visual artworks; and
4. I can explain how different techniques influence the meaning we make from visual artworks.

These items refer to different types of knowledge required in metacognitive thinking, including self-knowledge (item four in the above list), task knowledge (items one and two), and strategic knowledge (item 3) (Tarricone, 2011). Therefore, it is possible that one student may have responded more positively to items on one type of metacognitive knowledge compared to others: for example, a student may think they have good self-knowledge and task knowledge and respond highly on these items, but be unsure about sourcing information to fill gaps in their knowledge, so respond with a lower score for strategic knowledge.

Autonomy and intrinsic motivation had similar standard deviations (approximately 0.6 across the respective number of items) and reflected the concentration of students' responses at the higher end of the Likert scale, which was also reflected in the spread across percentiles for each subscale (Table 11). The interrelatedness of these factors may have also contributed to the mean and standard deviation scores: for example, a student who has high intrinsic motivation and responds positively to the statement, *I*

enjoy experiencing new artworks may also respond positively in the autonomy items as they may make frequent decisions about their learning based on new artworks they are actively sourcing and critically engaging with.

As an explanatory mixed methods approach was used, the qualitative findings were organised according to the factors for cognitive engagement on the VARSEI. Therefore, significant themes about cognitive engagement included:

- Intrinsic motivation;
- Lack of autonomy;
- Metacognition; and
- Perceived skills and knowledge.

The interviewed students discussed their intrinsic motivation to participate in visual arts. Collectively, the motivation to study visual artists and artworks to increase personal awareness about the history of art was very strong, *"[because] it is just good to know*". Adrian discussed the enjoyment he received from being able to challenge artists' intentions through image analysis, "*writing about other people's art is kind of fun, because you can make fun of the artist.*" For Adrian, being able to critique artworks provided him with a challenging opportunity and motivated him to complete Visual Arts responding tasks. The interviewed students' comments supported the high mean (5.05, *SD* = 0.79) for the item *I enjoy experiencing new artworks.* Sometimes motivation to complete responding tasks was linked to the literary skills required, as opposed to the subject matter of visual arts: for example, Bridget would like a career, "*not necessarily in visual arts, [I think] that would be more of a fun [hobby] thing for me. I would write though, I like writing*."

The most common reason for motivation to respond to visual arts was the personal improvement that was achieved through experiencing new works, and learning about self and history through studying other visual artworks and artists. Elizabeth summarised the comments of many students when she said, "*to develop your techniques and improve yourself as an artist you need to understand the foundation of art.*" Frida echoed the importance of foundational knowledge by stating, *"I think its just*

knowledge. Knowing how things changed and how the different art movements occurred and what [contextual factors] changed that – I like knowing that."

Interestingly, while intrinsic motivation was generally high, students did not feel motivated to pursue careers in visual arts. This was supported by the item, *Studying visual arts theory will help me in the future*, having the lowest mean of all the items in the intrinsic motivation subscale (Appendix L). Adrian had the strongest reaction against visual arts based careers, "*Not as a career … because it doesn't pay that much, not unless you're famous or something.*" He still believed that artists could not afford to make a living from selling their artworks, and that one could only sell artworks, "*as a side job or something.*" Cy and most other students stated that visual arts was, "*something I enjoy but I just don't think I'd do it as a career*"; while Elizabeth said: "*I just don't want to limit myself to art.*"

While students tended towards an *agree* on the summed autonomy subscale, the interviewed students discussed the lack of opportunity for autonomous learning in their Stage 2 Visual Arts classes. The means for individual items in the subscale (Appendix L) all corresponded with the *slightly agree* or *agree* categories, with *I am responsible for my own learning* having the highest item mean of 4.84 ($SD = 0.89$). Most importantly, all the students stated they did not make many decisions about the artworks they wanted to view. Again, these comments supported findings for the item *I make decisions about what artworks I want to view,* which had the equal lowest mean of the subscale ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.14$). Adrian suggested that teachers may make decisions about the artworks students view because, "*there's just so much art. It's distracting.*" Mario suggested that his teacher, "*picks the images to be more controlling … so we don't go too [far] off subject.*" However, Isabel suggested some consequences of not selecting her own images to study because:

> *If we get to make the decision [about artists or artworks to view] we just go to what we … feel comfortable with. If we see that something has got a lot in it to analyse, then we would obviously choose it over something that doesn't [or that has a more hidden meaning]. So it's good in that way, but it's bad because we dodge the ones that we're weak at. So we don't really progress that much.*

While most of the students discussed the strengths and limitations of having more autonomy in responding tasks, Adrian began to discuss autonomy in a different way. While the questionnaire showed students trended towards agreeing with the statement, *I view others' visual artworks to influence my own visual arts practice* (*M* = 4.71, *SD* = 1.05), Adrian suggested his autonomy was evident in his unique art making; for example: "*Other people try to look at other people's art for inspiration. I always forget to bring my laptop, so I can't look up stuff in class. I never look at other people's art … definitely [I'm original]*." Adrian felt his control came through in his art making and his perceived ability to detach himself from external influences, such as artists and artworks introduced in responding activities.

Metacognition was the third theme interpreted from the qualitative data. Metacognition had the lowest mean score of all the cognitive engagement subscales, with the highest item mean score being 4.46 (for *When I see a visual artwork I know what knowledge I need to analyse it*). Students generally felt confident about the information that was required when completing a visual analysis task or investigating an artist; for example, contextual research about the time and place in which the artist worked, formalistic analysis using the elements and principles, discussion about theories that may relate to the art (discourse), and judgements about the artworks that link techniques or subject matter to their (the students') own practices. However, the interviewed students spoke a lot about their dependency on technology and very limited content task knowledge. Adrian emphatically stated: "*No, definitely not! I know nothing pretty much! But I can just look … [anything] up if I want to know it*."

Like content task knowledge, students had low strategic knowledge and struggled to make decisions. Damien discussed how, "*it's just the amount of artworks out there. Finding one that's really sort of challenging, but not too hard, or just … one that has been done by a well-known artist, but that is also relevant to the topic [is very challenging]*." The access to a global database of artists and artworks through the Internet made many students feel overwhelmed. Unlike the majority of students who felt overwhelmed, the breadth of artworks Frida could find online excited her; however, she too had low strategic knowledge as she, "*can't make up my mind on one thing to do [after all my Internet searching]*." However, acquiring metacognitive skills through developed task and strategic knowledge also benefitted students' art making. Elizabeth

spoke about how reflecting on her participation in responding tasks led to an increased self-awareness in her own art practice:

> *I will admit that maybe two years ago I wasn't thinking about artwork in terms of how it was constructed, and I wasn't really thinking about my work in terms of how it was constructed, but more if it [was] accurate ... I wanted to paint or draw an accurate representation, like something realistic, but now it's more like, how can I just capture the light or just use tone to represent and not [any] line, ... [I focus on] different techniques and ... elements to create the image, not just making it look realistic.*

Within the discussions on autonomy, intrinsic motivation and metacognition, students frequently referred to their skills and knowledge in visual arts responding. Mario described the types of information expected from a typical visual arts responding assessment:

> *We looked at a brief biography of the artist, discussed their style of work, their influence and [other artists] they have influenced. Then we picked two pictures ... we dissected [them] and talked about how this theme has been influenced or relating it back to context.*

Most students responded that contextual knowledge about the artist's life and social conditions was the hardest component of visual analysis. They felt reasonably comfortable if they were allowed to research contextual information: for example, if they had an assignment to complete over a number of weeks; however, they felt anxious when contextual knowledge was expected of them during in-class assessments or examinations, when they had no opportunity to do some background research. Cy discussed his strengths and weaknesses in visual arts knowledge:

> *It's kind of easy to pick out parts of the artwork [to discuss], but it's much more difficult to talk about the contextual information ... I don't revise context enough. And it's hard to be given an image you don't know and then talk about its context.*

Helene discussed how her lack of context knowledge impacted her examination marks; *"Two pieces for compare and contrast, one was of a ... space thing and the other was, I think French Revolution ... I don't know anything about either of those ... I rambled."*

Generally, students recognised the importance of being cognitively engaged in responding activities as it had implications for examinations and their overall academic achievement.

Psychological Engagement

According to the VARSEI, two factors had an effect on students' psychological engagement: self-efficacy and student-teacher relationship. The central tendency measures for the summed totals of each subscale and an overall scaled score are presented in Table 12. Like the cognitive engagement scale, the total scores achievable for each subscale differed, with self-efficacy having a maximum score of 60 and student-teacher relationships having a maximum of 24. The overall score has been scaled to reflect the six-point Likert scale described in the previous section of this chapter.

Table 12. *Summary of Central Tendency for VARSEI Psychological Scale (N = 135)*

		Self-efficacy Summed	Student-teacher relationship Summed	Overall Score Scaled
Mean		44.11	19.10	4.93
Median		46.00	20.00	5.00
Mode		48.00	20.00	5.00
Std. Deviation		8.12	3.82	.83
Range		41.00	19.00	4.00
Minimum		19.00	5.00	2.00
Maximum		60.00	24.00	6.00
Percentiles	25	39.00	17.00	4.00
	50	46.00	20.00	5.00
	75	50.00	22.00	5.00

Like the cognitive engagement scale, students seemed to be psychologically engaged in Visual Arts responding, as indicated by a scaled mean score of 4.93 (*SD* = 0.83). However, there was a greater range of scores in the psychological scale, with minimum scores of 2.00 (disagree) and maximum scores of 6.00 (strongly agree). While self-efficacy had a much greater number of items on the scale after the factor analysis, suggesting its importance as a factor affecting psychological engagement, student-teacher relationships had a higher mean score (comparatively) in the central tendency

measures (4.77 versus 4.41 for self-efficacy). This suggests students had stronger agreement in the items that reflected student-teacher relationships. As discovered in the factor analysis, student-teacher relationships was negatively loaded, which indicated that agreeing with the items had a negative impact across the factors, and presumably, a student's psychological engagement.

There were a range of mean scores across individual items in the self-efficacy subscale (Appendix L), from 3.09 (slightly disagree) for the item *I enjoy talking about visual art I have created,* to 4.63 (tending to agree) for the item *I can express my opinions about visual artworks without fear.* As self-efficacy is a complex factor within itself, a range of responses was anticipated for this subscale. Students tended to agree with the statements about encouragement from peers and resilience in completing responding tasks. They were less sure of their own achievement, with a mean score of 4.09 (slightly agree) for the statement, *I believe I am achieving to the best of my ability in visual arts theory.* There was some disparity between items about peers and visual arts responding. While students felt their peers encouraged them to achieve in visual arts, they were less sure that they belong in their Visual Arts class (an item with a mean core of 4.06 – slightly agree). Students' lower self-efficacy regarding responding to their own art making could explain their hesitation towards the item about belonging. The Year 11 students scored the lowest on the items about writing and talking about their own artworks, so perhaps it is low self-efficacy as artists or practitioners that decreased their sense of belonging, as opposed to responding to other artists' works.

Student-teacher relationship items had consistently higher mean scores (Appendix L). The lowest mean score was for the only item that cross-loaded between the subscales, *I feel like I belong in my Visual Arts class.* As the remaining items in this subscale indicated the relationship between student and teacher was the underlying factor, it is possible that students' self-efficacy and psychological engagement could be increased by peers, but decreased by teachers (if both subscales are examined simultaneously). The highest mean score within this subscale was *my teacher encourages me to achieve to the best of my ability in theory tasks.* However, the fact that this factor was negatively loaded cannot be forgotten. Therefore, students who felt their teachers encouraged them to achieve had more negative student-teacher relationships. In fact, all the items relating to relationships were negatively loaded; meaning any agreement to the items had a

reverse impact on the students' relationship with the teacher. The second highest mean score within the student-teacher relationship subscale was *I feel like my teacher respects me* ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.18$). Again, respect hindered the relationship between student and teacher, which may link back to the cognitive engagement scale and students' perception that teachers should maintain control over the content of Visual Arts responding. One possibility is that respect from the teacher could be physically demonstrated through the teacher giving the students more freedom, which could in turn decrease their confidence in making choices about their learning in visual arts; this would simultaneously decrease both their cognitive and psychological engagement, based on the VARSEI.

Lastly, the negative loading on the items in the student-teacher relationship subscale could be suggestive of students' preferred perceptions of teachers. Perhaps students, given their awareness of high-stakes examinations and Visual Arts responding requirements, feel that teachers should be challenging them through rigorous activities as opposed to actively maintaining friendly or collegial relationships in the classroom. The phrases used in the items for this subscale: for example, *I like my teacher, I belong and my teacher encourages me,* all indicate something about the personal relationship between student and teacher. Therefore, it is possible that students are more psychologically engaged by teacher-as-examiner at a senior school level, with the knowledge of impending WACE examinations for university-entrance at the completion of Year 12.

As with the other sections of the research project, the qualitative data were organised into two themes linked to psychological engagement:

- Self-efficacy; and
- Relationships.

Self-efficacy was closely tied to students' sense of effort. Mario discussed the academic nature of visual arts responding and demonstrated how his efficacy is linked to reward for effort:

> *It's painful, yeah. It's new, because ... this is the first year we've really started to do art exams ... [my response to my grades]*

depends on how hard I feel I've tried on the project I've done … if I try really hard I want to get [a percentage] between 70s and 90s, but if I know I haven't put my all into it … it's not exactly going to bring me down – it will if I know I've worked hard for it.

In reflecting on their self-efficacy many students also discussed the advantage of certain subject pairings, particularly the benefit of studying English Literature and Modern History. The VARSEI had not indicated that many students enjoyed writing ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 1.39$) or history ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 1.57$) generally, which suggested while writing and history was not of particular interest to the majority of students, there may still have been some benefit from these pairings. Adrian stated that doing visual arts responding tasks, "*was a bit like [English] Lit anyway.*" Elizabeth elaborated on the advantages:

In a way [English] Lit has also helped … it's a similar analytical process … [and] I think the context [is my advantage because] I take Modern History … most of the art students don't take Modern History, so when we were studying modernism they didn't have the same contextual knowledge I had … even in Literature we were studying The Great Gatsby, which was around the 1920s and that helped as well.

The students all commented on the stressful nature of examinations, and how their self-efficacy had decreased as a result of increased examinations. For some students Year 11 was the first time they had completed examinations for Visual Arts. Elizabeth linked the purpose of studying responding specifically to examinations, "*it's important especially for your exam, for the large part it is only art theory … [in-class responding tasks means] you are not shooting in the dark in the exam.*" One part of the examination that had a significant impact on students' self-efficacy was having a *correct* interpretation of an artist's intentions. Similar to needing social and historical context knowledge, students could not confirm they had correctly understood an artist's intention while they were in an examination. Bridget stated: "*It's easier to write about my own art because I'm sure of what I'm thinking … but I'm not sure of what all, or some, artists are thinking.*" Part of this anxiety may have been linked to the assessment subjectivity, with Adrian saying, "*[an artwork] can be taken in a few different ways … it depends on the marker [if they think you are correct]. Its not a determined grade like Maths … you can't predict it.*"

Students spoke more generally about relationships in the classroom. Most students supported the quantitative findings by stating that their relationships with peers were positive, particularly if they were in a small class. Damien said the benefit of engaging in responding discussions with peers was that, "*every opinion on something is different, and so it's interesting to see what they think compared to what I think.*" While in-class discussion was frequently rated as a positive experience, assessments diminished the collegiality in the class. Isabel discussed how students, "*compare ourselves to each other … theory you have to focus [on]*." Mario stated that when it came to responding, "*everybody gets quite serious.*" Students also discussed how the teacher changed during a responding lesson, including how teachers would become more serious. Isabel sighed when she stated:

> *[My teacher], she focuses on theory a lot … most of the time theory comes first if we needed to … we are always able to come back after school [to catch up on our art making] … [during] practical work [she's] a lot more laid back.*

Elizabeth said, "*I don't think people dread it, but it goes slower, people are not as enthusiastic. It's not [my teacher's] teaching or anything … if we understood more then maybe we would accept [responding tasks] more.*" Mario reflected on how the teaching changed the atmosphere of the classroom: "*We all have a laugh [during art making] … [in responding] we're all quiet and checking the time … it seems more of the academic perspective.*"

Engagement with the Cross-Curriculum Priorities

The last question on the VARSEI asked students to rank a list of 12 images, three for Asia, three for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, three for environmental sustainability, and three *traditional* works that were modern or pre-modern (Baroque, Constructivist and Romanticist). By ranking images purely based on initial aesthetic interest, teachers could potentially diagnose the style of art that immediately gratifies students and interests students. While it was anticipated that the results from this question would be highly unreliable (as it relies on the personal preferences limited to 137 students), the overall ranking could give a generalised overview of the preferences of this Year 11 sample. The final ranking, based on mean scores for each image is listed in Table 13, with images used listed in Appendix A.

Table 13. *Mean Ranking for Cross-curriculum Inspired Images (N =137)*

Image identifier	Image (title, artist, priority)	Mean	Standard Deviation
D	*Agemaki,* Hiromitsu Takahashi Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia	20.10	30.91
B	*Glass Fish,* Alexander Calder Traditional (Constructivism)	19.81	31.08
E	*Women's Ceremony,* Bessie Sims Aboriginal and TSI histories and cultures	19.57	31.13
H	*Trashlog, Wednesday October 16 – Item #0165,* Nico van Hoorn Sustainability	18.79	30.45
K	*The Milkmaid,* Jan Vermeer Traditional (Baroque)	18.23	30.82
C	*Surrounded Islands (Miami, Florida),* Christo and Jean-Claude Sustainability	18.07	31.78
G	*Full Blossom at Arashiyama,* Andô/Utagawa Hiroshige Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia	17.20	31.04
J	*Malu Mandala I,* Brian Robinson Aboriginal and TSI histories and cultures	17.09	31.09
L	*Open Cut,* Gwenaël Velge Sustainability	16.91	31.16
I	*Rain, Steam and Speed,* William Turner Traditional (Romaniticism)	16.63	31.26
F	*Fishy Greetings,* Kozyndan Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia	16.28	30.41
A	*History Lesson,* Norma Macdonald Aboriginal and TSI histories and cultures	7.37	3.09

The ranking of the cross-curriculum priorities through students' response to visual artworks seemed almost random. In the top half of table (first six images) there are two traditional artworks, two works linked to sustainability, one to Asia and one to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The means of these images are relatively close and the standard deviation is also close for the top half of the table. The range of artworks in this half could be linked to students' interest in studying a breadth of images

and enjoyment of engaging with new artworks. The lower half of the table includes two works from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, two works from Asia, one about sustainability and one traditional work. The traditional work was William Turner's, a romanticist painter. The focus on European modernist movements in middle school may indicate that students were familiar with this style of art, and therefore, were less interested in this image. However, the lowest ranked work that was linked to Asia (Image F) was the most contemporary image for the cross-curriculum priority. This suggested that students were more interested in traditional Asian artworks: for example, the woodblock carving (Image G) was more popular than a contemporary digital print (Image F) that explores Asian popular culture (in this case, Hello Kitty). The lowest ranked artwork was *History Lesson*, a painting by Aboriginal artist Norma Macdonald. This artwork was ranked much lower than any of the other works and the low standard deviation shows the students' responses were within a close range; they were consistently ranking this image low. Norma Macdonald's painting was about shame, which is stencilled into the image through contrasting colours. It is possible that the emotive subject matter of the image did not appeal to students or that the students did not identify with the subject matter, as none of the students identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and many had strong cultural ties to overseas countries, particularly Asia.

Chapter Summary

The findings from the Year 11 Stage 2 student sample were presented following the sections of the VARSEI: personal interest, primary school, middle school (Years 7-10) and Year 11 school. Students generally had a visual arts practice external to their school studies; however, they considered the process of art making as relaxation, and more important than having products from their practice. Students also indicated their extensive interest across both traditional and contemporary disciplines including drawing, painting, as well as the more contemporary street art and tattoo art movements. The quantitative findings also showed that most students were only going to one or two exhibitions per year with their families. The majority of interviewed students discussed a link between gallery visits and travel, suggesting that galleries are seen as a cultural activity for holidays as opposed to a normative family practice. Lastly, the students interviewed had a significant artist or supporter within their families who shared artworks or encouraged creativity within the home. Primary school experiences were

mostly centred in art making. Only a quarter of students had visited an art gallery as part of their primary schooling, and close to 10% of students stated they did not remember doing any visual arts in primary school. Interviewed students did not share much about primary school visual arts, although Kate did talk about how her experiences were skill centred and left little room for individual artistic expression. The students had more balance between art making and responding in middle school, with responding tasks focussing on analysing visual elements (e.g., discussing an artist's use of line in an artwork). Their teachers most frequently discussed Aboriginal art for Australian art practices and international art practices were highly westernised, predominantly Western European and North American practices. The interviewed students discussed how the arts practices studied for responding often linked to the cultural backgrounds of the school student population, and how responding was not considered as serious because Visual Arts in middle school is still a wholly school assessed subject, unlike the WACE Stage 2 class.

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the Likert scales for cognitive and psychological engagement. The factor analysis determined autonomy, intrinsic motivation and metacognition were the factors affecting students' cognitive engagement; while self-efficacy and student-teacher relationships were factors contributing to psychological engagement. Students recorded positive engagement in both scales, although cognitive engagement had a smaller range that was higher (showed more agreement) compared to the psychological items generally. Metacognition had the largest range of scores within cognitive engagement scale, which was explained by the interviewed students' different reactions towards content and task knowledge (knowing what to do to complete a task) and strategic knowledge (knowing how to complete the task, including where to get information), with students lacking strategic knowledge. In the psychological engagement scale, the student-teacher relationship subscale was shown to have a negative loading on psychological engagement. This suggested that students who agreed with statement about being respected by and liking a teacher had lower psychological engagement. The interviewed students alluded to reasons for the negative loading by suggesting the complexity of the Year 11 course, including high-stakes examination and increased academic rigour, could see the role of the teacher shift from friend-like to intently focused on the need to prepare students for the challenging task of completing their Year 11 and 12 Visual Arts

examinations, which often resulted in a more serious class environment. Self-efficacy, the other psychological engagement factor, seemed closely linked to cognitive engagement through discussion with the interviewed students. Self-efficacy also seemed to be linked to academic performance and a student's perceived effort in completing responding tasks. The interviewed students considered the advantage of studying *subject pairs*: for example, the crossover between English Literature, Modern History and Visual Arts in both subject matter and analytical skills, which gave the students who studied subject pairs a significant advantage. Lastly, the students ranked a series of images with subject matter linked to the cross-curriculum priorities and more traditional artworks. No clear pattern came from the responses; however, students generally selected more traditional disciplines of art (e.g., woodblock and paintings) compared to newer methods of digital prints. The random pattern did demonstrate that students are interested in a breadth of images across a range of different social and historical contexts.

The next chapter presents the findings from the remaining three participant groups: Visual Arts teachers, Heads of The Arts and Principals.

CHAPTER SIX
TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR FINDINGS

In Chapter Five, the student findings from this research were explained. Chapter Six presents the qualitative findings from the teachers and administrators, which contextualise the student findings within the broader school setting. These findings were interpreted from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the three remaining participant groups: Visual Arts teachers (n = 11), Heads of The Arts (n = 5), and Principals (n = 8). This chapter is organised into three sections: Visual Arts teachers (Section A), Heads of The Arts (Section B) and Principals (Section C). Visual Arts teachers discussed their personal philosophies and experiences, as well as their perceptions of the Year 11 students; therefore, Section A is titled *Teachers and Teaching* to reflect these two types of data. Demographic information is presented at the beginning of each section, followed by the qualitative findings. The sections contextualise the students' responses at classroom, department and whole school levels.

Section A: Teachers and Teaching

Background information about the teachers was determined through each interview (n = 11). The Visual Arts teachers had varied experiences in education; teachers' years of experience ranged between two and 31 years, although one teacher had only been in a Visual Arts position for six weeks (Imogen had previously taught Media Arts for five years). The average length of the teachers' careers was 15 years. One teacher had also assisted in developing the VACoS in WA. Aside from Visual Arts, teachers had a significant list of other subject areas they had been required to teach during their careers. While the subjects individual teachers had taught are not listed to protect the identities of the participants, the collective subjects taught covered all Learning Areas in the WACF and included:

- Design and Technology;
- Drama;
- English;
- Health and Physical Education;
- Languages;
- Mathematics;

- Media Arts;
- Religious Education;
- Science;
- Society and Environment;
- Technical Drawing; and
- Textiles.

Six of the 11 teachers identified themselves as artists. Two teachers still had active art practices external to their teaching, with one teacher (Claude) describing how he had, "*a show [overseas] in a month or two … if students wish to know something [about being a professional artist] it is highly likely I can offer my experiences.*" The remaining four teachers described how they still practiced art, but did not have exhibitions because, "*it was hard, having the time to do both [teaching and art] really properly*" (Barbara).

The teachers all had very strong studio backgrounds. Four teachers preferred three-dimensional disciplines: Ana liked ceramics; Barbara did ceramics and textiles, and Grace made sculptures. The remaining seven teachers worked mostly in two dimensions: Eva, Franz, Henri, and Rachel painted; Franz also considered himself a drawer, alongside Mona and Nancy; while Imogen preferred printmaking, and Mona preferred photography. Claude worked in both two and three dimensions as he painted and sculpted. Their artistic influences were more challenging to determine, with Barbara, Eva and Mona stating everything, "*all styles*" (Eva), while Rachel discussed how she changed her interests based on what her students were investigating, and Mona thought she was more influenced by individual images rather than a particular style, "*something visually might affect me strongly, or I might like the way [the artist] used charcoal or Conte [crayons].*" The majority of teachers liked modernist art movements: for example, Impressionism (Franz) and Surrealism (Grace and Rachel). Henri and Imogen stated all modernist movements were interesting, although Henri also enjoyed the work of postmodern artist, Joseph Beuys. Claude was the only teacher to identify premodernism as an influence on his work, particularly, "*19th century artworks … and literature.*" Ana was the only Visual Arts teacher who acknowledged her interest in responding was a recent development, because at university she, "*thought it was a waste of time … I didn't get into art history until I'd been teaching … and got the*

chance to see the [AGWA] gallery's works in storage and talk about them with gallery staff."

Six teachers spoke specifically about their perceptions of teaching art responding. Grace stated she did not particularly enjoy teaching responding: "*Because art history isn't necessarily something I am fond of ... [I like it when there is] just making art for the sake of making.*" Barbara, Eva and Rachel all liked teaching responding. Barbara enjoyed the visual analysis process, *"just having a discussion about it [the artwork]"*; whereas Eva and Rachel enjoyed the history component: "*I always liked just sitting through lectures on art history ... so I like standing there [in the Stage 2 classroom] and actually being able to talk about some of the artists I love*" (Rachel). The teachers often used art history and responding interchangeably, reflecting their own education experiences, which had centred on traditional art history.

Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts

Visual Arts teachers generally saw their classes for an average of four hours per week (one school had three hours and another had five hours). Of the four hours, six teachers dedicated one hour (25% of class time) to art responding (Barbara, Claude, Eva, Franz, Grace and Nancy), while Imogen split the four hours equally between art making and responding. Ana, Henri, Mona, Nancy and Rachel all advocated a more organic approach to dividing their Visual Arts time between the two outcomes. Ana used an organic approach because, *"responding should be about finding a starting point for making"*; Henri preferred responding activities to be done as homework; Mona was, *"supposed to have three sessions of practical and one session of theory, which is - reasonably flexible ... depends where we are at"*; and Rachel thought it was important for her students to, *"spend a lot more time on the practical [making] side of things ... [responding is] organic, what I feel the kids need at certain points in time.*"

The main themes interpreted from the Visual Arts teachers' interviews were:
- Teaching strategies;
- Assessments;
- Links between art making and responding; and
- Use of technology.

All of the Visual Arts teachers (n = 11) discussed routines for teaching art responding that were grounded in preferred teaching strategies. The most popular discussion centred on the sub-theme of Slides and Frameworks. Slides or PowerPoint presentations were the most frequently used tool for teachers who lectured during art responding (n = 7). Nancy described how, *"we use PowerPoint so there's a lot of visual art [to look at and] discussion … I like to look at a particular artist each week."* Franz actively avoided using PowerPoint presentations and lecturing because, *"when you are doing a slide show … it's not interesting … [if] I end up just presenting through a PowerPoint [I will be] talking and talking and talking!"* Frameworks were linked to specific templates of how to construct visual analyses (Appendix M). Commonly used frameworks include Feldman's, Marsh's, Taylors, STICI (developed by the WA Curriculum Council) and The Frames; these often follow a structure of:

1. Describe the artwork's subject matter;
2. Discuss elements and principles (formal analysis) in relation to the composition of the artwork;
3. Discuss the possible meaning of the artwork;
4. Discuss any artist or contextual (social/cultural/historical) influences that may have affected the construction of the artwork; and
5. Make a judgement, supported with evidence, about the success of the work and how it helps you reflect on your own arts practice.

While all of the teachers discussed using frameworks to guide visual analysis, Ana was hesitant to use frameworks too often, or to use one type of framework to guide students' responses to artworks. She explained:

> *In terms of actually in the classroom, everyone talks about frameworks and crap like that. You know, the Feldman's and the Taylor's and the Frames and all that… [But my] year 11s really need to get a handle on The Frames next, because I've been focussing on Taylor, STICI, Marsh and Feldman. Then again, I'm rare, because most people just do Feldman [the most simplistic framework]. But I did enough research … I know there are others.*

Constructivist approaches to teaching responding were also popular. Ana apologised because, as she said: *"I'm so constructivist in my teaching that its really quite sad."*

Constructivist strategies included teachers showing YouTube videos or parts of films and television shows to inspire students' discussion on a particular issue relevant to their art making. Ana asked her students to write questions they would like to ask the artist (when looking at an artwork), which students then used with their peers to start a conversation about the work. Mostly constructivism was used as a way of, "*[using] everybody else's ideas, because that breaks down the scary bit*" (Ana). Barbara used a similar *placemat* strategy, where students' conversations were recorded on a placemat in the middle of the table. Eva had students present tutorials on modernist movements they researched to their class, so the students began to ask each other about the art movements rather than relying on asking Eva. Grace and Nancy both had their students, in groups, mark past WACE examination essays for art responding. Grace said:

> *They [the students] actually marked it harder than the examiner. I asked 'why did you mark so hard?' We had a conversation about the difference between literacy and how the priority is hitting the [marking] key [for Visual Arts]. They then peer marked ... the learning comes from within, from within them. I'll give them questions ... they have to look those questions up for themselves.*

Within the discussion on constructivism came a sub-theme of scaffolding, which was predominant within the teacher sample (n = 8). Teachers scaffolded both in-class and assessment work. Mona and Henri had similar ways of scaffolding assessments, as Mona described:

> *With a case study [an extended responding essay] I set mini deadlines up. So the first section might have been biographical; so that's due Monday in terms of a draft. Bring it back, we'll read through it. All right, let's do a group image analysis of one of their works [then go away and write it up] ... Then once I've got through those [draft] sections [and given feedback], then I'll set a final deadline [for the clean copy].*

In Mona's example, she had set a particular artist for students to research. In VACoS, the case study artist chosen must link back to the student's art making practice. Therefore, some teachers give students a list of preferred artists linked to the semester's theme, while other teachers give students complete freedom in terms of choosing an artist to study. Ana described how the process of selecting an artist needed to be scaffolded:

> *Because [my year 11s] … don't know enough artists to know where to start … I usually set up one artist and ask them to choose another one. I've been trying to say to them that visual analysis is a difficult task. And you don't have to get it right, you just have to have an argument.*

Barbara scaffolded the actual process of the visual analysis: "*I usually have two examples. I model an answer and walk through that process, and then I give them the opportunity to do it on their own … with lots of vocabulary sheets.*" Grace described how she scaffolded her students' social, cultural and historical context knowledge through getting them to make a timeline:

> *I got them to look at about 10 different movements … talk about the artist, historical component, give examples of the work. I only marked the [social, cultural and historical context] part of the marking key … When they do their visual analysis they are able to make reference, and give merit, to certain artists and genres [because of the timeline].*

While scaffolding was generally discussed as a reliable teaching strategy, Henri also commented on the potential consequence of scaffolding by stating: "*I have to stop myself from doing all the work for them.*" Henri was specifically referring to examinations, where he, "*made them revision sheets … just because I've got a kid that will get a lower mark because they haven't done the revision. If I do the [revision sheet], there's a chance they might read it.*" While scaffolding was most commonly linked to modelled writing or extending students' analysis skills through peer discussion and informal feedback, Henri emphasised the importance of remembering the difference between scaffolding students' learning and *doing* the work for them.

The Visual Arts teachers (n = 6) also discussed the influence of technology on their teaching. Rachel, Grace and Henri had shared student drives where their Stage 2 students could access class materials: for example, Rachel uploaded, "*materials and things like that so they are accessible from home … worksheets, handouts on terminology, the Frames and Feldman's.*" Nancy and Mona both encouraged their students to Google images and artists for their responding tasks; Mona even showed her students Wikipedia:

> *Even with Wikipedia, which is an evil, evil website ... I say forget about that, and look at where they've got their resources from, there's a whole list of stuff. So yeah, the Internet does help.*

Claude discussed how his lack of digital literacy impeded his ability to keep up with his students, "*sometimes the boys say, 'You talked about this person so I went and 'googled' them or 'youtubed' them ... I should be doing that in class ... I'm not very technologically knowledgeable.*"

Lastly, seven teachers discussed being creative in selecting teaching strategies. Franz emphasised the use of games to teach responding. He adapted the timeline approach used by other teachers and created timeline flashcards:

> *[I was] teaching them about the timeline - getting all the major movements in order... I said [write the art] movement, plus the artist's name, plus [the] name of a painting, [and] the date and they were all on different pieces of card ... and we played a game in teams and they had to put down a card in order and if you got it right then you got a certain number of points ...*

Franz also used role-plays to teach social, cultural and historical context. In a class on the Renaissance he had students take on the role of Lorenzo Medici and others, including Savonarola, the priest who exiled the Medici family, and then gave them scenarios from history to which the students improvised dialogue:

> *They found that quite good because they ... you know, how would you feel if this happened ... I'd say, 'You [Medici] have got to let them take over your land' ... she'd say, 'No way, I'm going to burn you and ...' and that was quite good.*

Imogen had her students draw thumbnail sketches of artworks' compositions so they could better understand how an artwork was constructed. Ana, like Franz, was quite dramatic:

> *Sometimes I go in and say, 'This painting ...' and I find a beloved Impressionist painting or something they may have seen ... 'oh, this is a piece of rubbish! Why would you bother?' I really lay it on, and then they pick at me. And sometimes that works [to get*

> *them to think about the argumentative nature of analysing art] …*
> *sometimes it doesn't [because they assume I'm right].*

Ana and Grace also had well-known Perth local artists come into their classrooms to talk to their students. Grace said that artists could also provide extra tutoring, in both responding and making. Ana emphasised the use of artist talks in enhancing responding: for example, "*I said just email him [the artist]. And they said 'Can I do that?' After meeting him they were like, 'whoa, whoa … that's so cool'.*" The immediacy of talking with the artist helped students to answer questions about the artworks they were engaging with.

Assessment was the second theme in interpreting the Stage 2 Visual Arts classrooms. Nine teachers discussed the assessments they gave students. All of these nine teachers spoke about the curriculum prescribed assessments: analysis, investigation and examination (Curriculum Council, 2008). Four teachers also gave additional assessments. Claude and Eva gave students in-class short answer tests on terminology and information relevant to the art movements they were studying. Claude used these short tests as a way of informally assessing his students and giving them formative feedback. Franz had his students do oral presentations about their case study artists; while Grace used the more informal interview approach, where she would talk to each individual student about his/her artist influences and the artworks he/she was engaging, while the student was completing his/her art making work. She described the process of these interviews:

> *They might tell me, 'I found this fantastic artist on YouTube' …*
> *[or] show it to me on their iPads and we discuss how they are*
> *using that particular artist's work perhaps with some visual*
> *language attached to that …*

In addition to discussing additional assessment tasks, six teachers described assessment criteria they focussed on when marking their Year 11 students. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) in Western Australia has generic marking keys for teachers to use in the VACoS content areas of production (art making) and interpretation (the responding content of analysis and investigation) (Appendix N). The six teachers who spoke about assessment criteria spoke about adhering to the guidelines of the SCSA marking key for art responding. Ana focussed on evidence-based

arguments: "*[I think] have they used the elements and principles to support their ideas … if that's your idea, prove it*." Franz also emphasised the importance of students' discussion on techniques or elements and principles in the composition of artworks. Rachel was concerned about students' content knowledge about social, cultural and historical contexts because, "*it's important for them to understand that the world is actually influencing art*." Mona focused more broadly on the overarching goals of art responding when assessing students' work, stating:

> *I suppose it's more about their [general] interpretation and analysis skills, which are the most important, because that's what you're trying to teach them. If they've got those skills they can apply it to anything.*

Year 11 Stage 2 Students

The Visual Arts teachers also discussed their perceptions of students' engagement in Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts. These comments were used to triangulate and elaborate on the semi-structured interviews conducted with the Year 11 students. As with the student data, two themes of cognitive engagement and psychological engagement (including their factors) were coded to compare the qualitative and quantitative findings (in Chapter Seven: Discussion); however, a third theme about student careers also emerged from teachers' discussion about their Year 11 classes.

The three main sub-themes within cognitive engagement were autonomy, intrinsic motivation, metacognition, and skills and knowledge. Seven of the 11 teachers spoke about student autonomy, or a lack of autonomy. Barbara discussed a link between autonomy and self-efficacy when she said: "*I've had to talk to them about the importance of gaining skills and confidence [in visual analysis], because they are going to be doing examinations [where they can't rely on my advice]*." While Barbara emphasised the importance of autonomy for students having to complete examinations, the remaining six teachers discussed autonomy as an important life skill. Eva stated that fostering autonomy was critical as her students, "*do not see the connection [of visual arts] to the real world*." Mona stated that autonomy was hard to foster when students were disconnected from the visual artworks they studied, saying:

The concepts in a lot of modern art can be pretty obscure and fairly sophisticated. If it's contemporary, for them to understand it, a lot of the time I guess they have to know what's going on in society, so that can be pretty tricky. I think it's easier to get the kids to relate to a lot of the contemporary art versus French impressionism and stuff and Heidelberg. I think that was done to death.

Mona also discussed the students' perception of visual analysis having a right and wrong answer, which acted as a barrier to their autonomy and risk-taking. Imogen and Nancy both discussed autonomy as linked to general life skills, rather than important for Visual Arts specifically. Nancy gave the example of case study assessments:

They get 16 weeks with case studies ... Mind you, some of them still didn't have them ready on time. Work in progress! I'm jumping on the kids' [attitude] that 'she'll be right' [or] 'later, I haven't brought my stuff, but I'm working at home' ... So it's really getting them to take ownership more so than what they did last term ... I will be working individually with those students to build them up to be where they should and know that they're not going to hit those pitfalls that they were hitting before.

The teachers had mixed responses regarding students' intrinsic motivation. Imogen stated that her students were, *"improving … getting into it … they're taking it a little more seriously, I don't think they realised how much of their mark is theory [responding to art]."* Imogen linked students' motivation to engage in art responding to academic achievement outcomes, rather than a broader interest in visual arts. Rachel's class also ranked themselves according to academic achievement, building motivation to succeed: *"They'll push each other to improve for the next time, and challenge each [to see who has done better]."* Ana thought that the teacher was central to establishing interest, but said that if she did not spark their interest in visual arts, students would not seek visual artworks on their own:

During the conversation [engagement is] usually very high, [the students] usually want to say quite a bit by the end of the lesson, at the end of an hour. They are usually involved, they don't tend to converse with each other in that whole high-animated level, but if I'm directing the discussion then they are usually quite involved.

Henri and Mona both stated their classes had mixed levels of motivation, and like Ana, students' motivation was higher in-class. Mona said that her class were motivated but, *"home is a different story."* Both Henri and Mona thought students socialising during class had stopped them from reflecting on the work and building an intrinsic interest in visual arts. An inability to focus on their work rather than socialising was seen as a generational disadvantage that was again linked to the prevalence of technology in students' lives.

Claude demonstrated intrinsic motivation through linking responding to professional art practice:

> *Most push on and do art and design at a tertiary level, and want to make it their life path for a period of time at least. So I think by year 12 I've made them understand that the art theory, [helps you because] you need to understand where it is you've come from and why you are making these decisions, so you don't get used by the weight of history. So, you're an active decision maker and in understanding that, you can make more informed decisions about the things you make or design or whatever.*

Six teachers reflected on their students' ability to think metacognitively. Herni, Mona and Nancy all discussed how their students felt they were creating art in a vacuum; Ana summarised these ideas by saying:

> *One of the bits that kids don't get, they think that they are just making their ideas. But they don't know that they are making their ideas from television, from Internet, from YouTube, from Pintrest, from all sorts of places. They don't know that they are being influenced culturally.*

She described a situation where an artist had come into her class to talk to her students, and in which the students had become excited about the artist's work. To build the students' metacognitive thinking, Ana found a review that criticised the same artist's work. The students immediately said:

> *"What! How dare they speak about his work that way" … [I said] That's what the critics do. So is the critic right or is the artist right? And that meant that they got an opportunity to go, 'oh, so I don't have to agree'. So I wanted to increase their critical reading*

> *ability, so that they were looking at who had written [the review and what his credentials were] … the artist will always promote his own work.*

Grace's students also had trouble with metacognition linked to general academic skills, "*a lot of our kids … have literacy or auditory problems.*" In addition to teaching her students to reflect on visual arts responding content, she had to teach them, "*strategies … you need to teach them, basically how to learn.*" Imogen felt that her students lacked any metacognitive skills in conceptualising how an artist's work could be linked to their art making, and had worked over her six weeks as a Visual Arts teacher to improve the metacognition:

> *The first [investigation task] was a bit dodgy … the Stage 2's [did] not so well, but I can actually see some improvement … They chose [to discuss] artists who were not even obscure; just not relating to their final work. It just makes it trickier for them and for me.*

Rachel also described how her students had difficulty with strategic knowledge to answer assessment requirements: "*[I] focus in Year 11 [on] getting them to adapt knowledge to a question, and actually understanding a question.*" Like with the student interviews, strategic knowledge or applying knowledge was challenging for the students.

Similar to the Year 11 students, Visual Arts teachers (n = 8) also spoke about students' skills and knowledge when discussing the other factors of cognitive engagement. Four teachers discussed students' limited social, cultural and historical knowledge as the greatest barrier to their engagement in responding. Ana thought her students, "*were lucky if they know who made it [the artwork] and when it was made. They don't know get who lives around that person, what's going on.*" Henri described the lack of contextual knowledge as highly problematic in his classroom:

> *So, this [painting by Luc Tuymans of the Nazi gas chambers] was painted in 1986 … I asked my students the reason why it was painted in 1986, expecting a general knowledge of the Second World War and what happened … These are Year 11s, some studying history. One said it was the fiftieth anniversary of the World War, some said it was painted just after the War … it was a realisation of a general lack of knowledge!*

Mona also discussed a general lack of knowledge linked to teenage stereotypes:

> *I'm trying to teach them context ... I think kids really struggle with the idea that art is not created in a vacuum. Okay, so this is this art piece, she's from Vietnam, what do we know about the history of it? Trying to teach them all that stuff, that's quite tricky because they're young, they're teenagers, they're reasonably self-absorbed. They're not used to looking out and seeing what affects other people.*

In addition to contextual knowledge, four teachers discussed knowledge of visual arts terminology as lower than the expected skills and knowledge for Year 11. Rachel discussed how her students were confident with analysing two-dimensional works: for example, paintings and prints; however, they were not able to use language appropriate for three-dimensional works: for example, the difference between shape (two dimensions) and form (three dimensions). Nancy spoke about how her students understood elements and principles, but could not apply more challenging terminology: for example, talking about juxtaposition in Surrealist artworks. Franz and Imogen both spoke about poor command of elements and principles. Franz discussed students' use of art terminology:

> *Now that they've got the basics of ... structure, I'm going to focus more on ... increasing their vocabulary and how you actually say things. You know, [in a] clear way... [Sometimes] I read their material and I think I know what they're trying to say, but it's really clumsy.*

The Visual Arts teachers also discussed their students' psychological engagement. Two themes were interpreted from the qualitative data: self-efficacy and student-teacher relationships. Nine teachers spoke about self-efficacy. In Ana's school, she felt the students had poor self-efficacy due to a fear of being wrong:

> *They are always scared out of their wits! Especially this crew, at this school …They are brought up, their families, the school, everyone promotes the very best kids get the very best results, and if you get the answer wrong then you're just wrong. So, they don't cope with the open-endedness [of visual analysis]. These people have been brought up in a mathematician's world where there is a right and a wrong, and you get points for showing your working, but you don't*

> *get points if it's wrong - you get less points if it's wrong. Well, I disagree.*

Barbara discussed how students' fear of being wrong made her change how she taught visual analysis: "*[Because] some students are shy, so [I put] them into a group where it's less threatening. They can try out their responses with each other ... gain confidence.*" Like Barbara, Imogen and Mona also commented on shyness as significant in their classrooms. Claude's strategy to build self-efficacy was to begin responding tasks earlier in middle school, "*because it occurs from the early years, it's not too confronting by the time they get to Year 11.*" Rachel was the only teacher (of the nine who spoke about self-efficacy) who thought her students all had really high self-efficacy. Rachel said: "*I think sometimes they're highly critical of themselves but I think they are reasonably confident ... to be quite independent.*" Like Claude, Rachel started extended responding assignments from earlier in middle school so students were familiar with the expectations of responding tasks by Year 11.

The second theme identified in the data was student-teacher relationships (n = 7). Ana and Grace both spoke about how Year 11 students try to please their teachers. Grace discussed her personal interest in Surrealism and how: "*Because I'm passionate, my guys do Surrealistic everything.*" Claude said his students also admired him because of his arts practice; he was the teacher who exhibited overseas frequently. Therefore, he said: "*While there is some grumbling [about responding], my interest, love and appreciation of art ... the depth and breadth of my understanding ... the boys appreciate that. They have a confidence in what I know.*" Mona and Rachel both discussed how they wanted to model enthusiasm and critical thinking for their students: "*[Because] enthusiasm ... that rubs off on the kids*" (Mona). Lastly, Franz spoke about how his relationships with the Stage 2 class were impacted due to cognitive engagement issues: "*I have a few students who sit together ... they don't engage, they find it conceptually challenging [studying art responding] ... it's very social, more [being] off-task.*"

Strengths and Challenges for Teaching Visual Arts Responding

The teachers discussed various strengths for teaching art responding. Five teachers discussed their knowledge of art history and making history relevant to students. They

generally spoke about their breadth and depth of knowledge, although Eva stated: "*[I know] contemporary movements a little less so.*" However, even if teachers found art movements they did not know much about they, "*never stopped learning*" (Ana) and "*enjoyed looking art artwork … pursuing knowledge in [new] areas*" (Claude). Franz spoke about making art relatable through his games and other teaching strategies that, "*made it real and put it in ways that students could … relate it to their current life and also to each other. I use a lot of analogies in explaining key ideas. Also humour.*" Ana also tried to relate art history to modern society, "*[and] the kids got it much more strongly because we'd connected [our in-class learning] with popular culture. I often use video clips and music.*" Teachers also thought that encouragement was one of their strengths: encouraging student autonomy (n = 3) and self-efficacy (n = 3) were important to them. Ana said:

> *I'm willing to let the kids run the show, but some teachers would see that as a weakness, that I'm not telling them what to do and how to do it every step of the way. I think that's strength; lots of teachers would see that as a weakness.*

Barbara described encouraging autonomy through a talk, "*about the importance of gaining skills and confidence in the process [of visual analysis] because they are going to be doing exams.*"

Ana, Barbara and Claude all discussed how their engagement of exhibitions assisted their teaching because, "*it means I have quite a reasonable knowledge of art*" (Barbara) and, "*I've collected resources … I enjoy it, so I continue to research, go abroad, see different exhibitions*" (Claude). Teachers' enjoyment extended to optimism as a strength of their teaching, an elaboration on the enthusiasm they used to build student-teacher relationships. Ana and Barbara both discussed how they hoped their love of, "*discovering artists … translates for the students … that they find it inspiring*" (Barbara).

While the teachers had a lot of strengths, they also noted a number of challenges that affected their teaching. Four teachers discussed their knowledge of art history as a challenge, including some of the teachers who discussed their knowledge as their strength. Ana stated that she while she enjoyed history and was continually learning: "*I*

don't do dates or deadlines." Eva noted that her good knowledge of modernism was not matched by knowledge of contemporary art movements that, "*were exposed by the new course, [which focuses on] contemporary knowledge*." Franz also felt challenged by his limited contemporary art knowledge.

Lack of curriculum structure was also a challenge for half of the teachers. Franz made his own marking keys because interpreting the SCSA marking keys was challenging. Mona also though the VACoS presented some challenges in its structure: "*It's more fluid, so I think there's a real potential for them not to have a broad knowledge … it really just focuses on a few artists.*" This concern was grounded in the fact that students do not have a list of pre-determined artworks that they need to know prior to their final Year 12 examination, as was the case for previous Visual Arts courses. Rachel elaborated on the same issue:

> *I would like a little bit more guidance as to what sort of styles of work we should be focusing on … more modern work or … postmodern stuff? It's just so broad in terms of what can be covered in that exam. I know [SCSA are] trying to build students' analysis skills rather than getting them to have a huge amount of … information about those particular movements but it does make it really tricky when you're trying to decide what to deliver.*

The Visual Arts teachers also found limited resources, facilities or time to be a challenge. Eva was quite upset about resources to support the VACoS including, "*set references, books and websites to support teaching.*" Franz also wanted his school to update resources; however, "*[there's] not so much in our budget [to cover it] … whether it be audio-visual or whatever, but stuff that students can engage in.*" Eva and Grace both discussed a lack of time; with the expectation of the art making work, Eva thought there was, "*a lack of time to do art history and criticism justice.*"

Balancing art making with responding was also a challenge. Due to changing curriculum most teachers studied under the TEE model where they had to memorise images and have breadth of content knowledge, with Franz noting: "*I've got to teach students how to do image analysis and how to do a case study … but my memory may not be great, but I don't remember doing that at high school.*" Ana also stated that achieving balance in a wider school context was "*dangerous*":

We push too hard … I don't want to do 5 million things shallowly. I'd rather do one really, deep, meaningful, big thing because art takes time, learning takes time … they are 17 [years old], they need a break … [And the administration] want me to teach to a timetable with deadlines.

School Culture

The interviewed teachers also discussed school culture's role in setting expectations for art responding. Seven Visual Arts teachers spoke about the literacy and examination focus of art responding. Ana spoke about how responding is tied to university entrance because, "*having it as an external examination, and the only way of examining, is the wrong way round too [because visual arts responding is linked specifically to art making].*" Barbara spoke about how examinations were used to guide teaching: "*I know what's expected … I guess these days I tend to work backwards. I know what is required at this [senior school] end so I'm preparing the students to get to that end.*" All the teachers spoke about their students relative to the ranking that occurs through the external responding examinations that students sit in Year 12, suggesting the academic achievement of Visual Arts students through the responding examinations were important to both teachers and school administration staff.

The teachers also discussed art responding gaining increased time in the middle school (Years 7-10) Visual Arts programs to assist students in acquiring skills for examination. Six teachers discussed their middle school programs, with Claude planning, "*[from] Year 7, one period a week … we look at a picture. We start familiarising ourselves with art, art language, the elements and principles … subjectively analysing [the image].*" Similarly, Grace began to "*introduce it more with the little kids, but only through their art making … looking at proper visual language [e.g., elements and principles] so it becomes innate.*"

Both the examination focus and increased responding in middle school could be a consequence of the last theme interpreted from the teachers' interviews, academic rigour. Teachers were more focused on life skills developed through responding (e.g., facilitating visual literacy through analysis skills); however, school administration and others had a different focus. Ana explained:

I'm much more interested in them providing me evidence of their learning ... which of course doesn't make very many people very happy.... in terms of, getting awards... They are brought up, their families, the school, everyone promotes the [idea that the] very best kids get the very best results ... There's no leeway for making a good argument even with a wrong answer.

Grace described how the new curriculum made her evaluate her teaching:

In the past, art theory was only worth like 25%. I looked at my [responding grades] a few years ago, and my students were slightly above State average, but that's not good enough. Over the last [few] years ... our results have been right up there ... but its been heavily scaffolded basically ... your weak cohorts test you – you have to try really had to get them a C grade.

From the teachers' interviews, it was evident they felt compelled to maintain a high standard of Visual Arts achievement through good rankings based on Year 12 WACE (university-entrance) Visual Arts examinations. This pressure was extended to Year 11 classes and to middle school Visual Arts through the inclusion of increased time spent on art responding tasks.

Section B: Heads of The Arts

Compared to the Visual Arts teachers, Heads of the Arts and Principals had shorter interviews of approximately 10 minutes. The interviews with the Heads of The Arts (n = 5) were conducted to gain insight into Visual Arts at a departmental level, and to determine how the leader of The Arts team viewed Visual Arts within the broader school context. One Head of The Arts was also the classroom Visual Arts teacher (Eva). Like with the Visual Arts teacher interviews, background information about the Heads of The Arts were determined through each interview. Three Heads of The Arts had been in their current positions for 13 years, one for seven years, and one Head of The Arts had taken this leadership position at her school five weeks prior to the interview. All the participants were asked to list their background in The Arts, and while the subjects individual teachers had taught are not listed to protect the identities of the participants, the collective subjects were:

- Drama;

- Media Arts;
- Music; and
- Visual Arts.

One Head of The Arts also spoke about her interest in Dance, but she had not taught the subject. One Head of The Arts had also worked in New South Wales, prior to teaching in Western Australia.

Perceptions of Visual Arts in the School Community

Although there were some brief conversations about the role of responding in Visual Arts, the Heads of the Arts often spoke about the role of Visual Arts more generally. The most common promotion of the Visual Arts was established through an annual school art exhibitions, as well as art collections and sharing Visual Arts with the broader community. Alexander and David both spoke about having large exhibitions. Alexander discussed how art exhibitions (which generally extend beyond Visual Arts to include some Design and Technology and other Arts subject works) were, "*community art exhibitions [organised] with the P&C [Parents and Citizens] group.*" David's school had plans to extend their displays of Visual Arts: "*We always have boys' work on display [at the moment, but]… we are building a new building and having a purpose built art gallery put into that.*" David went on to discuss how a purpose built gallery could extend the potential and professionalism of students' art exhibitions and increase promotion of the Visual Arts in the broader school community. He also had a small budget to buy original artworks to support the Visual Arts program that could also be linked to the new gallery space.

The notion of sharing Visual Arts, and The Arts generally, with the broader school community was important to three of the five Heads of The Arts. Alexander emphasised the importance of the Parents and Citizens (P&C) Association in organising their school art exhibition, which also included works by local Perth artists. He also thought the P&C were involved in, " *organising murals to put around the school, that's … part of a broader school approach.*" In addition to murals, Alexander said that his school supported students from other cultural backgrounds through the Visual Arts:

> *Exchange students from sister schools ... [always participate in]*
> *Visual Arts [who] are always prepared to take those kids on ... I*
> *think last year they did some Aboriginal stuff with them to explore*
> *the Australian context.*

Hermen explained a similar situation at his school where they had exchange students, "*look at Aboriginal art and perhaps introduce boomerangs and do designs and things like that.*" Additionally, Hermen's school actively involved all The Arts subjects through performance nights: "*We have performance nights where it will be cross-Arts. With Media [Arts] we will do background videos that will be combined with Visual Arts making props and things for the dancers and the theatre.*" One school also took Visual Arts outside of the school location and into the local community through painting bus shelters and local sporting clubs.

The Heads of The Arts spoke a lot about the activities happening around the Visual Arts in their community; however, they also spoke about advocacy for The Arts and how this was reflected in the school community. Alexander discussed how The Arts encourage collaboration during specialised activities, such as stage productions:

> *It plays quite an important role in getting people together. We just*
> *had a major production and that draw in ... all of the art forms and*
> *other areas of the school. The Arts really takes leadership.*

David discussed how he sees himself as an advocate for The Arts because, "*[I think they play] a central role ... I'd regard Visual Arts as one of the most important subjects in the curriculum.*" Florence had a school that promoted *culture* and as such, ensured that all Year 7 and 8 students completed some Visual Arts work each year, prior to making Visual Arts an elective subject. Hermen stated how his school had a Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program that helped to raise community awareness and support for the Visual Arts students. Eva, who was also the Stage 2 Visual Arts teacher, described how the Visual Arts still struggled in her school, despite her advocacy:

> *[The Visual Arts] play a reasonably large part; however, we have*
> *to fight constantly to keep ourselves visible and not get lost in the*
> *academically driven mentality [of a competitive school].*

Eva was the only Head of The Arts who showed concern about the role of the Visual Arts due to a competitive senior school curriculum.

Section C: Principals

Principals also had shorter interviews lasting approximately 10 minutes. The interviews with the principals (n = 8) were conducted to gain insight into Visual Arts within the broader school context. The average number of years as a principal was three and a half years; however, two principals been in their roles for less than a year, one principal was in an acting position for approximately six weeks prior to the interview, and one school was unable to make the Principal available, so an experienced Assistant Principal (three years) completed the interview on his behalf. As with the other educators, the principals were asked to list their subject areas, and while the subjects individual teachers had taught are not listed to protect the identities of the participants, the collective subjects were:

- Arts: Dance and Visual Arts;
- Design and Technology;
- English;
- Languages Other Than English: Chinese/Mandarin;
- Health and Physical Education;
- Mathematics;
- Religious Education;
- Society and Environment: Economics, Geography and History; and
- Science: Physics.

One principal, who did not teach the Arts, had a close family member who was a Visual Arts teacher and disclosed a personal interest in Visual Arts; specifically, a preference for modernist painters: "*I have a great interest in Mr Constable and Mr Renoir, and those sorts of people.*"

Benefits of Studying Responding in Visual Arts

Holism and balance was the first theme to be coded from the principals' data. The principals, particularly at single gender schools, saw value in the Visual Arts for holistic student development: "*It gives [boys] an avenue to express their emotions, be*

innovative, and in many ways, explore to full range of ways of expressing masculinity"
(Clifford). Ken thought holistic development was achieved through the Visual Arts
through their link to creativity:

> *Sir Ken Robinson [English visual arts education advocate] talks*
> *about creativity ... the next generation of students need to be able*
> *to think and to solve problems ... art is a little bit like that, making*
> *society more than just a reactive environment.*

Diego saw balance as integral through the Visual Arts because, *"[they] provide that*
creative outlet away from the mundaneness of normal subjects." For these four
principals, Visual Arts could provide students with essential learning unique to their
other subject areas.

Three principals also spoke about the intellectual challenge of studying responding
within Visual Arts, including ideas about literacy, research and social awareness.
Clifford discussed the analytical challenges: "*It challenges the boys with literacy*
demands, but in terms of placing art within a historical context, it's very important."
Hannah, echoed the importance of the challenge:

> *It's great to be creative, but at a more rigorous end [senior school]*
> *it has to be both of those things [making and responding]. They*
> *[need to] think in a very deep way about their art ... how it fits into*
> *the broader community.*

Challenges to Studying Responding in Visual Arts

In contrast to the positive ideas about the intellectual challenge of responding, three
principals discussed the challenge of balancing responding and art making outcomes in
the curriculum. Niki, the Assistant Principal, reflected on the complex balance between
making and responding to visual arts:

> *To fully appreciate a piece of work, it's important to understand*
> *the condition under which they were made and developed ...*
> *However, I do not think art theory should take over the Arts*
> *programs, 30% perhaps ... higher for the Stage 3 ATAR*
> *[university-entrance] Visual Arts.*

Ivan, like Niki, had concerns about the weighting of responding to art making, with the assessment weighting being split approximately 50/50 in the current curriculum (VACoS - 2014) and the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (ACARA, 2014a; Curriculum Council, 2008). Ivan was very concerned about responding in the curriculum, from a broader rationale of curriculum and policy writers, to the current pre-service teacher education courses in Western Australia:

> *I think education systems tend to gravitate towards the 'learning about' from a theoretical perspective, rather than actually 'learning from doing'. And I think that's always one of the challenges, particularly with the academic arts … [even] universities have said, 'well, we'll do the theory bit, but if [pre-service teachers] want to do the practical components of the art then you need to go somewhere else [like TAFE]' … It's a danger where learning institutions become about 'learning about' things from a theoretical perspective rather than 'experiential learning', because it's too costly to learn from doing, and I think that's a worrying trend.*

Ivan was advocating a senior school Arts course that was founded on practical art making, with minor responding activities that were directly linked to students' making practices.

Three principals, Ivan, Diego and Ken, discussed students' lack of interest in responding as a challenge. Ivan discussed how, at his school, students were moving from university-entrance courses into practical Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificate courses that did not include the responding component. Diego thought the challenge of responding in Visual Arts was linked to a simple question: "*That would be nice to do, but where is it going to lead me?*" For Diego, students' pressures to think about university-entrance and future careers made them question the relevance of art responding to their futures. Ken suggested that students' use of technology was a challenge in his school. While he was the only principal to name technology as a challenge, he stated that technology could be a rationale for students' lack of interest in Visual Arts regardless of whether they were making or responding to visual arts:

> *I think technologies can really help, but it also can hinder that purist [of] creativity in most people … people don't necessarily*

> *create too much that is tangible, that they can actually feel and think and touch. It's all on the screen and I think some of that is quite false.*

For Ken, students needed to be shown the benefit of creating tangible artefacts before they could be engaged in responding tasks.

School Culture

The principals suggested the school culture around Visual Arts was more centred on making than responding. They mostly discussed Visual Arts within the middle school, because as Diego suggested: "*I think the view of [senior school] education is not for education purposes but for what subjects do I need to do, so I get an ATAR [score] to get into university.*" Therefore, participation in Visual Arts significantly declined after Year 10.

Seven principals discussed the emphasis on art making in middle school (Years 7-10). Ben gave his rationale for the art making focus:

> *For the kids in junior years there is probably less, less emphasis on the theoretical [responding] component than the technical [making] component, because you need to get the technical skills and work on those so you can be successful in later years … if you spend too much time drilling them on the theory of art and who painted this and who painted that, I'd imagine there would be some students who would say 'hmmm, that volleyball is looking pretty attractive, or geez I'd like to go skin diving'.*

Ferdinand also discussed how students at his school were mostly, "*attracted to Visual Arts form the practical side … [it is only] in Years 10, 11 and 12 where the theory and the practical come together.*" Ivan supported the making emphasis in middle school because, "*you can research painting all you like, but if you can't actually do it, create something unique and original, one might argue what the point is.*" Niki also suggested that too much responding could be detrimental to students' development: "*Many of our students choose Visual Arts because they are creative and hands-on learners … too much theory stifles this passion.*"

In addition to emphasising art making in middle school, the principals (n = 6) discussed the literacy focus of responding tasks. Clifford discussed how he thought the school recognised art responding as, "*very important, in terms of literacy requirements, in terms of that and essay writing, and analytical writing and those research skills.*" Clifford's comments were also linked to the, "*junior secondary program [where] we are aiming to build the fundamental skills, and obviously it's across literacy and numeracy, but there's a whole lot of other skills [too]*." Ken elaborated on the literacy focus, and increasing national interest in literacy learning: "*There's a school of thought with all the NAPLAN [National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy] and all the testing and all of those sorts of things that we need to get 'back to basics' [in literacy and numeracy education] … there's a community perception [that this is important]*." For Ken, the wider school community emphasised the importance of literacy, which was something that Visual Arts could assist through the inclusion of art responding. Niki, who did not think there should be as much emphasis on responding in the Arts curriculum, also noted, "*the benefits – [the Visual Arts students are] better writers in Arts, English and History*."

Promotion of Visual Arts

The principals also discussed the importance of promoting the Visual Arts in the broader school community. Ferdinand was the only principal to talk about promoting the Visual Arts students' work through school art exhibitions: "*We have a big display for the visual arts, our display is an opportunity for the kids to display all their works and we try to promote that to the school community*." Four principals spoke about how they personally promoted The Arts, including the Visual Arts, in their schools. Clifford had dedicated a whole-school assembly to The Arts, "*most of my bit was about The Arts and the things that have been happening in the school during the last few weeks*." Ken was trying to promote the arts through, "*a building project grant where you can actually bring in really good facilities because the facilities aren't great for Visual Arts*." Diego and Ivan spoke about promoting student enrolments in the arts because, "*in Years 11 and 12 the numbers really drop off*" (Diego) and, "*we are keen to support our Art program so we can improve … give students access to different artists, different techniques, different strategies … a wide range of artists*" (Ivan).

Four principals also discussed how Visual Arts engaged the wider school community. Ben discussed the P&C's role in an annual art exhibition that is a fundraiser for the school, while Ken's Visual Arts staff organised their art exhibition. Ferdinand discussed after-school art clubs that anyone in the school community could attend. Hannah's school had conducted art making sessions with disabled community members: "*It was very powerful and you could see our kids interacting, and realising that people [have] profound disabilities ... [but] art could enhance their life*." Ken also discussed how the school liked to have artists-in-residence to grow relationships between Visual Arts students and local Perth artists.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Six presented the findings from the Visual Arts teachers, Heads of the Arts and Principals. All three participant groups had expansive teaching experiences across the WA Learning Areas. Visual Arts teachers had significant studio art practices, with two teachers actively exhibiting their artwork. The teachers were mostly interested in Western modernist art movements. The Visual Arts teachers discussed their Stage 2 classes, mostly teaching responding through lectures and PowerPoint presentations, which were supported through constructivist activities where students could analyse artworks collaboratively. Assessments were mostly curriculum-dictated; however, teachers emphasised the importance of formalistic analysis of elements and principles, and social, cultural and historical knowledge when assessing students' work. In regards to cognitive engagement, teachers described students' lack of autonomy despite some intrinsic motivation. Teachers felt that it was their leadership of art responding tasks that initially motivated students and gave them a foundation from which to engage in learning. Similar to the student findings, strategic knowledge in metacognitive thinking was low; meaning students found it challenging to adapt knowledge and determine what information they needed to engage in critiquing artworks. In regards to psychological engagement, teachers felt self-efficacy was affected by students' high standards of academic performance. Student-teacher relationships were affected by students' desire to please or imitate the teacher and by trusting the teachers' life experience as an artist. The teachers, who conceded they needed more support to deliver a curriculum that emphasises contemporary arts practice, considered art history knowledge both a strength and a challenge. Additionally, the increasing emphasis on art responding in

Year 11 changed the way teachers introduced responding to Visual Arts in the middle years of schooling.

The Heads of The Arts had experience across all Arts subjects, except Dance. The most common promotion of Visual Arts discussed by The Heads of The Arts was school based art exhibitions. Exhibitions and school programs, such as exchange programs, were essential to sharing Visual Arts with the wider community. They discussed how The Arts help students to collaborate both within and across schools. The Heads of The Arts were strong advocates for their Learning Area, whether it was through special programs or through ensuring Visual Arts was part of compulsory learning for part of their students' secondary school experience. Eva, the Visual Arts teacher and Head of The Arts at her school, was the only participant who discussed the curriculum pressure she felt to maintain the status of Visual Arts within an academically competitive curriculum.

Two principals had some background in The Arts, contributing to the extensive subjects taught by principals in the sample. The principals stated significant benefits to studying responding and the Visual Arts were the holistic development of children though having an "*expressive education*" and intellectual challenge of learning about literacy and social, cultural and historical contexts through Visual Arts. In addition to these benefits, the principals also noted a number of challenges for responding. Ivan was most vocal in expressing his concern about the inclusion of responding in the curriculum, particularly with a large assessment weighting. The principals suggested that students were moving towards Certificate based courses rather than university-entrance courses that included responding, due to the added stress of engaging in responding tasks. The principals discussed the importance of balancing art making with responding. School culture was also discussed, with most schools emphasising art making through middle schools. This view was similar to the perspective of the Heads of The Arts, but not shared by teachers who viewed art responding as becoming more essential to middle school due to Year 12 examinations in responding. Lastly, the principals promoted visual arts through exhibitions and school assemblies. They were trying to increase enrolments in senior school (Year 11 and 12) Visual Arts to support an enriched program, mostly linked to increasing facilities for art making.

The student findings presented in Chapter Five were triangulated by the Visual Arts teachers' interviews; however, the teachers offered different rationales for students' engagement: for example, while students felt they did not have the opportunity to be autonomous in Visual Arts, teachers suggested it was a result of students' poor self-efficacy and skills to be independent learners. The interview findings from Heads of The Arts and Principals contextualised the Visual Arts classroom experiences within the broader school community. Chapter Seven will discuss the findings from these four participant groups in more depth.

CHAPTER SEVEN
DISCUSSION

Introduction

Chapters Five and Six presented the findings from the Year 11 questionnaire instrument (VARSEI) and interviews conducted with the four participant groups: Year 11 students, Visual Arts teachers, Heads of The Arts and Principals. Chapter Seven discusses the implications of the findings across both the quantitative and qualitative research, linked to the research questions:

1. How effectively can students' cognitive and psychological engagement in Visual Arts responding tasks be measured?

2. To what extent are year 11 students engaging with Visual Arts responding tasks?
   a. To what extent are they engaging on a cognitive level?
   b. To what extent are they engaging on a psychological level?
   c. Do they engage with images based on ACARA's cross-curriculum priorities – fusion with Indigenous art (e.g., Lin Onus' artworks), Asian art (e.g., Kozyndan paintings) and art about sustainability (e.g., Richard Woldendorp photographs)?

3. What value do Visual Arts teachers place on responding and what approaches are they engaging to teach Visual Arts responding?
   a. How are the Visual Arts teachers' perceptions of art responding supported by their Heads of Learning Area and/or Principals?

4. How can the teaching and learning of Visual Arts responding education be modified to improve the engagement of Year 11 students?

The content of the research questions determined four aspects for discussion:
1. Constructing an instrument to measure students' cognitive and psychological engagement in Visual Arts responding;
2. Students' engagement with the Visual Arts responding strand;
3. Teacher and Administrator perceptions of Visual Arts responding; and
4. Implications for improving Visual Arts responding engagement in the Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts course.

Subsequently, these four overarching aspects will guide the discussion in which findings from the research will be linked to significant literature. Throughout the

discussion, this research study's contribution to the fields of student engagement and responding content and organisation within the Visual Arts curriculum (both VACoS and the Australian Curriculum) will also be discussed.

Constructing an Instrument to Measure Students' Cognitive and Psychological Engagement in Visual Arts Responding

The first research question asked how effectively could student engagement in Visual Arts responding be measured. In constructing the Visual Arts Responding Student Engagement Instrument (VARSEI) existing student engagement instruments were reviewed through a systematic database search. The instruments reviewed could be placed into two categories: subject-specific instruments and generalised engagement instruments. Prior to the VARSEI construction in 2012, Mathematics had most commonly used a subject-specific engagement instrument with secondary school students: for example, Kong, Wong and Lam (2003) developed an instrument using the constructs of cognitive, affective and behavioural engagement. An example of an item from this instrument is: *I think memorising mathematics is more effective than understanding it* (Kong et al., 2003, p. 11). Visual Arts responding does not have specific formulae to memorise, only frameworks that can be applied to tasks; therefore, this item was not be specific enough to the research context. Recently, Science educators have also begun to develop student engagement instruments: for example, Fortus and Vedder-Weiss (2014) developed a continuing motivation instrument that explored intrinsic motivation of students across school and home contexts. This instrument was not published when the instrument was constructed, although it includes similar items to the VARSEI: *I browse science-related internet sites* (Fortus & Vadder-Weiss, 2014, p. 504), which was similar to items about reading in the VARSEI.

Generalised instruments included a large Student Engagement Instrument developed by Appleton, Christenson, Kim, and Reschly (2006), which had been comprehensively validated over time (Appleton et al., 2008; Betts et al., 2010; Lovelace et al., 2014). The Student Engagement Instrument included items on cognitive and psychological engagement. An example of a cognitive engagement item from this instrument is: *Most of what is important to know you learn in school* (Appleton et al., 2006, p. 436). Items for psychological engagement included: *At my school, teachers care about students* (Appleton et al., 2006, p. 436). Both the cognitive and psychological engagement items

included concepts that were valuable to the VARSEI; however, the breadth of the items in measuring responses to the whole-school context did not allow a specific measure to be taken of students' engagement in one class. Furthermore, the cognitive engagement items were so broad that students' response to the item could change between different subject areas based on their personal preferences.

Other student engagement instruments included those developed for use with university students, which were also either subject-specific (Erdogan, Özel, Us̗ak, & Prokop, 2009) or generalised (Mazer, 2012). All student engagement instruments that were developed for university student samples were excluded from the development of the VARSEI due to the differences between university and school-based samples: for example, students' age, autonomy, cognitive development, economic independence and nature of study (e.g., location and timetables). An example from the Mazer (2012) instrument is the item: *I am interested in this class because I feel like I am learning topics covered in the course* (p. 108). This item included ideas about the university structure, such as the link between individual units and classes to the students' overall course. Students in secondary school have a different structure to university, as they elect to study specific subjects each year that give them a breadth of subject areas (e.g., across English, Humanities and Social Sciences, Mathematics, Sciences and The Arts) rather than the level of specialisation experienced by university students who have units linking to the area of course study (e.g., all units link to The Arts only). Items on university developed instruments asked students to rate study within and beyond the university context (Erdogan et al., 2009); however, this did not apply to the VARSEI as it was developed to specifically investigate Year 11 students' engagement in the classroom.

In addition to engagement instruments that were subject-specific or generalised, some researchers developed instruments that investigated one or more indicators. Gray and Hackling's (2009) instrument measured students' wellbeing and retention to reduce student attrition levels, although it included academic engagement as part of this measurement (e.g., one item linked to academic engagement was: *I'll keep working at difficult school work until I think I've worked it out,* despite the overall construct being about school culture); therefore, showing how some engagement indicators may be used even if engagement is not the construct motivating the research. Jimerson, Campos, and

Greif (2003) discussed the variation of generalised engagement instruments in their definitions and methods for investigating engagement, including the range of indicators across behavioural, affective and cognitive dimensions of engagement: for example, instruments that investigated more superficial in-class behaviours such as attendance, to complex engagement indicators such as interpersonal relationships. In Visual Arts learning, students are expected to make complex links between an artist of their choice, the context in which the artist worked and the product of working in this context (i.e., analysis of artworks produced under social, cultural and historical influences), and finally, link these ideas to their own arts practice. A hypothetical example of the complexity of a Visual Arts responding task (the case study) is described below:

Elizabeth, who was interested in Asian cultures due to her parents' collection of international arts and furniture, chooses to research Chinese watercolour painting as she wanted to produce her own watercolour painting about Western Australian landscape.

For her case study she researches Confucianism and its impact on Chinese painting, such as harmony and social respect being depicted between people and landscape, and Daoism's value of balance with nature (Kleiner, 2009). She also researches the canons of Chinese painting to learn the process of how Chinese painters used their brushes and organised composition (Kleiner, 2009): for example, the scale of a person is much smaller than that of the landscape, in accordance with Daoists' value of landscape. Elizabeth investigates poetry and calligraphy linked to literati painting so she can make links between images and written responses in poems or inscriptions from Chinese officials or scholars (Honour & Fleming, 2009). She researches Dong QiChang, a Southern School painter who was expressive and sometimes abstract (Honour & Fleming, 2009; Kleiner, 2009). She analyses two of QiChang's works to further understand his style and the influences of Chinese painting traditions on his watercolours.

This research informs Elizabeth's production of watercolour paintings, in which she may take the lessons of Chinese painting and applies them to a Western Australian context: for example, by substituting familiar landmarks like Cottesloe Beach, but using the Chinese style of painting. Her responding case study task discusses the research she had undertaken, as well as how and why she had used these principles in her own art making.

The nature of the case study task underscores the complexity of students' analysis and critical thinking in Visual Arts. Instruments that emphasise criteria about behaviour at a

superficial level (e.g., student attendance percentages) miss the complexity associated with engaging in the complexity of Visual Arts specifically. Therefore, it was imperative that the VARSEI match the breadth and depth of tasks that students engage in their Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts class.

Of all the instruments that were reviewed, the Student Engagement Instrument developed by Appleton et al. (2006) was the most comprehensively validated and linked closely to the literature reviewed on student engagement. The Student Engagement Instrument also acknowledged the differences between academic and behavioural engagement (more superficial indicators: e.g., GPA scores and attendance) and cognitive and psychological or affective engagement (more complex indicators: e.g., belonging and self-regulation) (Appleton et al., 2006). However, the Student Engagement Instrument was still a generalised instrument, so the new VARSEI instrument was constructed with items that were closely linked to the indicators of the Student Engagement Instrument (Appleton et al., 2006), but specific to Visual Arts skills and knowledge used in responding tasks. Therefore, items in the VARSEI included, *I make decisions about what visual artworks I want to view* as this linked to students' choosing artworks to investigate for their case study task, and *I can explain how different techniques influence the meaning we make from visual artworks*, as this is linked to applying research to visual arts analysis (e.g., Elizabeth applying knowledge of Chinese calligraphy and brushwork to the Daoist philosophy about the reverence of nature).

While the initial instrument included engagement indicators similar to the Student Engagement Instrument (Appleton et al., 2006), the exploratory factor analysis showed only five key factors that affected student engagement in Visual Arts responding: autonomy, intrinsic motivation, metacognition, self-efficacy and student-teacher relationships. These factors were anticipated as they linked closely to the expectations discussed by Visual Arts teachers: for example, Mona discussed the process of students completing an extended responding essay. She described:

> *With a case study [an extended responding essay] I set mini deadlines up. So the first section might have been biographical; so that's due Monday in terms of a draft. Bring it back, we'll read through it. All right, let's do a group image analysis of one of their*

works [then go away and write it up] … Then once I've got through those [draft] sections [and given feedback], then I'll set a final deadline [for the clean copy].

Her description includes students' autonomy – choose relevant information for the artist biography, which may sometimes include choosing artworks; intrinsic motivation – complete research at home because they are enjoying the task and have a desire to know more about the artist; metacognition – discern what information is relevant to the task; self-efficacy – feel confident to express personal opinions and make judgements about the success of the artist's works; and student-teacher relationships – trust that the teacher respects any personal judgements made and understand what the teacher expects to assess from reading the students' work.

Of the five emerging factors, autonomy requires further investigation. Autonomy in the VARSEI included concepts about students' choice and ownership of their learning (e.g., choosing what artist/s and artwork/s they want to learn about) and perceived relevance to future (e.g., influence of responding tasks on their own art making and value of learning responding in Visual Arts). While the factor loadings were positive, autonomy recorded the lowest factor loadings within the cognitive engagement scale, between 0.29 and 0.60. It also returned the lowest Cronbach's alpha of 0.73. The interviewed students discussed how they had limited choice in Visual Arts responding tasks: for example, Mario suggested, "*[my teacher] picks the images to be more controlling … so we don't go too [far] off subject.*" Therefore, further qualitative investigation of students' perceived autonomy or lack of autonomy in Visual Arts responding could help to refine the questionnaire items and also increase the reliability of the autonomy sub-scale.

The remaining sub-scales in both cognitive and psychological engagement had higher factor loadings and reliability scores, with alpha scores equal or greater to 0.84. Therefore, the pilot of the VARSEI showed student engagement in Visual Arts could be measured, although some changes to the autonomy sub-scale would further strengthen the instrument. Validating the instrument through a larger sample to warrant a confirmatory factor analysis and structured equation modelling would give more predictive validity to the VARSEI. Structured equation modelling would give teachers a more refined model to follow to enhance engagement based on the included factors.

Students' Engagement with the Visual Arts Responding Strand

The second research question asked the extent to which Year 11 students were engaging with Visual Arts responding; however, the question was structured in three parts. Firstly, the research asked to what extent students were cognitively engaged; secondly, to what extent were they engaged psychologically; and lastly, did they appear (based on an initial aesthetic reaction) to engage with artworks linked to ACARA's cross-curriculum priorities (ACARA, n.d.). Students' personal interest and home context, primary and middle school contexts were also included in the VARSEI to support the discussion of findings from this research question.

Section A: Personal Interest

Section A of the VARSEI investigated students' engagement with visual arts in their home context. Students seemed more motivated to make artworks at home (as opposed to respond to visual arts), with their practices being a form of relaxation for the students: for example, Isabel reflected on how she, "*won't specifically make anything amazing outside of school. If I do anything it would just be in a little sketch book, just casual drawings.*" The self-expressive reflective practice described by the students echoed Efland's (1990a) expressive-psychoanalytic model, as this model describes art practice that, "[produce] products of mental life … intuitive or subjective knowledge [for example, expressions of WA teenage experience as Cy demonstrated through his abstract self-portraits]. Art also has value for the individual creator because it enables personal growth to occur. For this reason the arts are therapeutic" (p. 16). There was also a quality of child-like art in the description of the students' home art practice, in which students produced images mostly from their imagination without formal guidelines from a teacher or adult (Efland, 1990b; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987; S. Macdonald, 2005). Cy's self-portraits were completely his own spontaneous expression, which he concluded were "*kind of abstract.*" He was not motivated by anyone to make these self-portraits and they were not shown to anyone for feedback or to be made public.

Despite working from their imaginations, the Year 11 students were actively influenced by images and texts they responded to while at home. Mario described how the Studio Ghibli Japanese anime films influenced him, and his drawings often arose from

something he had seen recently. Students were reading about the visual arts in both on-line and print-based media: for example, on blogs and in books and journals. Increased reading has been shown to improve students' discipline knowledge and general literacy skills associated within a certain discipline area (Billman & Pearson, 2013; Stewart-Dore, 2013) and this type of reading is highly autonomous and intrinsically motivated, as it is engaged external to any school requirements. Importantly, the students' sustained reading builds neural pathways through novelty (reading new material and connecting it to existing knowledge), while also strengthening existing neural pathways through sustained practice (linked to brain plasticity) (Longstaff, 2000; Willis, 2008). Some students also viewed visual arts texts on television or on-line. Further investigation is required to determine what texts, both written and visual, students are engaging with, and if these have a specific impact on motivation and metacognitive knowledge in Visual Arts responding tasks.

Year 11 students also attended art galleries with their families. While most students attend one or two shows a year (one exhibition every six to 12 months), the Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA) release previews of exhibitions on a quarterly basis, while Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA) stages new exhibitions approximately every two months. Therefore, most students are missing half or more of the exhibitions shown by AGWA and PICA each year. Brain novelty, leading to new neural pathways can also be built through viewing new artworks; therefore, students' motivation may be assisted by frequent visual arts gallery visits to stimulate novelty and increase motivation for sustained engagement in visual arts learning. The interviewed students discussed having significant visual arts advocates, including artists, in their families. These artists could also expose students to new skills and knowledge, which may also increase novelty and engagement in visual arts. Kate's brain novelty and plasticity were increased through visiting the WA Year 12 Perspectives exhibition as she used existing symbolic knowledge to interpret colour use and composition of works, enhancing her understanding of their meaning. Through attending the exhibition with her father, they shared opinions about the work, which extended her plasticity through strengthening neural pathways linked to interpreting artworks. She also described how the exhibition was special because she felt it was something she may achieve in Year 12. Therefore, she experienced brain novelty, associated with the pleasurable experience

of seeing new subject matter that enhances memory and emotion (Gilbert, 2013; Zull, 2011), which inspired Kate to continue working in the visual arts.

Section B: Primary School

Section B of the VARSEI elicited Year 11 students' memories of their primary school Visual Arts experiences. The qualitative findings demonstrated that students have few memories of specific Visual Arts experiences; therefore, the VARSEI findings provided the most detail about students' collective primary school experiences. The quantitative findings showed the emphasis on art making in primary schools. This finding was anticipated due to the benefits of Visual Arts learning on fine motor skills, social and cultural understandings, and developing self-efficacy (Alter et al., 2009a; Laird, 2012; Lummis, 1986; Speck, 1999). Historically, art making for children has had strong advocates in child art theorists like Cizek, Richardson and Lowenfeld, and art education advocates like Barkan, Eisner and Efland. From the early 1900s, Cizek's child art formalised the *progressive* idea that teachers should not interfere with children's creation of art as formal education conflicted with the natural state of being (Efland, 1990b; S. Macdonald, 2005). Therefore, *Progressive* educators believed instruction about how to draw (e.g., using elements and principles such as different types of line and colour) was detrimental to child development, and instead the teacher should provide materials and let the student what and how to draw. Boughton (1989) explained how the child art philosophy was widely practiced in Australian schools for many years, even once new philosophies about Visual Arts education emerged internationally (e.g., Aesthetic Education in the USA from the 1960s). Differing from child art were Manuel Barkan and Elliot Eisner, who both led influential Visual Arts education projects with primary school children in the 1960s. Barkan's Aesthetic Education Program started to produce specific curriculum and aesthetic education material for primary schools to deliver: for example, the curriculum would include art history, art language and criticism (evaluating an artwork's success through analysis) and in primary school, this would be facilitated through, "about ten hours of instruction and composed of such things as slides, film strips, and puzzles" (Kern, 1984, p. 222). Eisner's Kettering Project was similar, as he developed a curriculum and the materials necessary for a generalist primary teacher to provide Visual Arts learning experiences for early childhood classes (Eisner, 1968). The Kettering Project provided specific instructional

ideas to use in class, as well as explanations about visual arts concepts and materials/practice, for example:

> Suppose we want to help the child recognize that in a painting everything counts and that a change in one part means a change in the whole. We can demonstrate this phenomena [sic] by providing reproductions of paintings whose parts can be altered. What happens to a Rembrandt portrait when the color of the man's frock is changed from dark blue to a light green? (Eisner, 1968, p. 51)

Both Barkan and Eisner's projects influenced Australian curriculum, and the values and practices of primary school teachers (Boughton, 1989). The K-7 Art and Crafts Syllabus (Ministry of Education Curriculum Branch, 1987) published in WA included similar ideas about aesthetic education embedded into its *carrier project* (unit of work) approach:

> The Carrier Project … encourages art learning through the sequencing of several explorative activities from which children can investigate particular visual statements or problems under the direction of the teacher. All visual investigations lead toward a designed product or visual cultural experience. For example a … year six class may study the local architecture producing collection of observed drawings from an excursion [demonstrating Barkan's art history links through social and cultural learning at excursion] and refine their drawings using recall and imagination skills to form a class drawing which becomes the plan for a mural which can be constructed using ceramics, acrylic paint, collage or mixed media [the overall process echoing Eisner's ties between art concept and arts practice in the Kettering Project design] (Lummis, 1986, p. 65).

Despite the high percentage of art making in primary schools (77.3%), more investigation is required to determine the nature of these experiences: for example, the breadth of media and materials (including clay, found objects like toys and twigs, paint, pastels, textiles, wood) being used in art making. Working with some media requires specialist knowledge: for example, knowledge of cutting lino-blocks or foam to do printmaking so students don't cut themselves, and using printing ink (as opposed to paint) due to ink's viscosity, which helps to keep the lines clean on the print. Given the introduction of ACARA's cross-curriculum priorities in teachers' planning and instruction, another level of specialist knowledge is required to explore the deeper

meaning in the arts practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and Asian cultures. Knowledge of art history and how these cultures have shaped global arts practices is important if teachers are to facilitate deep learning about visual arts, and also to guide students' art making: for example, there are symbols that can and cannot be produced outside certain cultures, and cultural sensitivities that must be observed in art making. Subsequently, further investigation about the nature of art making and how teachers are incorporating the cross-curriculum priorities in Visual Arts would give a more holistic background of students' primary Visual Arts learning and how it impacts on their Year 11 engagement.

In investigating teachers' reflections on teaching The Arts in primary school, Alter et al. (2009) found that gender differences played a role in the delivery of Arts experiences. Teachers discussed how boys and girls responded differently to different art disciplines: for example, boys prefer painting and girls prefer craft, like weaving with wool (Alter et al., 2009). They also found that teachers limited Arts experiences in disciplines that one gender did not like: for example, if boys did not want to do dance, the teacher did not facilitate dance experiences (Alter et al., 2009). Similar research in Visual Arts had also shown teachers have preferences as to the types of Arts experiences they feel confident to teach, and limit disciplines in which they lack self-efficacy (Garvis, 2008; Lummis, Morris, & Paolino, 2014; Morris & Lummis, 2014). Given the high percentage of female primary art specialists (70.7%) who facilitated almost 60% of students' experiences, and the high percentage of female primary teachers generally (Mills, Martino, & Lingard, 2007), there may a tendency to facilitate more feminised Visual Art experiences and aesthetics in primary school; however, this is an area that needs further investigation as the issue of boys as the *new disadvantaged* is an ongoing debate in Australia (Hodgetts & Lecouteur, 2010; Keddie, 2010; Mills et al., 2007).

The low percentage of primary teachers, regardless of gender or specialist/generalist positions, engaging students in art responding activities was of concern. Students reported having verbal discussions about artworks, but these discussions were likely centred on students' own artworks, as only a quarter (25.8%) of students in the sample had attended the State art gallery, AGWA. The low percentage of students attending art galleries is of concern because it means these students may not be exposed to authentic artworks in person and may instead rely on reproductions of artworks for in-class

discussion. Reproductions of images are problematic, as students cannot see the surface quality of the artwork (Unrath & Luehrman, 2009): for example, different brushstrokes on a canvas or different materials in an installation. Furthermore, they cannot engage with artworks in the round, as a photograph is two-dimensional; therefore, they may miss important aspects of an artwork, such as other sides of a three-dimensional sculpture, or they may miss experiencing artworks through time, as time is often used in installation artworks such as video and sound projections in a space.

One example of the difference between reproductions and experiencing installed artworks is Perth's Sculpture by the Sea exhibition at Cottesloe. Artists install artworks along the beach and surrounding areas, and by visiting the exhibition students engage all their senses: for example, in 2014 Portuguese artists Carole Purnelle and Nuno Maya exhibited *Plastic World*, a three-dimensional globe made from recycled plastics (Sculpture by the Sea, 2014). The installation of the globe on the beach meant viewers could see and smell the ocean behind the sculpture, identifying links between recycling and the environment (demonstrating ACARA's cross-curriculum priority of Sustainability) and walk around the globe to see the detail of the land masses and identify the recycled products used to construct the work. These experiences cannot be replicated in a two-dimensional reproduction.

In their 1960s Art Education projects, Barkan and Eisner both included aspects of responding and engaging with art through the inclusion of history and activities that helped students to understand the meaning of artworks (Eisner, 1990; Kern, 1984). To echo Discipline Based Art Education theories, as visual artworks record historical events and cultural practices over time (e.g., Court paintings of significant past events and portraits of influential people as seen in the Archibald prize exhibitions) students who do not engage with a breadth of art disciplines and styles may limit their understandings about how the visual arts have changed over time and within different contexts (Bullot, 2013; Eisner, 1990; Greer, 1993; Lai, 2012). For example, recent portraits draw on (and challenge) conventions about composition and who can be painted (historically, only upper class, wealthy aristocrats), and students who do not view a wide range of portraits may not identify similarities (conventions) of this type of painting. Exploring portrait paintings within different cultures and comparing historical

to contemporary artworks will assist students to make informed choices in their own arts practice.

Engaging with artworks gives students knowledge about their life-world, but also enhances their own art making, as they appropriate different styles and explore new ideas about their society and perceptions of others cultures and societies (Freedman, 2010; Speck, 1999). In the current VACoS taught in WA, students engaging in their life-world actively seek new images and take note of images they see everyday to inspire their arts practice. Students who are inspired by what they see (engaging their novelty) critique their own work (and that of other artists) through post-structuralist theories: for example, theories about class, gender and power, as these theories are contemporary responses to the collective life-world post-modernity. Thinking about images through post-structuralist lenses allows students to critique society and to gain a greater awareness of their life-world, both generally and through visual arts.

Section C: Middle School (Years 7-10)

Section C of the VARSEI backgrounded Year 11 students' middle school Visual Arts experiences. Responding in Visual Arts increased from primary school, with most middle school students experiencing more balance between making and responding to visual arts. As responding learning increased, 55.8% of students attended gallery exhibitions, with all the interviewed students stating these excursions were to AGWA. Despite nearly 60% of the students attending AGWA, the gallery has specialised education staff to support all WA students and schools in attending exhibitions. AGWA education staff design tours and interactive workshops for students all at stages of schooling (K-12) and offer professional learning for teachers (Art Gallery of Western Australia, 2015). These education services can be specifically tailored by AGWA educators to meet curriculum requirements (such as facilitating cross-curriculum priority learning or making cross-curricular links), students' art making abilities and interests (Art Gallery of Western Australia, 2015).

The ongoing funding for AGWA's education support demonstrates the cultural expectation for WA students (both primary and secondary) to attend the art gallery as part of their school education. As approximately 60% of the Year 11 students had attended art exhibitions with school, 40% of the WA Year 11 students in this sample

still had not attended a learning experience at AGWA, despite the additional education support facilitated by the gallery. These students could be disadvantaged as they complete Years 11 and 12, as the expectations for responding to a range of local and international artists increases, and many artworks that students could use to build their breadth of knowledge about art are exhibited at AGWA. The support of experienced Visual Arts educators at the State gallery (often for no charge) should make it possible for every student to attend exhibitions. Supporting this experience through K-12 schooling may increase students' motivation to attend the gallery externally to school, as they become familiar with the location and experience of attending art exhibitions.

The Year 11 students indicated the Australian art movements they discussed during middle school. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander art was the most commonly studied (25.8%). There are a number of reasons why Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander art may be studied in middle school, including: the national initiative and media attention on *Closing the Gap*, the link to *Valuing Australian Arts* in the curriculum (WACF and VACoS), the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories cross-curriculum priority of ACARA, and individual principals' or teachers' values. The 2013 *Closing the Gap* Report noted $1.5 billion of National Partnerships funding for the next seven years to support, "tailored learning opportunities for students … and external partnerships with parents, schools, business and local communities" (Australian Government, 2013b, p. 59). Tailored learning opportunities include integrating the cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories into classroom learning: for example, through actively teaching these cultures in Visual Arts responding tasks. Furthermore, AGWA's education program outlines how the gallery can partner with schools to facilitate learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through the WA art collection (Art Gallery of Western Australia, 2015).

The WA curriculum (WACF and VACoS) also includes learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander through the aspect of *Valuing Australian Arts*. This aspect was part of one responding outcome (Arts in Society) in the WACF, and these outcomes remained the same for the senior school Course of Study (VACoS), despite the overall language of the VACoS shifting away from outcomes-based education. Valuing Australian arts includes the study of local culture, both past and present, and how

Australia's social, cultural and historical contexts have impacted on art making (Curriculum Council, 2008). Therefore, it is highly likely that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures would be discussed in teaching about the history of Australian art practice, as these art practices are some of the oldest modern art practices in our country and the world (Brumm & Moore, 2005; Honour & Fleming, 2009). The strong connection between culture, ritual and visual arts is also evident in Aboriginal art, in which caves were modified through carving to create suitable spaces for rituals to occur (Delannoy et al., 2013) and these caves were often transformed through paintings of figures engaging in daily life, such as hunting or dancing (Brumm & Moore, 2005). Subsequently, the interrelated nature of visual arts and Aboriginal culture make Aboriginal art highly transferrable to WA curriculum outcomes.

Lastly, teachers' values may also impact on their inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in middle school Visual Arts. Barbara discussed how, "*when they brought in Western Australian art ... in the old curriculum... I was quite enthusiastic about that, and I embraced that*." Focussing on local art gave Barbara the opportunity to include more Aboriginal art in her classroom teaching. It is also likely that schools involved in *Closing the Gap* research and National Partnership funding may also have staff who have an increased value and focus on including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Visual Arts due to their involvement in the *Closing the Gap* initiative.

The breadth of study on international art practices was also investigated in Section C. Western European visual arts dominated students' middle school study (17.81%). European art practices were much more commonly studied than local Asia-Pacific visual arts, whose highest percentage was 5.67% for the Oceania region of New Guinea, the Pacific Islands and New Zealand (China and Korea, Japan, South Asia and Southeast Asia had even lower percentages). These findings show the privilege of the Western canon of arts in WA schools. The prevalence of European art in schools is most likely due to the historical influence of France and Italy on the education of artists through academies and apprenticeships (Kleiner, 2009). Paris, in particular, historically influenced the distinction of *good* art through the practice of The Salon de Paris, in which the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris choose the best artworks to exhibit (Honour & Fleming, 2009). While the tradition of Salon predates modernism (i.e., pre-

1900), the cultural association of visual arts and Paris is still widely recognised today: for example, through the cultural heritage in Paris' many art galleries like the Musée du Louvre, Centre Pompidou, Musée d'Orsay and Palais de Tokyo visited by tourists each year (Mickov & Doyle, 2013).

In addition to European art, Year 11 Visual Arts students also commonly studied North and Central American art in middle school. The USA lead the modernist period of visual arts, and these modernist movements included those preferred by the Visual Arts teachers interviewed, including: Impressionism (Franz) and Surrealism (Grace and Rachel), while Henri and Imogen stated all modernist movements are interesting, although Henri also enjoyed the work of post-modern artist, Joseph Beuys. Therefore, teachers' personal interests and the prevalence of American art during the modernist period (from mid-1800s to 1970s) could be reasons for a focus on American art during middle school. The close political alliance with the USA could also increase the prominence of American art in WA classrooms, as students build understandings about American culture through visual arts that can be used in empathising and engaging with America, either through interpersonal connections (e.g., talking to American citizens or visiting American cities) or through engaging with American culture (e.g., through American television programs and product brands).

While there are valid reasons for including European and American art in WA Visual Arts learning, including Western practices at the exclusion (or limitation) of Asia-Pacific visual arts is problematic. Given the increased focus on Australia's position in the Asia-Pacific and increased efforts to build partnerships with Indonesia and China (He & Sappideen, 2013), WA students require an understanding of the cultural practices of countries within our region. ACARA has already identified Australia's engagement with Asia as another cross-curriculum priority (ACARA, n.d.). As a result of China's emergence as the second largest economy (He & Sappideen, 2013), Australian students may have a better understanding of Chinese culture and custom through studying Chinese visual arts: for example, Ai Weiwei's contemporary art practice critiques China's society, including his investigation to publish names of those killed in a Sichuan earthquake through creating memorial videos because of the government's failure to announce those who had died (Weiwei, 2014). Viewing Ai Weiwei's works may give students a deeper awareness of contemporary Chinese society, their values

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and culture. As Australia's relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific grows, it may be increasingly important for students to be aware of these countries' cultures so they may conduct business and understand the traditions underpinning modern Asian societies.

Finally, in Section C of the VARSEI students responded to both the aspects of visual analysis and roles of visual arts discussed in their middle schooling. Less than two thirds of students felt they were taught how to critique visual artworks through describing the subject matter, discussing parts of the image (e.g., use of colour or scale of figure to landscape), identifying external influences that may have impacted the work (i.e., social, cultural and/or historical context) and making a judgement about the artwork's success (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004b). This analysis process is the foundation of all responding tasks, and therefore, it is imperative that students are familiar and confident with analysing artworks prior to entry into Year 11 and 12 Visual Arts courses. Feldman's and other frameworks (Appendix M) have been created and modified to ensure students are scaffolded through the analysis process. Feldman's framework uses language appropriate for middle school classes, for example:

1. Description: What can you see? What is happening? Who is in the work?
2. Analysis: How have the elements (e.g., line, colour and shape) and principles (e.g., unity, balance, repetition) been used to produce the artwork? How do they relate to each other?
3. Interpretation: What is the artist saying? Why was the artwork made? What impact does it have on you?
4. Judgement: Do you like the artwork? Why/why not? How would you do it differently?

With the use of frameworks and questioning, students should be able to begin some visual analyses earlier than Year 11. In order to give students adequate practice to complete visual analysis under examination conditions, as it accounts for 60% of the written examination mark, students need to understand how to produce a visual analysis during their middle schooling. Subsequently, Year 11 and 12 Visual Arts teachers could focus on increasing students' sophistication of writing and depth of analysis during the senior years, knowing that students had a basic understanding of content (the four aspects listed above in the Feldman framework) and structure (the order of these

aspects). In exploring the purpose or role of visual arts (which is linked to students' interpretation), the Year 11 sample indicated they mostly explored visual arts' role in entertaining and reflecting on society. These concepts include social commentary, such as recording the scientific Enlightenment of the 18th century or critiquing social practice as William Hogarth did in his satirical Marriage à-la-Mode engravings, which showed the downfall of arranged marriages for the upper class citizens who married strategically to support their lavish lifestyles and social ranking.

The least studied role of visual arts was to sell artworks; therefore, students may not be aware of art's use as a commodity and the economic value of visual arts to modern society. The production of visual arts is dependent on the availability of media and materials, the commission and value of artworks through established and emerging audiences and markets, and the organisation of a visual arts market through auction, exhibition, dealerships and institutions (Harris, 2011). Relationships between countries impact on the cultural exchange of visual artworks: for example, Tiampo (2011) writes about how Japanese Gutai artists exhibiting Abstract Expressionist artworks in New York in 1958 were called derivative and were criticised for having a style that was too westernised (as the leader of Abstract Expressionism was American artist, Jackson Pollock). The criticism of Japanese artists in this post World War II period emphasises the cultural distinction between East and West, and how the marginalisation of the East was extended through the visual arts market (Tiampo, 2011). The marginalisation continued despite the West appropriating from Japanese print styles in Fauvism and Synthetism in the last 17th and early 18th centuries, prior to World War II (Tiampo, 2011). M. Bull (2011) notes how there are two markets for visual arts, economic and esteem. The economic market considers the price of the artist's works through sales at auction and through exhibitions, while the esteem market considers who has collected the artist's work, any prizes awarded to the artist and institution investment (in lending space and interest) to the artist's work (M. Bull, 2011).

These two markets also impact an artist's success, and cultural transfer through artists/countries who are privileged compared to those who fare lower on the two markets. Subsequently, exploring the economic value and obstacles to producing visual artworks are important to study as it relates to students' interpretations (e.g., they may question why AGWA partnered with the Museum of Modern Art in New York rather

than a gallery from a different country). Additionally, economic considerations have added importance for students who wish to undertake tertiary study in visual arts.

Section D: Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts Engagement

Findings about students' engagement in Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts were collected in Section D of the VARSEI. The data collected through Sections A-C of the instrument were used to contextualise the findings about Year 11 engagement. The second research question linked most closely to this section of the instrument, from which students' cognitive and psychological engagement was measured. This section of the VARSEI also determined if students' appeared (based on an initial aesthetic reaction to a specific image) to engage with artworks linked to ACARA's cross-curriculum priorities (ACARA, n.d.) through the presentation of images, which the students ranked from their most to least favourite (Appendix A).

Cognitive engagement was the first construct to be measured within Section D. The Year 11 students were cognitively engaged, with the overall summed scale trending towards an *agree* response category ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 0.76$). The findings showed the factor that most increased students' engagement was autonomy, followed by intrinsic motivation and metacognition. Students felt they were responsible for their own learning, demonstrating the ownership required to be an autonomous learner (Reeve et al., 2004; Winchmann, 2011). The sense of ownership could be linked to either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation (Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Soenens, & Matos, 2005). Extrinsic motivation could be academic pressure, including examination emphasis in senior schooling; whereas, intrinsic motivation would be linked to the concepts in the motivations subscale, including a sense of relatedness and self-development (Mandigo et al., 2008; Reeve et al., 2004; Vansteenkiste et al., 2005): for example, relatedness was linked to the item, *Studying Visual Arts responding will help me in the future*. However, autonomy is also affected at a higher level, through the amount of self-regulation given to us in society (Winchmann, 2011): for example, freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to take part in public affairs and elections (Australian Government: Attorney-General's Department, 2014). Given the democratic values instilled in students, there capacity to be autonomous learners may be greater than cultures that restrict individual's free will (Winchmann, 2011); therefore, the Australian life-world may contributed to students' feelings of responsibility for their learning. The Australian

or Western life-world is different compared to Confucian life-worlds: for example, in Asia many students experience a hierarchal life-world in which they must obey authority figures in parents and teachers (Ryan & Deci, 2006; Winchmann, 2011).

While students felt responsible for their overall learning, they did not feel they had control over individual decisions made to complete Visual Arts responding tasks: for example, choosing which artworks they wanted to analyse as part of their learning. Adrian noted that his active disengagement in responding to other artists' works made him a more original artist; however, it is likely that Adrian was influenced by images in popular culture (he liked comics), but did not acknowledge the influence of external sources within his own art making. Isabel spoke about responding tasks specifically, suggesting that students would always select artworks they perceived to be easier to analyse and, "*dodge the ones we're weak at*." She thought that if given the choice, students would prefer a higher grade that could be achieved through less effort, as opposed to the risk of selecting a more challenging artwork where meanings and interpretations may not be as easy to discern, but which would provide more intellectual challenge. Isabel's response may be motivated by the link between intrinsic goals and autonomy, in which students who set the goal of achieving high academic grades will act in ways that will best facilitate their goal (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005; Winchmann, 2011). However, Moller et al. (2006) assert that goals motivated by a sense of obligation or requirement, show controlled regulation as opposed to autonomous regulation. In self-determination theory, autonomous regulation is a result of choosing to sustain engagement with an area of interest (Moller et al., 2006). Therefore, students' motivation and interest in Visual Arts responding was also a factor of their cognitive engagement.

The Year 11 students were intrinsically motivated to engage in Visual Arts responding. Elizabeth linked responding to making art, as she felt her art making had improved based on analysing a breadth of artworks. Elizabeth reflected:

> *I wanted to paint or draw an accurate representation [two years ago] … now it's more like, how can I just capture the light or just use tone … [I use the] elements [and principles of art] to create the image.*

Part of becoming a visually literate individual is recoding understandings about visual arts into art making (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004b); that is, once a student understands how composition is created using elements like line to establish repetition and unity (principles of art) they can more effectively manipulate these elements and principles in their own artworks. Elizabeth clearly understood how responding to a breadth of artworks helped her to have more control over her arts practice, to manipulate her art making and better express her ideas.

Understanding the manipulation of imagery also assists students in becoming more active global citizens, as they understand how hegemony of class, gender, ideology and power are represented through the visual arts (Duncum, 2010): for example, a student viewing William Kentridge's *Refusal of Time* video installation may more acutely connect the representation of an African procession moving across the screens, contrasted with the European furniture painted into the background of the installation to Kentridge's South African heritage (Tone & Kentridge, 2013). The connection between an artist's context and artworks is particularly evident in Kentridge's work, which is:

> [Embedded] with coded references to the social history of South Africa. Kentridge has stated, 'I have never tried to make illustrations of apartheid, but the drawings and films are certainly spawned by and feed off the brutalized society left in its wake' (pp. 10-11).

Through motivation and interest to engage with artworks, students gain a deeper understanding of society and their life-world (Duncum, 2010; Habermas, 1988, 1999). They may also more deeply understand the life-worlds of other artists, such as the South African depictions shared by Kentridge.

Despite the positive scores for intrinsic motivation, the subscale had a broad range of scores, reporting the highest summed standard deviation compared to autonomy and metacognition. The interviewed students provided some explanation, suggesting that their interest was quelled by the perception that they could not earn a living from their creative endeavours. While some students were interested in pursuing creative careers (Helene and Elizabeth), they did not want to commit to a career that was only in the arts. Adrian stated that he would only pursue visual arts as a second job, because *you can't live on an artist's wage*. The cultural reproduction of humanities subjects,

including Visual Arts being less academic than Mathematics and Science based subjects, was very prevalent among students; possibly due to the tradition of these subjects being offered at university, while visual arts were taught through an apprenticeship model (McGaw, 1984; Morris & Lummis, 2015; Tully, 2002).

Metacognition was the last subscale within cognitive engagement. If students were intrinsically motivated, metacognition would show how they approached the study of responding in Visual Arts. Metacognition can be divided into three types of metacognitive knowledge: self-knowledge, task knowledge and strategic knowledge. The Year 11 students reported high self-knowledge in the VARSEI; that is, they felt they knew their strengths and weaknesses when asked about explaining the meaning of artworks (Proust, 2010; Tarricone, 2011). In comparison to self-knowledge, the students had a mixed response to task knowledge. They were able to identify what knowledge was required to complete a responding task (Tarricone, 2011): for example, they could follow a visual analysis framework of description, analysis, interpretation and judgement, and know what information is required in each part of the analysis. However, students were less sure about how to understand the meaning of an artwork, which is the aim of completing a visual analysis. Knowing how to understand the meaning of an artwork is linked to knowledge about formalistic analysis (knowing elements and principles) and context knowledge (awareness of social, cultural and historical influences). The interviewed students indicated that they understood the framework for completing visual analyses, but they did not have a knowledge base from which to complete the task itself. Adrian stated that, in terms of content knowledge required in visual analysis, he knew, "*nothing, pretty much! But I can just look … [anything] up if I want to know it*." Helene discussed how her examination grades were impacted by her limited context knowledge, because students' cannot research contextual information during the examination.

Strategic metacognitive knowledge, or knowing *how* to complete the task (Karlen, Merki, & Ramseier, 2014), was also investigated. Strategic knowledge included how to find information to complete visual analyses, which was important for Helene and other students who did not know the context information required to complete their analysis tasks. Overall, the strategic knowledge of the Year 11 students was low (compared to other items in the subscale, see Appendix L). The interviewed students discussed how

searching for artworks to respond to was, "*distracting*" (Adrian). Many students acknowledged the immediacy and quantity of information on the Internet made researching visual artists and artworks overwhelming. Teachers also echoed the challenge of conducting online research: for example, Mona actively taught her students how to ensure their information was credible. With technology's prevalence in society and among adolescents (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010), learning how to safely and effectively navigate the Internet is highly important to facilitating students' critical thinking and human agency in their life-world (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson, 2001; Toews, 2009). Furthermore, researching more effectively on the Internet may improve research skills across other subjects, as some literacy skills have benefits across disciplines (Billman & Pearson, 2013; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007).

Psychological engagement was the second construct in Section D of the VARSEI. The two indicators of psychological engagement were self-efficacy and student-teacher relationships; however, the relationship scale was negatively loaded (Table 10, Chapter 5), indicating engagement was measured on the inverse response to the items. Like the cognitive scale, the overall summed mean of 4.93 ($SD = 0.83$) indicated that students had a fairly positive psychological engagement with Visual Arts responding, although the range of scores indicated more disparity across this construct (i.e., responses ranged between two and six on the six-point Likert scale).

Self-efficacy was the first factor affecting psychological engagement. The Year 11 students had high efficacy in active class participation: for example, in expressing their opinions about artworks with their peers. The interviewed students also commented on how it was beneficial to have honest discussions about artworks so they could extend their analysis skills by listening to peers' opinions about the meaning or construction of artworks: for example, Damien noted that peer discussion facilitated comparison as, "*every opinion on something is different, and so it's interesting to see what they think compared to what I think*." This finding is consistent with research on the benefit of peer influences in providing support and a caring environment in which academic learning is enhanced (Hattie, 2009). The typically small classes in this sample led to positive learning environments, in which students could talk freely without being stereotyped or marginalised – a negative impact of peer influence discussed by Hattie (2009). In considering the Visual Arts classroom, Cy acknowledged that having the

same students in his class for middle school and Year 11 was a privilege, as they had build a sense of trust and supported one another in contributing to conversations about visual arts and artworks. However, despite the positive nature of peer collaboration in the Visual Arts classrooms in the qualitative findings, students only slightly agreed that they felt a sense of belonging in the classroom from the quantitative data. It is possible that the lower mean scores on these items reflected the students' disagreement to the items regarding communicating about their own artwork. Students did not enjoy talking or writing about their own art, which may indicate low self-efficacy as artists. Efland and others (Efland, 1990a; Feen-Calligan, 2008; Gussak, 2004, 2009) have explored the role of visual arts practice in engaging deep subconscious, psychological and social beliefs. As adolescents, students begin to explore more personal narratives as they develop their self-identity and investigate human experience (K. B. Bull, Dulaney, North-Coleman, Kaplan, & Stover, 2013; Eisner, 2002) and the personal nature of themes explored in their art making may be a reason why they are less confident to share their art through writing and talking to peers and teachers. Their hesitation to share their own art with others may have impacted their sense of belonging and self-efficacy.

The students also slightly agreed that they were achieving to the best of their ability in Visual Arts responding. The interviewed students discussed how responding sometimes became competitive, particularly with assessment marks as these allowed the students to rank themselves in terms of performance against their peers: for example, Isabel noted that students, "*compare ourselves to each other … theory you have to focus [on]*." The competition for high academic achievement may have also decreased a sense of belonging in the class; however, Hattie (2009) suggests that competitive learning may have a positive effect on students' learning in comparison to individualistic learning methods. The positive effect of competition may lead to increased cognitive engagement, as competition gives students motivation to achieve a goal whether it be to perform better than past achievements or to perform better than peers (Hattie, 2009; Hinsz & Jundt, 2005). Despite the positive influence of competition on goal setting, Hinsz and Jundt (2005) caution that achievement of these goals must occur alongside students' need for mastery or an intrinsic motivation to complete the task: for example, if a student wants to improve their links between an artwork and the context in which it was created, they must also be motivated to learn about history in order to achieve their

goal. In this way, self-efficacy is closely linked to the cognitive engagement indicators. The positive means of the cognitive engagement scales and the lower scores on the belonging and achievement items in the self-efficacy subscale suggest that the level of competition may be trending towards a slightly negative impact for the Year 11 students in this sample.

In comparing themselves to their peers, the interviewed students discussed the benefit of subject pairings. Students who studied English Literature and/or Modern History noted how these subjects gave them an advantage over their peers. Elizabeth, who studied both Literature and Modern History, discussed how themes in the three classes (including Visual Arts) had been similar and she had an advantage of understanding the social, cultural and historical context more deeply than her peers who did not explore the same themes through a historical, literacy and arts lens simultaneously. While the interviewed students discussed their advantage for choosing subject pairs that complemented one another, the quantitative findings suggested students did not really like writing or history (both had mean scores corresponding with a slightly agree response); however, the demographic data suggested that Humanities and Social Science subjects (including History) were the most popular subjects selected after English, which is compulsory. While it is unknown how many students studied the complementary subject pairs, it is likely that studying these subjects had a positive effect on students' engagement in Visual Arts responding through increasing their contextual knowledge. The benefit of subject pairings on students' engagement and achievement in Visual Arts is an area for further research, despite existing research suggesting the benefits of interdisciplinary study between Visual Arts and language literacy (Buffington & Muth, 2011; Shaw, 2014).

The benefit of complementary subject pairings (e.g., English Literature and/or Modern History with Visual Arts) may also improve students' self-efficacy in *correctly* interpreting artworks. While it was not part of the VARSEI items, the interviewed students discussed the high-stakes nature of examinations and the fear of incorrectly interpreting artworks. This discussion was also linked to students' reliance on the Internet, as they could not research contextual information for visual analyses during examinations. Bridget summarised the concerns of students who knew their interpretation of their own art was correct (as they had conceptualised and made it), but

were not sure of what artists' had intended their work to mean. Some Visual Arts teachers also reflected on students' misunderstanding about interpretation: for example, students felt they had to agree with the artist's intention, as opposed to supporting their interpretation with evidence generated by deconstructing the artwork through the elements and principles and contextual information. Given the strong link between self-efficacy and achievement (Bandura, 2012; Hattie, 2009) improving interpretation skills through studying complementary subject pairs may give students increased self-efficacy to engage in Visual Arts responding tasks: for example, improving context knowledge by studying Nazi Germany in History may improve students' efficacy to discuss art that was privileged or marginalised during this period, such as the marginalisation degenerate art (which included art made by Jewish artists) that led to the mass exodus of Jewish artists and architects into American cities. By improving skills and knowledge mastery, students build self-efficacy and are more likely to sustain achievement in the discipline (Bandura, 2012; Garvis, 2008; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Hattie, 2009; Morris & Lummis, 2014).

The second factor affecting psychological engagement was the student-teacher relationship. The negative factor loadings on this sub-scale indicated that students had higher psychological engagement if they did not feel respected, did not like or did not feel encouraged by their teacher, or if they did not feel a sense of belonging in the Stage 2 Visual Arts class. These factor loadings were contrary to the body of research on student-teacher relationships and their impact in fostering cognitive engagement and student autonomy (Appleton et al., 2008; Fredricks et al., 2004; Furlong & Christenson, 2008; Gray & Hackling, 2009; Osterman, 2000; Yonezawa et al., 2009); which suggested that teachers respect and encouragement fostered a sense of autonomy in students who engaged with schoolwork as they felt they were active part of the learning community. Reflecting on the cognitive and psychological engagement findings of this study, reasons for the unexpected results could be in the requirements of Visual Arts responding tasks. The Year 11 students had low strategic metacognition and found it difficult to implement research and writing strategies that would allow them to complete the task. The students also discussed how they had lower self-efficacy in examinations, or any time when they could not research to confirm the *correctness* of their interpretations of artworks. Research has shown that teachers who are learner-centred, who are encouraging and respectful and wish to foster autonomy, generally have

classrooms in which students initiate and regulate learning experiences according to their needs (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2009). The Year 11 students' findings for metacognition and self-efficacy emphasised that they did not want to be regulating learning in Visual Arts responding. The interviewed students confirmed that they thought the teacher should dictate and heavily scaffold learning in Visual Arts responding, based on the students' perceptions of academic rigour required by responding tasks.

The interviewed students frequently used words such as *serious* and *academic* to describe the classroom environment during Visual Arts responding lessons. They reported that the time goes slower during responding lessons and they become, "*a bit like English lit*" (Adrian). The interviewed students were also aware of high-stakes examination, in which 50% of their overall Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) score for Visual Arts would come from a written examination (responding). As senior school students, many who hadn't experienced the same rigour in middle school Visual Arts responding, they did not feel prepared to complete examinations in Visual Arts responding. The written examination that assesses students' responding skills is made up of three parts: two visual analyses sections and extended essay section based on the students' case study artist (the artist who influenced their art making). Without the ability to research during the examination, students are expected to use their analysis skills to interpret artworks and write responses that incorporate contextual understandings, formalistic (elements and principles of art and design) analysis and personal judgements about visual artworks (Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2013, 2014). The high-stakes examinations that are a key part of Visual Arts responding may be the primary reason for students not responding to a collegial and nurturing teacher. It is possible that students, anticipating the rigour of responding, prefer their teacher to challenge them in a way that they feel prepares them for examination and scaffolds them while they build self-efficacy. The highest mean of the student-teacher relationship subscale was 5.04, for the item *my teacher encourages me to achieve to the best of my ability in theory tasks*. This demonstrates that students were agreeing with item; however, the encouragement could be in the form of constructive feedback, which was discussed by the Visual Arts teachers as a way of pushing the students to improve in their responding assessments. Perhaps students feel they require learning support from the teacher rather than having a

teacher who encourages their autonomy too early into Year 11, as the students were approximately six months into their course when they participated in the research. The interviewed students perceived their teachers as being more knowledgeable others, which corresponds with their desire to be heavily scaffolded by the teacher at this stage of their Visual Arts study.

The final part of Section D asked the Year 11 students to rank 12 images (Appendix A): three images linked thematically to each of the cross-curriculum priorities (ACARA, n.d.) and three images that were more *traditional* works that were modern or pre-modern (Baroque, Constructivist and Romanticist). The images were unseen before the students completed the VARSEI, and therefore, the results gathered students' initial aesthetic responses to the images. The researcher acknowledges that as reproductions were used for availability, the response may not be as powerful as if the students were exposed to the authentic artworks (Unrath & Luehrman, 2009); however, this was not logistically possible for the research. As the overall ranking relies on the 137 Year 11 students' perceptions, it is also unreliable to generalise about students' engagement with the cross-curriculum priorities from the rank; however, the rank shows the perceptions unique to this sample of students. An aesthetic ranking is valuable as it considers students' initial affective responses to artworks, which also stir cognitive elements like interest, motivation and social understandings through metacognitive processes (Efland, 2004; Lummis, 2001; Seeley, 2006); therefore, aesthetics are an impetus for engaging in Visual Arts.

The highest three rankings were an Asian artwork, a traditional Constructivist artwork, and an Aboriginal artwork. The next three artworks (completing half of the list) were linked to Sustainability, traditional Baroque, and a second Sustainability artwork. The breadth of artworks in the upper half of the ranked list corresponds to students' motivation to learn about a breadth of artworks. The mean scores for each artwork were relatively close (between 18.07 and 20.10), indicating that students did not really prefer one style of artwork to the others. However, the inclusion of two traditional artworks and two Sustainability artworks could suggest students' interest in these areas. The image of Alexander Calder's (1955) Constructivist work, *Glass Fish,* may have also inspired a response linked to Sustainability as the fish could be linked to marine life and conservation themes.

The lower half of the ranked artworks included two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks. While one artwork linked to this priority was ranked highly (*Women's Ceremony* (Sims, n.d.)) the remaining artworks were ranked seventh and last (12th). Norma MacDonald's (n.d.) *History Lesson* was a painting of adolescents with their backs turned to the viewer, standing on podiums labelled with years between 1905 and 1967, the year that a referendum supported the removal of discrimination against Aboriginal people in the Australian Constitution (Australian Government: National Archives of Australia, 2015). The word *shame* is painted in large yellow letters across the bodies of the adolescents. Given students' disclosures about limited historical knowledge and their age range, it is possible they did not identity the historical significance of the painting. The students may have also ranked the artwork low if they felt disconnected from the artwork, as no students in the sample identified themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

More contemporary works were generally ranked lower than artworks that had more traditional subject matter: for example, the Kozyndan (2010) acrylic painting referencing contemporary popular culture symbol Hello Kitty was ranked eleventh overall, whereas the Andô/Utagawa Hiroshige (ca. 1835) woodblock print depicting a river and cherry blossom trees was ranked seventh. The students' interest in traditional technologies was also apparent in the high rankings for traditional modernist and pre-modern artworks, with two of the three traditional images being ranked in the upper half of the image list. The only traditional artwork ranked in the lower half was Turner's (1844) Romanticist oil painting, *Rain, Steam and Speed*, which is a highly impressionistic painting of a train speeding towards the viewer through a desolate, misty landscape. The focus on European artworks, including English visual arts, in middle school could have affected students' response to this image as they may have studied Romanticism already and be familiar, and therefore less interested by, this artwork. Damien and Cy also stated Romanticism as one of their favourite art movements due to previous school study, indicating that some of the students were familiar with Romantic artworks.

The lower ranking of contemporary artworks could be detrimental to students, given the emphasis on contemporary visual arts in the VACoS and in the Australian Curriculum:

The Arts, in which students are asked to consider the role of visual arts in their globalised life-world (ACARA, 2014a; Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a). The WACE examinations in Visual Arts also emphasise students' analysis of contemporary artworks (e.g., in the 2013 WACE examination the majority of artworks were created in the past five years (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2013)); subsequently, the study of contemporary works may have implications for students' academic achievement in examinations and entrance to university at the completion of Year 12. Therefore, it is imperative that students are motivated to learn about a breadth of artworks, from premodern traditional works to contemporary visual arts.

Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of Visual Arts Responding

The third research question had two parts: firstly, it asked the extent that teachers valued responding in the Visual Arts course and the approaches they were using to teach responding tasks; secondly, it asked whether teachers' perceptions of responding were supported by Heads of The Arts and Principals. These groups represented the administrative perceptions of Visual Arts and Visual Arts responding in the wider whole-school community. The Visual Arts teachers' perceptions will be discussed first, followed by the combined perspective of Heads of The Arts and Principals.

Visual Arts Teachers

The 11 Visual Arts teachers all maintained their own studio practice, whether as an exhibiting artist or hobby artist. Their interest in studio disciplines was varied, with teachers working in both two and three dimension; however, the majority of teachers had interests in 18th and 19th century modernist art movements. Their interest in modernism, a highly Westernised period of visual arts (Bru, Nicholls, & Baetens, 2009; Summers, 2003), is likely a reflection of their own secondary school education. The average age of the Visual Arts teachers ranged between 41 and 50 years old; therefore, the teachers completed their secondary education during 1980s, during the postmodern period of early globalisation in visual arts (Honour & Fleming, 2009). Australian Visual Arts education during this period was undergoing significant change, as Visual Arts was made a Tertiary Entrance Examination (TEE) subject that counted towards students' university admission (McGaw, 1984; Morris & Lummis, 2015; Tully, 2002). In achieving the academic rigour required for a university entrance subject, Visual Arts

had additional art criticism and art history components, in which students demonstrated their research and literacy skills within the visual arts discipline (Boughton, 1989). Some of the Visual Arts teachers discussed memorising the set list of artworks that were used in the TEE, as students were often given small black and white reproductions to work from in the examination; subsequently, they had to commit the detail and colours of artworks to memory prior to the examination. As a result of their own secondary education, five Visual Arts teachers felt they had broad art history knowledge in comparison to their contemporary students.

While the teachers used a range of strategies, the most popular routine in Visual Arts responding lessons was for the teacher to present a PowerPoint slideshow with a lecture, followed by a constructivist task to consolidate the lesson content (seven teachers). Ana stated that the teacher was central to creating students' interest in Visual Arts responding, and in modelling good responses to responding tasks. Through teacher-centred lectures she could model a visual analysis using appropriate arts terminology (e.g., elements and principles of art and design) and build up students' historical knowledge, which four of the teachers perceived as significantly limited. The lectures given by Visual Arts teachers were generally centred on presenting a case study artist through: a discussion of their life and artistic influences, visual analyses of some artworks, and links to broader theories (i.e., post-structural readings about gender, power and similar themes). Constructivist activities were frequently used, as teachers believed students were social learners who learn best when constructing their own knowledge from active collaboration with peers (Hattie, 2009; Krause, Bochner, & Duchesne, 2003; Vygotsky, 2011). While the first half of a typical responding lesson was teacher-centred, the second half was learner-centred and the Year 11 students would often work in pairs or groups to complete a visual analysis task together.

Imms and Ruanglertbutr (2012) found that teachers who identify as artists generally wanted to foster greater student autonomy and peer collaboration in Visual Arts. These traits were also reflected in this research sample, with all of the Visual Arts teachers maintaining some visual arts practice (either exhibiting or hobby) and emphasising the importance of student autonomy developed through constructivist tasks within the lesson. The purpose of having two parts in the typical responding lesson was linked to both intrinsic motivation and students' self-efficacy. Grace, who wanted her passion to

inspire her students, discussed how her lectures were intended to spark motivation within the students. All the teachers who gave lectures discussed incorporating tragic or comic narratives and powerful imagery to *hook* students into the artists' lives and works. The constructivist approaches to completing visual analyses allowed students to hear multiple opinions about artworks (the benefit of this was confirmed by the students) in an attempt to diminish students' fear of *incorrectly* interpreting artworks. Through active discussion students were able to reflect on visual arts from various viewpoints and have some consensus to confirm their reading of the artwork being discussed, usually linked to the case study artist presented in the lecture.

While the seven Visual Arts teachers used lectures and constructivist consolidation activities, seven teachers also discussed creativity as important when teaching responding. Some teachers who discussed creativity also followed the lecture model: for example, Ana was quite dramatic in beginning teacher-centred class discussions:

> *Sometimes I go in and say, 'This painting …' and I find a beloved Impressionist painting or something they may have seen … 'oh, this is a piece of rubbish! Why would you bother?' I really lay it on, and then they pick at me. And sometimes that works [to get them to think about the argumentative nature of analysing art] … sometimes it doesn't [because they assume I'm right].*

However, while Ana was more active in classroom discussion, other teachers used creative strategies to move further towards student-centred learning. Franz was also dramatic and often used role-plays, for which his students would conduct some research before he gave out scenarios for them to role-play in front of the small Visual Arts class. Through role-play, the students constructed an understanding of social, cultural and historical contexts through interpreting their research into dialogue. Franz, as an audience member or an active participant, was still able to correct any misconceptions about historical facts if required. Drama was one strategy Franz used to build students' intrinsic motivation, although it also fostered student autonomy, as they were responsible for constructing and sharing historical knowledge with the rest of the class.

Frida, the student interviewed from Franz's class, reported the high level of interest in responding because, "*he [Franz] makes it fun*." The interviewed students in Visual Arts classes that followed the lecture/consolidation model had less motivation in responding:

for example, Mario said, "*we're all quiet and checking the time … it seems more of the academic perspective*." As students' intrinsic motivation is based on being personally interested in the area of study, it is important that responding is not only seen means to an examination end, but is something fun and linked to students' lives and arts practices. However, Hattie (2009) found that teachers who were *activators* that encouraged and challenged their students through authentic guided instruction learning had a much higher effect size than teachers who were *facilitators,* those who had more unguided or discovery based learning. Therefore, it is cautionary to focus on a *fun* student-centred approach if this is not supported by strategies linked to teacher *activators,* such as: reciprocal teaching, feedback, direct instruction, challenging goals and mastery learning (Hattie, 2009).

As part of encouraging mastery learning, eight Visual Arts teachers discussed the concept of scaffolding. Scaffolding is linked to Vygotsky's *zone of proximal development*, in which students have an actual level of development (what the students can achieve on his/her own) that is extended through social learning with a more knowledgeable other (i.e., a teacher or peer whose actual level of development is higher than the initial student) (Vygotsky, 2011). Mona scaffolded her students by selecting artists for them to study in Visual Arts responding, as opposed to letting the students search Google for an artist with the appropriate amount of published biographical information required to complete an in-depth case study assessment. Barbara created visual arts terminology sheets for her students to refer to when writing their visual analyses. Henri's students had access to a shared computer drive for Visual Arts, which they could access from home, on which Henri uploaded formative feedback, good exemplars of tasks and additional contextual information. However, Henri also underscored the risk of, "*doing all the work for them.*"

The intention of teachers' scaffolding was to encourage autonomy and increased metacognitive thinking. As the VACoS has a contemporary focus on visual arts in a global culture (Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014), teachers wanted to provide students with links between contemporary visual arts and students' own lives, so that students could then use their lived experience in responding. Supporting students' learning about contemporary visual arts was important as some students found more conceptual artworks challenging: for example, Damien

said that non-representational artworks were much harder to analyse than modernist works. Scaffolding through visual arts terminology linked to students' metacognitive thinking, as Barbara tried to assist students' development of task knowledge and responding expectations. Mona's decision to choose case study artists scaffolded students' strategic metacognitive knowledge, as she demonstrated the amount of biographical information required for a case study and how she had found the artists chosen for the class. She also explicitly taught research skills so students could build strategic knowledge to effectively navigate the Internet when completing Visual Arts responding tasks. Lastly, the scaffolding of students' learning established a clear relationship between teacher and student, with teacher as, "master and mentor" (Graham & Zwirn, 2010, p. 223). This theory could be linked to the notion of teacher as artist, as teachers who identify as artists being more likely to support their students in increasing deep thinking about global issues (Imms & Ruanglertbutr, 2012): for example, scaffolding for conceptual art analysis.

Although teachers scaffolded learning, assessments and curriculum structure were key challenges for Visual Arts teachers. VACoS has significantly less structure when compared to TEE Visual Arts, in which students had a prescribed list of artworks to memorise and specific social, cultural and historical knowledge outlined (Monk, 1997; Morris & Lummis, 2015). In VACoS, Year 11 and 12 students have to complete one artist case study per semester (Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014); therefore, they can enter their WACE Visual Arts examination with knowledge of four (or six, if they study a modified course in Year 10) individual artists and their contexts. Visual Arts teachers found this structure confronting, as the VACoS assessments have depth (particularly a case study), while the teachers felt they should also provide a breadth of art history in Visual Arts (which was the basis of the TEE model under which they had been educated). The conflict between breadth and depth had implications for assessments, with four Visual Arts teachers giving students additional assessments to those listed in the curriculum. These additional assessments, often short answer tests or oral presentations, were intended to broaden students' general knowledge of visual arts history so they were ready for examinations: for example, in 2013, the WACE Visual Arts examination contained source images of artworks made between 1947 and 2012 (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2013), so general knowledge of significant world events and

ideologies from the last 50-60 years would be advantageous to students during Section Two of the examination, which focuses on interpreting the meaning and purpose of artworks (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2013).

While the use of additional assessments were intended to better prepare Year 11 students for their Visual Arts examinations (including WACE), the students still reported examination anxiety linked to university-entrance and senior school examinations, with media attention often generated around WACE examination periods (Bickers, 2014; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012) and students' self-knowledge from reflecting on past achievements impacting their future performance (Hattie, 2009; Zeidner & Matthews, 2007). The Year 11 students who said they felt most prepared were the students whose teachers divided the VACoS mandated assessments into smaller sections, giving formative feedback at each stage: for example, Mona described:

> *With a case study [an extended responding essay] I set mini deadlines up. So the first section might have been biographical; so that's due Monday in terms of a draft. Bring it back, we'll read through it. All right, let's do a group image analysis of one of their works [then go away and write it up] … Then once I've got through those [draft] sections [and given feedback], then I'll set a final deadline [for the clean copy].*

This type of scaffolding supported students in developing the skills and knowledge to alleviate examination anxiety, more than the students who had additional assessment tasks to complete. While this area requires further investigation, as anxiety can create cognitive and psychological barriers to learning (Hattie, 2009) it is possible that reducing students' assessment load may prove beneficial to increasing their engagement in Visual Arts responding tasks. Furthermore, Hattie's (2009) meta-analyses found that prior achievement was the 14th most influential factor affecting student achievement. Therefore, if students are required to complete additional assessments and perform lower than their expectations, there may be negative consequences on their self-efficacy and future achievement.

The Visual Arts teachers' discussions about assessments, and examinations in particular, were closely linked to teacher accountability. All of the teachers spoke about their students' performance in Year 12 WACE Visual Arts examinations as a reflection

on the quality of their teaching and the quality of the school. Grace evaluated her success as a teacher through the ATAR rankings that reflected students' performance in the WACE Visual Arts examination:

> *In the past, art theory was only worth like 25%. I looked at my [responding grades] a few years ago, and my students were slightly above State average, but that's not good enough. Over the last [few] years … our results have been right up there … but its been heavily scaffolded basically.*

While the Stage 2 students had one year before they completed the WACE examination, Visual Arts teachers were already preparing them for this examination and the school-based examinations that came before WACE. The teachers' accountability based on Year 12 student performance also meant responding had a more significant component in middle school Visual Arts. Through middle school intervention, the teachers aimed to give students a foundational knowledge of key visual arts terminology and to practice making judgements about visual artworks. These types of intervention may support students to feel success and mastery of responding at a middle school level, which could build self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation through the experience of positive achievements prior to entering Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts (Bandura, 2012; Bandura & Locke, 2003; Hattie, 2009).

In addition to teachers' accountability to maintain high achievement in Year 12 Visual Arts, teachers expressed a number of other challenges. Most of these challenges were linked to lack of professional learning in Visual Arts responding and limited time and resources to support the curriculum. Four teachers felt they required more professional learning about contemporary knowledge and visual analysis on contemporary artworks. Given the (often) conceptual basis of contemporary art, and increased use of audio-visual technologies to create visual artworks, a new type of language is required to discuss contemporary artworks: for example, Stern (2011) writes about how installation artists include the viewer's body in their artwork:

> Artists such as Rokeby, Utterback and Briand are more interested in how we move than in what we see. Their installations are not objects to be perceived but relations to be performed … physical action literally and figuratively becomes the "work" that is the "work of art" … they are collaboratively enacted, dispersed,

entwined, differentiated and shared. In this way, interactive installations exceed extant models for understanding art, which almost exclusively rely on signs, vision or form. (p. 233)

As contemporary artworks change, the visual arts terminology used to describe the experience changes: for example, a viewer cannot embody a painting by looking at a reproduction print, but they can embody an artwork as part of an installation. Therefore, the interpretation of the installation artwork may rely more on personal affective responses linked to lived experience, as opposed to more traditional formalistic analysis that considers composition through the elements and principles of art and design.

Zupancic (2005) also considers the ethical dilemmas of contemporary visual arts:

> Marco Evaristti exhibited an installation entitled *Helena* at Traphold, Denmark in 2000. In this installation, ten white Moulinex Optiblend-2000 mixers were placed on an ordinary table in a gallery. All the mixers were full of water, and swimming inside each one was a red-orange goldfish. The mixers were visibly connected to the electricity ready to operate them … In the two days before the authorities turned off the electricity, sixteen fish became 'fish soup' as viewers pushed the yellow on-off buttons and killed them … Regardless of how deeply we agree or disagree about *Helena*, there is a problem if art educators want to present this installation to their pupils. I hold to a strong educational belief that we should avoid introducing to youth works of art that expose living beings to danger. The catch resides in the fact that without real live beings whose lives we, the viewer, are tempted to manipulate, this work loses its impact. (p. 34)

As contemporary visual arts is created in a globalised culture, confronting post-structuralist epistemologies, teachers are faced with the dilemma of presenting (often) confrontational imagery and issues, as in the example of *Helena*, to their Year 11 students. Professional learning around talking about contemporary visual arts with students may assist teachers in strengthening their own self-efficacy to deliver this component of the curriculum.

The other challenge frequently cited was a lack of time and resources to support Visual Arts responding. Art making and art responding both comprise 50% of a student's total Visual Arts grade (Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014). On the assessment weighting, it could be expected that teachers would

divide in-class time equally between the two content areas of making and responding; however, the teachers in this sample recognised the extensive amount of time required for students to produce quality artworks and left, "*a lack of time to do art history and criticism justice*" (Eva). Ana noted that the expectations of the two content areas resulted in doing, "*five million things shallowly. I'd rather do one really, deep, meaningful, big thing because art takes time, learning takes time … they are 17 [years old], they need a break*." Limited time was, in some cases, the motivation for teachers to scaffold Visual Arts responding assessments and minimise anxiety for Year 11 students. It is possible that planning responding tasks to maximise quality, rather than quantity of in-class time, could be part of a solution to the challenge of limited time.

Maximising the quality of responding instruction could also be assisted through the development of curriculum resources. When the VACoS was released in WA in 2008, Lynda Kuntyj and Beth Harcourt (two WA Visual Arts teachers) wrote a series of textbooks with the School Curriculum and Standards Authority to accompany the new Visual Arts course (Impact Publishing, 2014). These textbooks are aimed at senior secondary students, and suggest activity ideas to extend their work in both art making and art responding (Impact Publishing, 2014). However, Franz suggested that new support materials could, "*be audio-visual or whatever, but stuff that students can engage in*." Updating curriculum resources to reflect the same technologies as students are already accessing (e.g., Claude discussed how, "*the boys say, 'You talked about this person so I went and 'googled' them or 'youtubed' them*") could result in students accessing these resources more readily. Again, the success of engaging more audio-visual and Internet based resources required further investigation.

Administrators: Heads of The Arts and Principals

The two administrative participant groups (Heads of The Arts and Principals) were interviewed from the perspective of Visual Arts' role in the broader school community. The five Heads of The Arts had varied backgrounds within The Arts learning area, representing every subject except Dance. The eight principals represented all eight learning areas of the Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998) and religious education, an additional subject in the Catholic sector. The small sample size limited generalisability; however, these findings were used to triangulate the teacher and student data.

The principals discussed the benefits and challenges of studying Visual Arts. In terms of benefits, holism and balance to learning were key concepts. Clifford, who was the Principal of a single-gender school, noted: "*It gives [boys] an avenue to express their emotions, be innovative, and in many ways, explore to full range of ways of expressing masculinity.*" Through Visual Arts, his students achieved a holistic education that challenged stereotypical gender representation, similar to Visual Culture Art Education's philosophy of exploring hegemonic representations in the global life-world (Duncum, 2010; Garber, 2010; Smith-Shank, 2008):

> Despite the inroads of feminism, students find that men are commonly represented as strong, aggressive, and crude, while women are represented as weak, overly emotional, and dependent upon men … Each of these stereotypes draws upon ideological constructions. While serving a need to gain immediate recognition, each marginalizes because each denies complexity (Duncum, 2010, p. 8).

In addition to the holistic study of their life-world, Diego suggested students found a sense of balance in studying Visual Arts as a, "*creative outlet away from the mundaneness of normal subjects.*" This statement supported the students' own rationales for participating in home-based visual arts: for example, Mario's process-driven creativity:

> *I just draw and see if something comes of it, and then I start to progress it and see how it turns out. It would most likely end up scrunched up in the bin, but that's the real practice.*

Visual Arts practice for holism and balance also echoed Efland's (1990a) expressive-psychoanalytic model, as this model describes visual arts practice that, "[produce] products of mental life … it enables personal growth to occur. For this reason the arts are therapeutic" (p. 16). Through Visual Arts, principals saw an opportunity for students to learn about themselves within their life-world, but to also express themselves through therapeutic activities.

Principals contrasted the creative practice of art making with the academic rigour of art responding. Hannah suggested that at the senior school level, "*[students need to] …*

think in a very deep way about their art … how it fits into the broader community."
Rigour in responding to visual arts was often associated with higher-order critical thinking, in which students explore the role of visual arts to critique dominant life-world ideologies (Garber, 2010). Despite the intention of responding in the Visual Arts course, some principals (those who taught in practically-based subjects) were concerned about the weighting of responding to art making: for example, Ivan was concerned about how, "*education systems tend to gravitate towards the 'learning about' … rather than actually 'learning from doing'*." These principals saw a need for balance between responding and making in practical subjects, including Visual Arts.

The concern about balance could be linked back to the history of Visual Arts education in WA. Prior to 1984, Visual Arts was not counted towards a student's university-entrance score, and was wholly assessed through art making (Monk, 1997; Morris & Lummis, 2015). In establishing Visual Arts as a TEE subject (one which would count towards university-entrance), responding was introduced to increase academic rigour, to show that the research and literacy skills developed in Visual Arts would adequately demonstrate a student's ability to be successful in tertiary study (Monk, 1997; Morris & Lummis, 2015). Since the 1980s, the balance between making and responding has been expressed through dual examination: the production of a Visual Arts making portfolio (or similar) and a traditional written examination focussing on responding topics (Monk, 1997; Morris & Lummis, 2015). Therefore, the challenge for Visual Arts teachers (communicated in their interviews) is to balance art making and responding in a way that maintains students' motivation and prepares them to meet the requirements of both examinations.

Finding balance is also critical because of visual arts' nature to engage kinaesthetic intelligence through materiality. Kinaesthetic intelligence includes students' high mastery of gross and/or fine motor skills (Gardner, 1999, 2006). In Visual Arts, students explore different media and techniques to communicate their ideas, and therefore, mastery in manipulating media (e.g., creating different types of line to express emotion) is fundamental to creating successful artworks. Developing the technical skill to manipulate media can be enhanced through responding to other artists' works, to compare artistic style with the meaning of the work and students' responses as viewers.

Engaging in responding can then be translated back into the students' own art making, which relates to the cyclic concept of visual literacy (Figure 12, below).
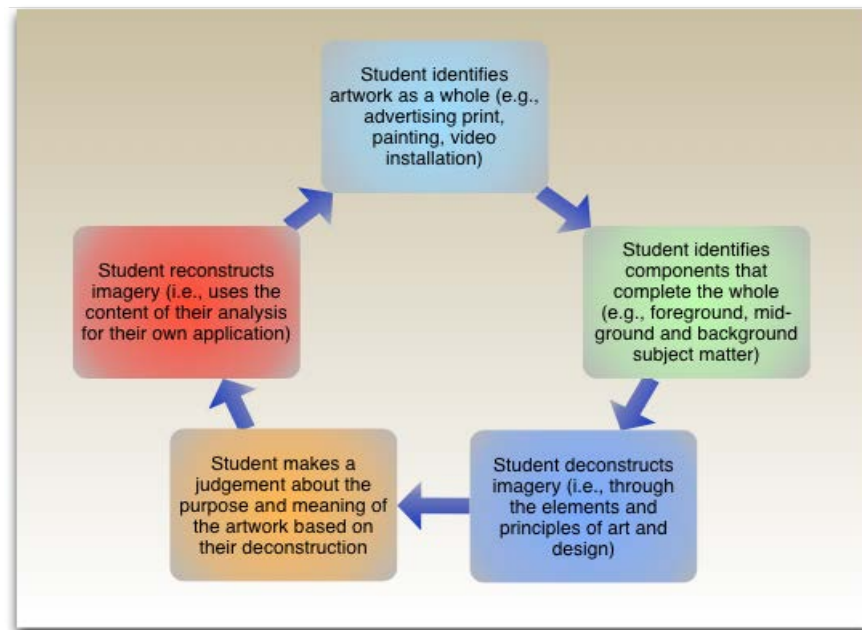

Figure 12. *Process of Visual Literacy Reading* adapted from Flood (2004b).

The process of visual literacy is a cycle because students lean to read and interpret other artworks and also question their own artworks: for example, Elizabeth asked herself questions about how to represent light or how to use tone instead of line.

Some principals also discussed the challenge of Visual Arts responding for students' motivation and autonomy, as there can be a disconnection between responding and relatedness to students' lives. Diego suspected some Visual Arts students thought: "*Where is it [responding] going to lead me?*" He felt that senior secondary courses heavily emphasised the goal of high achievement in WACE, without relating content to students' lives beyond the school context. Ivan thought the issue of relatedness and the rigour of Visual Arts responding were reasons for the increased enrolments in school-based Vocational and Education Training (VET) Visual Arts courses at his school. These principals' perspectives showed that the rationale for responding in Visual Arts as a link to art making, at a whole-school level, was misunderstood. The expectation of responding seemed closely connected to students' examination performance as opposed to a part of their own art making practice. This perspective also confirmed Visual Arts

teachers' perceptions of being held accountable for students' performance in WACE examinations.

In addition to senior school Visual Arts, the principals also reflected on how senior school study contrasted with middle school (Years 7-10) Visual Arts. In most schools, the middle school Visual Arts courses emphasised art making prior to Year 11 because, "*[students] … need to get the technical skills … so you can be successful in later years*" (Ben). The principals set up an opposition between making and responding, in which art making developed kinaesthetic intelligence through media and material manipulation, whereas responding developed students' linguistic intelligence through extensive writing and research. Responding was seen as, "*very important, in terms of literacy requirements*" (Clifford), *"[with] a school of thought with all the NAPLAN [National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy] and all the testing … that we need to get 'back to basics' [in literacy and numeracy education]"* (Ken). Visual Arts responding was a part of schools' literacy focus as Visual Arts students are, "*better writers in Arts, English and History*" (Niki). In the principals' interviews, Visual Arts responding was not linked to the study of Visual Arts, but to developing general literacy and academic skills that were beneficial across the curriculum. This perspective marginalises the intent of Visual Culture Art Education and other theories that link the essentialness of Visual Arts responding to students' understanding of their life-world (Burgess & Addison, 2004; Chung, 2006; Freedman, 2003b; Garber, 2010; Naylor, 2006).

While the principals spoke about their perspectives of Visual Arts responding's benefit and challenges, both the Heads of The Arts and principals reflected on how the Visual Arts were promoted in their schools' cultures. Four principals discussed actively promoting Visual Arts through upgrading Arts facilities, increasing enrolments in Visual Arts and sharing positive achievements at school assemblies. However, most of the promotion occurred in the broader community, often with the assistance of Parents and Citizens (P&C) associations. Two schools had their P&C organise fundraising and exhibitions of student artworks. Hannah, the Principal at one school, took her students into the local community to conduct art making sessions with disabled community members: "*It was very powerful and you could see our kids interacting, and realising that people [have] profound disabilities … [but visual] art could enhance their life.*"

Through Hannah's engagement with her school's local community, her students increased their interpersonal intelligence, understanding of their life-world, and were exposed to the use of visual arts as therapy, which again linked to visual arts' ability to be used from expressive-psychoanalytic approach and art as experience (Dewey, 1934; Efland, 1990a).

Compared to the principals, who saw local community engagement as key to visual arts promotion, most of the Heads of The Arts reflected on more school-based art exhibitions and activities as opportunities to publicise the Visual Arts each year. David discussed the importance of always having student artworks on display in the school to increase students' sense of professionalism in their arts practice, in addition to annual visual arts exhibitions. Alexander saw cultural exchange programs as another opportunity to promote the Visual Arts: "*Visual Arts are always prepared to take those [exchange] kids on … I think last year they did some Aboriginal [and Torres Strait Islander visual arts] … with them to explore the Australian context.*" The level of promotion, either in the local community or within the school, could be linked to the job description of the participants. Principals, as leaders of the whole school, are more likely to engage with the broader community; while Heads of The Arts, who organise The Arts learning within the school, may be more inclined to reflect on internal aspects of Visual Arts. However, both groups saw advocacy for the Visual Arts as central, despite their range of opinions on the role of responding within the Visual Arts. The consensus about advocacy supports the essentialness of visual arts learning to support students' social development and understanding of their life-world, so they may be agents of social and cultural change (Anderson, 2003, 2004; Eisner, 1992, 2002; Frank, 2011; Habermas, 1999; Morris & Lummis, 2014).

Implications for Improving Visual Arts Responding Engagement in the Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts Course

The final research question asked how the teaching and learning of Visual Arts responding education could be modified to improve Year 11 students' engagement. While teachers were not directly asked about how they could improve their own practice it was anticipated that the measurement of students' engagement would be affected by the Visual Arts teachers' approaches to teaching responding; therefore, implications for improving teaching/learning could be determined from these data. The

findings suggested that Year 11 could not be considered in isolation; therefore, links between home and school cultures, as well as Visual Arts education from K-10 are discussed. The impact of Visual Arts engagement from early childhood to Year 11 is discussed, with implications for increasing student engagement and future research directions.

A key issue in students' engagement is relatedness. Research on self-determination theory, which has autonomy and competence as key concepts, in addition to psychological engagement research associated to social-emotional wellbeing, frequently cite relatedness as a key factor to ensuring sustained engagement in learning (Appleton et al., 2006; Carbonneau, Vallerand, & Lafrenière, 2012; Fredricks et al., 2004; Mitchell & Carbone, 2011; Moller et al., 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2006; Winchmann, 2011). Relatedness can refer to both the relatedness of a task to a student's interest and aspirations, which Mitchell and Carbone (2011) term task authenticity; however, relatedness can also be linked to positive relationships with others, including parents and teachers (Fredricks et al., 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2000). In determining the implications for teaching and learning of Visual Arts responding, it is necessary to consider broader concepts of relatedness in the home and school contexts.

Pomerantz, Grolnick, and Price (2007) consider parents' role in fostering competence through relatedness from early childhood:

> Although children's satisfaction of their competence need is likely to be most relevant, their satisfaction of other needs may also be important (e.g., when children feel connected to their parents, they may feel worthy, which may lead them to feel competent) (p. 260).

Children's competence, or mastery of skills and knowledge, may be influenced by the positive memories of engaging in tasks with their families (Pomerantz et al., 2007). The positive influence of having a family advocate for visual arts was also a key theme from the Year 11 student interviews. Therefore, building engagement in Year 11 may be influenced by the social relatedness and memories established during early childhood. Students' engagement of Visual Arts and responding could be aided through regular gallery visits with family members, where family members and the child engage in spontaneous conversation about visual artworks: for example, asking children about

subject matter, colour use, making judgements (i.e., do you like this artwork? Why or why not?). As in the VACoS curriculum, responding to visual artworks should also be linked to art making (Unrath & Luehrman, 2009): for example, once a child has seen artwork they like, they could use this as inspiration for their own visual arts at home. If family members facilitate and participate in art making with children, the children are more likely to experience the social relatedness that impacts their sense of competence and sustains engagement (Pomerantz et al., 2007).

Similarly, school culture has an effect on students' sustained engagement. Deci and Moller (Deci & Moller, 2007) assert that: "Chaotic and rejecting environments (i.e., those that thwart satisfaction of competence and relatedness) are likely to interfere with identification and integration [of motivation]" (p. 590). Environments that diminish a sense of relatedness and students' competence could include schools that emphasise examinations as the rationale for including responding in the Visual Arts curriculum. While examination was the purpose for initially incorporating responding, to fulfil the academic rigour requirement of a TEE university-entrance subject (Monk, 1997; Morris & Lummis, 2015), maintaining this rationale is detrimental to students' motivation as it shifts the reward from internal (i.e., an understanding of responding as important for relationship with others and as a task that can be mastered to enhance students' lives) to external (i.e., an understanding of responding as important for academic performance and university-entrance). An adaptation of Deci and Ryan's taxonomy of human motivation (Figure 13, overleaf) shows the continuum of motivation from external regulation from compliance (e.g., participation in examinations), in which the students' cause to complete the task is external to their interests, to internalised motivation to complete tasks. If the school environment emphasises the extrinsic reward of examination achievement, students lose the opportunity to internalise their process of engagement as this is at the other end of the causality continuum.
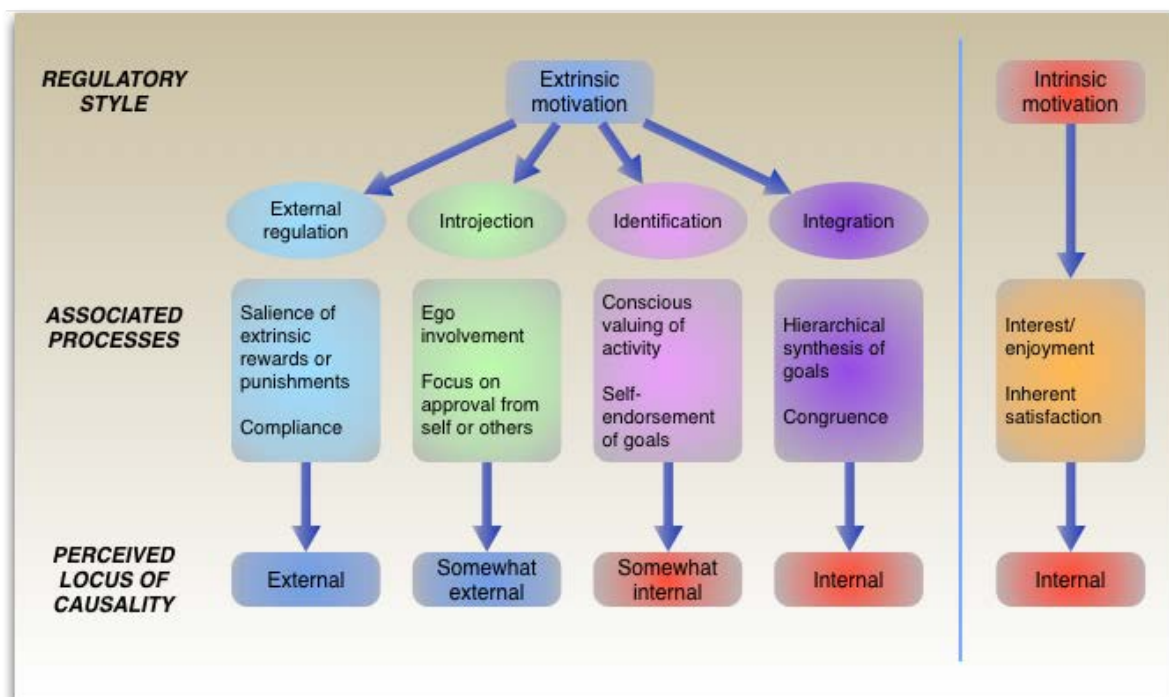
Figure 13. *Taxonomy of Human Motivation* adapted from Ryan and Deci (2000).

Therefore, if the rationale for responding in Visual Arts education is linked to visual literacy and engaging with a global visual society (ACARA, 2014a; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a), school culture needs to support this rationale and move away from citing examinations and academic performance as the key reward for students' engagement in Visual Arts responding. Both integration (an external motivation process) and intrinsic motivation are linked to internal causality for engaging in a task (Figure 13, above). While it is hopeful to think that all students will be inherently interested and enjoy Visual Arts responding, it is not necessarily correct. Ryan and Deci (2000) noted that intrinsic motivation, "becomes increasingly curtailed by social demands … in school … intrinsic motivation becomes weaker with each advancing grade" (p. 60). Again, this may be linked to assessment pressures as students approach senior school, in addition to Principals' and Heads of The Arts' perspectives of Visual Arts responding as fulfilling academic rigour, as opposed to students' interests. However, decreasing intrinsic motivation makes, "extrinsic motivation … an important issue … because many of the tasks that educators want their students to perform are not inherently interesting … extrinsic motivation becomes an essential strategy for successful teaching" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55). In integrated extrinsic

motivation, students are motivated because although they are performing the task for an external reward (e.g., part of their Visual Arts grade), they realise value in the task and see it as aligned with their personal needs (e.g., relatedness to future or fulfilment of social needs) (Deci & Moller, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Subsequently, students need to be given a purpose for studying Visual Arts responding that resonates with their own personal needs, so they may have opportunities to internalise the process of engaging with responding over the course of their formal (K-12) education.

The promotion of Visual Arts in a school context cannot begin in Year 11. The Visual Arts teachers interviewed affirmed that limited time was a significant challenge to covering breadth and depth in Visual Arts responding. Therefore, strategies to teaching and learning must begin earlier, perhaps even at a primary school level. Research into primary teachers' efficacy in teaching The Arts determined teachers have low mastery of required skills and knowledge, which may lead to minimised Arts instruction (Garvis, 2008; Lemon & Garvis, 2013). The Arts, including Visual Arts, instruction in pre-service primary teacher education courses is also declining, resulting in less Visual Arts experiences for future primary school teachers (Dinham, 2007; Lummis et al., 2014; Morris & Lummis, 2014). The Year 11 students in this sample reported some art making; however, visits to art galleries was significantly lower and it is unknown how many students engaged with artworks outside of discussion about their own visual arts products. Engaging primary students in Visual Arts responding can be facilitated through educational programs, such as those at the Art Gallery of Western Australia (Art Gallery of Western Australia, 2015), in addition to local Perth organisations like Art on the Move, who organise artist visits and *pop-up exhibitions* to send to regional and remote schools (Art on the Move, 2015). These opportunities give students a chance to feel mastery and to inspire interest in responding to visual arts prior to entering middle school study.

If families activate positive memories and relatedness of Visual Arts in early childhood, and Visual Arts responding is promoted in school culture as a meaningful activity, then students will be closer to fulfilling their needs of autonomy, motivation and self-efficacy, which is fostered through competence of sustained participation in an activity (Bandura, 2012; Bandura & Locke, 2003). Subsequently, Visual Arts teachers in

secondary schools (Years 7-12) may have fewer challenges to facilitating Visual Arts responding engagement in their students.

In Western Australia, Visual Arts is in a period of transition from the Curriculum Framework for Years K-10 and VACoS from Years 11 and 12, to the Australian Curriculum. In 2015, a modified VACoS syllabus that more closely aligns with cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities will be implemented for Years 11 and 12 (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a). Therefore, implications for teaching and learning will be most useful in the Western Australian context if they consider the Australian Curriculum as a basis for effecting change.

Students in Western Australia generally start secondary school in Year 7. In the Year 7-8 band, the emphasis of responding is on linking interpretation ideas to students' own art making. They consider artworks from a range of viewpoints: personal responses, analysis of form and meaning, influence of society, as well as critical theory and history (ACARA, 2014a). Students also start to think about presentation to enhance meaning of artworks, "for example, mounted and framed exhibition, a website, or as a children's book" (ACAVAM122, ACARA, 2014a). In addition to the integration of viewpoints into students' art making, there are also two responding content descriptions: *Analyse how artists use visual conventions in artworks (ACAVAR123)* and *Identify and connect specific features and purposes of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their art-making, starting with Australian artworks including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACAVAR124)* (ACARA, 2014a).

To engage Years 7-8 students in responding to Visual Arts, viewpoints can be integrated into ACAVAR123, which analyses visual conventions. The elaborations of viewpoints often links to Feldman's framework of visual analysis (Appendix M): for example, the societies viewpoint asks students to consider if culture and time affect the meaning of an artwork, which aligns with Feldman's interpretation questions about why the artwork was made (linked to time and place) and also the judgement questions about if the student would do anything differently. The judgement questions could also be adapted to ask if our interpretation changes based on contemporary society and if it does, how could the artwork be changed so the meaning is true for viewers today?

Across the Years 7-8 band there are eight viewpoints in total, six within art making descriptions and two within the responding content descriptions (ACARA, 2014a). Subsequently, teachers could focus on one viewpoint per term across the two years. This strategy aligns with the Year 11 teachers who divided tasks to ensure deep learning for Year 11 students, without overburdening them with information and assessment tasks.

While most of the viewpoints are covered through Feldman's framework (or slightly amended versions), there are some additions to the F-10 Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014a) that are not explicit in WA's Curriculum Framework. Teachers will need to begin to incorporate discussion about presentation: for example, students could include presentation information in their final designs for artworks, such as materials required and location for presentation. Teachers could facilitate these ideas through exploring artworks in different contexts and discussing how presentation changes the meaning of the artwork (e.g., comparing gallery exhibitions, Sculpture by the Sea at Cottesloe, public art, street art, books and multimedia presentations). One of the elaborations for responding description ACAVAR123 is to engage in physical or virtual art exhibitions, and engaging with curated exhibitions could also link into students' ideas for presenting their own final artworks. The second responding outcome, ACAVAR124 specifically includes engagement starting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACARA, 2014a), whereas the WA Curriculum Framework only included an aspect on valuing Australian arts more generally (Curriculum Council, 1998). Given the wording of the content description, "starting with" (ACAVAR124, ACARA, 2014a), a linear progression of Australian visual arts from pre-English settlement to today is implied. For some students it may be useful to follow a timeline of visual arts so they begin to make connections between how visual artists are influenced by preceding artists and contexts, as well as their own. This idea is also linked to the histories viewpoint in Years 7-8 (ACAVAM121, ACARA, 2014a).

While there is a lot of responding content in the Years 7-8 band, teachers should ensure that this content is engaging through using age-appropriate strategies: for example, after visiting an art gallery, students could design and create a class gallery of artworks that explore similar ideas to what they viewed (Unrath & Luehrman, 2009). Students can develop an understanding of histories through collaborative timeline activities, in which

each student could be responsible for one art movement or artist to add to a class timeline. However, collaborative activities should be structured, as Hattie (2009) cautions that too little guidance from the teacher could result in poorer achievement for students. A significant change from the WA Curriculum Framework to the Australian Curriculum is the emphasis on critical theory and discourse in middle schooling. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers find ways to engage students in respectful discussion about critical theories: for example, in Years 7-8 it may be appropriate to discuss Australian and other societies through lenses of binary oppositions, iconography, materialism, stereotypes or sustainability. The teacher could model critical theory in presentations about an artist or group of artists and their contexts, simultaneously building breadth of art history knowledge. Similar to the routine of Year 11 study, presentations where content is modelled could be consolidated through a constructivist activity that scaffolds students' analysis to include critical theory ideas. However, like the ratio of making to responding content descriptions (five to two), the emphasis on responding in lower middle school should be on foundational knowledge (learning visual arts terminology and histories) and the integration of responding in the students' own art making. As the Principals and Heads of The Arts described, younger students need foundational skills before they enter senior school. Also, to overcome students' and teachers' motivation for responding as linked to academic performance and examinations, the rationale for embedding responding in making must be started prior to Year 11.

In Years 9-10, evaluation of artists' intentions and students' own developing aesthetic are emphasised in the Australian Curriculum: Visual Arts (ACARA, 2014a). Similar to Years 7-8, there are five content descriptions linked to art making, and two for art responding; however, there are 11 viewpoints (eight for art making, three for art responding) across the content descriptions that need to be integrated within the eight school terms within this band. In integrating the viewpoints for art making, one viewpoint could be considered per term: for example, one term might emphasise artists' representations of global issues for societies and cultures (ACAVAM125, ACARA, 2014a), while another term might emphasise appropriation of other artists in the histories viewpoint (ACAVAM127, ACARA, 2014a). The two art responding content descriptions across Years 9-10 are: *Evaluate how representations communicate artistic intentions in artworks they make and view to inform their future art making*

(ACAVAR130) and *Analyse a range of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their visual art-making, starting with Australian artworks, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider international artworks (ACAVAR131)* (ACARA, 2014a). These content descriptions are closely linked to students' own art practices and consideration of artists' intentions in communicating ideas.

To engage students in Years 9-10 responding, teachers will need to scaffold students' understanding of post-structural critical theories, as the philosophies and ideologies viewpoint (ACAVAM129) explicitly states the use of art theory to analyse artworks (ACARA, 2014a). Ideas from Visual Culture Art Education, like the Gaze, ideology and representation can be applied to engage students in critical thinking (Duncum, 2010): for example, the Gaze is a process of looking, comparing self to other, and asserting power of the viewer over what or who is being viewed (D'Alleva, 2012; Duncum, 2010). D'Alleva (2012) gives an example of the role of women in advertising, which assumed a voyeuristic male viewer. The male has power because he is looking, which supports a patriarchal ideology, whereas the female is passive because she is the subject being viewed (D'Alleva, 2012). Teachers could continue to present students with a range of artists and art movements (developing broad knowledge about visual arts history), while explaining critical theories and teaching students to apply these to visual analysis. Again, students could then be given constructivist activities in which they support one another to add critical readings into the interpretation aspect of visual analysis. Critical theory may also impact their judgement of an artwork's success through different readings of the work.

Due to the deep critical thinking emphasised in the Years 9-10 band (ACARA, 2014a), teachers should find creative ways of presenting critical theory, which appeal to multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2006). Multiple intelligences may be of increased importance due to the challenging nature of critical theory content, as catering for students' preferred learning styles enhances their integration of new and existing knowledge (Gardner, 1999, 2006). Franz's example of role-play could be a useful strategy for teaching responding to kinaesthetic and interpersonal learners, and for critical theory content in particular. Dramatic role-play is a way to embody characters (Ricketts, 2011); therefore, the Gaze could be taught by having two students act it out,

with one student positioned as if they were the subject of the artwork and the other as the viewer. Letting them have a conversation about how it feels to view or be viewed could give students insight into the power of gazing and representation of subjects in artworks. The teacher could guide this interaction through questioning, or conclude the activity through structured classroom discussion to analyse the role-play.

Prior to entering Year 11, students should be fulfilling their cognitive and psychological engagement needs. Competence, achieved through intrinsic motivation to engage the visual arts, which can be achieved through early childhood participation in art making and responding. The mastery of skills and knowledge are also central to competence, which can be developed through the scaffolded process of direct instruction about visual arts histories (i.e., contexts, artists, technologies), visual arts terminology and critical theories. Autonomy can be developed through smaller constructivist tasks that allow students to have ownership of their learning through choice; however, it is also critical that students feel they have an intrinsic purpose for engaging in learning to begin with, such as the development of their own art making (Deci & Moller, 2007; Moller et al., 2006). Linking students' purpose for responding to their own art making is evident in the structure of viewpoints integrated into the art making content descriptions of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014a). Metacognition can be modelled through internalising the process of visual analysis and increasing the complexity of analysis over Years 7-10. Through modelling and practising visual analyses, students develop task and strategic knowledge (Proust, 2010; Tarricone, 2011). Additionally, students develop self-knowledge through investigating visual arts, as they learn about which art movements, artists and artworks they prefer, and what subject matter and media motivate art making, all of which helps students to understand their individuality (Proust, 2010; Tarricone, 2011).

The two psychological engagement factors were self-efficacy and student-teacher relationships. Self-efficacy can be developed through positive and constructive feedback, linked to students' mastery of skills and knowledge. Sustained engagement in visual arts, from early childhood onwards also supports self-efficacy because students have many opportunities to improve and experience success in visual arts. It is crucial to create a positive feedback loop, in which students continue to engage in visual arts and responding in school-based Visual Arts, so they can develop self-efficacy over time

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(Bandura, 2001; Bandura & Locke, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000). If students do not have their cognitive engagement needs met, including those of mastery, they will experience negative self-efficacy and no longer engage in visual arts (Bandura & Locke, 2003). The Year 11 students in this sample responded that they preferred a teacher who would challenge them, rather than a teacher who respected them and whom they liked. However, relatedness between teacher and students through respect, mutual understanding and nurturing is well supported by research (Dodge & Kaufman, 2009; Furrer & Skinner, 2003). Therefore, primary and middle school teachers may succeed in engaging students through relatedness, slowly increasing the challenge for students during middle school, prior to being a critical mentor for Year 11 and 12 students.

The Year 11 students in this sample exhibited high levels of both cognitive and psychological engagement, and therefore, the strategies used by the teachers in this sample are likely to contribute to the high engagement in their students. The low mastery of skills and knowledge perceived by Visual Arts teachers could be resolved through increased modelling and scaffolding of responding activities from primary school, and particularly through the Years 7-10 Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014a), while most of the engagement factors could also be improved through early childhood participation in arts making and responding with family. However, one key issue for Year 11 students was their low self-efficacy to discuss their own artworks. With the increased integration of responding into art making for the F-10 Australian Curriculum: Visual Arts (ACARA, 2014a), it is important for students to recognise their own arts practice as a valuable contribution to society. Participation in community exhibitions and school-based competitions (e.g., Black Swan Portraiture Prize and St George's Cathedral Art Exhibition) could be strategies to encourage students to consider their arts practice as authentic, as opposed to school-based study that is detached from their identity as adolescents. Facilitating opportunities for students to write and talk about their artworks from an early age may assist in building self-efficacy about their own arts practice, as they gain confidence to share personal narratives with others (including family members, peers and teachers). Informal interviews, where a Visual Arts teacher may use questioning to find out the motivation for an artwork, or peer feedback (structured to ensure feedback is serious, constructive and meaningful) could be strategies to build students' confidence around talking about their artworks. Students could also use self-reflection or journals to record ideas about their artworks,

including personal inspiration and the influence of other artists/artworks or subject matter on their arts practice.

Contemporary visual arts and critical theory are two issues to arise from these data and the development of the Australian Curriculum: Visual Arts (ACARA, 2014a). Some teachers did not fee confident to teach contemporary visual arts, and some students also discussed the challenge of more conceptual based contemporary artworks. Increasing professional learning for teachers on delivering contemporary visual arts as part of the curriculum may assist the teaching and learning of these artforms. Professional learning would need to include contemporary visual arts terminology (e.g., terms for multimedia artworks), contemporary skills (e.g., basic video editing, photography and Adobe Photoshop or similar editing programs), and ethics (e.g., the purpose of contemporary artworks such as the goldfish killed in the *Helena* installation and how to discuss these serious ethical issues in-class). Giving teachers skills and knowledge about contemporary visual arts may increase their self-efficacy, and in turn, their students' self-efficacy. Furthermore, the issues of contemporary visual arts may be intrinsically interesting to students, because as Mona said, *it is more relevant to their lives than Heidelberg Impressionist artworks*.

Critical theory professional learning may also be required for Visual Arts teachers as the Australian Curriculum: Visual Arts (ACARA, 2014a) is implemented. The integrated viewpoints on critical theory, philosophies and ideologies, and psychology require teachers to have an understanding of critical theories, including post-structuralist critiques. Not only do teachers need to know how to conduct readings of artworks (e.g., feminist or Marxist readings), they need to understand how to scaffold these intellectual and abstract discussions for students, particularly for students who will not be intrinsically motivated to analyse artworks in such depth. Professional learning that provides an overview of critical theories, structuralist and post-structuralist, and learning experience suggestions may be of use to Visual Arts teachers, particularly in engaging students in the rigour of senior school (Year 11 and 12) Visual Arts.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Seven discussed both the quantitative and qualitative findings, as related to the four research questions:

1. How effectively can students' cognitive and psychological engagement in Visual Arts responding tasks be measured?
2. To what extent are year 11 students engaging with Visual Arts responding tasks?
    a. To what extent are they engaging on a cognitive level?
    b. To what extent are they engaging on a psychological level?
    c. Do they engage with images based on ACARA's cross-curriculum priorities – fusion with Indigenous art (e.g., Lin Onus' artworks), Asian art (e.g., Kozyndan paintings) and art about sustainability (e.g., Richard Woldendorp photographs)?
3. What value do Visual Arts teachers place on responding and what approaches are they engaging to teach Visual Arts responding?
    a. How are the Visual Arts teachers' perceptions of art responding supported by their Heads of Learning Area and/or Principals?
4. How can the teaching and learning of Visual Arts responding education be modified to improve the engagement of Year 11 students?

The first research question asked if engagement could be measured. Analysis of existing subject-specific and generalised engagement questionnaires resulted in the construction of the Visual Arts Responding Student Engagement Instrument (VARSEI), which included items specific to the skills and knowledge required in Visual Arts responding. The exploratory factor analysis on this instrument resulted in five factors affecting student engagement: autonomy, intrinsic motivation, metacognition for cognitive engagement, and self-efficacy and student-teacher relationships for psychological engagement. While all of the factor sub-scales are reliable, autonomy requires further investigation due to the range of factor loadings (0.3 to 0.6). The student interviews suggested limited autonomy in terms of learning ownership, and therefore, using the qualitative findings to revise the autonomy subscale may improve its validity and reliability. Predictive validity of the student engagement measurement could be achieved through data collection from a larger sample, followed by a confirmatory factor analysis and structured equation modelling.

The second research question asked the extent to which students were engaged in Visual Arts responding. The Year 11 students were engaged, both cognitively and psychologically, in responding tasks. The high engagement of visual arts making and

some responding at home confirmed students' intrinsic motivation to participate in Visual Arts. In primary school, a high percentage of students (77.3%) reported making artworks, although more investigation about the nature of these experiences is required, as teachers may limit instruction in subject or discipline areas where they lack confidence (Alter, et al., 2009; Garvis, 2008), and research shows pre-service primary teachers have limited arts experiences both before and within teacher education (Lemon & Garvis, 2013; Lummis et al., 2014; Morris & Lummis, 2014). Responding in primary school Visual Arts was particularly low, and Year 11 engagement may be improved by students' experiences of art exhibitions from early childhood. Middle school (Years 7-10) Visual Arts created more balance between making and responding. Students engaged in more exhibitions, and studied both Australian and international arts practices; however, the artworks studied appeared to be mostly Western (European and American). As Australia's engagement with the Asia-Pacific region grows, more balance between Western and Eastern visual arts would facilitate students' understanding of their life-world, and also may support increased autonomy as the Visual Arts content has relevance for students' lives and futures.

The Year 11 students were engaged in Visual Arts responding. Students felt autonomous; however, they lacked control over decision making in responding tasks. They were highly motivated to engagement in Visual Arts responding, although they were not motivated to continue in an Arts-based career. They had mixed abilities in metacognitive thinking, with lower task knowledge (e.g., knowing context information required to complete a task) and strategic knowledge (e.g., being able to effectively search the Internet for required information). Actively teaching students how to complete tasks through appropriate scaffolding may improve metacognitive thinking. The cultural reproduction of Visual Arts as less esteemed than other subject areas was perpetuated in students' limited motivation to pursue Visual Arts after compulsory schooling. Demonstrating the breadth of careers that use Visual Arts skills or explaining the rationale of visual literacy and its importance to students' futures may increase students' autonomy and motivation through demonstrating the relevance of Visual Arts responding.

The Year 11 students also had high psychological engagement. Self-efficacy was very high in terms of active participation, but lower for discussing or writing about their

personal artworks. The interviewed students also discussed the competitive nature of in responding, with some peers ranking themselves in terms of academic achievement. Self-efficacy is crucial to sustained engagement in an activity, and therefore, important to sustaining engagement in Visual Arts responding. Giving students opportunities to demonstrate their mastery may also increase their self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation. Mastery could be improved through complementary subject pairings (e.g., Visual Arts with Literature or Modern History) that use similar skills or explore similar themes, as they explore similar ideas more deeply or practise similar skills to improve them across all subject areas. Student-teacher relationships was the second psychological factor. The findings for this factor demonstrated that students did not want to regulate their learning, instead they preferred when the Visual Arts teacher maintained close control of learning. This could be linked to examination anxiety in senior school students, who were approaching their WACE examinations for university-entrance.

Students also indicated the extent to which they were aesthetically engaged in the three cross-curriculum priorities. The resultant ranking from this item is highly subjective; however, it showed that students did not prefer one style to another. They did not like the highly emotive Aboriginal artwork linked to the 1967 referendum (MacDonald, n.d.) and appeared to prefer traditional subject matter over some contemporary artworks: for example, the Hello Kitty painting (Kozyndan, 2010) was ranked lower than a woodblock print depicting Japanese cherry blossoms (Hiroshige, ca. 1835). Increasing students' engagement with contemporary artworks is significant, including within the cross-curriculum priorities, as the WACE examinations in Visual Arts emphasise contemporary artworks for visual analysis sections (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2013).

The third research question asked about teachers' values and strategies to teaching Visual Arts responding, and if these were supported by administrators. The Visual Arts teachers were strong arts practitioners, who mostly valued modernist (18th and 19th century) artworks. They generally taught responding, in Stage 2 Visual Arts, through PowerPoint presentations followed by constructivist tasks where students collaborated with peers. The Visual Arts teachers also emphasised creativity, from drama to debate and storytelling, in motivating students to engage in responding tasks. The strategies teachers used followed Hattie's (2009) *activator* model, in which authentic guided

instruction was emphasised. Scaffolding was significant in Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts, with teachers acting as critical mentors to their students. However, the Visual Arts teachers felt they had limited structure within the VACoS curriculum, which contrasted their own Visual Arts experiences within the TEE Art course. The limited curriculum structure sometimes led to increased assessments and examination emphasis, which increased students' anxiety about responding. The Visual Arts teachers felt their performance was measured against examination performance, and this was echoed by Principals who cited examinations as the rationale for including responding in the Visual Arts curriculum. Despite the examination focus, some Principals also saw holistic reasons for students to participate in Visual Arts: for example, exploring gender representations. Principals discussed the links between Visual Arts responding and literacy, emphasising a literacy focus in Australian schools. However, Principals also saw public relations value in the Visual Arts, promoting the school through community engagement of art making workshops and exhibitions. Heads of The Arts as also cited school-based exhibitions in promoting Visual Arts to the wider school community. Principals and Heads of The Arts were supportive of Visual Arts teachers; however, it appeared the examination emphasis could increase teachers' and students' anxiety about Visual Arts responding.

The final research question asked about the implications for improving students' engagement in Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts responding. From the previous findings, it was evident that Year 11 could not be examined in isolation. Instead, early childhood engagement of making and responding to visual arts is important to build a sense of relatedness within families and to build intrinsic motivation in future Visual Arts students. Sustaining this engagement within the schooling system should be supported by rationales that tend towards internalised motivation, rather than schooling for Year 12 examinations yielding Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) scores for university entrance. School culture, from K-12 should support a rationale of visual literacy and engaging in a global visual society, which is aligned to ACARA's (2014) Australian Curriculum: The Arts. Primary teachers require self-efficacy and appropriate Visual Arts professional learning to engage with the complexity of the curriculum. Partnerships between schools and the Art Gallery of Western Australia's education program can facilitate students' responding learning and provide teachers with resources to sustain Visual Arts learning. In middle school, the emphasis is on building

foundational skills, such as familiarity with responding frameworks (e.g., Feldman's) and visual arts terminology (e.g., elements and principles). Students are also introduced to critical theory in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014) and therefore, Visual Arts teacher require professional learning to scaffold these learning experiences for students. Additionally, the interviewed teachers spoke about their limited understanding of contemporary visual arts, which is also emphasised in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014). Supporting teachers to provide concrete skills and knowledge about a breadth of art movements, both contemporary and historical, will give students foundational knowledge to support senior school Visual Arts responding.

Establishing these structures prior to Year 11 would improve students' engagement, as they will have been supported to strengthen their motivation and metacognition in learning about Visual Arts in previous year levels. Autonomy can be strengthened through small constructivist tasks that give students' control of their learning; however, it could also be developed through relevance, such as participation in community visual arts exhibitions where students recognise their arts practice as being for purposes beyond school study. Sustaining engagement from early childhood builds self-efficacy as students feel competence and enjoyment in visual arts learning and are therefore more likely to take risks and to feel confident to discuss their own arts practice. In terms of student-teacher relationships, balancing teachers' traits as mentors and critical reviewers could be an area for future investigation. Primary and middle school teachers may have more successful relationships with relatedness fostered through nurturing, whereas Year 11 teachers may find being a honest critical friend who challenges students may be better suited to preparing students for life beyond the school context. Most importantly, the purpose of Visual Arts responding as fostering visual literacy and as an integral part of arts practice is the key issue to improving all the factors that contribute to cognitive and psychological engagement. Moving towards this rationale, and making it explicit to students and the school community, may change perceptions about the inclusion of responding within the Visual Arts curriculum and improve students' engagement through a sense of relatedness and relevance to their individual life-worlds. The conclusions of this study and implications for future research will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to determine if Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts students' engagement could be diagnostically measured, and if so, to determine their extent of engagement in responding to Visual Arts. Responding is one of two outcomes in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014a) and it also equates to 50% of the WA senior school Visual Arts Course (Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a). The rationale for including responding within Visual Arts courses is founded on visual literacy and agency, explained through the Australian Curriculum rationale and aims for Visual Arts:

> Visual Arts supports students to view the world through various lenses and contexts. They recognise the significance of visual arts histories, theories and practices, exploring and responding to artists, craftspeople and designers and their artworks. They apply visual arts knowledge in order to make critical judgments about their own importance as artists and audiences. Learning in the Visual Arts helps students to develop understanding of world culture and their responsibilities as global citizens (ACARA, 2014a, ¶4).

Through studying responding in Visual Arts, students learn how to decode visual artworks and also recode these understandings to make meaning in their own arts practices. The inclusion of responding in Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts is significant, as these students are engaging in a university-entrance Visual Arts course that has increased emphasis on responding for assessment.

In exploring Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts students' engagement, four research questions were posed:

1. How effectively can students' cognitive and psychological engagement in Visual Arts responding tasks be measured?
2. To what extent are year 11 students engaging with Visual Arts responding tasks?
   a. To what extent are they engaging on a cognitive level?
   b. To what extent are they engaging on a psychological level?
   c. Do they engage with images based on ACARA's cross-curriculum priorities – fusion with Indigenous art (e.g., Lin Onus' artworks), Asian

art (e.g., Kozyndan paintings) and art about sustainability (e.g., Richard Woldendorp photographs)?

3. What value do Visual Arts teachers place on responding and what approaches are they engaging to teach Visual Arts responding?

    a. How are the Visual Arts teachers' perceptions of art responding supported by their Heads of Learning Area and/or Principals?

4. How can the teaching and learning of Visual Arts responding education be modified to improve the engagement of Year 11 students?

These research questions were guided by two research paradigms: post-positivism was linked to the quantitative research methods (i.e., the development of the VARSEI), and an interpretivist-constructivist paradigm informed the qualitative methods (i.e., semi-structured interviews). The quantitative research determined the current educational experiences of Year 11 students in the Visual Arts and supported the development of the diagnostic assessment instrument. The qualitative methods elicited rich narratives from a range of interview participants (i.e., students, Visual Arts teachers, Heads of The Arts and Principals), elaborating on the quantitative findings as defined by the explanatory mixed methods approach.

This chapter presents the final conclusions of this research study, based on the findings and discussion presented in Chapters Five and Six. Recommendations for intervention in Visual Arts responding and future research areas are also proposed.

Conclusions

Three main conclusions can be drawn from the collected data: the impact of assessment on students' engagement, the need for early childhood intervention, and the need to change and monitor school culture.

Conclusion One: The Impact of Assessment on Students' Engagement

Diagnostic assessment is not commonly used within Stage 2 Visual Arts learning, and therefore, teachers are not equipped with evidence about students' engagement in Visual Arts learning, or how it may change over time. It was evident from the teacher interviews that some Visual Arts teachers divide larger assessments (e.g., artist case

studies) into smaller parts and providing formative feedback; however, the majority of Visual Arts teachers rely on summative assessments, including examinations.

Diagnostic assessment is a basis for determining students' learning needs, and it may also be used to adjust teaching and learning strategies over a period of time (Kemp & Scaife, 2012). The VARSEI (final version found in Appendix M) has been shown to measure students' levels of engagement in Visual Arts responding, and could be one way of diagnosing factors affecting engagement: for example, if students return a low metacognitive score, teachers could begin explicit teaching about task knowledge (e.g., through frameworks and additional content knowledge), as well as strategic knowledge (e.g., through research and writing activities). Effective teaching and learning in responding is important as Visual Arts teachers acknowledged the limited time in which they have to cover the Visual Arts curriculum requirements for responding, alongside art making. Diagnostic assessment would also provide teachers with evidence about how students are progressing, and may ease teachers' accountability anxiety associated with students' examination performances.

Not engaging in diagnostic assessment could also have repercussions for students' learning. In this sample, the middle school (Years 7-10) section of the VARSEI showed that most students had limited responding experiences in primary school, and middle school responding experiences that centred on Westernised visual arts. Therefore, while these students were engaged (overall), they did not demonstrate the breadth of knowledge about visual arts history to engage fully in the Visual Arts Course of Study (VACoS), which assumes knowledge of modernism due to its emphasis on postmodern and contemporary content. The interviewed Year 11 students also described how limited world knowledge impacted on examinations, as they could not provide interpretations of artworks grounded in the context in which they were created.

Conclusion Two: The Need for Early Childhood Intervention

Both the quantitative and qualitative student findings demonstrated the importance of home engagement in Visual Arts, as the students (who were generally engaged) spent time engaging in Visual Arts beyond the school context. While it is not feasible (or appropriate) to ensure families engage their children in art making or responding from infancy, it is possible to intervene early in formal education settings (e.g., kindergartens

and primary schools). Early childhood classrooms could be the first opportunity to facilitate positive and frequent learning experiences in Visual Arts.

The Year 11 students in this sample all reported some engagement of art making and responding in primary school. They also participated in a balance of art making and responding in middle school (Years 7-10); however, Visual Arts teachers suggested that the responding material covered in these year levels was basic in comparison to the requirements of VACoS. Regardless, the engagement of Visual Arts responding throughout schooling was likely to be a significant contributor to students' positive levels of Year 11 engagement. Given the literature on self-determination theories, meeting students' needs for competence from a young age could increase their motivation to sustain participation (Carbonneau, Vallerand, & Lafrenière, 2012; Deci & Moller, 2007; Pomerantz, Grolnick, & Price, 2007). Therefore, students' resilience in engaging with the challenge of senior school responding could be supported through early childhood, primary and middle school opportunities to experience success in age-appropriate Visual Arts responding tasks. All of the factors affecting students' engagement in this research (autonomy, intrinsic motivation, metacognition, self-efficacy and student-teacher relationships) are developed over time and can be positively/negatively affected over time. Importantly, self-efficacy theory indicates that students who do not experience success in tasks are filled with self-doubt, which has effects on their future performance and lowers their efficacy (Bandura, 2012; Bandura & Locke, 2003). Self-efficacy theory further emphasises the need for students to engage with responding over time so they can develop confidence through mastery of tasks, and improve their psychological engagement with Visual Arts responding in senior school.

Conclusion Three: The Need to Change School Culture

The findings from the Heads of The Arts and Principals, in addition to the Visual Arts teachers, indicated an examination emphasis within senior school Visual Arts courses (Stage 2 and 3 VACoS/ATAR). The perception of responding for the purpose of university-entrance examinations contrasted with students' home arts practice, which was linked to therapeutic or expressive-psychoanalytic engagement (Dewey, 1934; Efland, 1990a; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987; Macdonald, 2005). The rationale for responding's initial inclusion in Visual Arts, to ensure that Visual Arts was academically rigorous enough to support students' entrance in university courses

(McGaw, 1984; Monk, 1997; Morris & Lummis, 2015; Tully, 2002), was still discussed by Principals in the semi-structured interviews. The inclusion of responding to improve literacy and maintain rigour was much more frequently discussed than ACARA's (2014) rationale in the Australian Curriculum, in which Visual Arts fulfils students' visual literacy and supports them to become active participants in the ever expanding global visual life-world. The WA based VACoS has the same rationale at the core of its curriculum (Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a).

With the implementation of updated senior school Visual Arts courses in WA during 2015, which are more aligned with the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014) and the future implementation of the Australian Curriculum for Years F-10 (ACARA, 2014), there is an opportunity to align school culture with the curriculum rationale. With the inclusion of responding weighted as 50% of a students' overall grade for Visual Arts (Year 11 and 12), there is a need to demonstrate that the inclusion of responding has value for students both within and beyond the school context. Students' sense of relevance has an impact on their engagement, and by emphasising examinations as the purpose for studying responding, students may be less inclined to appreciate the long-term purpose of responding in strengthening their practice as an artist. Visual Arts teachers frequently commented that to instil a life-long passion for the Visual Arts was important. They also stated that students do not create in a vacuum, but instead are influenced by everything in their life-worlds (Morris, Lummis, & Lock, 2014) and engaging in responding is part of acknowledging the influence of other artists, culture and everyday occurrences on visual arts practice. Changing school culture through administrative personnel's understandings of responding in the Visual Arts curriculum could also change students' sense of relevance in engaging with Visual Arts responding, minimising examination emphasis and instead considering the broader implications for responding to the life-world.

Recommendations

As a result of the three main conclusions of this research study, there are three key recommendations for improving students' engagement and learning within Visual Arts responding: further development of diagnostic assessment in Visual Arts, professional learning and specialist Visual Arts support for early childhood and primary schools, as

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well as professional learning for secondary Visual Arts teachers. There are also recommendations for future research directions linked to the topic of student engagement and learning in Visual Arts.

Recommendation One: Further Development of Diagnostic Assessment in Visual Arts

The VARSEI showed that students' engagement in Visual Arts responding can be measured, although further refinement of the instrument is warranted. However, the development of a diagnostic instrument is not worthwhile unless it can be effectively utilised by Visual Arts teachers. The current VARSEI was administered through a Qualtrics questionnaire and the data were analysed through SPSS. This method of data collection and analysis requires specialist research skills and time that would not be viable for the school setting. Therefore, it is recommended that the VARSEI is further refined to a format that is accessible for students to complete and for teachers to retain and analyse the findings.

The online format of the VARSEI worked effectively, as most students had access to school-based devices to complete the questionnaire. As the overall scores were combined into subscale means and overall means, it may be possible to create a diagnostic sheet that tells the student which sub-scales they scored well in and where there are areas for improvement, including strategies that may assist their improvement. Alternatively, the student may complete an online questionnaire and the teacher receives similar information for individual students and overall class statistics. Creating a quiz-like format, which equate score ranges to a synopsis about the student/s engagement within each sub-scale and for overall engagement, would give teachers a description to follow, as opposed to statistical output to be interrogated.

The overall VARSEI, with sections about home, primary school and middle school in addition to Year 11, may be too long to complete frequently. Therefore, creating an interface that would allow teachers to pick certain sections of the questionnaire to administer would also be useful. If the questionnaire identifies students for the teacher, then each student would only have to complete certain sections once during their secondary schooling: for example, in Year 7 students could complete home context and primary school, and at the beginning of senior school, students may repeat the home

context section, but then skip to the middle school section. This would minimise the amount of time taken to complete the questionnaire, while still giving teachers a full background of students' prior Visual Arts learning.

Ensuring the VARSEI is practical for teachers and students to use within the school setting is the next step to achieving a feasible diagnostic assessment to measure student engagement in Visual Arts responding.

Recommendation Two: Professional Learning and Specialist Visual Arts Support for Early Childhood and Primary Teachers

Given that primary school (K-6) may be students' first formal engagement with Visual Arts, ensuring they receive high quality learning experiences in both making and responding is important for future engagement. The expectations of responding from Years 7 onwards are increasing within the Australian Curriculum: for example, with the inclusion of critical theory viewpoints in the Years 7-8 band of the curriculum (ACARA, 2014). Therefore, foundational instruction in responding during primary school is important to ensure that Year 7 students can cope with the complexity of senior school Visual Arts courses.

There is a rising amount of literature on the lack of pre-service teacher education in The Arts and on primary teachers' low self-efficacy and challenges for delivering The Arts (Alter, Hayes, & O'Hara, 2009b; Dinham, 2007; Lemon & Garvis, 2013; Lummis & Morris, 2014; Lummis et al., 2014; Morris & Lummis, 2014). Subsequently, the complexity of primary school Visual Arts is increasing as primary teachers' experiences and self-efficacy in The Arts are decreasing. There is a need for increased specialist support in The Arts subjects, including Visual Arts, to ensure that students' receive high quality experiences that prepare them for secondary school courses. The majority of students in this sample had specialist primary school Visual Arts teachers, and this experience may have also contributed to their increased engagement in Stage 2 Visual Arts. Specialist teachers or advisors to support generalist primary school teachers may be one intervention to support primary school Visual Arts. Ongoing professional learning within Visual Arts may also support generalist teachers, including the Schools Program facilitated through the Art Gallery of Western Australia (Art Gallery of Western Australia, 2015).

Recommendation Three: Professional Learning for Secondary Visual Arts Teachers

The contemporary focus and introduction of critical theory in secondary school Visual Arts courses have challenged some teachers. The teachers in this sample also believed they did not have enough resources or direction from the curriculum to plan learning experiences that would meet the required breadth and depth of the VACoS. These challenges reflected from the VACoS implementation can serve as warnings for the implementation of the 2015 revised ATAR courses in Visual Arts (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a), and the impending Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014).

The majority of Visual Arts teachers in this sample completed their secondary education in the 1980s, prior to the emergence of contemporary visual arts (1990s-2000s). Many teachers also stated that limited professional learning was offered within contemporary visual arts to assist with their competence to effectively plan and deliver lessons based on analysing contemporary artworks. The inclusion of critical theory in Australian Curriculum also overlaps with the contemporary visual arts focus on senior school courses, as contemporary artworks are often created with post-structural frames that critique the modern life-world (Burgess & Addison, 2004; D'Alleva, 2012). Subsequently, secondary school Visual Arts teachers require knowledge about critical theories and how to apply these to visual arts analysis, which could be offered through ongoing professional learning. Supporting this professional learning with contemporary artworks would assist in giving teachers authentic examples about how to analyse contemporary artworks that begin to break the boundaries of historical visual arts: for example, video installations that include the viewer as part of the artwork itself (Stern, 2011). Contemporary visual arts professional learning must also include topics such as the ethics regarding some visual artworks, as contemporary artworks can often confront the viewer with controversial ideas about society (Zupancic, 2005). Furthermore, some contemporary artworks involve audience participation, such as Zupancic's (2005) discussion of *Helena* and the goldfish. Therefore, teachers need to scaffold informed discussions about students' roles in viewing (or participating) in artworks and the consequences of these practices, as well as positioning an ethical framework into aesthetic discourse.

Professional learning and resources about contemporary visual arts and critical theory may support teachers, and enhance their self-efficacy, to deliver the senior school Visual Arts courses and the impending Australian Curriculum (F-10) in WA. Through ongoing professional learning, teachers may also become more aware of broader rationale for Visual Arts responding (i.e., the significance of responding in contemporary life-worlds), and this may also affect school culture around the inclusion of responding within Visual Arts curricula.

Future Research Directions

This research aimed to determine if students' engagement in Visual Arts responding could be measured, and if so, to determine the extent of students' engagement in responding within the Stage 2 Visual Arts course in WA. While initial findings show that students' engagement can be measured, the instrument (VARSEI) could be further refined through collecting data from a larger sample and completing a confirmatory factor analysis on these data. The sample for this research study included schools with an ICSEA value between 900-1200; which covered a range of mid-high socio-economic schools in WA, but did not include the low socio-economic schools. Therefore, repeating the study with a random sample across all WA schools could produce more generalisable findings.

The VARSEI instrument could also be improved by researching the impact of each factor (autonomy, intrinsic motivation, metacognition, self-efficacy and student-teacher relationships) within Visual Arts. Each factor is complex, and the VARSEI instrument was developed on the holistic concept of each factor. Therefore, conducting research on Visual Arts students' perceptions and engagement with the factors individually could also strengthen the VARSEI, and provide more comprehensive findings about aspects of students' cognitive and psychological engagement in Visual Arts responding.

The influence of prior experiences on students' Year 11 engagement was important. The positive engagement of Year 11 students in this sample was likely connected to their breadth of experiences in Visual Arts across home, primary and middle school contexts. Given the recommendation to improve students' primary school responding tasks, it would be valuable to conduct further research on the role of generalist and specialist

Visual Arts teachers in primary schools, including their ability to facilitate responding experiences within the primary school context. This research could lead into an intervention for primary school Visual Arts, including responding.

Lastly, secondary school Visual Arts teachers' professional learning requirements could also be investigated. While the Year 11 teachers indicated they needed more support to deliver the contemporary visual arts focus of the WA VACoS, middle school (Years 7-10) teachers may have additional professional learning requirements. In a period of curriculum implementation, ensuring teachers are supported to meet the requirements of new curricula is important to the success of implementation, and additionally, to students' learning. Professional learning for secondary teachers could also be extended to students' engagement with the cross-curriculum priorities in Visual Arts, as 2015 is the first year that Visual Arts teachers have to plan and include these priorities in their teaching.

Conclusion: The Significance of This Research

Students' engagement in Visual Arts responding is important for their academic achievement and for their lives beyond school. Within the WA curriculum, responding is weighted as 50% of a students' overall grade for Visual Arts, and therefore, students who continue into Year 12 ATAR (Stage 3) Visual Arts will have responding as a significant contributor to their score for university-entrance. However, the rationale for responding in Visual Arts is broader than assessment. Responding to Visual Arts facilitates students' visual literacy development, that is, their ability to decode images to understand their meaning and to recode images as arts practitioners that will contribute to their life-world through creating meaning (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Flood, 2004a, 2004b; Freedman et al., 2013).

As art making and responding are linked within Visual Arts curricula (ACARA, 2014; Curriculum Council, 2008; School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014a), students' engagement in one strand of Visual Arts has repercussions for the other. As responding requirements become more complex (e.g., critical theory inclusions), there is a need to ensure students are resilient and prepared to engage with challenging responding content. As this content is assessed through ATAR examinations, teachers must work to prepare students for this complexity within two years of senior school.

Given the demands of senior school Visual Arts, it is imperative that time is effectively utilised within senior school courses. Diagnostically assessing students, an uncommon practice in Visual Arts, is one strategy to ensuring teachers can monitor students' engagement and revise their teaching to meet any specific needs within their classes.

Creating a diagnostic assessment around *student engagement* in Visual Arts responding, as opposed to an assessment about the achievement of the content itself, was important due to research on the significant impact of engagement. Student engagement has been linked to increased retention, higher social and emotional outcomes and improved academic learning (Appleton et al., 2008; Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012; Fredricks et al., 2004; Furlong & Christenson, 2008; Gray & Hackling, 2009; Jonasson, 2012; Yonezawa et al., 2009). Improving student engagement also improves other associated factors for the student: for example, using teaching strategies to help a student improve strategic metacognitive thinking helps both their engagement and their general research skills. The improvement of one aspect of learning has a domino effect that can improve student learning in many other subjects. The students participating in this research also noted the benefits of subject pairings: for example, how engaging in Visual Arts responding improved their learning in English (particularly Literature students) and Modern History. In Australia, there is an emphasis on literacy learning through the *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) and a focus on improving international academic performance, including closing the gap between high and low performing students, through the *Better Schools Plan* (Australian Government, 2013a). The benefits of improving student engagement in one subject area may have positive outcomes for overall student learning (i.e., learning not specific to Visual Arts).

As Visual Arts curricula keep changing, and further complexity is added to Visual Arts responding across all year levels, teachers must actively monitor students' engagement in learning. Failure to engage students in responding at one level of schooling could have implications for their future responding learning and for their participation in the complex contemporary life-world.

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APPENDIX A
ACARA Inspired Images for the VARSEI

The list below is ranked according to the Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts' students VARSEI responses.

The cross-curriculum priority or art movement linked to each image is listed with the artworks' information using the following codes:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures (AbTSI history);
- Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia (Asia);
- Sustainability (Sustainability); and
- Traditional (Trad: Art movement).

ASIA

Artist: Hiromitsu Takahashi

Year: 1991

Title: *Agemaki*

Media: Kappa stencil print

Size: 73x80cm

Retrieved from Art Gallery of NSW:

http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/465.1993/

TRAD: CONSTRUCTIVISM

Artist: Alexander Calder

Year: 1955

Title: *Glass Fish*

Media: Glass and wire

Size: 54.8x108cm

Retrieved from:

http://www.pacegallery.com/artists/66/alexander-calder

AbTSI HISTORY

Artist: Bessie Sims

Year: no year

Title: *Women's Ceremony*

Media: Ochre on linen

Size: 66x154cm

Retrieved from:

http://www.aaia.com.au/design/aaia1.html

SUSTAINABILITY

Artist: Nico van Hoorn

Year: no year

Title: *"Trashlog", WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 16 - ITEM #0165*

Media: Found object

Size: no dimensions

Retrieved from:

http://greenmuseum.org/content/artist_index /artist_id-72.html

TRAD: BAROQUE

Artist: Jan Vermeer

Year: ca. 1657-58

Title: *The Milkmaid*

Media: Oil on canvas

Size: 45.5x41cm

Retrieved from:

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/milk/hd_milk.htm

SUSTAINABILITY

Artist: Christo and Jeanne-Claude

Year: 1983

Title: *Surrounded Islands (Miami, Florida)*

Media: Floating pink polypropylene fabric

Size: 603, 870 m²

Retrieved from:

http://christojeanneclaude.net/projects/surrounded-islands#.VKukTloVplI
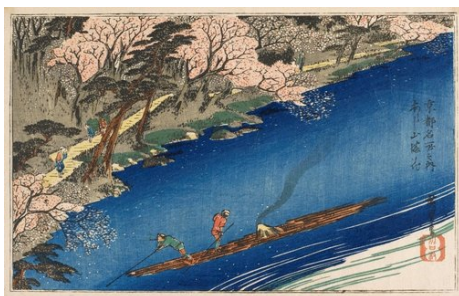
ASIA

Artist: Andô/Utagawa Hiroshige

Year: ca. 1835

Title: *Full Blossom at Arashiyama*

Media: Coloured woodblock print

Size: 21.8x35.2cm

Retrieved from:

http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/DO8.1961/

AbTSI HISTORY

Artist: Brian Robinson

Year: 2011

Title: *Malu mandala I*

Media: Linocut print

Size: 38x39cm

Retrieved from:

http://shop.kickarts.org.au/collections/past-exhibitions-brian-robinson-2011-feature-wall

SUSTAINABILITY

Artist: Gwenaël Velge

Year: 2011

Title: *Open Cut*

Media: Photograph

Size: no dimesions

Retrieved from:

http://ccwa.org.au/art?page=2

TRAD: ROMANTICISM

Artist: J. M. W. Turner

Year: 1844

Title: *Rain, Steam, and Speed – The Great Western Railway*

Media: Oil on canvas

Size: 91x121.8cm

Retrieved from:

http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/joseph-mallord-william-turner-rain-steam-and-speed-the-great-western-railway

ASIA

Artist: Kozyndan

Year: 2010

Title: *Fishy Greetings*

Media: Acrylic on board

Size: 18x24inches

Retrieved from:

http://www.kozyndan.com/art/fishy-greetings

AbTSI HISTORY

Artist: Norma MacDonald

Year: 2005-2010

Title: *History Lesson*

Media: Oil and charcoal on Belgian linen

Size: 80x120cm

Retrieved from: http://www.gomboc-gallery.com.au/artists/western_australian/painters/macdonald.htm

APPENDIX B

Information Letter for Principals

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROJECT: ASSESSING WESTERN AUSTRALIAN YEAR 11 STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH VISUAL ARTS THEORY
INFORMATION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3

02 December 2013

Dear *Name*

RE: ECU Doctor of Philosophy Research Project - Assessing Western Australian Year 11 Students' Engagement With Visual Arts Theory

My name is Julia Morris and I am a Doctor of Philosophy student from Edith Cowan University, within the Faculty of Education and Arts. I am conducting a small-scale research project investigating Western Australian year 11 students' engagement in visual arts theory, within the context of high socioeconomic schools. I would like to invite *School Name* to take part in the project due to your school's rating on the Index of Community Socio-Education Advantage (ICSEA) scale. *School Name* is one of twenty schools approached for their participation.

The research project seeks to investigate WA year 11 students' level of engagement in visual arts theory; in which theory is defined as the skills required to interpret and respond to an artwork and knowledge of visual artworks, artists and context. The project will analyse data collected from students, teachers, principals and the head of the arts in 12 schools; in order to determine students' cognitive and psychological engagement with visual arts theory, and the how this engagement is affected by the school and home contexts. Your school was selected to participate in this research due to the school's relatively high Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) score, and as a school offering students Stage 2 Visual Art under the guidance of experienced Visual Arts teachers.

What does participation in this research involve?
As the Principal, you or an equivalent representative (if you are unavailable at the time of data collection) will be invited to participate in a short 15 minute phone interview

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about the role of the visual arts in the school community. These interviews will be conducted at the school, at a time that is convenient for you.

The school's involvement in the administration of the research procedures will be kept to a minimum. However, it will be necessary for the school to send information letters and consent forms prepared by the researcher to the parents of the student participants. The research project will also require access to the year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts class, and the teacher of this class; as well as some brief time with the Head of the Arts.

The year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts students will be invited to participate in a confidential questionnaire about their experience of visual arts and art theory inside and outside of school. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The students will access the online questionnaire through an icon on the home screen of the iPad. They will not have access to internet browsers or any other internet application other than the questionnaire. Students who do not wish to participate will remain in the visual art class and undertake normal class activities.

One student from this class will be invited to participate in an interview during the same class (instead of completing in the questionnaire), lasting approximately 30 minutes. This student will be chosen at random. It is anticipated that the questionnaire and interviews will be conducted during visual art class time, or as agreed upon by the researcher and your school.

The visual arts teacher for the year 11 Stage 2 class will be invited to participate in a 40 minute interview about their approach to teaching visual arts theory and their personal views about visual arts and visual arts theory. This interview will be conducted at the school, at a time that is convenient for the visual arts teacher. The visual arts teacher will also be required to distribute and collect student information letters and consent forms prior to the questionnaire and interviews being conducted. The researcher will provide sufficient copies of these documents.

The Head of the Arts will be invited to participate in a short 15 minute phone interview about the role of the Arts in the school, conducted at the school when convenient.

Please note that the researcher requests all interviews to be audio recorded for the purposes of data analysis. All participants that agree to an interview will receive a copy of the interview transcript to check for accuracy, and to amend if required.

What are the potential benefits of my participation?
It is the researcher's aim to provide a set of teaching recommendations to assist in increasing student engagement and therefore performance in visual arts theory. As a Principal, you may direct the Arts Learning Area may use this information to revise their visual arts programs, and you may wish to apply findings (as applicable) to other arts areas.

To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. If any member of a participant group decides to participate and then later changes their mind, they are able to withdraw their participation at any time.

There will be no consequences relating to any decision by an individual or the school regarding participation, other than those already described in this letter. Decisions made will not affect the relationship with the researcher or Edith Cowan University.

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?

Information that identifies anyone will be removed from the data collected. The data is then stored securely in a locked cabinet at Edith Cowan University and can only be accessed by the researcher and supervisors. The data will be stored for a minimum period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed. If a participant withdraws from the research, they will be given the option for their data to be destroyed immediately.

The identity of participants and the school will not be disclosed at any time, except where the researcher is legally required to disclose that information or under the Department of Education *Child Protection* policy. Participant privacy, and the confidentiality of information disclosed by participants, is assured at all other times.

The data will be used for this project, and may form part of the researcher's Doctor of Philosophy degree. Consent for this project will include allowing the researcher to use the data if a Doctor of Philosophy degree is undertaken. After this time, the data will not be used in any future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from participants.

A summary of the research findings will be made available to the participating schools, the Department of Education and Catholic Education Office. The researcher will notify the participating schools at the completion of the research project to arrange a handover of the summary.

Is this research approved?

Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the research, and permission has been obtained from the Department of Education and the Catholic Education Office to conduct this project. I have attached a copy of the research approval letter to indicate this project has met the policy requirements of the Department of Education.

Does the researcher have a Working with Children Check?

Yes. Under the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004, people undertaking work in Western Australia that involves contact with children must undergo a Working with Children Check. The researcher has a current Working with Children Check that will be presented to the school prior to the beginning of data collection.

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What should I do if I would like to participate?

If you would like to participate could you please sign the informed consent document attached and return it in the addressed envelope. If you have any enquiries, could you please conduct them to the researcher, Julia Morris, on XXXX XXX XXX or at jmorri14@our.ecu.edu.au. If you would like to speak with my Principal Supervisor, please contact Dr Geoffrey Lummis on (08) 9370 6847 or at g.lummis@ecu.edu.au. Alternatively, if you would like to speak to an independent person, you may contact ECU's Human Research Ethics Officer on (08) 6304 2170 or at research.ethics@ecu.edu.au. The project number for this research is 8736.

Thank you for your participation in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Morris
ECU PhD Student

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Document for Principals

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY RESEARCH PROJECT: "ASSESSING WESTERN AUSTRALIAN YEAR 11 STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH VISUAL ARTS THEORY"

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR PRINCIPAL (OR REPRSENTATIVE)

By signing this document you are agreeing to the statements below:

1. I have been provided with a copy of an information letter outlining the school's participation in the research study, including my own participation

2. I have read and understood the information provided to me regarding the research study to be undertaken in the school

3. I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions and have been given satisfactory answers to any questions asked regarding the research project

4. I am aware that if I have any further questions I am able to contact the researcher or an alternative contact to discuss the research project

5. I understand that my participation in the research study will involve completing an interview and agree to this

6. I understand that my interview will be audio recorded and agree to this

7. I understand that the information I provide will be kept confidential and that my identity will not be disclosed without my consent

8. I understand that any data collected will only be used for this research project

9. I understand that I am able to withdraw from the research at any time, without explanation or penalty

10. I freely agree to participate within this research project

11. I agree for the school to participate in this research project by sending information and consent letters to Head of the Arts, the Year 11 Visual Arts Teacher, Parents and Guardians and Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts students

12. I am aware that the school's participation in this research will mean giving up time to participate in questionnaires and/or interviews and I agree to this

_____   _____

Principal's first name (please print)   Principal's surname (please print)

_____   _____

Principal's signature   Date

This research project is conducted within the Faculty of Education and Arts at Edith Cowan University. If you have any queries please contact the researcher, Julia Morris, on XXXX XXX XXX or at jmorri14@our.ecu.edu.au. Alternatively you may contact the Principal Supervisor, Dr Geoffrey Lummis, on (08) 9370 6847 or at g.lummis@ecu.edu.au.

Information Letter and Informed Consent Document for Heads of The Arts

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROJECT: ASSESSING WESTERN AUSTRALIAN YEAR 11 STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH VISUAL ARTS THEORY
INFORMATION LETTER TO HEAD OF THE ARTS

Address Line 1
Address Line 2
Address Line 3

Date

Dear *[participant name]*

RE: ECU Doctor of Philosophy Research Project - Assessing Western Australian Year 11 Students' Engagement With Visual Arts Theory

Your school has been invited to participate in a small-scale research project being undertaken as part of the requirements of a Doctor of Philosophy at Edith Cowan University, within the Faculty of Education and Arts.

The research project seeks to investigate WA year 11 students' level of engagement in visual arts theory; in which theory is defined as the skills required to interpret and respond to an artwork and knowledge of visual artworks, artists and context. The project will analyse data collected from students, teachers, principals and the head of the arts in 12 schools; in order to determine students' cognitive and psychological engagement with visual arts theory, and the how this engagement is affected by the school and home contexts. Your school was selected to participate in this research due to the school's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) score, and as a school offering students Stage 2 Visual Art under the guidance of experienced Visual Arts teachers.

What does participation in this research involve?
As the Head of the Arts, you will be invited to participate in a short 15 minute interview about the role of the visual arts in the school community. These interviews will be conducted at the school, at a time that is convenient for you.

The research will involve students to complete a confidential questionnaire on engagement with visual arts theory, which will take approximately 20 minutes and be conducted during a visual arts lesson. Students will access the online questionnaire through an icon on the home screen of iPads provided by ECU, if not using a school-

issued device. They will not have access to internet browsers or any other internet application other than the questionnaire. One student will be invited to participate in an interview during the same class (instead of completing in the questionnaire), lasting approximately 30 minutes. This student will be chosen at random. Students who do not wish to participate will remain in the visual art class and undertake normal class activities. The visual arts teacher will be present to maintain duty of care for all students, and to be available for non-participating students.

The visual arts teacher for the year 11 Stage 2 class will be invited to participate in a 40 minute interview about their approach to teaching visual arts theory and their personal views about visual arts and visual arts theory. This interview will be conducted at the school, at a time that is convenient for the visual arts teacher. The visual arts teacher will also be required to distribute and collect student information letters and consent forms prior to the questionnaire and interviews being conducted. The researcher will provide sufficient copies of these documents.

Please note that the researcher requests all interviews to be audio recorded for the purposes of data analysis. All participants that agree to an interview will receive a copy of the interview transcript to check for accuracy, and to amend if required.

What are the potential benefits of my participation?
It is the researcher's aim to provide a set of teaching recommendations to assist in increasing student engagement and therefore performance in visual arts theory. As the Head of the Arts, you may use the information to revise the school's visual arts programs, or trial the application of these findings in other Arts learning areas.

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?
Information that identifies anyone will be removed from the data collected. The data is then stored securely in a locked cabinet at Edith Cowan University and can only be accessed by the researcher and supervisors. The data will be stored for a minimum period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed. If a participant withdraws from the research, they will be given the option for their data to be destroyed immediately.

The identity of participants and the school will not be disclosed at any time, except where the researcher is legally required to disclose that information or under the Department of Education *Child Protection* policy. Participant privacy, and the confidentiality of information disclosed by participants, is assured at all other times.

The data will be used for this project, and may form part of the researcher's Doctor of Philosophy degree. Consent for this project will include allowing the researcher to use the data if a Doctor of Philosophy degree is undertaken. After this time, the data will not be used in any future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from participants.

A summary of the research findings will be made available to the participating schools, the Department of Education and Catholic Education Office. The researcher will notify

the participating schools at the completion of the research project to arrange a handover of the summary.

Is this research approved?
Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the research, and permission has been obtained from the Department of Education and the Catholic Education Office to conduct this project.

Does the researcher have a Working with Children Check?
Yes. Under the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004, people undertaking work in Western Australia that involves contact with children must undergo a Working with Children Check. The researcher has a current Working with Children Check that will be presented to the school prior to the beginning of data collection.

What should I do if I would like to participate?
If you would like to participate could you please sign the informed consent document attached and return it in the addressed envelope. If you have any enquiries, could you please conduct them to the researcher, Julia Morris, on XXXX XXX XXX or at jmorri14@our.ecu.edu.au. If you would like to speak with my Principal Supervisor, please contact Dr Geoffrey Lummis on (08) 9370 6847 or at g.lummis@ecu.edu.au. Alternatively, if you would like to speak to an independent person, you may contact ECU's Human Research Ethics Officer on (08) 6304 2170 or at research.ethics@ecu.edu.au. The project number for this research is 8736.

Thank you for your participation in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Morris
ECU PhD Student

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY RESEARCH PROJECT: "ASSESSING WESTERN AUSTRALIAN YEAR 11 STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH VISUAL ARTS THEORY"

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR HEAD OF THE ARTS
By signing this document you are agreeing to the statements below:

1. I have been provided with a copy of an information letter outlining my participation in the research study

2. I have read and understood the information provided to me regarding the research study

3. I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions and have been given satisfactory answers to any questions asked regarding the research project

4. I am aware that if I have any further questions I am able to contact the researcher or an alternative contact to discuss the research project

5. I understand that my participation in the research study will involve completing an interview and agree to this

6. I understand that my interview will be audio recorded and agree to this

7. I understand that the information I provide will be kept confidential and that my identity will not be disclosed without my consent

8. I understand that any data collected will only be used for this research project

9. I understand that I am able to withdraw from the research at any time, without explanation or penalty

10. I freely agree to participate within this research project

11. I understand that staff and students within my department will be approached to participate in this research

_____   _____

HOLA's first name (please print)   HOLA's surname (please print)

_____   _____

HOLA's signature   Date

This research project is conducted within the Faculty of Education and Arts at Edith Cowan University. If you have any queries please contact the researcher, Julia Morris, on XXXX XXX XXX or at jmorri14@our.ecu.edu.au. Alternatively you may contact the Principal Supervisor, Dr Geoffrey Lummis, on (08) 9370 6847 or at g.lummis@ecu.edu.au.

Information Letter and Informed Consent Document for Visual Arts Teachers

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROJECT: ASSESSING WESTERN AUSTRALIAN YEAR 11 STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH VISUAL ARTS THEORY
INFORMATION LETTER TO VISUAL ARTS TEACHER

Date

Dear *Name*,

RE: ECU Doctor of Philosophy Research Project - Assessing Western Australian Year 11 Students' Engagement With Visual Arts Theory

Your school has been invited to participate in a small-scale research project being undertaken as part of the requirements of a Doctor of Philosophy at Edith Cowan University, within the Faculty of Education and Arts.

The research project seeks to investigate WA year 11 students' level of engagement in visual arts theory; in which theory is defined as the skills required to interpret and respond to an artwork and knowledge of visual artworks, artists and context. The project will analyse data collected from students, teachers, principals and the head of the arts in 12 schools; in order to determine students' cognitive and psychological engagement with visual arts theory, and the how this engagement is affected by the school and home contexts. Your school was selected to participate in this research due to the school's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) score, and as a school offering students Stage 2 Visual Art under the guidance of experienced Visual Arts teachers.

What does participation in this research involve?
The research will require your Stage 2 Visual Art students to complete a confidential questionnaire on engagement with visual arts theory, which will take approximately 20 minutes and be conducted during a visual arts lesson. Students will access the online questionnaire through an icon on the home screen of iPads provided by ECU, if not using a school-issued device. They will not have access to internet browsers or any other internet application other than the questionnaire. One student will be invited to participate in an interview during the same class (instead of completing in the questionnaire), lasting approximately 30 minutes. This student will be chosen at

random. Students who do not wish to participate will remain in the visual art class and undertake normal class activities. I ask that you will be present to maintain duty of care for all students, and to be available for non-participating students.

As the visual arts teacher for the year 11 Stage 2 class, you will be invited to participate in a 40 minute interview about their approach to teaching visual arts theory and your personal views about visual arts and visual arts theory. This interview will be conducted at the school, at a time that is convenient for you. Please note that the researcher requests all interviews to be audio recorded for the purposes of data analysis. All participants that agree to an interview will receive a copy of the interview transcript to check for accuracy, and to amend if required.

Lastly, as the teacher of the visual arts class you will be required to distribute and collect student information letters and consent forms prior to the questionnaire and interviews being conducted. The researcher will provide you with sufficient copies of these documents.

What are the potential benefits of my participation?
Your students may benefit from the research as it will outline factors that may contribute to increasing engagement in visual arts theory, and they may use these finding to improve their learning in theory tasks.

As a Visual Arts teacher you may benefit from the research as the recommendations will afford reflection into your own practice and give insight into how teaching practice and student learning in visual arts theory can be improved. As the research will also look at students' interest in the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) cross-curriculum priorities, you may learn of how these priorities can be used to increase cognitive and psychological engagement. It is the researcher's aim to provide a set of teaching recommendations to assist in increasing student engagement and therefore performance in visual arts theory.

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?
Information that identifies anyone will be removed from the data collected. The data is then stored securely in a locked cabinet at Edith Cowan University and can only be accessed by the researcher and supervisors. The data will be stored for a minimum period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed. If a participant withdraws from the research, they will be given the option for their data to be destroyed immediately.

The identity of participants and the school will not be disclosed at any time, except where the researcher is legally required to disclose that information or under the Department of Education *Child Protection* policy. Participant privacy, and the confidentiality of information disclosed by participants, is assured at all other times.

The data will be used for this project, and may form part of the researcher's Doctor of Philosophy degree. Consent for this project will include allowing the researcher to use the data if a Doctor of Philosophy degree is undertaken. After this time, the data will

not be used in any future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from participants.

A summary of the research findings will be made available to the participating schools, the Department of Education and Catholic Education Office. The researcher will notify the participating schools at the completion of the research project to arrange a handover of the summary.

Is this research approved?
Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the research, and permission has been obtained from the Department of Education and the Catholic Education Office to conduct this project.

Does the researcher have a Working with Children Check?
Yes. Under the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004, people undertaking work in Western Australia that involves contact with children must undergo a Working with Children Check. The researcher has a current Working with Children Check that will be presented to the school prior to the beginning of data collection.

What should I do if I would like to participate?
If you would like to participate could you please sign the informed consent document attached and return it in the addressed envelope. If you have any enquiries, could you please conduct them to the researcher, Julia Morris, on XXXX XXX XXX or at jmorri14@our.ecu.edu.au. If you would like to speak with my Principal Supervisor, please contact Dr Geoffrey Lummis on (08) 9370 6847 or at g.lummis@ecu.edu.au. Alternatively, if you would like to speak to an independent person, you may contact ECU's Human Research Ethics Officer on (08) 6304 2170 or at research.ethics@ecu.edu.au. The project number for this research is 8736.

Thank you for your participation in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Morris
ECU PhD Student

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY RESEARCH PROJECT: "ASSESSING WESTERN AUSTRALIAN YEAR 11 STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH VISUAL ARTS THEORY"

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR VISUAL ARTS TEACHER
By signing this document you are agreeing to the statements below:

1. I have been provided with a copy of an information letter outlining my participation in the research study

2. I have read and understood the information provided to me regarding the research study

3. I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions and have been given satisfactory answers to any questions asked regarding the research project

4. I am aware that if I have any further questions I am able to contact the researcher or an alternative contact to discuss the research project

5. I understand that my participation in the research study will involve completing an interview and agree to this

6. I understand that my interview will be audio recorded and agree to this

7. I understand that the information I provide will be kept confidential and that my identity will not be disclosed without my consent

8. I understand that any data collected will only be used for this research project

9. I understand that I am able to withdraw from the research at any time, without explanation or penalty

10. I freely agree to participate within this research project

_____   _____

Teacher's first name (please print)   Teacher's surname (please print)

_____   _____

Teacher's signature   Date

This research project is conducted within the Faculty of Education and Arts at Edith Cowan University. If you have any queries please contact the researcher, Julia Morris,

on XXXX XXX XXX or at jmorri14@our.ecu.edu.au. Alternatively you may contact the Principal Supervisor, Dr Geoffrey Lummis, on (08) 9370 6847 or at g.lummis@ecu.edu.au.

APPENDIX F

Information Letter and Informed Consent Document for Visual Arts Students and Parents/Guardians

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROJECT: ASSESSING WESTERN AUSTRALIAN YEAR 11 STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH VISUAL ARTS THEORY

INFORMATION LETTER TO STUDENTS, PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Date

Dear Year 11 Visual Art Students and Parents/Guardians

RE: ECU Doctor of Philosophy Research Project - Assessing Western Australian Year 11 Students' Engagement With Visual Arts Theory

Your school has been invited to participate in a small-scale research project being undertaken as part of the requirements of a Doctor of Philosophy at Edith Cowan University, within the Faculty of Education and Arts.

The research project is investigating WA year 11 students' level of engagement in visual arts theory; in which theory is defined as the skills required to interpret and respond to an artwork, and knowledge of visual artworks, artists and context. The project will analyse data collected from students, teachers, principals and the head of the arts in 12 schools; in order to determine students' emotional and academic engagement with visual arts theory, and the how this engagement is affected by the school and home environments. All students currently studying Stage 2 Visual Art have been invited to participate.

What does participation in this research involve?

The research will involve students to complete a confidential questionnaire on engagement with visual arts theory, which will take approximately 20 minutes and be conducted during a visual arts lesson. Students will access the online questionnaire through an icon on the home screen of iPads provided by ECU or through your own school issued technological devices. They will not have access to internet browsers or any other internet application other than the questionnaire. Students who do not wish to participate will remain in the visual art class and undertake normal class activities. The visual arts teacher will be present to maintain duty of care for all students, and to be available for non-participating students.

What are the potential benefits of my participation?
The results of the study will be given to the participating schools to help teachers and students improve the teaching and learning of visual arts theory. The research will reflect on education in the current Course of Study curriculum with a view to improving visual arts theory in the Australian National Curriculum. The recommendations of the research may assist students in improving their performance in visual arts theory, by giving them tips on what factors increase success in visual art theory tasks.

To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?
Participation in this research project is voluntary. If students choose to participate and then later change their mind, they are able to withdraw from the research. At this time the student may choose whether or not they want their data to be destroyed. There will be no consequences if students choose to withdraw from this project. Decisions made will not affect the relationship with the researcher or Edith Cowan University.

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?
Information that identifies anyone will be removed from the data collected. The data will then be stored securely in a locked cabinet at Edith Cowan University and can only be accessed by the researcher and supervisors. The data will be stored for a minimum period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed.

The identity of students and the school will not be disclosed at any time, except where the researcher is legally required to disclose that information or under the Department of Education *Child Protection* policy. Otherwise, privacy of the participants and the information they give will be assured. No student will be mentioned in the Doctoral thesis by name or in a way that identifies the student, and any information will be treated with the strictest confidence. A summary of the research findings will be made available to your school, the Department of Education and Catholic Education Office. The researcher will notify your school at the completion of the research project to arrange a handover of the summary.

Is this research approved?
Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the research, and permission has been obtained from the Department of Education and the Catholic Education Office to conduct this project.

Does the researcher have a Working with Children Check?
Yes. Under the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004, people undertaking work in Western Australia that involves contact with children must undergo a Working with Children Check. The researcher has a current Working with Children Check that will be presented to the school prior to conducting the research.

What should I do if I would like to participate?

Before agreeing to participate, I ask that year 11 students and parents/guardians discuss the research and what participation in the research means. Then, could you sign the consent forms attached and return them to the year 11 visual art teacher.

If you have any enquiries, could you please conduct them to the researcher, Julia Morris, on XXXX XXX XXX or at jmorri14@our.ecu.edu.au. If you would like to speak with my Principal Supervisor, please contact Dr Geoffrey Lummis on (08) 9370 6847 or at g.lummis@ecu.edu.au. Alternatively, if you would like to speak to an independent person, you may contact ECU's Human Research Ethics Officer on (08) 6304 2170 or at research.ethics@ecu.edu.au and quote the project number 8736.

Thank you for your participation in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Morris
ECU PhD Student

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY RESEARCH PROJECT: "ASSESSING WESTERN AUSTRALIAN YEAR 11 STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH VISUAL ARTS THEORY"

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF YEAR 11 STUDENTS

By signing this document you are agreeing to the statements below:

1. I have been provided with a copy of an information letter outlining my/my child's participation in the research study

2. I have read and understood the information provided to me regarding the research study

3. I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions and have been given satisfactory answers to any questions asked regarding the research project

4. I am aware that if I have any further questions I am able to contact the researcher or an alternative contact to discuss the research project

5. I understand that my/my child's participation in the research study will involve completing a confidential questionnaire and agree to this

6. I understand that my/my child's participation may possibly involve completing an interview and agree to this if approached by the researcher

7. I understand that interviews will be audio recorded and agree to this

8. I understand that the information provided by me/my child will be kept confidential and that my or my child's identity will not be disclosed without my consent

9. I understand that any data collected will only be used for this research project

10. I understand that I/my child is able to withdraw from the research at any time, without explanation or penalty

11. I understand that if I/my child withdraws from the study, any data they have given will not be used in the research

12. I freely agree to participate within this research project

13. As a parent/guardian, I have discussed what it means to participate in this research project with my child

_____   _____

Student's first name (please print clearly)   Student's surname (please print clearly)

_____   _____

Student's signature   Date

_____   _____

Parent/Guardian's first name (please print) Parent/Guardian's surname (please print)

_____   _____

Parent/Guardian's signature   Date

This research project is conducted within the Faculty of Education and Arts at Edith Cowan University. If you have any queries please contact the researcher, Julia Morris, on XXXX XXX XXX or at jmorri14@our.ecu.edu.au. Alternatively you may contact the Principal Supervisor, Dr Geoffrey Lummis, on (08) 9370 6847 or at g.lummis@ecu.edu.au.

APPENDIX G

Original Visual Arts Responding Engagement Instrument

This instrument was used prior to the factor analysis; therefore, it includes items for the original nine factors.

SECTION A: Demographic Information

YEAR 11 STAGE 2 VISUAL ART QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Please do not rush, and answer honestly. If you have any questions while completing the survey, please ask the supervising teacher/s.

Please select only one option unless otherwise stated.

What is your age?
- ○ 15
- ○ 16
- ○ 17

What is your gender?
- ○ Male
- ○ Female

What is your home postcode?

[_____]

What is your parent or guardian's occupation?

| Mother/ Guardian | [_____] |
| Father/ Guardian 2 | [_____] |

Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Do you speak a language other than English at home?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Which language (other than English) do you speak at home?

[_____]

Were your parents/guardians born overseas?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Where were your parents/guardians born?

Mother/Guardian 1	
Father/Guardian 2	

Which type of primary school did you attend?

☐ Government

☐ Independent

☐ Catholic

☐ Other

What subjects are you studying at school this year?

Glossary of Terms for Sections B, C, D & E

GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR SECTIONS B, C, D & E

Visual art or artworks - includes craft, folk art, two and three dimensional works, performance based art, traditional and contemporary art forms

Studio production or Studio work - visual art making activities (e.g. drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics work)

Visual art theory - responding to, evaluating or learning about visual artists, artworks and/or history

Contemporary art - "current, offering a fresh perspective and point of view, and often employing new techniques" (Australian Government, 2009)

SECTION B: Personal Interest in Visual Art

SECTION B: Personal Interest in Visual Arts

Do you practice art outside of school hours?

◯ Yes

◯ No

What type of art do you practice outside of school? Please select all that apply.

☐ Painting

☐ Printmaking

☐ Drawing

☐ Textiles

☐ Sculpture

☐ Digital Media

☐ Jewellery/Metal Work

☐ Other (Please specify)

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Which art movements are you insterested in? Please select all that apply.

☐ Abstraction	☐ Contemporary	☐ Polynesian
☐ African	☐ Fantasy/Surrealism	☐ Pop Art
☐ Ancient (Greek, Roman, Egyptian)	☐ Folk Art	☐ Postmodern
☐ Buddihist/Hindu	☐ Impressionism	☐ Prehistoric (Cave Art)
☐ Byzantine	☐ Indigenous	☐ Realism
☐ Celtic	☐ Japanese	☐ Renaissance/Gothic
☐ Chinese	☐ Middle Eastern (Islamic etc.)	☐ South American (Aztec etc.)
☐ Colonial	☐ Native North American (Pueblo etc.)	☐ Other (Please specify)

Do you read about art?

○ Yes

○ No

Where do you read about art?

☐ Art journals

☐ Books

☐ Magazines

☐ Newspapers

☐ Websites/Blogs

☐ Other (Please specify)

How often do you read about art?

○ Less than 1 hour/week

○ Less than 2 hours/week

○ Less than 3 hours/week

○ More than 3 hours/week

How often do you attend art exhibitions?

○ Never

○ 1-2 times/year

○ 3-4 times/year

○ 5 or more times/year

Does your family own orignial artworks?

○ Yes

○ No

Do you or your family talk about art at home?

○ Yes

○ No

Do you or your family watch art programs on television/on-line?

○ Yes

○ No

Section C - Primary School Visual Art (Pre-Primary to Year 6)

SECTION C: Primary School Visual Arts (Pre-Primary to Year 6)

Did your primary school have a visual arts specialist teacher?

○ Yes

○ No

What gender was your visual arts teacher/s?

○ Male

○ Female

○ Mix of both female and male

Which, if any, of these activities did you participate in during primary school visual arts classes? Please select all that apply.

☐ Visiting art galleries

☐ Verbal discussion

☐ Watching documentaries

☐ Reading art books

☐ Making visual artworks

☐ None of these activities

☐ Other (Please specify)

[   ]

☐ None of these activities

Section D - Middle School Visual Art (Year 7 to Year 10)

SECTION D: Middle School Visual Arts (Year 7 to Year 10)

What gender were your middle school visual arts teacher/s?

○ Male

○ Female

○ Mix of both male and female

How was the time spent in your middle school visual arts class?

○ Mostly studio skills

○ Mostly responding to visual art

○ Balance of both

Did you visit visual art exhibitions as part of your middle school visual arts studies?

○ Yes

○ No

Did your middle school visual arts teacher/s talk about responding/reflecting on Australian visual arts?

○ Yes

○ No

Which Australian art movements were discussed? Please select all that apply.

☐ Abstraction   ☐ Heidelberg School

☐ Australian Modernism   ☐ Indigenous Art

☐ Colonial Art   ☐ Postmodernism

☐ Contemporary Australian Art   ☐ Other (Please specify) [_____]

Other than Australia, which cultures' art practices did you discuss in your middle school visual arts class? Please select all that apply.

☐ America, North - Alaska, Canada, USA, Mexico, Central America   ☐ Islamic - Turkey, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran

☐ America, South - Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Chile, Argentina   ☐ Japan

☐ Aftrica   ☐ Oceania - New Guinea, Pacific Islands, New Zealand

☐ Ancient Cultures - Greek, Roman, Egyptian   ☐ Scandanavia - Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark

☐ China & Korea   ☐ South Asia - India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

☐ Europe, Western - Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Belgium   ☐ Southeast Asia - Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia

☐ Europe, Central - Poland, Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Netherlands, Greece   ☐ United Kingdom (Great Britain, Wales, Scotland) and Ireland

☐ Europe, Eastern - Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Belarus, Montenegro, Albania   ☐ Other (Please specify) [_____]

When responding to visual art works, did your middle school visual art teacher/s encourage you to: Please select all that apply.

☐ Respond to the visual elements of the work

☐ Consider culture, context and time period of the work

☐ Make a judgement about the value or success of the work

☐ Use specific visual arts terminology

☐ Consider how other works/visual artists influence your own visual arts practice

Did your middle school visual arts teacher/s discuss the following roles and values of visual arts? Please select all that apply.

☐ To entertain and engage   ☐ To create and reflect

☐ To transmit values and culture   ☐ To sell

☐ To mourn or celebrate   ☐ For rituals or ceremonies, including religious

☐ To record history   ☐ Other (Please specify) [   ]

Section E - Year 11 Visual Arts

SECTION E: Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts

Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the statements below, at the present time:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I like being challenged to make meaning from visual artworks	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy experiencing new artworks	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like learning about different cultures by studying visual art/artists	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like learning about myself by studying other visual art/artists	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like learning about history through studying other visual art/artists	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION E: Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts

Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the statements below, at the present time:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I want to learn about visual artists	○	○	○	○	○	○
I want to acheive high grades in visual arts theory tasks	○	○	○	○	○	○
I want to look at visual artworks and know how to make meaning from them	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am scared of doing badly at visual arts theory tasks	○	○	○	○	○	○
I want to learn about history through the visual arts	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION E: Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts

Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the statements below, at the present time:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
When I see visual artworks I know what to do to understand its meaning	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I see visual artworks I know what knowledge I will need to analyse it	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know where to get information I need to help me analyse visual artworks	○	○	○	○	○	○
I plan my response to visual artworks before I begin	○	○	○	○	○	○

| I reflect on my work in visual art theory tasks | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

SECTION E: Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts

Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the statements below, at the present time:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I use visual arts terminology when responding to visual artworks	○	○	○	○	○	○
I make judgements about the visual artworks I view	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can identify the media/techniques used to construct visual art	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can explain how different techniques influence the meaning we make from visual artworks	○	○	○	○	○	○
I view others' visual artworks to influence my own visual arts practice	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION E: Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts

Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the statements below, at the present time:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Studying visual arts theory will help me in the future	○	○	○	○	○	○
I make decisions about what visual artworks I want to view	○	○	○	○	○	○
My teacher lets me view visual artworks I am interested in	○	○	○	○	○	○
I think it is important to study visual artists/artworks	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am responsible for my own learning in visual arts	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION E: Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts

Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the statements below, at the present time:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I like making visual art more than responding to it	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy visual arts because my friends are in my class	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy visual arts because I like my teacher	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy writing about visual art I have created	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy talking about visual art I have created	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION E: Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts

Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the statements below, at the present time:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I enjoy viewing visual art	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy reading about visual art	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy watching programs about visual arts	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy visiting art galleries	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy viewing public art	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION E: Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts

Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the statements below, at the present time:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel like my teacher respects me	○	○	○	○	○	○
I prefer to read about or listen to what others say about their artworks	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel like I belong in my visual arts class	○	○	○	○	○	○
My friends encourage me to achieve to the best of my ability in theory tasks	○	○	○	○	○	○
My teacher encourages me to achieve to the best of my ability in theory tasks	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION E: Year 11 Stage 2 Visual Arts

Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the statements below, at the present time:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I do not give up when visual arts theory tasks become challenging	○	○	○	○	○	○
I want to feel like I am successful at visual arts theory tasks	○	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy sharing with others things about visual art I have created	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can express my opinions about visual artworks without fear	○	○	○	○	○	○
The skills I learn from studying visual arts theory help me in everyday life	○	○	○	○	○	○
I believe I am achieving to the best of my ability in visual art theory	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like writing	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like history in general	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like digital media tasks	○	○	○	○	○	○

Rank the images from your most favourite to your least favourite (1 = most favourite, 12 = least favourite)

a

b

c

d

e

f

g

h

i

j

k

l
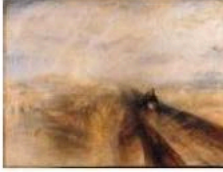
Extended List of VARSEI Observable Indicators and Item Statements

This list represents the VARSEI at the time of pilot. The final items (after factor analysis was conducted) can be found at Appendix M.

Questionnaire Items for the Five Indicators of Cognitive Engagement

Observable Indicator	Questionnaire Items
Autonomy	1. Studying visual arts theory will help me in the future
	2. I make decisions about what visual artworks I want to view
	3. My teacher lets me view visual artworks I am interested in
	4. I think it is important to study visual artists/artworks
	5. I am responsible for my own learning in visual arts
Intrinsic motivation	6. I like being challenged to make meaning from visual artworks
	7. I enjoy experiencing new artworks
	8. I like learning about different cultures by studying visual art/artists
	9. I like learning about myself by studying other visual art/artists
	10. I like learning about history through studying other visual art/artists
Metacognition	11. When I see a visual artwork I know what to do to understand its meaning
	12. When I see a visual artwork I know what knowledge I will need to analyse it
	13. I know where to get information I need to help me analyse visual artworks
	14. I plan my response to visual artworks before I begin
	15. I reflect on my work in visual art theory tasks

Observable Indicator	Questionnaire Items
Setting targets	16. I want to learn about visual artists
	17. I want to achieve high grades in visual arts theory tasks
	18. I want to look at visual artworks and know how to make meaning from them
	19. I am scared of doing badly at visual arts theory tasks
	20. I want to learn about history through the visual arts
Skills & knowledge	21. I use visual arts terminology when responding to visual artworks
	22. I make judgements about the visual artworks I view
	23. I can identify the media/techniques used to construct visual artworks
	24. I can explain how different techniques influence the meaning we make from visual artworks
	25. I view others' visual artworks to influence my own visual arts practice

Questionnaire Items for the Four Indicators of Psychological Engagement

Observable Indicator	Questionnaire Items
Enjoyment	26. I like making visual art more than responding to it
	27. I enjoy visual arts because my friends are in my class
	28. I enjoy visual arts because I like my teacher
	29. I enjoy writing about visual art I have created
	30. I enjoy talking about visual art I have created
Personal interest	31. I enjoy viewing visual arts
	32. I enjoy reading about visual arts
	33. I enjoy watching programs about visual arts
	34. I enjoy visiting art galleries
	35. I enjoy viewing public art
Positive relationships	36. I feel like my teacher respects me
	37. I prefer to read about or listen to what others say about their artworks
	38. I feel like I belong in my Visual Arts class
	39. My friends encourage me to achieve to the best of my ability in theory tasks
	40. My teacher encourages me to achieve to the best of my ability in theory tasks
Self-efficacy	41. I do not give up when visual arts theory tasks become challenging
	42. I want to feel like I am successful at visual arts theory tasks
	43. I enjoy sharing with others things about visual art I have created
	44. I can express my opinions about visual artworks without fear
	45. The skills I learn from studying visual arts theory help me in everyday life
	46. I believe I am achieving to the best of my ability in visual arts theory

APPENDIX I

List of Issues Reported During the VARSEI Pilot

Average time taken to complete questionnaire: 25 minutes	
Feedback item	**Action to be taken**
Primary school sectors – offer multiple choice selection	Done
Add an 'other' option to primary school selection for overseas students	Done
Confused about definition of studio work	Added a definition in a glossary after demographic information
Confused over definition of contemporary	Added a definition in a glossary after demographic information
Spelling error (about) in one of likert scale items	Done
Would like a none option for topics discussed by primary art teacher	Done
Found it difficult to complete Section E	Divided one long table of items in this section so that there are shorter tables/less items per page
Thought questionnaire was too long (took 30 minutes)	Divided one long table of items in this section so that there are shorter tables/less items per page
Question about parent occupation was confusing (don't understand why it was required)	Researcher can explain demographics to students when she administers the questionnaire during data collection. Students who are confused or unsure about giving this information can leave the occupation field blank.
Last section was too long	Divided one long table of items in this section so that there are shorter tables/less items per page
Found it too long overall -25 mins	Divided one long table of items in this section so that there are shorter tables/less items per page. An average of 25 minutes is not too long given the amount of items in the questionnaire.

APPENDIX J

Interview Scripts for All Participant Groups

SEMI-STRUCUTRED SCHOOL PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Hello, _____. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Would like to confirm your consent… Let's begin.

1. How long have you been the principal at this school?

2. What is your background in education? (study and employment)

3. What role do the visual arts play in your school community?

4. Do you think learning visual art theory is important for the students attending here?

Thank you for your participation. I will send you a copy of the transcript as soon as possible. Please don't hesitate to contact me if there are any issues you would like to discuss or if anything else comes to mind.

SEMI-STRUCUTRED HEAD OF THE ARTS INTERVIEW GUIDE

Hello, _____. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Would like to confirm your consent… Let's begin.

1. How long have you been the Head of the Arts at this school?

2. What is your background in the arts? (study and employment)

3. What role do the visual arts play in your school community?

4. Do you think learning visual art theory is important for the students at this school? What benefit do you see for students who study visual arts theory?

5. Do you promote cross-curricular learning within the school? Are the visual arts part of this program?

Thank you for your participation. I will send you a copy of the transcript as soon as possible. Please don't hesitate to contact me if there are any issues you would like to discuss or if anything else comes to mind.

SEMI-STRUCUTRED VISUAL ARTS TEACHER INTERVIEW GUIDE

Hello, _____. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Would like to confirm your consent… Let's begin.

Background information:

1. How long have you been a teacher? How many years have you been teaching visual art?

2. What are your studio interests?

3. Are you a practising artist?

4. Which artists/art movements inspire you?

5. How would you describe the depth/breadth of your knowledge about art history (movements and artists, both historical and contemporary)?

6. What importance do you personally place on responding to art? Do you consider responding as equally important to making art?

Classroom practice:

7. How many hours per week are allocated for year 11 stage 2 visual arts students?

8. How do you break down the time (per week) between art making and arts responses?

9. What teaching strategies or methods do you use to teach arts responses/arts in society?

10. How do you assess arts responses/arts in society?

11. How do your students respond to arts responses and arts in society activities, behaviourally and academically?

12. Can you identify some strengths and limitations of your current approach to teaching arts responses/arts in society with year 11 students?

13. What is your level of confidence in teaching art responses/arts in society?

14. Do you enjoy teaching arts responses/arts in society?

Thank you for your participation. I will send you a copy of the transcript as soon as possible. Please don't hesitate to contact me if there are any issues you would like to discuss or if anything else comes to mind.

At completion of interview:

The following questions will be used for contextual purposes, could you …

Please identify your age range:
☐20-30   ☐31-40   ☐41-50   ☐51-60   ☐Over 60

Please identify your gender?
☐Male   ☐Female

What is your qualification in education?
☐Dipolma. Ed.
☐Bachelor of Education
☐Master of Education
☐Doctor of Philosophy

Current job title: _____

SEMI-STRUCUTRED VISUAL ARTS STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Hello, _____. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Would like to confirm your consent… Let's begin.

Background information:

1. What studio disciplines interest you?

2. What importance do you personally place on responding to art? Do you consider responding as equally important to making art?

3. Does your family like visual arts? Do you often go to galleries? Read or watch programs about art at home?

4. Do you practice your visual art outside of school time?

5. Do you think you will pursue a career within the field of visual arts? Why or why not? What sort of career are you interested in?

6. How much time per week do you spend doing visual arts theory tasks at school? Do you spend more time learning theory or doing practical activities?

7. How would you describe your level of knowledge about art history (movements and artists, both historical and contemporary)?

8.   What does a typical visual art theory lesson look like for you? Can you describe the types of activities you do? Does your teacher let you choose what type of visual art you look at and analyse? How do you feel about this?

9. How do you respond to visual arts theory lessons? How do the other people in your class respond to theory lessons? Are you confident about analysing visual artworks? What about context knowledge?

10. What types of assessments do you complete for visual arts theory?

11. Do you ever think about your visual arts grades? How do you feel when you think about your grades?

12. What is the most rewarding part of studying visual arts theory for you?

Thank you for your participation. I will send you a copy of the transcript as soon as possible. Please don't hesitate to contact me if there are any issues you would like to discuss or if anything else comes to mind.

APPENDIX K

Visual Arts Outcomes in WACF and VACoS

WACF: The Arts Outcomes and Aspects

Arts Ideas	Exploring Developing Creating Interpreting Presenting
Arts Skills and Processes	Skills Technologies Conventions
Arts Responses	Responding Reflecting Evaluating
Arts in Society	Valuing the Arts Valuing Australian Arts Cultural and Historical Contexts Economic Considerations

VACoS: Visual Arts Essential Content

Art Making	Inquiry Visual Language Visual Influence Art Forms, Media and Techniques Art Practice Presentation Reflection
Art Interpretation (Analysis and Investigation)	Visual Analysis Personal Response Meaning and Purpose Social, Cultural and Historical Contexts

Measures of Central Tendency for the VARSEI

Central Tendency Statistics for VARSEI Cognitive Subscale: Autonomy

Questionnaire Items	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. I make decisions about what visual artworks I want to view	4.36	1.14
2. My teacher lets me view visual artworks I am interested in	4.36	1.30
3. I think it is important to study visual artists/artworks	4.50	1.06
4. I am responsible for my own learning in visual arts	4.84	0.89
5. I view others' visual artworks to influence my own visual arts practice	4.71	1.05

Central Tendency Statistics for VARSEI Cognitive Subscale: Intrinsic Motivation

Questionnaire Items	Mean	Std. Dev.
6. I like being challenged to make meaning from visual artworks	4.53	1.19
7. I enjoy experiencing new artworks	5.05	0.79
8. I like learning about myself by studying other visual art/artists	4.41	1.13
9. I like learning about history through studying other visual art/artists	4.11	1.38
10. Studying visual arts theory will help me in the future	3.99	1.22
11. I want to learn about visual artists	4.53	1.08
12. I think it is important to study visual artists/artworks	4.50	1.06

Central Tendency Statistics for VARSEI Cognitive Subscale: Metacognition

Questionnaire Items	Mean	Std. Dev.
13. When I see a visual artwork I know what to do to understand its meaning	4.26	0.99
14. When I see a visual artwork I know what knowledge I will need to analyse it	4.46	0.99
15. I know where to get information I need to help me analyse visual artworks	4.38	1.01
16. I can explain how different techniques influence the meaning we make from visual artworks	4.45	0.85

Central Tendency Statistics for VARSEI Psychological Subscale: Self-efficacy

Questionnaire Items	Mean	SD
17. I enjoy writing about visual art I have created	3.81	1.38
18. I enjoy talking about visual art I have created	3.09	1.42
19. I feel like I belong in my Visual Arts class	4.06	1.19
20. My friends encourage me to achieve to the best of my ability in theory tasks	4.56	1.17
21. I do not give up when visual arts theory tasks become challenging	4.53	1.00
22. I can express my opinions about visual artworks without fear	4.63	1.06
23. The skills I learn from studying visual arts theory help me in everyday life	3.86	1.35
24. I believe I am achieving to the best of my ability in visual arts theory	4.09	1.18

Central Tendency Statistics for VARSEI Psychological Subscale: Student-teacher
Relationships

Questionnaire Items	Mean	SD
25. I feel like my teacher respects me	4.82	1.18
26. I enjoy visual arts because I like my teacher	4.58	1.14
27. I feel like I belong in my Visual Arts class	4.06	1.19
28. My teacher encourages me to achieve to the best of my ability in theory tasks	5.04	1.04

APPENDIX M

Commonly Used Visual Analysis Frameworks

Visual Analysis Frameworks available on the SCSA website.

FELDMAN'S CRITICAL ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

DESCRIPTION	Providing a pure description of the object without value judgments; identifying the key features of the artwork.
ANALYSIS	Formal analysis looks at the way the artist has used art elements and principles to produce the artwork.
INTERPRETATION	Determining what the features suggest and deciding why the artist used such features to convey specific ideas.
JUDGEMENT	Judging a piece of work means identifying the significance of the work and its importance in the visual arts.

TAYLOR'S CRITICAL ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

MOOD *(feeling or atmosphere)*	Does the work affect me the viewer, in any way? Does it capture or convey a mood, atmosphere or emotion which I have previously experienced? Does it capture or convey feelings about life and nature? Can I imagine what the artist's feelings were, or might have been, when producing this work? Is the work quiet or noisy, soothing or disturbing, happy or sad, relaxing or jarring in its mood? What are the qualities inherent to the work which cause it to affect me?
CONTENT	What is the subject matter of the work, what is it about? Is the subject matter incidental or of importance? Is it a vehicle for communication of social, religious, moral, economic or political concerns of either the artist or the client? Was the subject matter based on direct observation, or was it remembered, invented or imagined? Was it the intention to treat representationally or has there been deliberate exaggeration, distortion or abstraction and if so, why? Is the content immediately apparent or are there hidden aspects alluded to through, for example, the use of symbol, metaphor or analogy?
PROCESS	How has the work been arranged? Is this in keeping with its content? What kind of colour scheme has been employed? Is it harmonious or does it make use of contrasts? Is it subtle or vivid? Does one colour predominate or do two or more have equal significance? Is there a main overall shape or is there an interrelating sequence of shapes? Is the design of the work determined by use of recurring shapes, lines, rhythms, tones or forms? Does the work have variety or unity of texture? Does the work hold together as an overall entity or is it pleasing in parts but not as a whole?
FORM	How was the work made and what was it made with? What materials, tools, processes and techniques did the artist use? How might the artist have commenced the work and through what stages did it proceed to completion? Might the artist have made, and made use of, supporting studies, such as sketches, photographs, maquettes, collages and companion works? Do you think the work was executed rapidly or did it evolve slowly over a long period? What range and variety of skills must the artist have required in order to produce this work?

Taylor, R. & Taylor, D. (1990). *Approaching art and design: A guide for students.* Harlow: Longman.

STICI FRAMEWORK

S	**Subject**	What is the artwork about? What themes or ideas are being communicated? Does the work fit into a specific genre? What are the features of the work? Is there any symbolism or hidden meanings in the work? It the subject imagined, remembered or observed? Describe what you can see in the work
T	**Technique**	What materials, skills and processes have been used to create the work? How has the artist executed the work? What effects have been achieved in the work?
I	**Influences**	What influences from other artists can be detected? Do you see any evidence or reference to another art movements, periods, times or cultures in the work? Can any other environmental or contextual influences be identified? Is there any evidence of social, political, theoretical or religious influences in the work.
C	**Composition**	How has the work been arranged? How have art elements and principles been used and to what effect? What compositional devices have been used to execute the work?
I	**Intention**	What messages are being communicated? How are these messages being conveyed? What mood, feeling or atmosphere is created? What is the purpose of the artwork? Why do you think the artist has created the work? Is their a narrative or story to the artwork? Does the work have social or cultural significance? It is confronting or make political comment?

THE FRAMES

Subjective Frame	• What do I see in the artwork? • What do I feel? • What does it remind me of? • What do others (critics/historians) see and feel about this artwork?
Structural Frame	• What materials and techniques have been used? • Discuss the composition. Where does my eye travel when I look at the work? • What elements and principles have been used in the organisation of the work? • What techniques and processes have been used in the construction of the work? How does this contribute to the meaning of the work?
Cultural Frame	• What time period or culture does the artwork belong? • What does the work reveal to you about that culture or society? • What style or movement does the work belong to? • What social and cultural issues or concerns are raised in the work – class, race, gender, religion or politics? • What stylistic influences can be observed?
Postmodern Frame	• Have past work been used in a new way? • Have any images been appropriated and re-contextualised? • In your opinion, what meaning, values, beliefs or opinions does this work communicate today? • How do the opinions of others (critics/historians) support or oppose your judgement of the work?

APPENDIX N

SCSA Year 11 Marking Keys

STAGE TWO
Art Making Marking Key (Production)

Creativity and innovation				
10-9	8-7	6-5	4-3	2-1
Work is strong and ambitious demonstrating originality, creativity and flair.	Work is expressive and shows a sound level of creativity and originality.	Work is imaginative and shows some elements of creativity and originality.	Work shows limited creativity and originality.	Minimal evidence of originality, creativity or engagement.
Score:				

Communication of ideas				
10-9	8-7	6-5	4-3	2-1
Ideas successfully communicated in articulate and expressive work.	Ideas effectively communicated in direct and uncomplicated work.	Literal, obvious or superficial ideas communicated.	Limited ideas communicated.	Ideas insufficiently or ineffectively communicated.
Score:				

Use of visual language				
10-9	8-7	6-5	4-3	2-1
Highly developed application of visual language demonstrated in artwork. Visual relationships strongly evident.	Competent application of visual language demonstrated in artworks. Visual relationships soundly established.	Simple application of visual language demonstrated in artwork. Slight evidence of visual relationships.	Limited application of visual language demonstrated in artwork. Visual relationships unclear.	Minimal application of visual language demonstrated in artwork. Lacks evidence of visual relationships.
Score:				

Use of media				
10-9	8-7	6-5	4-3	2-1
Highly competent selection and use of media demonstrating consistent application and handling.	Appropriate selection and use of media demonstrating satisfactory application and handling.	Basic selection and use of media demonstrating sufficient application and handling.	Limited selection and use of media demonstrating inappropriate application and handling.	Minimal exploration and use of media demonstrating insufficient application and handling.
Score:				

Skills and processes				
10-9	8-7	6-5	4-3	2-1
Highly considered selection and application of skills and processes used to resolve the work.	Appropriate selection and application of skills and processes used to resolve the work.	Basic selection and application of skills and processes used to resolve the work.	Limited selection and application of skills and processes used to resolve the work.	Insufficient or ineffective selection and application of skills and processes used to resolve the work.
Score:				

Total   /50

Comments_____

STAGE TWO
Art Interpretation Marking Key (Critical Analysis)

Visual analysis
- Identify and discuss key features of artwork/s
- Recognise how the artwork/s have been constructed
- Discuss materials, techniques and processes used in artwork/s
- Interpret and make judgements about the artwork/s.

10–9	8–7	6–5	4–3	2–1
Detailed analysis of artwork that explains both the aesthetic qualities and conceptual meanings communicated with selective use of art language.	Objective analysis of artwork and identification of key meanings communicated, using appropriate art language.	Basic analysis of artwork focused mainly on the formal aspects and/or key features, using a limited range of art language.	Analysis of artwork restricted to being largely descriptive and/or emotive with limited use of art language.	Inadequate analysis of artwork with minimal use of art language.

Personal response
- Express personal opinions about the artwork/s
- Support opinions with evidence from artwork/s.

10–9	8–7	6–5	4–3	2–1
Articulates own viewpoint and supports personal opinions with reference to specific features of artwork/s.	Provides reasons for personal conclusions about artwork/s based on subjective and objective evidence.	A few simple reasons offered to support opinions and personal conclusions about artwork/s.	Personal opinions about artwork/s stated but not supported with reasons or evidence.	Little or no attempt to respond to artwork/s. No conclusions formed.

Meaning and purpose
- Offer reasons for why the artwork was produced
- Interpret the meanings communicated by the art work/s
- Discuss alternative readings of artwork/s.

10–9	8–7	6–5	4–3	2–1
Informed and thorough discussion of concepts, meaning, purpose and value of artwork/s, synthesising varied or conflicting interpretations.	Comprehensive interpretation of meanings communicated in artwork/s.	Straight forward and literal interpretation of artwork/s and its meaning.	Limited description of artwork/s.	Little or no attempt to discuss the meaning and purpose of artwork/s. Inadequate response.

Social, cultural and historical contexts
- Discuss the context of artist practice and gives examples of their work
- Discuss the social, cultural and historical influences on the work of selected artists
- Identify the impact of artists on broader context of art practice, production and reading.

10–9	8–7	6–5	4–3	2–1
Extensive explanation of the context and critical discourse surrounding artist/s and their work.	Sufficiently detailed explanation of the context surrounding artist/s and their work.	Satisfactory explanation of the context surrounding artist/s and their work.	Limited explanation of the context surrounding artist/s and their work.	Insufficient information about the context surrounding artist/s and their work.

Total   /40

Comments_____

309

APPENDIX O

Final VARSEI Indicators and Item Statements

Questionnaire Items for the Final VARSEI Cognitive Engagement Scale

Observable Indicator	Questionnaire Items
Autonomy	1. I make decisions about what visual artworks I want to view 2. My teacher lets me view visual artworks I am interested in 3. I think it is important to study visual artists/artworks 4. I am responsible for my own learning in visual arts 5. I view others' visual artworks to influence my own visual arts practice
Intrinsic motivation	6. I like being challenged to make meaning from visual artworks 7. I enjoy experiencing new artworks 8. I like learning about myself by studying other visual art/artists 9. I like learning about history through studying other visual art/artists 10. Studying visual arts theory will help me in the future 11. I want to learn about visual artists 12. I think it is important to study visual artists/artworks
Metacognition	13. When I see a visual artwork I know what to do to understand its meaning 14. When I see a visual artwork I know what knowledge I will need to analyse it 15. I know where to get information I need to help me analyse visual artworks 16. I can explain how different techniques influence the meaning we make from visual artworks

Questionnaire Items for the Final VARSEI Psychological Engagement Scale

Observable Indicator	Questionnaire Items
Self-efficacy	17. I enjoy writing about visual art I have created
	18. I enjoy talking about visual art I have created
	19. I feel like I belong in my Visual Arts class
	20. My friends encourage me to achieve to the best of my ability in theory tasks
	21. I do not give up when visual arts theory tasks become challenging
	22. I can express my opinions about visual artworks without fear
	23. The skills I learn from studying visual arts theory help me in everyday life
	24. I believe I am achieving to the best of my ability in visual arts theory
Student-teacher relationships	25. I feel like my teacher respects me
	26. I enjoy visual arts because I like my teacher
	27. I feel like I belong in my Visual Arts class
	28. My teacher encourages me to achieve to the best of my ability in theory tasks