



Australian Teachers' Perspectives on Children's Television and Screen Media in Education

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Summary of Key Findings

This mixed-method study involved a survey of 106 primary and secondary school educators from across Australia and 17 semi-structured interviews with teachers, as well as educators in school leadership roles.



TV is Used Regularly in the Classroom

- The majority of educators (55%) use television in the classroom weekly or more. This suggests that television is a mainstream educational tool in Australian classrooms across all year levels.
- While television is used frequently in classrooms across all age groups, its use is highest for younger students. 54% of foundation teachers use television weekly or more, compared to one third of Year 12 teachers using it at least once a week.
- Teachers prefer using short-form screen content, such as YouTube clips, in response to time pressures and student attention spans.



Screen Content can Support Cross-Curriculum Priorities

- Teachers responded favourably to using screen media to teach the national curriculum, especially cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities.
- There was a desire for more resources to help make connections between screen content and curriculum requirements, though challenges around funding and discovering educational resources remain.



Using Teaching Resources About TV Shows

- Over half of teachers surveyed (58%) have used educational resources to help them incorporate an Australian children's television program into lessons.
- Top three platforms for accessing Australian television teaching resources:
 - The ABC (16%)
 - *Behind the News* website (16%, ABC)
 - The *My Place* website (15%, ACTF and Education Services Australia)
- Teachers reported they often discover useful screen resources via colleagues.
- Teachers repeatedly identified time as a key obstacle to finding, preparing, and delivering suitable screen content.

Case Study: ACTF Learning Resources

- Teachers respond favourably to ACTF resources, particularly around specific programs.
- Yet awareness and uptake are low



Positive Outcomes From Using TV in Lessons

- Teachers reported that the outcomes of using television are overwhelmingly positive, both educationally (98%) and in terms of student responses (84%).
- Television is not only enjoyable and engaging for students, but is also seen as a tool to help teach complex or abstract concepts.



Teachers Prefer Australian Screen Content

- The large majority of survey respondents reported a strong preference for Australian content (76%) versus international content.
- Teachers feel Australian screen content helps both reflect and instil important cultural values, while providing a more relatable experience.



Fiction and Non-Fiction Equally Valuable

- The vast majority of teachers surveyed (83%) saw equal value in fiction and non-fiction screen content in lessons.
- This balance is reflected in the two most favoured genres: comedy (usually fiction) and documentary (non-fiction).
- Teachers use a wide range of screen content: 55+ programs and films were mentioned by name.



Students Create Screen Content

- Over half of teachers (55%) facilitate students' creation of their own screen content.
- Students primarily work on:
 - script development
 - storyboarding
 - filming
 - editing
- Teachers report that media making develops students' technical skills and engages students across a range of topics, including media literacy.



Screen Content is an Accessible and Accepted Educational Tool

- Almost two thirds of teachers (65%) felt positive about using screen content in lessons as a tool to encourage student engagement.
- Teachers felt the quality of screen content and its presence in education has increased over their careers, facilitated by new technologies.

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Introduction

Australian Children's Television Cultures (ACTC) is a research project based at Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, in collaboration with RMIT University. In partnership with the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF), ACTC are undertaking a four-year project to investigate the roles of Australian children's television and other children's screen entertainment in people's lives, memories, families, and education. The findings and outcomes of this project are designed to inform the Australian children's television sector as it navigates an era of increased viewing options, policy changes, and new viewing practices.

This report presents findings from research that sought to better understand how and why Australian educators use (and/or do not use) children's screen media – especially Australian children's screen media – in the teaching and learning programs of primary schools and high schools. This study explores how contemporary Australian educators incorporate screen media and ancillary screen media resources in their lessons, with a particular focus on television given the medium's decades-long ties with education.

Local television has long been singled out in policy as a medium with a key role in “educating Australian children in culturally specific ways.”¹ Since the 1970s, policy around Australian children's television overtly aimed to serve the “public interest,” including contributing to children's “social, emotional or intellectual development,” and enhancing “a child's understanding and experience” from specifically Australian perspectives.² Education was a key aim of the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF) at its inception in 1982 as the production, policy, and advocacy organisation for local children's television, tied to teachers' call for better quality children's television.³ Also in 1982, the Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) initiated the ATOM Awards for students, educators, and industry practitioners making screen media in Australia and New Zealand. In 1983, the ABC's Charter specified that it had the responsibility to broadcast “programs of an educational nature.”⁴ Since the 1980s, Australian children's television has been seen as a significant source of curriculum-aligned content and related learning activities.

Television is now part of a broader and more complex ecosystem of screen content, particularly given the rise of streaming platforms and social media. Our prior study with Australian parents and guardians identified the popularity of BVOD and SVOD services among children.⁵ Further, our research with children aged 7–9 indicated a preference for Netflix, followed by YouTube, over other screen content providers.⁶ The platform children aged 12–14 were reported to most preference was YouTube (80%), followed by Netflix (77%).⁷ Research also shows the second most popular reason for 14–17-year-olds using social media is entertainment, which includes watching content on platforms such as TikTok and YouTube, behind using social media for connection.⁸ Notably, the short duration of screen content on these social media platforms contrasts “traditional, long-form broadcast formats” for young viewers.⁹ Broader concerns in Australian culture around the nature and high uptake of social media use among children prompted legislation to enforce age restrictions on those accessing social media.¹⁰ Teachers in our study recognised impacts of shifts in screen technologies available to young people on teaching environments.

With the introduction to popular social media apps, it allows students to explore a wide variety of content across different platforms, which is easily accessible to them via phones/tablets.

Survey response from 25–30-year-old female teacher, QLD

¹Jessica Balanzategui, Liam Burke, and Joanna McIntyre, 2021, “What would Bandit do?: reaffirming the educational role of Australian children's television during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond,” *Media International Australia*, Vol. 178, No. 1, p. 55. Joanne Lisosky, 2001, “For all kids' sakes: comparing children's television policy-making in Australia, Canada and the United States,” *Media Culture & Society*, Vol. 23, pp. 835–836.

²Nadia Mecinski and Belinda Mullen, 1999, “Regulation of Children's Television in Australia: Past and Present,” *Media International Australia*, Vol. 93, No. 1, pp. 28–29, 32.

³Norman Lacy and Paul Landa, 1981, “An Australian Television Foundation,” *Media Information Australia*, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 23; Anne Gorman, 1981, “The Australian Children's Television Foundation,” *Metro Magazine*, p. 20.

⁴Australian Broadcast Corporation (ABC), 1983, “The ABC Act 1983,” <https://about.abc.net.au/how-the-abc-is-run/what-guides-us/legislative-framework/> (accessed 27 May 2024).

⁵Liam Burke, Joanna McIntyre, Jessica Balanzategui, Djoymi Baker, 2022, “Parents' Perspectives on Australian Children's Television in the Streaming Era,” Swinburne University of Technology. <https://doi.org/10.26185/xtt0-d294>.

⁶Jessica Balanzategui, Djoymi Baker, Georgia Clift, Liam Burke, and Joanna McIntyre, 2024, “Australian Children's Streaming Video Platform Habits, Fluencies, and Literacies,” Swinburne University of Technology and RMIT University. DOI 10.60836/p6re-bv50; Jessica Balanzategui, Djoymi Baker, and Georgia Clift, 2024, “What is ‘children's television’ in the streaming era?: Assessing content discoverability through Australian children's streaming platform fluencies,” *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, DOI: 10.1177/13548565241264002.

⁷Liam Burke, Joanna McIntyre, Jessica Balanzategui, Djoymi Baker, 2022, “Parents' Perspectives on Australian Children's Television in the Streaming Era,” Swinburne University of Technology. <https://doi.org/10.26185/xtt0-d294>.

While television sets remain the main device on which Australian families watch children's screen content,¹¹ teachers in this study report students do not necessarily use or identify with the term "television."

Don't say 'television', or if you say 'television', make sure you say 'Netflix' or 'YouTube' or 'streaming'.

Amy, Secondary School Teacher, VIC

Screen media literacy education is an important part of contemporary media literacy education more broadly, which may include "informing youth about media, helping young people become more critical media users, and working with people to create media content."¹² Media literacy education encourages students to actively consider and engage with the "values and ideas" they encounter in media, how it is made, and reflect on media use by themselves and others.¹³ A prior 2021 Australian study demonstrated that "overwhelmingly, primary and secondary school teachers view critical thinking about media as important."¹⁴ The educational role of screen media also extends beyond the classroom environment, with parents and guardians identifying the importance of locally produced programs in modelling Australian cultural values and important skills, such as water and sun safety.¹⁵ For the purposes of this study, we sought to discover how audio-visual screen media, such as television, film and online clips, were being used in Australian schools, both as a component of media literacy education, and as a tool in teaching other areas of the curriculum.

As Cunningham et al. note, digital technologies have made screen media more accessible in formal education settings, providing opportunities for "structured exposure to Australia's audio-visual heritage," but which are nonetheless difficult to track.¹⁶ While the Australian curriculum (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority – ACARA)¹⁷ is intended to provide nationwide consistency, implementation differs across states and territories, resulting in "variation in the use of screen content across the country."¹⁸

This report contributes to the understanding of Australian educators' usage patterns and preferences around screen media in lessons, evidencing its role as a regular and accepted teaching tool across multiple learning areas.

¹¹Amber van der Wal, Patti M. Valkenburg, and Irene I. van Driel, 2024, "In Their Own Words: How Adolescents Use Social Media and How It Affects Them," *Social Media + Society*, Volume 10, Issue 2, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305124124859>

¹²Anna Potter and Jeanette Steemers, 2021, "Children and the Media Industries: An overlooked but very special 'television' audience," in Paul McDonald (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Media Industries*, Abingdon: Routledge, p. 247.

¹³Rod McGuirk, 2024, "Australia proposes legal minimum age for children accessing social media," *AP News*, 10 September, <https://apnews.com/article/children-ban-social-media-australia-87f3c0cd5609329fd64852b3defc289>

¹⁴Liam Burke, Joanna McIntyre, Jessica Balanzategui, Djoymi Baker, 2022, "Parents' Perspectives on Australian Children's Television in the Streaming Era," Swinburne University of Technology. <https://doi.org/10.26185/xx0-d294>.

¹⁵Jessica Harvey, Tracy A. McNelly, and Jennifer A. Buxton, 2022, "Toward a Media Literate World: Exploring Secondary Educators' Challenges Incorporating Media Literacy Education," *Media Education Research Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 3, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7459944>

¹⁶Kristy Corser, Michael Dezuanni, and Tanya Notley, 2022, "How news media literacy is taught in Australian classrooms," *The Australian Educational Researcher*, Volume 49, p. 764.

¹⁷Jocelyn Nettlefold and Kathleen Williams, 2021, "News Media Literacy Challenges and Opportunities for Australian School Students and Teachers in the Age of Platforms," *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 34, <https://doi.org/10.23860/JMLE-2021-13-1-3>

¹⁸Liam Burke, Joanna McIntyre, Jessica Balanzategui, Djoymi Baker, 2022, "Parents' Perspectives on Australian Children's Television in the Streaming Era," Swinburne University of Technology. <https://doi.org/10.26185/xx0-d294>.

¹⁹Stuart Cunningham, Michael Dezuanni, Ben Goldsmith, Maureen Burns, Prue Miles, Cathy Henkel, Mark Ryan, and Kayleigh Murphy, 2016, *Screen content in Australian Education: Digital Promise and Pitfalls*, Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology, Australia, <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/101132/>

²⁰Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), *Australian Curriculum*. Sydney, NSW, Australia, <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> (accessed 12 April 2024).

²¹Michael Dezuanni, Stuart Cunningham, Ben Goldsmith, and Prue Miles, 2017, "Teachers' curation of Australian screen content for school-based education," *Media International Australia*, Vol. 163, No. 1, p. 88, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X17693701>

Methods and Study Design

This mixed-method study involved a survey of 106 educators from across Australia, collected through Qualtrics online software, and 17 filmed in-depth semi-structured interviews with primary and secondary school teachers, as well as educators in school leadership roles. We commenced with an initial 11 interviews in 2022, using this qualitative data to inform the design of our 2023 survey, which was followed by six additional interviews in 2023 to provide further explanatory depth.¹⁹ The survey produced both quantitative and qualitative data in the form of open-response questions, while the interviews “illustrate real ways of speaking” in person, that thereby allowed us to “enrich” the quantitative data with more detailed individual experiences.²⁰ Semi-structured interviews in particular provide room for reflection upon everyday practices and experiences²¹ that can be difficult to capture in the limitations of a survey. As such, mixed methods are used here because “multiple approaches can generate more complete and meaningful understanding.”²² The survey and interviews asked teachers whether and how frequently they use television or other audio-visual screen content in their lessons, as well as screen media making, but also included “opinion or value questions”²³ to gauge educators’ attitudes towards such practices. Teachers were interviewed for anywhere between 15 and 60 minutes depending upon their availability, with a mix of in-person and online interviews.

The 106 educators²⁴ who completed the full survey represented an even mix of adult age groups and a range of teaching year levels across primary and high school years (see Appendix One). The average time that respondents had been employed in education was 16.3 years. Across their careers, survey respondents worked in major cities (54%), inner and outer regional areas (70%), or remote/very remote areas (23%).²⁵ Notably, the majority of survey participants self-identified as women (86%) and most respondents worked in the government sector (84%). Further, while we received survey responses from all Australian states and territories, the majority came from Queensland (58%). Our 11 initial interviewees were from a relatively even spread of states and territories, and analysis of this interview data informed the survey design. Subsequent post-survey interviews were predominantly with those from the ACT through snowballing recruitment, which resulted in a greater range of individual educator roles. The over half of the 17 interview participants were women (65%). This weighting is reflective of the gender division in Australia’s teaching workforce, as women constituted 71.9% of full-time teachers in 2023.²⁶ Our survey sample size and gender distribution are comparable to other recent studies of teachers and media literacy, such as Harvey, McNelly and Buxton’s 2022 study that had a survey sample of 69 secondary educators, the majority of whom were women.²⁷

¹⁹Jane Ritchie and Rachel Ormston, 2014, “The application of qualitative methods to social research,” in J. Ritchie et al (eds) *Qualitative Research Practice*, Los Angeles: Sage, pp. 42-23. Manuel Puppis and Hilde Van den Bulck, 2019, “Doing Media Policy Research,” in Hilde Ven den Bulck et al (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Methods for Media Policy Research*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 28.

²⁰Matthias Frey, 2021, *Netflix recommends: algorithms, film choice, and the history of taste*, Oakland, California: University of California Press, p. 123. We used the services of T garage consultancy to provide an overview of our Qualtrics survey data, and combined this with thematic coding analysis of our interview data.

²¹Anne Galletta, 2013, *Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond: From Research Design to Analysis and Publication*, New York: New York University Press, p. 24.

²²Jennifer C. Greene, 2007, *Mixed Methods in Social Inquiry*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. xxii.

²³Norman E. Wallen and Jack R. Fraenkel, 2001, *Educational Research: A Guide to the Process*, second edition, Mahwah, N.J. & London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, p. 443.

²⁴Total responses were n=178, of which n=159 met the criteria of being current or former Australian educators over 18. Of these, n=106 educators completed the full survey.

²⁵These statistics add up to more than 100% because they represent overall career trends (rather than only the respondents’ most recent position).

²⁶Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2023, “Staff Numbers, Key Facts,” *National Report on Schooling in Australia*, Sydney, NSW, Australia, <https://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/staff-numbers> <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> (accessed 12 April 2024).

²⁷Jessica Harvey, Tracy A. McNelly, and Jennifer A. Buxton, 2022, “Toward a Media Literate World: Exploring Secondary Educators’ Challenges Incorporating Media Literacy Education,” *Media Education Research Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 1-21, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7459944> Jocelyn Nettlefold and Kathleen Williams, 2021, “News media literacy challenges and opportunities for Australian school students and teachers in the age of platforms,” *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 28-40, <https://doi.org/10.23860/JMLE-2021-13-1-3>

1. TV is Used Regularly in the Classroom

More than half of educators (55%) surveyed reported using television in lessons at least once a week, with 23% of teachers using it on average once a week, while 22% use it twice or more a week. Only one in 10 teachers do not use television in their classes at all. This prevalence suggests that television is a mainstream educational tool in Australian classrooms across all year levels.

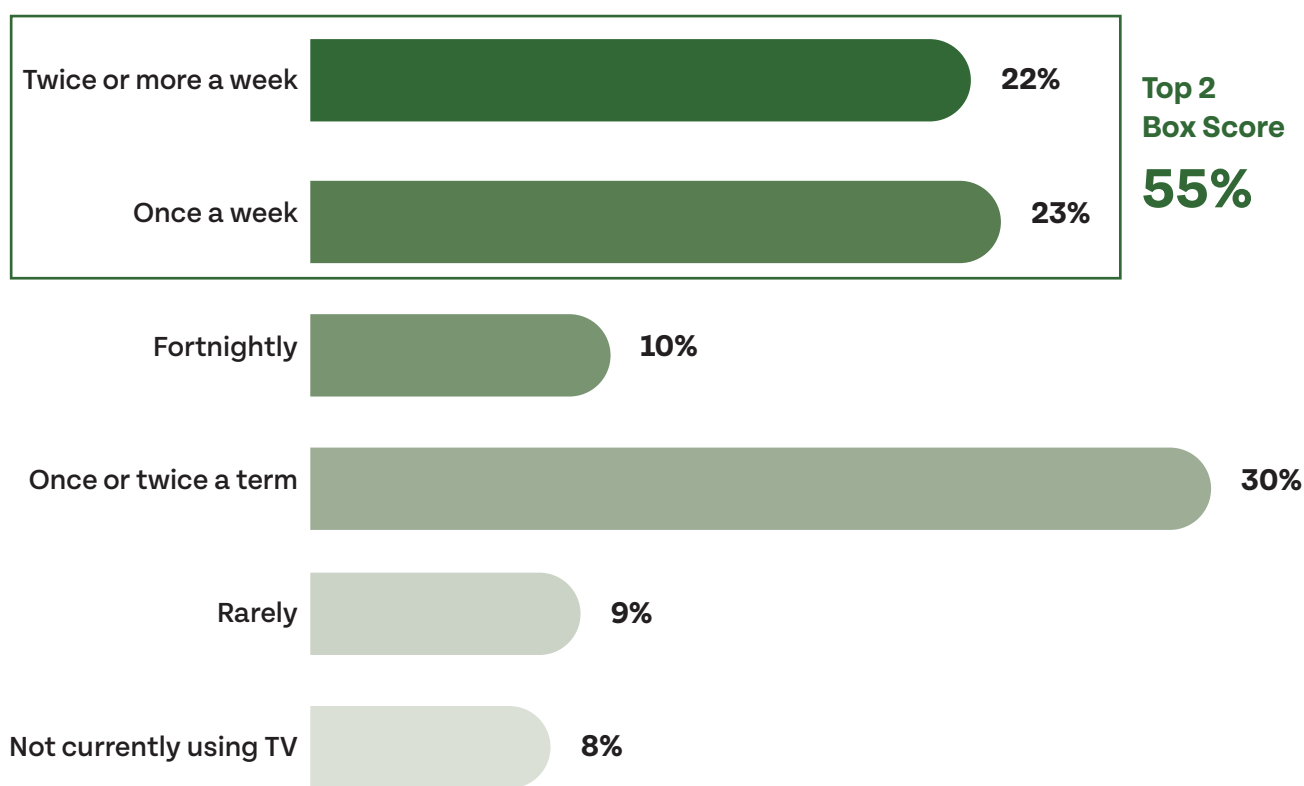


Figure 1 Frequency of TV Use in Classes

In interviews, when reflecting on using screen content in lessons, teachers often commented on the importance of teaching students how to understand and critically engage with screen media.

Media literacy is such an important thing first and foremost.

Alex, Primary and High School Principal, NSW

I'm a great believer in using visual text in the classroom... [Students] think they know everything about it, but at the same time, they need to be able to deconstruct that text just as much as all of the other ones we do, if not more so.

Alison, Secondary School Teacher, SA

While television is used frequently in classrooms across all year levels, its use was highest for Foundation, the first year of primary schooling.²⁸ More than half (54%) of Foundation teachers reported using television weekly or more, and this percentage dropped consistently with increasing age groups, with only one third of Year 12 teachers using it at least once a week.

Comments from teachers in the survey suggested screen media is an effective tool to engage young students who may have short attention spans. These trends may also reflect availability of content. In interviews, teachers commented on the wide range of television programs available for younger viewers, and a relative paucity of suitable material to engage ‘tweens’ (ages 8–12 years).

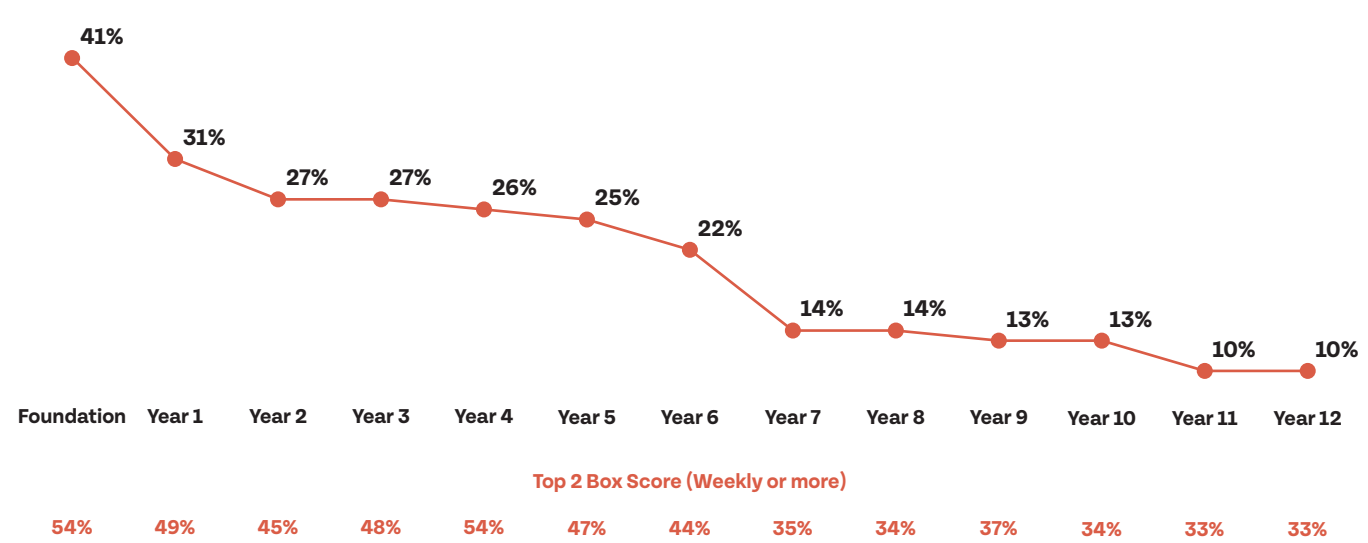


Figure 2 Teachers Using Television in Classes Twice a Week or More

I think it is also hard for that older primary school age group because there’s so much junior content. And then there’s maybe a lot of sort of high school teen drama, that finding material that’s really suitable for year three to six can be challenging.

Amelia, Primary School Teacher, ACT

Have seen ‘ClickView’ demonstrated at the trade fair but unfortunately it was deemed too expensive with other competing priorities. Seems it would have great potential to support teachers in identifying and accessing content.

Survey response from 51–55-year-old female teacher, QLD

Teachers in our survey and interviews sourced screen content through a variety of online services: ABC iView, YouTube, ClickView, SBS on Demand, the National Sound and Film Archive, and state and territory Department of Education portals (such as eLearn in the Northern Territory and Arc Learning in Victoria)²⁹. Some teachers noted paid subscription services such as ClickView were not always available due to budgetary constraints.

²⁸Foundation is the term used for the first year of primary school in Australia. Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Australian Curriculum. Sydney, NSW, Australia, https://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/Information_for_parents_Foundation_year.pdf

²⁹See also Michael Dezuanni, Stuart Cunningham, Ben Goldsmith and Prue Miles, 2017, “Teachers’ curation of Australian screen content for school-based education,” Media International Australia, Vol. 163, No. 1, pp. 91-92, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X17693701>.

Screen Delivery Technologies

To deliver screen content in lessons, the two top technologies were computers (79%) and SMART Boards (interactive whiteboards with touch detection, 62%).

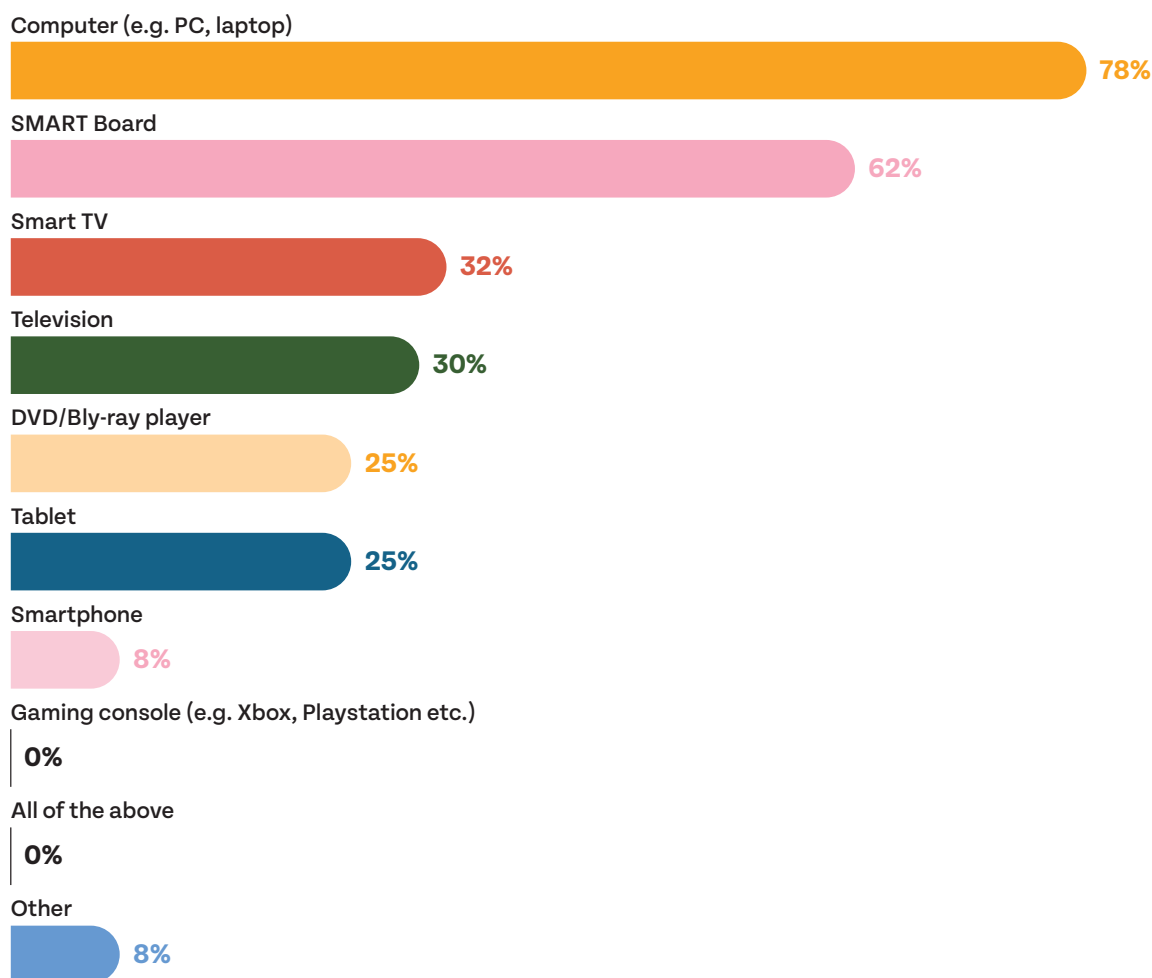


Figure 3 Devices Used to Show Children's Screen Content in Lessons

Preference for Short Clips

Responses in both the survey and interviews indicate teachers prefer using short online clips in lessons (rather than whole movies or episodes), in response to time pressures and student attention spans.

2-7 min clips are the most usable. Shows which are longer than that I don't have the time to pre-watch to check for content relevance and I don't have time to play to my class either.

Survey response from 25–30-year-old female teacher, QLD

Teachers use screen media that already has a short duration, such as advertisements (see also Point 7, pp. 19–21) or time permitting, select short excerpts from longer screen materials.

I think with the time thing, people think, 'Oh, but how can we watch a whole series of that?' It may not be... sometimes it's just the right little snippet. Because it might link to one of our school values.

Marc, Acting Principal, ACT

Teachers indicated they would welcome more pre-prepared short-form content to use in their lessons. These responses align with a trend identified in a 2016 study, in which teachers suggested that because screen media is now an everyday part of lessons, "shorter clips are more likely to be played to enhance students' learning."³⁰ The high frequency of television use in lessons identified in our own study should be read with this continuing trend in mind, indicating the regular use of shorter screen clips rather than necessarily indicating complete television episodes or films. Teacher requests for pre-prepared short excerpts for the classroom nonetheless presents practical challenges, both in terms of funding the creation of clips for educational use, and in terms of making them easily discoverable, discussed further in relation to educational resources below (see Point 3, pp. 9–10).

³⁰Stuart Cunningham, Michael Dezuanni, Ben Goldsmith, Maureen Burns, Prue Miles, Cathy Henkel, Mark Ryan, and Kayleigh Murphy, 2016, Screen content in Australian education: Digital promise and pitfalls, Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology, Australia, p. 12, <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/101132/>

2. Screen Content can Support Cross-Curriculum Priorities

In our study, teachers were enthusiastic about the ways screen content can be helpful in implementing cross-curriculum priorities.

In the Australian Curriculum version 9.0, the three cross-curriculum priorities are: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures; Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia; and Sustainability. These priorities are not learning areas in themselves but are integrated into learning area content. They are designed to enable "students to engage with and better understand their world."³¹ These priorities are applied in lesson plans in varying ways.

Teachers were particularly positive about using screen media for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

I already use programs with an ATSI [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander] perspective (Little J & Big Cuz, Languages of Our Land) in my teaching and follow up with discussions about why this is important for ATSI people. I would imagine that there are also ways to link this in with other areas – e.g. Dirt Girl World could be used for sustainability.

Survey response from 31–35-year-old female teacher, ACT

There is a plethora of Indigenous content out there, of children's television that we can draw upon to engage our Indigenous students and also teach non-Indigenous students more about Indigenous culture

Ash, Secondary School Teacher, WA

Notably, however, our research found teachers would like to know about - and have easy access to - more screen content that directly addresses all the cross-curriculum priorities in a range of age-appropriate ways. They would also like additional resources to help teachers, students, and even parents engage with these key issues in respectful ways.

It's the cross-curriculum priorities that I believe are the final frontier for any support... So, moving forward maybe considering the cross-curriculum priorities in programs, and episodes, and short clips that can support teachers with implementing programs to that level.

Mark, Assistant Principal, NT

There's lots of work that we hear in terms of actual just information-type content... about sustainability. But I think if there was something more fictional which was about people changing the world or having impact, that could be really helpful.

Amelia, Primary School Teacher, ACT

³¹Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2022, "Cross-curriculum priorities," <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/f-10-curriculum-overview/cross-curriculum-priorities> [accessed 22 May 2021].

General Capabilities

In survey responses and interviews teachers were positive about using screen content to help their lessons address general capabilities: Critical and Creative Thinking; Digital Literacy; Ethical Understanding; Intercultural Understanding; Literacy; Numeracy; Personal and Social Capability. The general capabilities are designed to support learning area content to “equip young Australians with the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions” they will need in their lives and work.³² Some general capabilities align with specific learning areas, while others are incorporated across all areas.

Screen content was seen as a good way to engage with the Personal and Social Capability, as well as Critical and Creative Thinking.

It creates a great jumping off platform for students to practice these capabilities through meaningful discussions and inspiration for creating their own digital content.

Survey response from 25–30-year-old female teacher, WA

I find that kids’ TV... works really well with our lower students, just in regards to helping them grapple with, for them, what are some really big concepts in terms of analysis...

Cody, Secondary School Teacher, NT

You can teach them skills to question... and say, ‘Okay, whose voice aren’t we hearing in this? What about if you were in this, what would your response to that scene be?’

Alison, Secondary School Teacher, SA

Nonetheless, teachers expressed a desire for more instructional screen content around the general capabilities, with programs or short clips that directly explain and demonstrate specific content and skills.

I’ve definitely not been able to find Australian TV, especially, I would say, around some literacy ideas, like spelling... if I’m teaching a spelling rule, in Australia, we have an accent, and that accent affects the way children spell.

Jasmine, Primary School Teacher, NT

Our research found teachers would welcome further resources, time-saving suggestions, and suitable short clips to use in class that align with the curriculum, cross-curriculum priorities, and general capabilities. As noted above (Point 1, p. 6), there are challenges associated with these requests around funding and discoverability.

³²Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2022, “General Capabilities,” <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/f-10-curriculum-overview/general-capabilities> [accessed 22 May 2024].

3. Using Teaching Resources About TV Shows

Over half of teachers surveyed (58%) have used educational resources about at least one Australian children's television program to help them effectively incorporate Australian screen media in their lessons.

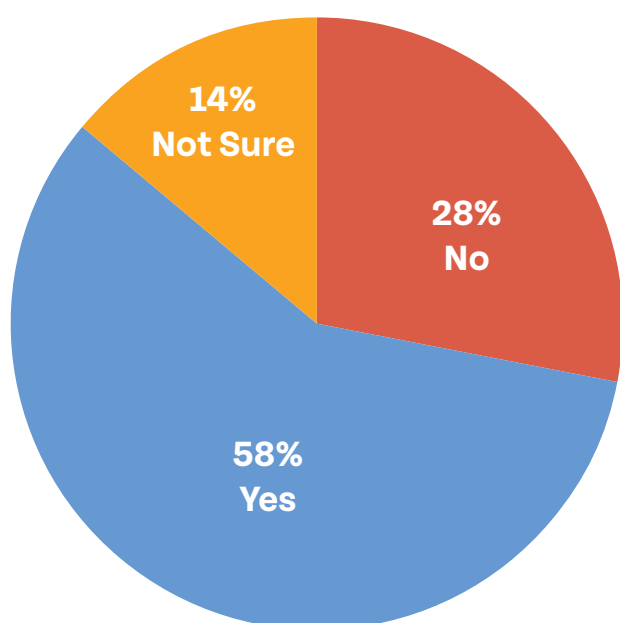


Figure 4 Teachers' Use of Screen Educational Resources

The key platforms for accessing Australian television teaching resources consistently mentioned by name were:

- The ABC (16%)
- The *Behind the News* website (16%, ABC)
- The *My Place* website (15%, ACTF and Education Services Australia).

The survey showed teaching guides were the most used type of resources (33%). Teaching or study guides provide lesson activities based on specific screen texts, predominantly films, television programs, or episodes. Depending on the platform, teaching guides are searchable by screen title, year level, learning area, topic keywords, cross-curriculum priorities, or general capabilities.

Teaching guides provided by Screen Australia, NITV, ABC, and SBS are very useful as overviews and starting points. They often provide links to further reading and resources. They also give an overview of a TV series episode by episode, which informs how I select content.

Survey response from 41–45-year-old female teacher, QLD

I think that My Place is a great example of a project that's really helpful for teaching Australian history, but I think something along those lines in different areas would also be really helpful. You know, having a book, having a show, having teacher resources, they're all really, really helpful in terms of being able to teach it easily.

Amelia, Primary School Teacher, ACT

Several teachers noted in interviews that they were more likely to find out about useful resources from colleagues than from, for example, promotional materials. Teachers frequently stated they were keen to utilise resources that help them include new screen media in lessons, but consistently cited time pressures as being a significant obstacle to locating new materials and incorporating new ideas and screen texts into lesson plans.

Given the ABC and its 'news for kids' show *Behind the News* (BTN) were the two most cited sources used to incorporate television into lessons, accessing relevant screen content may now be easier for Australian teachers. In mid-2024, the ABC launched four new digital live streams for children and families, one of which is the *BTN* Stream, touted as offering "the best of *BTN* and educational entertainment".³³

Even so, however, teachers already using educational resources for screen media pointed to the need for professional development across the sector so that teachers would have a better understanding of where to easily find suitable materials.

³³BTN Stream, 2024, <https://iview.abc.net.au/show/btn-stream>

We could get could definitely, definitely have more professional learning... It's just that kind of perspective about TV not being serious or the resources being sort of another thing to do. Whereas actually... they're so wonderful and it's so cleverly constructed that they would save people time.

Jo, Primary & Secondary Teacher, ACT

While the ABC, BTN and *My Place* were overwhelmingly the three most named sites for accessing resources, teachers also cited they use: Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) Study Guides; screen education resources provided through local state or territory Department of Education portals (such as Arc Learning in Victoria); the Screen Australia website; and resources created by the Australian Children's Television Foundation (discussed further below).



Case Study: ACTF Teaching Resources

In interviews, teachers noted the importance of having localised teaching resources around Australian texts, and commented favourably on resources available from the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF):

I think that having that teaching toolkit is absolutely perfect... I think we can make it work from the very young.

Jo, Primary & Secondary Teacher, ACT

I've checked out their learning package that's on the website... I think the resources are good, in that, they're realistic and they're practical and they're not something you have to read and then adjust for the actual real-world classroom. They're written ready to go.

Daniel, Secondary School Teacher, TAS

In the survey, when asked directly about ACTF educational resources, only one third of teachers were aware of them.

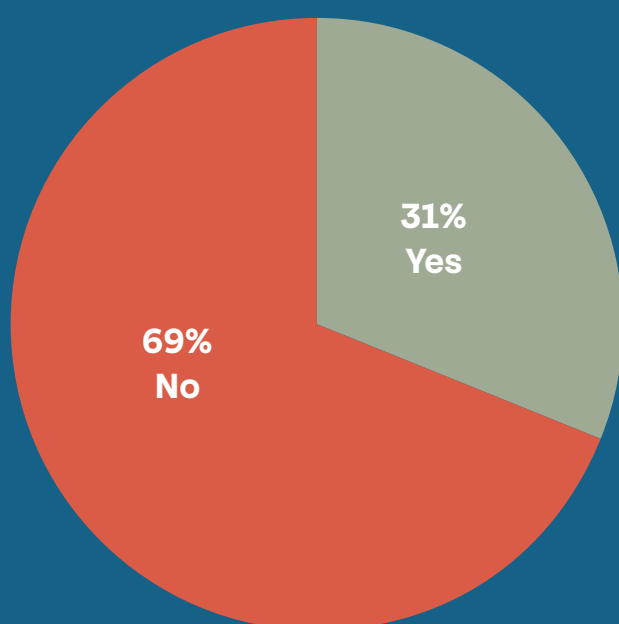


Figure 5 Teachers' Awareness of ACTF Educational Resources

This awareness came primarily from the ACTF website (52%). Social media (24%), conference presentations (24%) and teaching associations (21%) were other means by which they had become aware of ACTF teaching resources. Of these teachers, most looked at the Teaching Toolkits (64%) and the ACTF Learning website (55%).

Although the survey respondents who were aware of ACTF resources was small (n=31), 68% of those had positive feedback. One teacher commented that they were "Usually, a very high standard of content that enables me to get ideas for developing my own curriculum to suit my students." Another stated, "They are fantastic and easy to navigate." There was some feedback indicating that teachers felt the resources were better suited to younger year levels, and would like to have seen more relating to science.

Only half the teachers who were aware of the ACTF educational resources in the survey reported using them in the classroom. However, the interviews help to clarify that many teachers do not necessarily use such resources verbatim, but rather to provide their team or themselves with ideas.

I've gotten ideas from them... the impact's not going to be there if you don't have the agency... you're not only building capacity and capability for your students but also for your staff as educators as well.

Carolyn, Primary School Teacher, ACT

We'd like to just look at some resources and maybe overlay... some of our key inquiries that happen in a year... Here's a list of possible Foundation resources that could actually help to launch or support that learning, just to kind of give people a bit of a menu to just start, doesn't mean they have to use it, but it might just kick-start some curiosity.

Marc, Acting Principal, ACT

Nonetheless, as with the survey, many teachers in our interviews were not aware of the resources on offer through the ACTF, and noted that time constraints were often a factor.

Several of our interviewees who were already using ACTF educational resources had first become aware of them directly through ACTF staff visiting their school. Teachers reported positive student outcomes from this interaction but acknowledged that it is not feasible for ACTF staff to visit every school.

How can we make sure that teachers know what's out there in a very time effective way? ... There's got to be a more effective way of sharing than one person telling another person.

– Marissa, Team Leader, Primary, ACT

Most teachers were not aware of the ACTF Learning News email newsletter to which they could subscribe, to receive updates about new resource releases and educational events. In some cases, this included teachers already using other ACTF resources:

It could be really helpful, I think if, say, the Children's Television Foundation put out something for educators, which maybe just even like a newsletter that introduced some of the new resources that are out there.

Primary School Teacher, ACT

These results suggest that although ACTF educational resources are valued by those who use them, awareness in the sector remains statistically low.

The Northern Territory Department of Education site eLearn provides an example of how ACTF programs and resources can be shared with teachers:

There was a need of a place where we call it the one-stop shop for them to come in and find information... they can find all the things that they need to know about, for example, the ACTF... They're just picking out exactly what they want to teach in the classroom. The resources there are available that go with them, they really like it.

Liliana, eLearn, NT

On the eLearn site, teachers access teaching and learning materials related to their specific teaching area, with a resource library that includes Australian Children's Television Foundation television series and films, as well as related supporting materials, such as program guides. The licensing of ACTF screen content and education resources through local state and territory Department of Education portals may be a more effective way to reach teachers than the ACTF website itself given the practical and financial difficulties in addressing the lack of teacher awareness.



4. Positive Outcomes From Using TV in Lessons

Nearly all survey respondents (98%) reported positive educational outcomes when using children's television in the classroom.

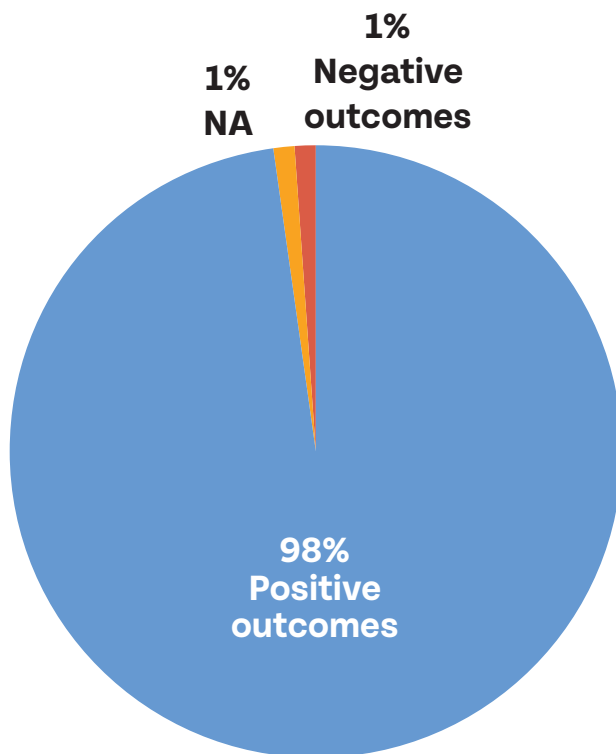


Figure 6 Educational Outcomes Using Children's Television in the Classroom

In survey open responses, teachers provided a range of explanations why they felt television helps with educational outcomes:

a. Engagement & Relatability

Engagement and relatability emerged as strong themes in our interviews. Similarly, this was the most common response in the survey, with screen media providing children with an additional way of connecting with the lesson material.

I find that the students relate to the information I am teaching more and it can also help students who may be struggling to understand content more.

Survey response from 25–30-year-old female teacher, QLD

If this is what the students are engaging in, well, how can we connect that to the curriculum? ... We have a responsibility to educate them about critical literacy.

Marissa, Team Leader, Primary, ACT

If you can engage them in a way that authentically improves their outcomes, where it authentically engages them in a teaching and learning program, I think the way in which you do that is completely your prerogative as a teacher. If they are more inclined to engage with a digital text, or a television program, well then that's what you do.

Mark, Assistant Principal, NT



b. Variety in Learning

Television and screen media were seen as providing variety in teaching and learning methods, offering an accessible way of delivering content and breaking up the schedule.

I find using a variety of media can help engage students and bring what they are reading to life.

Survey response from 31–35-year-old female teacher, VIC

c. Audio-Visual Reinforcement

Teachers asserted that screen content can provide audio-visual reinforcement of concepts from lessons in a way that is memorable to students, such as via distinctive visuals or songs.

It helps reinforce the teaching I have done as they shown in another way... students use strategies shown in clips.

Survey response from 31–35-year-old female teacher, VIC

d. Emotional & Social Understanding

Survey respondents observed television can be an especially valuable tool for exploring emotions and social dynamics, helping students to understand both themselves and others.

Looking at emotions in Little Lunch & understanding that they often felt the same way or had similar people in their class.

Survey response from 36–40-year-old female teacher, NT

Opportunities to view cultures and communities different to their own, particularly relevant in the very remote schools I have worked in.

Survey response from 36–40-year-old female teacher, QLD

The large majority of teachers also reported their students' responses to using children's television in the classroom have been overwhelmingly positive (84%).

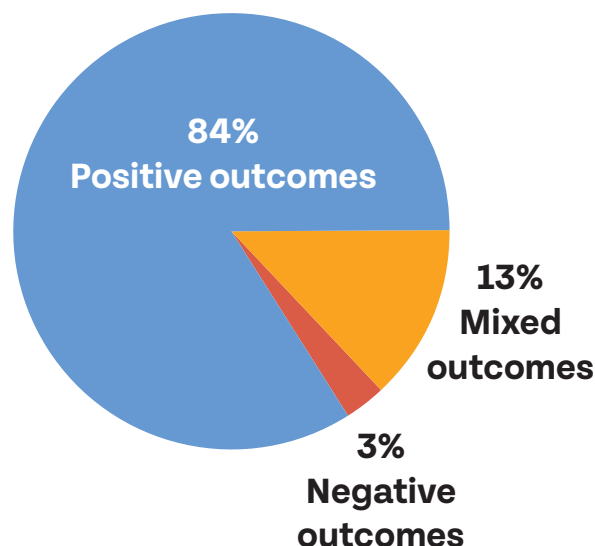


Figure 7 Student Responses to Television in the Classroom

They are always really happy to engage, and particularly if it's something that's actually right at their right level... I think it's about ... setting it up right, too, and saying, well, we're going to watch this, and then afterwards I'm going to ask you this question or I'm going to ask you to do this, so that they know, I do actually have to be paying a bit of attention here.

Amelia, Primary School Teacher, ACT

They love it. I always set students a challenge every year to be more conscious in their watching choices, and to deliberately choose Australian content more often.

Survey response from 41–45 year-old female teacher, QLD

Children enjoy this kind of stimulus... they are highly engaged with visual media.

Survey response from 31–35-year-old female teacher, VIC

Overall, television is seen as not only engaging for students, but it is also viewed by teachers as an important method to help teach complex or abstract concepts in memorable ways.

5. Teachers Prefer Australian Screen Content

The survey indicated Australian teachers have a strong preference for using Australian screen content in lessons (76%) rather than international content.

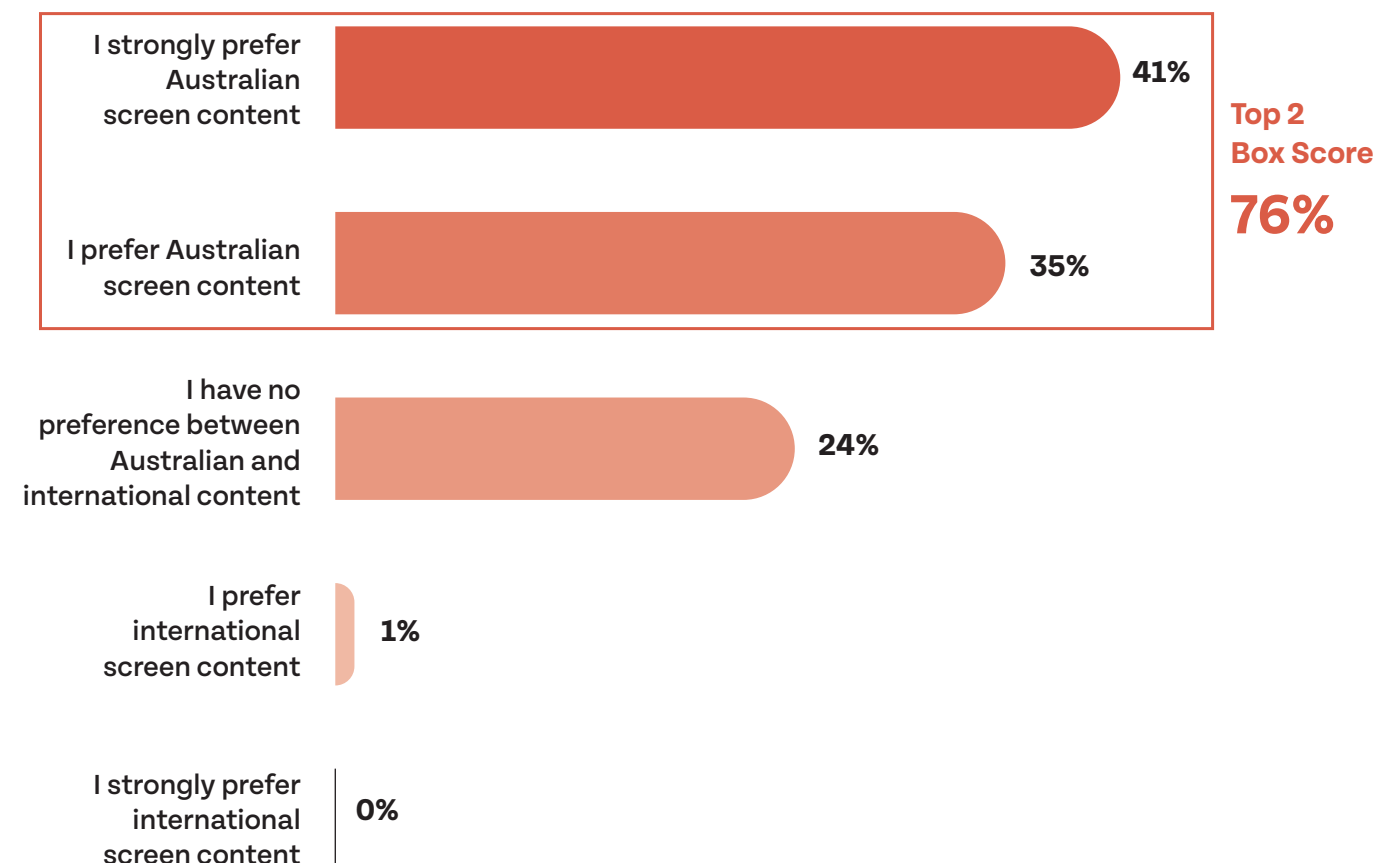


Figure 8 Teacher Preferences for Australian Screen Content Versus International Content

Our research found that teachers feel using Australian screen content in lessons helps to both reflect and instil important cultural values, while providing a more relatable experience for Australian students. In interviews, teachers reflected on the value of Australian children’s television shows and films for cultural relatability.

I know that, in terms of my pastoral care group, it's very difficult to get them to engage... But if I can show them media that relates to them, if I can show them someone that looks like them, then they're way more receptive to the messages or the ideas that I'm trying to present to them.

Cody, Secondary School Teacher, NT

I do look for Australian TV specifically... because I teach early childhood... I think it's important that the children hear accents that are the same as ours ... understanding from their point of view and from what they see and hear in their home and with their friends and family.

Jasmine, Primary School Teacher, NT

Thematic analysis of open survey responses revealed this preference related to four main factors:

1. Australian values: Teachers feel it is important to use content that both reflects the experiences of Australian students and fosters Australian values.
2. Relatability & Engagement: Familiar Australian phrases, accents, and settings make for more engaging content.
3. Education & Curriculum Alignment: Teachers note that Australian content is more closely aligned with curriculum requirements.
4. Cultural Identity & Representation: Australian screen content fosters a sense of belonging and cultural identity.

Further clarifying the importance of engagement with Australian culture through local content, several interview participants reflected that in non-school contexts students seem to favour international screen texts, particularly from the US, and did not appear to be exposed to a substantial amount of Australian screen content outside school. This observation reflects findings from our study of children aged 7–9 years, which showed children were more likely to choose international screen content, and found it difficult to find and identify Australian content on streaming services despite being interested in it.³⁴ Teachers felt this lack of exposure to Australian content highlighted not only the importance of using local texts in lessons, but also of unpacking issues of representation and making students aware of the degree of US media influence. Indeed, in both regional and urban schools, teachers reported having Australian students who speak with an American accent. While teachers preferred to use Australian screen content, they saw the merits of using international content to educate students about other cultures where appropriate.

So many Australian kids now talk with American accents because they watch so much American TV. So, I do think it's more relatable when they see themselves reflected in these kinds of shows... but I do also think there are times where they need to see different world views and cultures.

Amelia, Primary School Teacher, ACT

In open survey responses, teachers noted the importance of diverse local representation in the Australian screen content they use in lessons.

Our bush kids need to see themselves and recognize that there are plenty of kids just like them living in Australia.

Survey response from 36–40-year-old female teacher, QLD

This survey outcome reflected a key finding from the interview data. Thematic analysis of our interviews revealed teachers place a high level of importance on showing screen content that depicts the multiplicity of Australian identities and lived experiences.

When you're able to access a diverse range of Australian stories, you're able to help emphasise that point that being Australian doesn't equal this one thing.

Daniel, Secondary School Teacher, TAS

Teachers in our study praised increased diversity in Australian children's programming over the past two decades, while also conveying they would like to see even more diverse representations in these important local screen spaces, for all age groups of children and young people.

As someone who is part of the LGBTQIA+, I really would love to see more of that represented. I'm sort of clutching at straws a lot of the time so that young people can see that they're just as much a part of communities as everybody else, and seeing that reflected would be so good.

Faith, Primary School Teacher, ACT

Teachers overwhelmingly value local Australian screen content for providing relatable and culturally relevant experiences that can be harnessed in classes, while advocating for a wide variety of representation that reflects contemporary Australia.

³⁴Balanzategui, J., Baker, D., Clift, G., Burke, L., & McIntyre, J. 2024, "Australian Children's Streaming Video Platform Habits, Fluencies, and Literacies". Swinburne University of Technology and RMIT University. DOI 10.60836/p6re-bv50

6. Fiction and Non-Fiction Equally Valuable

The large majority of teachers surveyed (83%) see equal value in using fiction and non-fiction screen content in lessons.

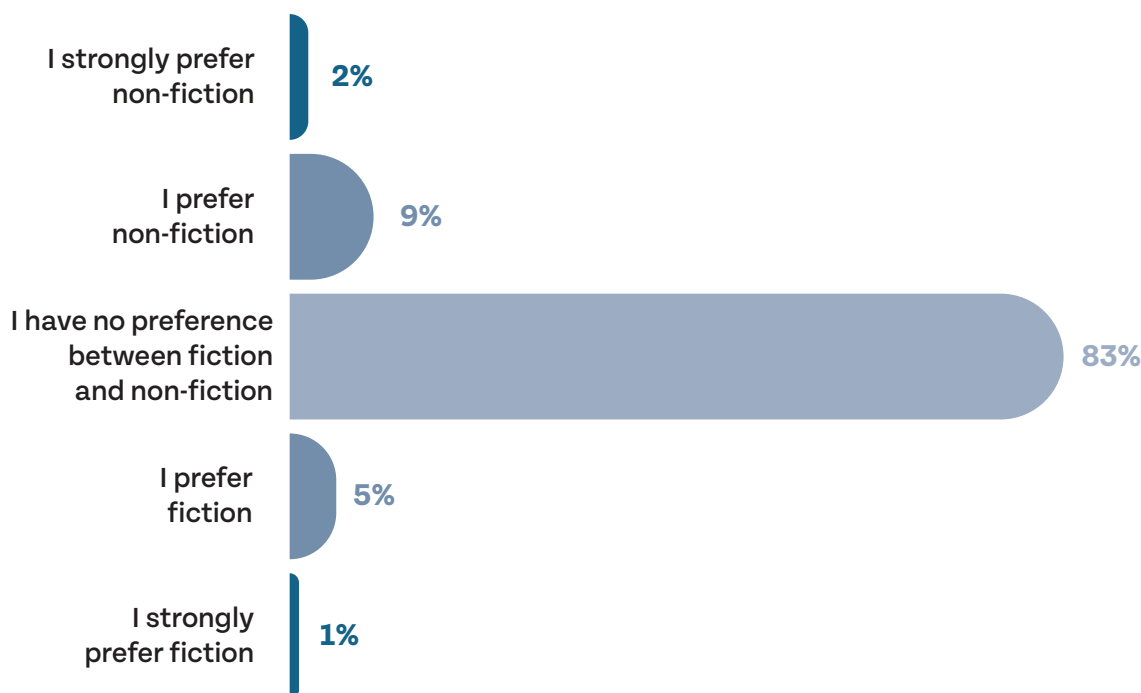


Figure 9 Teacher Preferences for Fiction or Non-Fiction Screen Content in Lessons

This view is reflected in the two genres teachers identified they most frequently favour in lessons: comedy and documentary. Teachers' perceptions of students being especially receptive to comedic screen content aligns with findings from other studies that have been undertaken with Australian students, parents, and adults reflecting upon their childhood viewing, which identify that culturally there is high value placed on humour as an element of screen content for young Australians.³⁵

Humour works on so many levels, you can do that with students, and they feel like no, you are speaking to me, you're not speaking down to me. I suspect when you've got a straight drama... they're not going to be as responsive, but I think humour is a really good way of getting it in there.

Alison, Secondary School Teacher, SA

³⁵Stuart Cunningham, Michael Dezuanni, Ben Goldsmith, Maureen Burns, Prue Miles, Cathy Henkel, Mark Ryan, and Kayleigh Murphy, 2016, Screen content in Australian education: Digital promise and pitfalls, Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology, Australia, p. 20, <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/101132/>; Liam Burke, Joanna McIntyre, Jessica Balanzategui and Djoymy Baker, 2022, "Parents' perspectives on Australian children's television in the streaming era, Swinburne University of Technology," <https://doi.org/10.26185/xxt0-d294>; Joanna McIntyre, Liam Burke, Djoymy Baker and Jessica Balanzategui, 2023, "Kids' TV Memories: Audience Perspectives on the Roles and Long-term Value of Australian Children's Television," Swinburne University of Technology, <https://doi.org/10.26185/cchb-wf43>

Using short snippets of things just to try and engage students on a topic or use a bit of comedy in the classroom [can] get them thinking about something from a different perspective.

Daniel, Secondary School Teacher, TAS

Teachers work within the Australian Curriculum, yet also retain a high degree of autonomy in lesson planning.³⁶ Our research found a diversity of content and uses that suggests the screen media incorporated into lessons is usually specific to individual teachers.

Teachers use a wide range of screen content, as survey responses listed over 55 different screen titles by name. Of these, the television programs *Bluey* (21%) and *Behind the News* (21%) were the only titles frequently mentioned by teachers. Notably, these are a fiction and a non-fiction program respectively. 11% of teachers simply listed YouTube as a streaming service they use regularly for lessons, rather than itemising specific content titles.

I think I can show any Bluey clip and find something that's a teachable moment for the children in early childhood because it touches on subjects that we see in our culture.

Jasmine, Primary School Teacher, NT

The equal value placed on fiction and non-fiction is influenced by teachers incorporating screen media into lessons for a wide range of applications. Audio-visual content is not only used for the presentation of information, but also to teach media literacy, media making, and a variety of themes including emotional and cultural understanding. Specific learning areas resulted in targeted needs, for example with maths and science teachers preferencing non-fiction screen content.

The interviews revealed that broader perceptions around screen media being for entertainment rather than education can influence teachers' choice of screen materials used in lessons, and even whether they use them at all. Such choices arose in response to concerns that other colleagues, particularly those in leadership roles, and students' families might deem screen content to be unsuitable as education material.

I feel that the way I've seen Australian television best and most successfully used has been factual non-fiction style, because I feel like – rightly or wrongly – that there's a greater perception of credibility... it's easier for a teacher to justify to their principal.

Alex, Primary and High School Principal, NSW

Overall, our survey indicates teachers utilise numerous screen titles from a range of genres for differing reasons, from the directly informative documentary format to the engaging qualities of comedy as a means of broaching important topics.

³⁶The Australian Curriculum Version 9, 2022, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, Sydney, NSW, Australia, <https://v9.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> (accessed 21 May 2023). Michael Dezuanni, Stuart Cunningham, Ben Goldsmith and Prue Miles, 2017, "Teachers' curation of Australian screen content for school-based education," *Media International Australia*, Vol. 163, No. 1, p. 91, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X17693701>.

7. Students Create Screen Content

The roles of screen media in education also include students producing their own content. Over half of teachers surveyed (55%) support students to create original screen content within lessons.

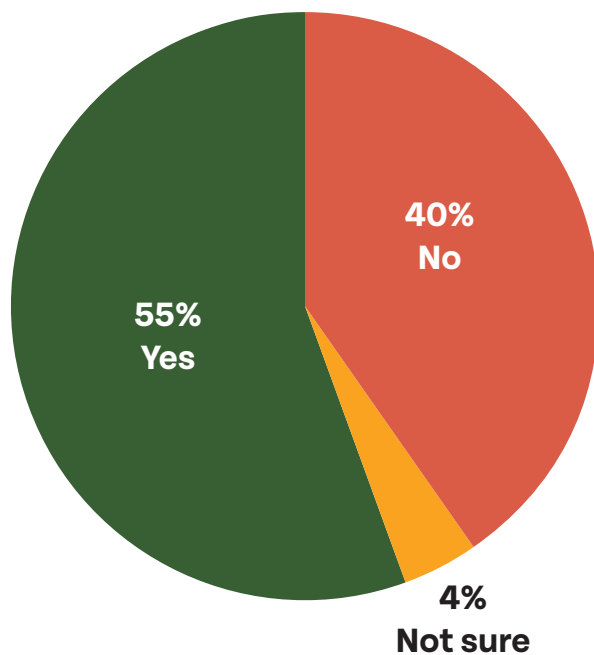


Figure 10 Students Creating Screen Content in the Classroom

Analysis of interview data revealed teachers see media making as a means of helping students to express and reflect on their ideas in multiple ways while also learning essential digital literacy skills.

If kids are working on an inquiry... getting them to document that and create videos... that explain their thinking and how they got to that process.

Amelia, Primary School Teacher, ACT

We... taught the kids some media literacy and some media skills by showing them other children's television resources such as Red Dirt Riders, which was given to us by April Phillips, who works for the Australian Children's Television Foundation. She actually ran sessions with our students over Zoom... teaching them how to frame their interviews, how to take B-roll shots, how to use camera movement. And then we had other sessions with a composer there, who taught the kids how to make a track for their documentary. So, it was really powerful to have the kids... actually engaged in making their own texts too, about the same questions.

Ash, Secondary School Teacher, WA

Survey responses showed short non-fiction formats were the most common type of screen media set for students to create, accounting for 78% of the screen genres that teachers listed (when combining advertisements, news and commentary, and documentaries).

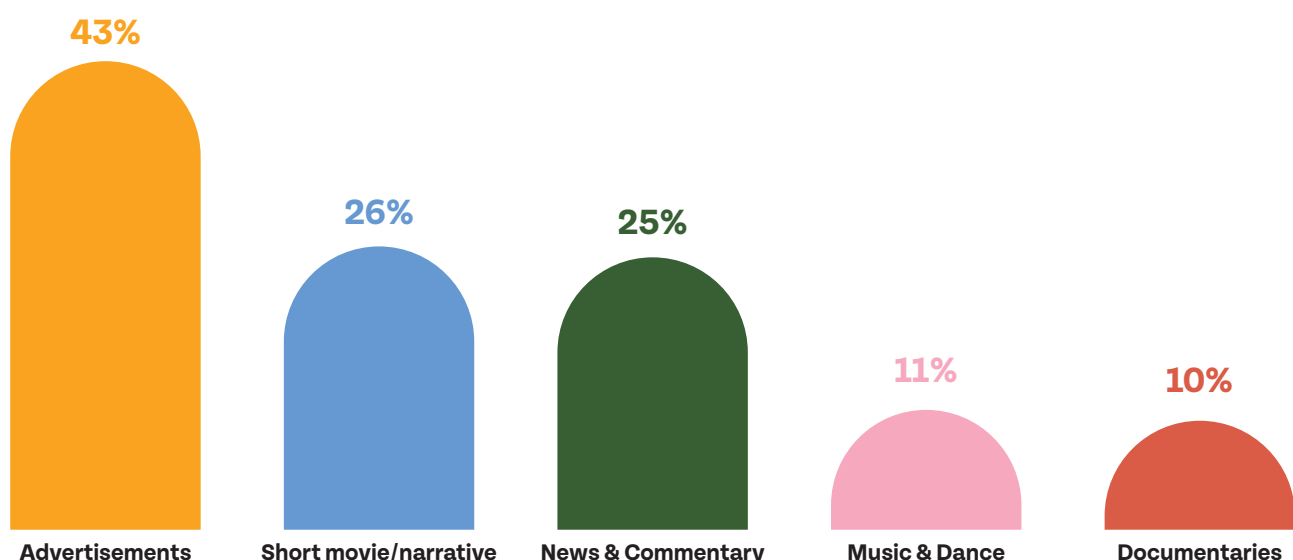


Figure 11 Type of Screen Media Created by Students in Classes

Teachers in our research identified advertisements as particularly useful short-form screen texts for students to both interpret and make themselves. This was seen as an important part of developing digital literacy as young people are so frequently exposed to marketing material.

Ads are fabulous to teach students at that age, because they have to be age-appropriate... They're ... making so many assumptions ... but in coded ways ... You've got a nice little 30 second thing to analyse and that can be great.

Alison, Secondary School Teacher, SA

Teachers reported the screen production tasks students primarily worked on as part of lessons were: filming, storyboarding, scriptwriting, and editing.

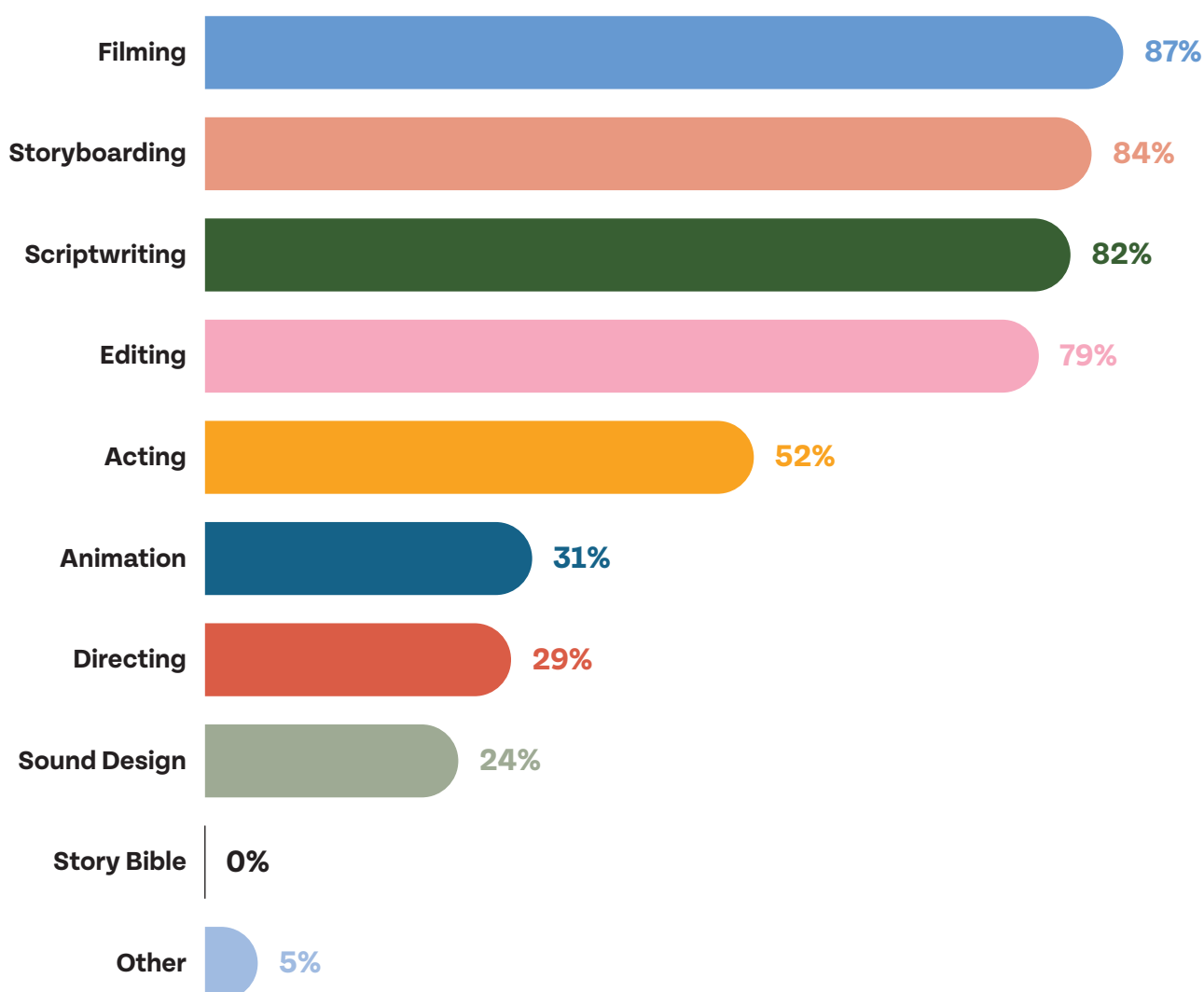


Figure 12 Elements of Production Process in Lessons

Some of these activities, such as storyboarding (84%) and scriptwriting (82%), are undertaken as either preparation for subsequent filming and editing assessments, or as independent tasks that in themselves help students learn about the intricacies of screen production processes, narrative construction, and character development. Such activities do more than teach technical skills, they also help develop critical media literacies.

One of the other tasks they have to do is to take a text that they've studied during the year and turn it into a new form. They've got to transform it into something else and do a writer's statement. So, a number of them end up doing a screenplay... you can do a lot of good things, getting them to realise how these texts are all commenting on the human condition, but in different ways, with different effects. Each decision you're making there is having a different effect on the audience or viewer or reader ... It's also such a growth industry. In terms of getting students ready to move into that creative world, then it's really important that we teach them how these texts work.

Alison, Secondary School Teacher, SA

Some of our interview participants suggested that, over time, teachers helping students to understand and create their own screen media will make people – students, their families, and those in Australian culture more broadly – aware of the complexity of screen media and its value in education.

Too many parents see children's television as babysitting [But this might change] if they see the teachers respecting it, and they see the teachers acknowledging how much effort goes into producing [even] three minutes.

Alison, Retired Preschool and Primary School Teacher, SA

8. Screen Content is an Accessible and Accepted Educational Tool

Most teachers (65%) reported feeling positive about using screen content in the classroom as a tool for student engagement. Our survey revealed teachers believe the quality of screen content and its presence in lessons has increased over the years they have been teachers. Quality in screen content was identified as referring both to technical production values and the diversity of characters and stories. This timeframe was variable depending on the respondent's career length, but the sentiment was consistent across survey responses.

In open survey responses, teachers commented on the following changes over time that have impacted how screen media is used in schools:

a. Technological Advances and Greater Accessibility (22%)

Respondents noted classroom access to screen content had improved due to technological innovations such as the internet, streaming services, and devices such as tablets and interactive whiteboards. This was the most common change identified.

When I first started teaching, it was harder to access clips, whereas now it's easier to find small snippets that can target an idea.

Jasmine, Primary School Teacher, NT

When I started teaching you had to book into the one room in the school which actually had a television you could get them to go and watch ... certainly there's massive changes because now we can all show it in our classroom.

Alison, Secondary School Teacher, SA

b. Changing Teaching Methods (21%)

Teachers reported that screen content has taken on a more prominent role in lessons as their careers have progressed, and is now used for multiple educational purposes. Teachers felt they had developed improved skills around incorporating screen media into their lesson plans and learning areas.

Teachers used television to give the children a 'break' from learning or for rainy days. Now I am using TV shows to add content knowledge, to instigate discussion or to build engagement in a new concept.

Survey response from 51–55-year-old female teacher, QLD

I see people coming up being much more open to using new platforms and new digital resources in the classroom.

Duncan, Former Secondary School Teacher, currently in Teacher Education, ACT

As teachers I think that we've become far more flexible in terms of not just the content, but how it's actually delivered.

Mark, Assistant Principal, NT

c. Increasing Quality in Screen Content and Resources (15%)

Teachers felt that across their careers, screen content had improved in quality, in terms of both aesthetics and diverse representation. They also noted an increase in better resources to support teachers using screen content.

I use it a lot more regularly now compared to earlier in my career, there are more useful and relevant resources becoming available each day.

Survey response from 31–35-year-old female teacher, VIC

d. Screen Content is now an Acceptable Component of Education (13%)

Finally, teachers noted screen media had become a more mainstream, conventional part of education. This shift in attitude is also reflected in its high frequency of use in lessons (see Point 1, pp. 4–6).

Screen media is far more accessible and accepted now.

Survey response from 46–50-year-old male teacher, ACT

There was a stigma that if you're watching TV then you're not doing hard work ... I think that many teachers today are actively trying to fight those stigmas as misconceptions, and embrace TV because it can be potentially really enriching and engaging for students.

Cody, Secondary School Teacher, NT

In the interviews, several teachers nonetheless noted there was still work to be done to help shift attitudes towards screen media being used in lessons.

I think it's just helping parents understand that school's very different to when they were kids, and we do things quite differently nowadays, and it's still learning.

Amelia, Primary School Teacher, ACT

This reflection sometimes included teachers acknowledging their own ambivalence as parents themselves in relation to screen content being used in their own children's education.

I think there's a lot of room for helping families understand the role of TV and screens, and how that can be used in a really powerful, meaningful way, as a tool for education. Even myself, I have a bit of assumptions and a bias towards it being a bit of a negative thing. But I also value multimodal opportunities ... As a parent myself ... I'm really curious to know how a screen is being used for my child.

Faith, Primary School Teacher, ACT

Teachers were also mindful to take into consideration broader concerns about children's overall screen time.

They're so engaged by it and they're so keen for it ... but ... we can't be on screens all day. We can't be on devices all day ... So, it's a tricky balancing act.

Marissa, Team Leader, Primary School, ACT

You really have to justify why students are watching something ... schools are particularly aware of how much time children are spending watching something.

Meredith, Acting Assistant Principal, Primary School, VIC

Conclusion

This study combines quantitative and qualitative national survey data and qualitative interview data, to demonstrate that Australian primary and high school teachers perceive screen media, especially Australian television to be an important tool for teaching and learning. Australian teachers understand screen content can be used to engage students and assist them in meeting their educational needs.

This research reveals the use of screen media in schools is a key way local children's television serves a "public value" function, enabling children to meaningfully engage with content that reflects their cultural contexts and supports their educational needs.³⁷

Many teachers in our study have seen increases in the availability of quality children's screen content and ease of accessibility over the course of their careers. At the same time, however, the ability to easily locate screen content suitable for specific lesson plans, and related educational resources, remains challenging. As previous research has established, teachers "shoulder a heavy responsibility for building young citizens' knowledge and skills," particularly given "a student's upbringing plays a key role in building media literacy skills."³⁸ Teachers in our study identified the need for professional training around screen media content and resources, as well as improved strategies for making content easily discoverable, particularly given the dominance of YouTube. The case study of the ACTF's educational resources demonstrates some these challenges, with these resources receiving positive responses from teachers who use them, but low awareness about them among teachers more generally.

Overall, our research reveals that screen media is frequently woven into learning experiences in Australian school lessons. Australian content is highly valued by teachers for both reflecting students' own lived experiences and identities, as well as encouraging them to learn about a multiplicity of Australian identities.

³⁷ Anna Potter, 2015, *Creativity, Culture and Commerce: Creating Children's Content with Public Value*. Bristol: Intellect, pp. ix, 3.

³⁸ Jocelyn Nettlefold and Kathleen Williams, 2021, "News media literacy challenges and opportunities for Australian school students and teachers in the age of platforms," *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 37, <https://doi.org/10.23860/JMLE-2021-13-1-3>

Appendix One:

Survey Participants

Position	
Foundation	35%
Year 1	46%
Year 2	42%
Year 3	49%
Year 4	47%
Year 5	53%
Year 6	53%
Year 7	55%
Year 8	48%
Year 9	50%
Year 10	51%
Year 11	41%
Year 12	38%
Other class formats	23%
Principal	7%
Assistant Principal	8%
Other leadership positions	42%
Other	10%
Learning Area	
Generalist Primary Teacher	57%
English	43%
Humanities & Social Sciences	35%
The Arts	34%
Mathematics	27%
Science	24%
Technologies	21%
Health & Physical Education	10%
Work Studies	7%
Languages	6%
Other	8%

About the Authors

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Joanna McIntyre is a Senior Lecturer in Media Studies and the Course Director of the Bachelor of Media and Communication at Swinburne University of Technology, Australia. Joanna has published widely on the topics of Australian screen history, Australian screen cultures, gender, celebrity, queer and trans representation, and Australian "national identities." Her research interests include children's media and its intersections with issues of gender, celebrity, and identity. Joanna has published in leading international journals in her field, including *Journal of Children and Media*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *Celebrity Studies Journal*, and *The European Journal of Cultural Studies*. Her edited collections include *Gender and Australian Celebrity Culture* (Routledge, 2021) and *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Celebrity* (Routledge, 2025). Her news articles in *The Conversation* have over 1.4 million readers.

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