The Australian Thesaurus of Education Descriptors – like many similar vocabulary authorities – incorporates a system of broad categories into which all preferred terms are grouped. The purpose of these subject categories or groups is to provide an easy access point, especially for users unfamiliar with the terms included in the Thesaurus. The categories have been adapted from those found in the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors.

Each term in the Thesaurus is assigned to one subject category and to only one. This principle of single group assignment reflects guidelines established to determine the placement of terms that, because of the breadth of their scope, could be assigned to more than one group. Terms are assigned to groups based upon (1) the term's relationship to the entire field of education, rather than to any specialty (2) the broadest possible application of the term in indexing.

The 41 subject categories and their codes are listed below and are linked to a list of all terms in that category.

110 LEARNING AND PERCEPTION
Learning, conditioning and reinforcement; cognition and thought processes; perception

120 INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS
Attributes of the individual, i.e. Psychological characteristics, aptitudes, abilities, behaviour, needs and attitudes; growth and development; age groups; individual differences

210 HEALTH AND SAFETY
Medicine and health; health conditions and services; diseases; health occupations; health facilities; professional and paraprofessional health education; parts of the body; accidents and safety

220 DISABILITIES
Physical and mental disabilities; special education; communication disorders; processes and therapies; equipment for disabled people

230 MENTAL HEALTH
Mental illness and mentally ill persons; therapies promoting mental welfare; mental health facilities; psychology

240 COUNSELLING
Guidance and counselling; counselling techniques; rehabilitation

310 THE EDUCATION PROCESS: CLASSROOM PERSPECTIVES
Procedures and processes characteristic of the classroom, i.e. teaching systems, teaching methods, classroom environment and classroom management; student/teacher behaviour and interaction
THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS: INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES
Procedures and processes beyond the classroom but internal to the school, college etc., i.e. internal policy and administration, personnel practices, staff evaluation, curriculum and program development, student/school and teacher/administrator relationships.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS: SOCIETAL PERSPECTIVES
Procedures and processes related to the school, college, etc., in its social and educational environment, i.e. relations with parents, community and society at large; relations and processes between institutions and higher authorities, between institutions and other agencies, and among institutions; movement of staff and students; the role of schools and colleges etc. in society; the impacts of institutions on society and of society on the institutions; other educational factors beyond the single school, college, etc.

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS, QUALIFICATIONS AND ORGANISATIONS
Grade or year levels; types of schools and colleges; forms and levels of education; academic awards and credentials.

CURRICULUM ORGANISATION
Units and sequences around which curriculum and teaching are organised; attributes of curriculum structures as defined by time, sequence, special location and other organisational concepts.

STUDENTS, TEACHERS, EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL
Terms for students, teachers, administrators and support personnel.

CURRICULUM SUBJECTS
Terms representing subject matters (e.g. Civics) or curriculum areas (e.g. General education) and terms pre-coordinating a subject area concept with a concept related to education, skills training, teaching processes and curricula. Excludes those terms assigned to a group dealing with a specific curriculum area.

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Agriculture; forestry; agricultural education; agricultural products, materials and facilities; natural resources; and pollution, conservation and other environmental concerns.

ARTS
Fine arts, i.e. art, music, dance, theatre and dramatics; commercial arts, i.e. graphic arts and design.

HUMANITIES
Literature and literary genres, criticism, history, philosophy and religion.

LANGUAGES
Human languages and language groups.

LANGUAGE AND SPEECH
Language and linguistics; grammar and parts of speech; language teaching; speech and speech education; vocabulary.

READING
Reading teaching and development, literacy and reading facilities.
470 PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION
Physical education, recreation and sports

480 MATHEMATICS
Mathematics and mathematics education; excludes statistical techniques

490 SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Physical and biological sciences, scientific concepts, science education, engineering, technology

510 THE INDIVIDUAL IN SOCIAL CONTEXT
Familial and other social influences on individual development; social attributes of individuals; social roles; personal relationships

520 SOCIAL PROCESSES AND STRUCTURES
Attributes of society and of social groups; social programs and services; social institutions, values and structures (e.g. family, community and social classes); collective action and behaviour; social organisations; social life; group relations

530 SOCIAL PROBLEMS
Behavioural and other social problems; individuals and groups defined by such problems

540 BIAS AND EQUITY
Prejudice, stereotypes, discriminatory attitudes; segregation and integration; equality and opportunity

550 HUMAN GEOGRAPHY
Demography, geographic distribution and migration of people; urban and rural environments and conditions

560 PEOPLE AND CULTURES
Culture and cultures; ethnic/racial groups; religious groups

610 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Local, state and federal government; law; political divisions and political activism; international relations

620 ECONOMICS AND FINANCE
Economics; individual and institutional finances; educational finance; budgeting and accounting; taxes

630 LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
Jobs, employment and unemployment; employment practices; labour force; skill levels of workers and personnel; job training; personnel management; working conditions and attitudes; employee-employer and industrial relations; supervision

640 OCCUPATIONS
Occupations and occupational groups, excluding those employed in education
650 BUSINESS, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
Business, industries, transport and sales

710 INFORMATION / COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS
Information and communication processes, services, networks and systems; libraries and information centres

720 COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA
Print and non print media used in communication; media production

730 PUBLICATION / DOCUMENT TYPES
Terms used frequently, though not exclusively, to describe the form of a document

810 RESEARCH AND THEORY
The research process; fields and types of research; theories; research methodology

820 MEASUREMENT
Testing and measurement; statistical and analytical techniques used in indexing to represent subjects of documents and also indicate methodologies employed in research.

830 TESTS AND SCALES
Testing and data gathering instruments; terms may be used to represent subject content or presence of tests or scales in the document.

910 EQUIPMENT
Types of equipment and supplies; equipment maintenance

920 FACILITIES
Design and construction of facilities; building materials and components; interior space; types of facilities, excluding libraries and facilities related to mental or physical health