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Dance

2015 Chief Assessor’s Report

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## Overview

Chief Assessors’ reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

## School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Skills Development

Choreography

This task requires students to create a choreographic work of up to 4 minutes comprising up to three separate dance pieces (e.g. one 4-minute piece, or two 2‑minute pieces, or three pieces totalling 4 minutes). The work may be performed in a variety of settings, or students may opt to specifically film the work in a location of their choice.

It was most exciting to see the continued development in the choreographic ability of Stage 2 Dance students. Students are carefully considering viable themes, researching their chosen topic to provide movement triggers, developing their chosen phrases, and refining their final presentation. Students had the opportunity to meet the performance standards at the highest level when movement choices were well planned, were rigorously rehearsed, were clearly expressed, and engaged their audience.

The option of preparing dance specifically for film is a popular choice. Many students experimented with these presentations, producing highly creative choreography in conjunction with steady camera work, use of creative angles, and clean editing techniques. Teachers and students are reminded that the editing and production elements of dance for film are the sole responsibility of individual students. Although students can draw on inspiration from dance clips available on the Internet, the final choreographic presentation must be completely original.

Teachers should identify when choreographic work has been created specifically for film or live performance.

Technique

This task requires teachers to select one dance style and create a series of exercises that explores the range of movement possibilities found within that genre. Students then study these exercises over the course of the year before being filmed for assessment.

All five SACE-approved genres were undertaken by classes, although contemporary and jazz continue to be the most popular choices.

Students were successful when the technique classes covered a full range of challenging exercises specific to the genre. Teachers are encouraged to create a variety of musical styles and tempos to allow students to showcase their musicality, and to develop complex movement phrases that extend beyond basic skills to demonstrate students’ stamina.

Teachers can assist the moderation process in this assessment type by clearly identifying students with a number front and back.

Teachers should ensure, when preparing moderation material, that USB drives or DVDs containing evidence of student work can be played on a number of devices.

**Folio**

This assessment task requires students to create a folio of exploration of the processes of creating a dance work (that is, their personal choreographic journey), or present a folio that summarises their understanding and development of technique over the year. The popular option has been the choreographic folio.

More students have been experimenting with multimodal format for folio presentation in 2015. Videos, with spoken text embedded in PowerPoint presentations, made for engaging viewing of student work. The quality of the folio content is strong when students are thorough in exploring the process of their development in technique or the creation of a dance work. Teachers are to support students to create this assessment task with a high degree of analysis and evaluation, and to keep within the word-limit or time-limit.

Assessment Type 2: Written Response

Students write two essays of up to 1000 words each on historical perspectives and contemporary issues in this assessment type. Students were successful when they responded to well-crafted questions with a high degree of analysis and evaluation.

Popular questions centre on dance pioneers of the early twentieth century for historical perspectives and an Australian choreographer or dance company for contemporary issues. Teachers are reminded to check the 25-year limit on contemporary issues.

Successful responses were sophisticated, sustained, and coherent, and connected in a personal way to the student learning. In order to extend the response beyond a simple regurgitation of facts, teachers are encouraged to assist students to search for the value of dance in society as the prime motivator for this study.

Some essays were a constant series of references and quotes with little connective text belonging to the student. As part of the learning, teachers should discuss essay structure and the use of quotes and references.

For teaching in 2016, teachers must refer to the 2016 Dance subject outline to note the changes in learning requirements and assessment conditions for this assessment type.

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Performance

The performances in 2015 were conducted according to the guidelines, with the majority of the students being appropriately challenged to allow them to demonstrate their performance or off-stage skills to meet the performance standards at the highest level. Teachers were well organised in operational procedures in relation to paperwork, marking protocol, and student preparation.

Teachers are reminded to prepare the paperwork before the marking commences and to present the predicted result sheet in a sealed envelope before the performance. The comments on the performance notes sheets should use language from the specific features of the performance standards and must be written during the course of the performance.

Teachers provided markers with a copy of the program for the performance, indicating which performance items included those students being assessed. Once the performance work and presentations are finished, teachers provided markers with a quiet private space, in order to complete their paperwork.

Different styles, personas, and moods were presented in the choreographic material. Students, in general, presented movement that demonstrated a degree of technical complexity, with appropriate regard for safe dance. Teachers should avoid creating choreographic movement which is similar throughout, that is, just done at various tempos, depending on the style of music, as this restricts opportunities for students to demonstrate their versatility and ability to adapt to a range of dances. Teachers are also encouraged to aim for a range in music selection with some variety in rhythm and tempo, so that students have the opportunity to show their versatility as a performer.

Students achieving at the highest level demonstrated an ability to adapt to a variety of choreographic material either within one dance genre or a range of genres. These students demonstrated an ability to apply their understanding of the nuances of the specific technique with a sustained application of skills for the duration of the performance. They showed a thorough understanding of the intention of the work and expressively and sensitively communicated to their audience. They demonstrated the ability to relate to their fellow performers and audience with integrity, using an extensive variety of performance skills.

Teachers are advised to monitor the workload in a performance, so that students do not risk becoming overly tired and potentially inconsistent during the performance. Teachers should plan the placement of students on stage to allow all students time at the front.

It is expected that teachers are mindful of the educational environment in which the work is being assessed and ensure that the choreography does not contain any sexual content or innuendo. This caution should apply equally to the choice of design in costumes.

If the work has been choreographed by students, it needs to be appropriate Stage 2 standard and provide a sufficient challenge to the dancers. Teachers should be aware of the guideline of 1-minute solos/duos/trios within each student’s 15‑minute stage time. In larger assessment groups, it is suggested that the students be presented in smaller groups to ensure that markers are able to assess students confidently.

Successful students undertaking off-stage roles were generally well prepared, and included an explanation of their processes and decision-making which they demonstrated in a well-constructed, well-rehearsed, and informative presentation.

Performances were presented in a variety of locations, ranging from school sites to professional theatres, although the venue has no impact on student achievement.

It is acceptable for the performance to be part of a larger showcase which includes performers other than those in Stage 2.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks and assessment notes should be evident on all student school assessment work. Many teachers opted to place all of their moderation material on a separate USB drive for each student which contained student work and annotations on assessment decisions.

Teachers are requested to ensure that any practical student work is clearly numbered with both the assessment number and the student’s SACE registration number.

## General Comments

Dance teachers continue to improve their teaching through professional learning and community interaction, undertaken by attending touring dance companies and local performances, engaging in SACE clarifying forums and dance teachers’ discussion groups, and supporting each other in a variety of contexts. In this way, teachers have been able to provide valuable educational possibilities for their students.

We look forward to another rewarding year of dance in 2016.

Dance

Chief Assessor