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Dance

2016 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

This assessment type consists of three equal parts: choreography, technique, and folio.

**Choreography**

Students create one, two, or three choreographic pieces that total 4 minutes in duration. For students with a limited movement vocabulary, three tasks set by the teacher is a more achievable option. All work needs to be recorded individually to a disc or USB drive that is clearly labelled.

A synopsis at the beginning of the choreographic piece/pieces gives context and understanding to the moderators confirming the work. Choreography based on a clear concept or theme allowed the students to explore a range of movement options and be creative in their exploration of ideas. This year there were several instances of a refreshing extension of notions presented through the choreographic component. When this is matched with a thorough exploration of new movement choices, it amply satisfies the innovation component of the performance standards. Over-reliance of video clips to provide inspiration is to be monitored by teachers so that plagiarism does not occur.

**The more successful responses**

* provided a clear structure with a beginning, middle, and resolution to their pieces
* capitalised on the musicality of their soundscape to showcase dynamic highlights and calm insights
* presented the work with clarity within the technical ability of the performers
* connected to the theme of their work with personal integrity and honesty
* featured work that was engaging to watch, with themes ranging from personal perceptions to global concerns.

**The less successful responses**

* struggled to find sufficient innovation in their movement choices
* did not use their space creatively
* did not interact convincingly with their partner or group.

**General information**

* By selecting eight or nine specific features for assessment in the choreographic component, teachers are making it quite difficult for their students to achieve an optimum grade. Teachers should consider four or five specific features that directly relate to the task.

**Technique**

Dance teachers have the option of selecting contemporary, jazz, classical, tap, or break-dance technique for their students to present. The most popular option this year was contemporary technique. Currently hip hop technique is not a recognised option.

A range of exercises are to be presented to give an overall picture of the student’s ability, strength and stamina irrespective of the genre chosen. These exercises should be sufficient in length and complexity to reflect an appropriate SACE Stage 2 standard. For students to meet the performance standards at the higher levels, correct alignment and placement of the body is essential, a clear understanding of the nuances of the chosen technique is required, and a demonstration of the dynamics and musicality of the presented material should be evident.

Teachers may delineate some exercises to cater for less competent abilities within their group and should avoid showcasing skills that the student has not yet mastered (e.g. refrain from including fouettés in an exercise if the student struggles with this step). Teachers should consider editing long musical introductions to avoid students standing still for long periods of time waiting to begin an exercise.

**The more successful responses**

* consistently demonstrated core control throughout their exercises
* worked with breadth and ease across the movement phrase
* showed an aesthetically pleasing line through the body and arms, indicative of the selected genre
* coordinated movement details through various body parts
* implemented safe dance practices
* demonstrated confidence in their classwork
* showcased a broad range of skills that demanded a high level of stamina, strength, and precision
* had a clear and confident understanding of the genre’s style and dynamic musical intent
* demonstrated a high level of energy throughout the class.

**General information**

* Teachers who have chosen to work in hub groups to define their standards have avoided discrepancies, especially across the range of genres, and marked accordingly.
* Giving students exercises of sufficient length with a breadth of complexity in movement choices enabled them to accurately display their ability and to extend their movement range to meet the performance standards at the higher levels.
* All students are to wear a number to identify them and teachers should ensure that each student is visible during filming. Teachers should consider breaking the group down into smaller components to allow each person to be clearly seen.
* Teachers should provide a list of each student’s technique number and their corresponding SACE registration number for ease of identification. Filming students saying their numbers at the beginning has not been successful and teachers are advised to discontinue this practice.

**Folio**

Students have the option of completing either a technique folio or a choreographic folio, using a multimodal or a written format. In previous years, the choreographic folio has been the most popular choice; however, in 2016 the technique folio was more prevalent and was frequently presented in a multimodal format.

The content for the technique folio was clearly structured and afforded students the opportunity to both research and evaluate their progress at some depth, making the task meaningful.

The choreographic folio allows students to: track their planning, development of ideas, and movement phrases; report on their refinement and presentation; and evaluate the success of their performance. By having a clear concept or theme, students were able to research their topics and structure their pieces into a coherent statement of intent.

**The more successful responses**

* were able to analyse their abilities, plan their developmental program, and consider their improvement
* if presenting in multimodal form, gained visual clues from the multimodal aspect to adequately evaluate their placement, alignment, and control as their bodies moved through the technique exercises
* addressed the research section of this task by tracing back the origin of some exercises to a dance pioneer
* were able to articulate their design with sufficient analysis and reference to choreographic practices, clearly explaining the how, why, where, and what of their dance piece. (Simple journal entries, however, do not suffice. Adequate analysis and evaluation must take place.)

**General information**

* The shift towards multimodal presentation has made this component far more engaging for students, given greater meaning to their learning, and provided further clarity to the evaluation of their progress.

Assessment Type 2: Response

The response now offers a range of opportunities for students. Students research topics from Part 1: Historical Perspectives, Part 2: Contemporary Issues, or both. They either undertake two responses, taking one topic from each part, or they undertake a single in-depth response that takes its topic from a single part or a combination of the two parts. When undertaking two responses, each one should be a maximum of 1000 words if written or a maximum of 6 minutes for an oral presentation, or the equivalent in multimodal form. For the in-depth response, the limits are doubled. (See the subject outline for more details.)

The opportunity to write a single 2000-word response has highlighted the depth of research that can be achieved.

Students who undertake the option of an in-depth response on one part (historical perspectives or contemporary issues), must the study the other part in order to fulfil the requirements of specific feature AE1 (research into, and analysis and interpretation of, historical and contemporary dance works, practice, and issues in context, using different sources). Evidence of this research must be included in the folio of Assessment Type 1: Skills Development. Teachers must be clear in showing where the specific features are met in these circumstances. A shaded rubric is the best way to indicate this.

**The more successful responses**

* thoroughly researched their topics
* wrote with clarity and understanding of the material under review
* used appropriate terminology
* consistently analysed and evaluated the content of their work.

**General information**

* Some responses were presented in an essay format; others were PowerPoint presentations.
* Popular topics included: local dance companies or dance artists, and Indigenous dance companies or artists of Australia in contemporary issues; and dance pioneers in historical perspectives.
* Questions that directed students to analyse and evaluate the material they were studying and make informed comments assisted them with their response.
* By avoiding topics that limit interpretation and restrict students from thinking for themselves, teachers are able to help their students achieve the best results possible.
* Broadly based topics often made it difficult to focus the response within the given word-limit.
* Culturally sensitive terminology and language, especially when researching Indigenous artists and their works, needs to be monitored. Many schools have an Aboriginal Education Officer who can be consulted to clarify appropriate language.

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Performance

The performances in 2016 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. For instance, teachers provided predicted mark sheets in a sealed envelope prepared before the performance, positioned examiners appropriately with a clear view of the performance, provided a program or running sheet identifying which dances the students being assessed were in, and provided information in regard to the venue. Once the performance work and presentations were 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. Performances ranged from discrete performances only for those students being assessed, through to performances that included a range of year levels, and other performing arts, such as music and drama. Teachers are reminded that choreographed movement needs to demonstrate a degree of technical complexity to allow students to achieve at all levels. Teachers are encouraged to aim for a range of movement styles or themes with sufficient dance content, so that students have the opportunity to show their versatility as a performer. The genre of dance theatre, which sometimes incorporates simple pedestrian movement, needs to be balanced with works that require more complex movement.

**The more successful responses**

* demonstrated an ability to adapt to a variety of choreographic material, either within one dance genre or within a range of genres.
* demonstrated an ability to apply their understanding of the nuances of the specific technique consistently throughout the performance, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the intention of the work through an expressive and sensitive presentation
* demonstrated the ability to relate to their fellow performers and audience using an extensive variety of skills
* for students undertaking off-stage roles, were well prepared, and included an explanation of their processes and decision-making which they demonstrated in a well-constructed, well-rehearsed, and informative presentation
* demonstrated evaluation and a deeper analysis of process. (Markers noted an improvement in this area.)

**General information**

* 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.
* Teachers are reminded 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. 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 are reminded to ensure that the choreography does not contain any sexual content or innuendo, irrespective of gender. This caution should apply equally to the choice of design in costumes. For example, costumes that are too brief or suggestive in nature, including male dancers not wearing a top, are not considered appropriate.
* Performances were presented in a variety of locations, ranging from school sites to professional theatres, although the venue has no impact on student achievement.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

Ensuring that each task is accompanied by a shaded rubric greatly assists moderators to confirm teachers’ marks. Also, providing a copy of the learning and assessment plan (LAP) gives an overall picture of where the specific features have been assigned to each component of the course.

Teachers are to be congratulated on their packaging of materials for moderation. Fewer teachers are using bulky folders with unnecessary print-outs. Teachers are streamlining their student work to a single USB drive containing every aspect of their course with a simple cover sheet. This makes moderating for a far more ergonomic process. Rubrics can be inserted either at the end of a written task or within the folder of a specific task, along with the video or PowerPoint of work to be assessed.

The majority of disc and USB drive submissions played successfully on computers at moderation, but a handful did not. Please double-check that any recording of student work plays in a variety of electronic devices before sending in to the SACE Board. Work that is submitted in chapters is much easier to review than a continuous movie that cannot be tracked forward.

Teachers are encouraged to include a cover sheet that indicates the breakdown of the marks assigned to each student. This is in addition to providing a shaded rubric for each assessment task undertaken. Please take care to be accurate when collating results. Only the use of grading (e.g. A+, B–, C) is appropriate for Stage 2. The use of numbers is not allowed. This needs to be observed, especially in the breakdown of skills development. Giving 13 out of 16.5 is not a practice to be undertaken any longer.

As a point of clarification, when assigning grades via the rubric shading, if there is no element of an A in the work submitted, a student cannot be assigned a B+.

Once marks are entered online, there can be no further adjustments. Teachers must cross-check what they have entered by printing off the summary sheet to avoid any clerical errors. There have been instances when the final grade did not match the breakdown marks.

Teachers are advised that, if student work is either missing or not finalised, a Variations — Moderation Materials form should be completed. If work is not submitted, it is graded with an I, not an E. An E indicates that work has been attempted, but it has only met the performance standards at the E level.

Some students have created a blog or website to present certain components of their work. Access to this material has proved difficult at moderation and teachers should consider an additional method of capturing students’ work to show what they have achieved.

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