

Dance

2012 Chief Assessor's Report



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DANCE

2012 CHIEF ASSESSOR'S REPORT

OVERVIEW

Chief Assessor's reports give an overview of how students performed in the 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

Part 1: Choreography

The choreographic section gives students the opportunity to express their views through movement on a topic of their interest. This can be done either through a single piece, two short pieces, or three tasks, with a total duration of 4 minutes. Students may work alone or with their peers, or direct other students to present their work — so, the choreographer need not necessarily perform in their own piece(s).

This year, the most popular choice was the single 4-minute piece, with only a small percentage of students opting for two shorter pieces and three tasks.

The themes chosen in this section of work covered a range of topics, from burgeoning population growth worldwide, to the slave trade, the impact of modern technology on interpersonal relationships, child abduction, and body image to name only a few.

The students who achieved the most success had a clear vision for their dance works, employed complex movement motifs, developed their phrases using choreographic devices, and were well rehearsed. Their willingness to experiment with shape, level, and dynamics, and to avoid simple repetition of known movement, made for creative dance pieces.

Teachers should present each student's work on a single DVD disc, clearly labelled. The standard of filming of student work has improved, with greater clarity in the finished product and sufficient distance between the performers and the camera.

Teachers are asked to check that all DVDs can be played, before submitting them for central moderation.

Part 2: Technique

Teachers have the option of a specific range of technical genres to choose from to allow their students the best opportunity of success. The most popular option

continues to be contemporary dance (from the options of contemporary, jazz, classical, tap, and break-dance genres), and several schools chose the jazz option.

In order to prepare students, teachers are advised to offer a class of work to demonstrate the full range of exercises that would normally be undertaken to develop the appropriate dance skills for the selected genre.

Students should meet the performance standards by demonstrating their skills through a series of meaningful, well-constructed movement combinations, of a suitable length, in a formal class setting. Short, simplistic, or repetitive exercises limit the students' ability to demonstrate their stamina, memory recall, strength, and coordination.

Teachers are not required to participate in the class and should refrain from giving instructions or feedback during the filming of the work.

Student numbers are worn both front and back, regardless of how many students are in the class, and teachers are reminded to ensure that the numbers are clearly visible at all times. Teachers should assign numbers of students in alphabetical order, to reflect the order shown on the SACE class list.

Students may wear leotards of different colours (in addition to their numbers), which makes it easier for moderators to identify them.

Part 3: Folio

The folio can be presented in a variety of ways and should summarise and analyse the process the student undertakes in either the process of choreographing their final work(s) or the development of the chosen technique and selected areas of research. In either case, students need to document the impact of their learning and its implications for their growth as dancers.

Students were most successful this year when they avoided journal-type entries and focused on research material that influenced certain choices made during the process. Folios based on accumulated knowledge and references to research information provided a better response and met the performance standards at a higher level.

A substantial number of folios did not take advantage of the full word count. Finding the right balance of evidence in all of the assessment design criteria has been a challenge for some students and teachers may wish to focus on this.

Teachers should encourage students to write notes for the folio as they go through the choreographic process. This will provide substantial reference material when it is time to create the final product.

Likewise, continual recording of the assigned technical tasks will give a breadth of understanding of the growth in technique the student has undertaken.

Assessment Type 2: Written Response

The written response requires students to write two essays – one on works, practice, and issues from a historical period before the past 25 years, and the other on works, practice, and issues from a contemporary period in the past 25 years. Questions may

be directed by the student or teacher, and should provide ample opportunities to meet the specific features of the performance standards through a discussion that demonstrates in-depth research and understanding of the chosen topics, within the word count.

Students and teachers are encouraged to choose a range of specific questions that have a clear focus for discussion. If questions are too broad or not specific enough, they may well limit the degree of possible analysis. Students who revert to paraphrasing tend not to express their level of learning as clearly. It is recommended that more than one question be offered on each topic, to allow all students the opportunity to successfully respond at the level that provides the most suitable challenge.

Most teachers included their shaded rubric, to indicate their marking of students' work, and this assisted moderators in confirming teacher's grades. A few teachers annotated student responses, which also supported the moderation process.

A good range of topics were offered to students this year, with a focus on Australian artists in the Contemporary Issues responses. Teachers can encourage students to include the question at the beginning of their essay and the total word-count at the end.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 4: Performance

In 2012, the external assessment performances went well. Teachers submitted predicted marks sheets before the performance, seated markers separately with sufficient space in which to work and identified students clearly both on stage and on the Performance Notes Sheets.

Many performances gave the opportunity for students to achieve at the highest level, while also giving them the challenge of dancing in a variety of genres and experiencing different choreographic approaches. The performances included appropriate material expected for Stage 2, in terms of the complexity of the choreographic demands.

In general teachers adhered to the 15-minute time-limit. A variety of off-stage roles were represented, including front-of-house, publicity, and costume and make-up design.

Teachers and students understood the requirements of the performance and adequate facilities were provided for the performances to run smoothly.

Many performances were supported by presentations from other year levels, or other art forms (e.g. music), to allow the students being assessed time to change and prepare themselves for their next dance. This approach also gives markers time to reflect and make written comments on the Performance Notes Sheets.

Students were given solos and also demonstrated their partnering skills in duets and trios. As solo material can highlight both the skills and the shortcomings of a dancer, teachers are advised to consider carefully the student's opportunity in being given a solo taking in the dancer's skill level and confidence.

Many students, in addition to working independently, demonstrated a sound knowledge of working collaboratively with others as a member of an ensemble. Students who achieved at the highest level demonstrated an ability to adapt both to a variety of choreographic material that required them to perform using different personas, and to different moods on stage.

Students who achieved at the highest level demonstrated an ability to apply their deep understanding of the nuances of the specific technique, with sustained energy, for the duration of the performance. These students exuded an expressive confidence that showed integrity towards the intention of the work. They demonstrated their ability to relate with meaning to their fellow performers and the audience, using an extensive range of performance skills.

Teachers are to be commended on their organisation of the performance work and the variety of choreographic material provided to their students. Teachers are advised that if they choose to use guest choreographers, the choreography must be at a suitable level and of sufficient complexity for Stage 2 Dance.

Teachers are also advised, when numbering the students, that numbers are affixed firmly to the front and back of costumes wherever possible, and that the number order is aligned with the alphabetical order as it appears on the marks sheets.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

All teachers are encouraged to check the SACE website on a regular basis. In particular, teachers are advised to download the 2013 subject outline and subject operational information for Dance. These documents include key dates and information to support the external assessment and school assessment processes.

When packaging material for central moderation please ensure that:

- task sheets are included indicating the specific features the teacher has chosen for the task
- the rubric for each task is included, appropriately shaded to indicate the student's result
- written tasks are annotated to indicate the teacher's assessment decision-making
- all DVDs and CDs submitted are in working order, and may be tracked across the task
- in Assessment Type 2, Part 1 (Choreography), only one DVD per student is used, and it is clearly named
- in Assessment Type 2, Part 2 (Technique), all students wear a fixed number, front and back, and there is a record of the number assigned to each student
- students are numbered in consecutive, alphabetical order
- each piece of student work is clearly identified
- a cover sheet showing the breakdown of marks for Assessment Type 1: Skills Development, to clarify how the teacher used the evidence in the student work in making their assessment decisions.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The standard achieved in Stage 2 Dance continues to rise, due to the commitment of both teachers and their students.

Students and teachers are encouraged to access the exemplar material available on the SACE website. Teachers who discuss the performance standards with students at the beginning of the year are able to provide students with a clear goal for extending their personal skills to reach a higher level of achievement.

The clarifying forum is an opportunity for teachers to meet and discuss the performance standards for Stage 2 Dance, to discuss the technique and performance assessment tasks as a group, and to obtain support in making their assessment decisions during the school year.

All Dance teachers, and particularly new teachers, are encouraged to engage in professional dialogue with peers, to build their confidence and capacity in teaching and assessing the subject.

In this way, the passion that exists for the subject continues and grows in the Dance community.

Dance
Chief Assessor