

Creative Arts



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Taking a look at assessment and reporting in 2000

Q. What does a standards-referenced approach mean?

A. The new Higher School Certificate (HSC) will use a standards-referenced approach to assessing and reporting student achievement.

This means that the achievements of students are assessed and reported against specified standards that are established for each course. In a standards-referenced approach, students are recognised for what they know, understand and can do. The mark they receive will reflect the standard which the student has achieved in the course.

The current HSC uses a norm-referenced approach. In this approach, fixed percentages of students are placed into bands of marks according to a pre-determined distribution. This occurs regardless of what students know, understand and can do, and fails to recognise the standard which the student has demonstrated in terms of achievement of course outcomes.

Q. What are the “standards”?

A. In the new Higher School Certificate these standards are:

- the knowledge, skills and understanding expected to be learned by students as a result of studying the course, referred to as the *syllabus* standards
- the levels of achievement of the knowledge, skills and understanding (reported in six bands), referred to as the *performance* standards.

Syllabus standards and *performance* standards are based on the aims, objectives, outcomes and content of a course. Together, they specify what is to be learned and how well it is to be achieved.

Q. How will the changes to the new HSC affect school policies and procedures?

A. The Board of Studies ACE Manual remains current for the year 2000. Schools should ensure that they are familiar with the HSC requirements concerning policy and procedures, as set down in this manual.

School policies and procedures will need to reflect the Board’s requirements for the HSC internal assessment, as stated in the ACE Manual (check with the Board of Studies).

Aspects of policy and procedure which must be developed and implemented by schools include:

- informing students in writing of the assessment requirements for each course before the commencement of the HSC course
- ensuring that students are given adequate written notice of the nature and timing of assessment tasks
- providing meaningful feedback on students’ performance in all assessment tasks
- maintaining records of marks awarded to each student for all assessment tasks
- addressing issues relating to illness, misadventure and malpractice in assessment tasks
- addressing issues relating to the late submission and non-completion of assessment tasks
- advising students in writing if they are not meeting the assessment requirements in a course and indicating what is necessary to enable the students to satisfy the requirements
- informing students about their entitlements to school reviews and appeals to the Board
- conducting school reviews of assessments when requested by students
- ensuring that students are aware that they can collect their Rank Order Advice at the end of the external examinations at their school.

Schools will need to ensure that they understand the new mandatory assessment requirements of different courses by checking the relevant syllabuses. These changes to requirements need to be incorporated into school policy and procedures.

The Board still requires schools to develop an internal assessment program that:

- specifies the various assessment tasks and weightings allocated to each task
- provides a schedule of the tasks designed for the whole course.

Q. How will changes to the new HSC affect my assessment practices?

A. The white paper envisaged that changes to assessment practice would occur over several years, commencing in 2001.



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Teachers should follow school policies and procedures and syllabus guidelines for assessment and reporting. They need to ensure that course requirements are followed in terms of the balance and weighting of components and types of tasks. What is important is that the strategies used to assess students are appropriate to the outcomes being assessed.

Teachers need to provide a mark for internal assessment tasks. These marks should be derived from the students' achievement against specified criteria.

Appropriate feedback should be given to students to inform them about what they need to learn and do in order to improve their achievement in a subject.

Q. What are good assessment practices?

- A. Teachers demonstrate good assessment practices when they:
- design and use assessment strategies which are directly linked to and reflect the course outcomes and the standards expected
 - provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate their achievement of outcomes in a variety of types of task
 - consider the type of assessment task being used, ensuring that it is appropriate to the outcomes being assessed
 - inform the students of the assessment criteria on which the assessment task is to be judged, before the task is undertaken
 - design for each task marking schemes which are aligned to the syllabus standards
 - provide students with meaningful feedback about what they are able to do and what is needed to improve performance
 - determine rankings and relative difference between students by level of achievement of the standards.

Q. Will the new HSC examination be different from the current examination?

- A. HSC examination questions will be developed from the examination specifications. Teachers will need to check the examination specifications for each course they teach. Most courses have had changes made to their exam specifications as a result of the review process.

HSC examinations will now assess against standards. They will do this by using a variety of question types to enable students to demonstrate their level of achievement of course outcomes. Questions will be clearly worded and structured to indicate to students what is expected and will reflect a range and balance of course content and outcomes. Marking guidelines will be developed which will align with the performance standards. Examinations will be marked using teachers' professional judgement to determine the standard of students' performance, and the marks awarded will reflect the standard.

Q. What are non-examination type tasks?

- A. Some examples of non-examination type tasks include:
- computer simulations, multimedia presentations
 - interviews, surveys, seminars
 - debates, hypotheticals
 - case study reports
 - oral presentations
 - community-based fieldwork
 - research reports
 - participant observation and analysis
 - dramatic presentations
 - interpretation of scenarios, statistics
 - co-operative learning tasks
 - investigation and analysis tasks
 - audio-visual presentation or analysis
 - practical performances to demonstrate theoretical understanding.

Q. What are performance scales and performance bands?

- A. Students who successfully complete the HSC Course will have their performance reported against performance bands on a course report.

The course report includes a performance scale which describes five levels (bands) of achievement above a minimum standard expected. Each band on the performance scale (except band 1) includes descriptions that summarise the attainments typically demonstrated on that band.

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Students who meet or exceed the minimum standard receive a mark of 50 or more. The mark awarded to a student will reflect the standard achieved in the course.

Performance scales can assist in internal assessment programs as they can be used to determine the wording of marking schemes and feedback to students.

Q. What do I need to understand about performance bands?

A. Teachers need to understand that the performance bands are used only to report students' achievement at the end of the course. They provide a summative description of a student's overall performance in a subject, based on internal assessment and the external examination.

Teachers need to recognise that the development of performance bands is an evolving process, in which the bands will continue to be refined to include information from performance in the new HSC courses and the outcomes assessed internally.

Support for teachers in developing an understanding of performance bands will include:

- State-wide workshops (LIG events) in November, which will specifically focus on assessment in the new HSC.
- New HSC Bulletins. Four HSC Bulletins are being developed to address issues concerning assessment and reporting in the HSC. The first bulletin is on *Assessment—A Standards-Referenced Approach*. Other issues that will be addressed include: the role of internal assessment; developing assessment tasks; reporting student achievement.
- Board of Studies support documents, including the *Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplement* for each course.

Q. At the end of the HSC, what will I need to submit to the Board of Studies?

A. As in previous years, schools will provide the Board with a mark only. These marks are the product of the internal assessment program and should indicate the rank order of the students and the relative differences between the students.

This mark will provide a summation of each student's achievement, measured at points throughout the course.

Teachers will make informed judgements about the relative difference between students, based on their differing achievement of standards.

Q. What will happen to the internal assessment mark which I submit to the Board?

A. For each school course group, the school assessment marks submitted to the Board of Studies will be moderated on the basis of the group's performance in the HSC examination. The approach to be used will be the same as at present, except that the raw examination marks will be used in the moderation process.

For each course, the moderated assessment and the examination mark will be averaged to provide a composite mark.

Experienced markers will follow a structured procedure, employing their professional judgement to determine what composite marks will correspond to the borderline between each performance band. This step provides a set of "mapping points" that enable students' marks to be aligned with the performance scale.

For each student in a course, the moderated assessment mark and the examination mark are separately aligned with the performance scale.

The average of a student's assessment mark and the examination mark, after alignment to the performance scale, is then reported as the student's HSC mark.

Q. What will students receive in terms of an HSC?

A. Students will receive:

- The HSC testamur (if all requirements are met).
- A Record of Achievement which summarises results awarded in each course.
- A course report for each board-developed course. This will show the moderated internal assessment mark, the external examination mark and the averaged HSC mark on a performance scale. This report also includes statements of a typical performance which a student would demonstrate in each band.
- VET credentials.



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NEW SYLLABUSES IN CREATIVE ARTS

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Drama

The implementation package for drama focuses on the changes to the HSC syllabus. The changes, while minor, will provide teachers with the opportunity to review their current teaching practices to accommodate some of the new features of the HSC drama course.

The details of the whole-day workshops appear on the professional development calendar in your school.

Following is information on the new HSC drama professional development days.

The day will be divided into three modules. In some of the modules there will be significant practical activities. Teachers should come prepared for these activities with casual clothing that allows for practical work.

Teachers are also encouraged to bring any teaching and learning materials that may be useful for workshop activities that involve programming and assessment.

For those unable to attend the implementation workshops, detailed information will appear on the New HSC web site:

www.newhsc.schools.nsw.edu.au

The web site will contain programming models, frequently asked questions, teaching strategies for new content, and any other materials presented at the workshop

Session 1: What has changed? What remains the same?

Session 1 will address the following questions:

- What's changed in the new syllabus?
- What content remains the same in the old and the new syllabuses?

- How has the Preliminary course changed and how do I program and teach the new content?
- What effect will the new HSC written core have?
- How has the Individual Project changed?
- What is the rationale?
- How does *Studies in drama & theatre* differ from *Drama and theatre in societies and cultures other than Australia*?
- What are the new prescribed texts in the topic lists?

Session 2: Applying the changes in the drama classroom

Session 2 will suggest a programming sequence for teachers to apply to their teaching from Preliminary to HSC drama.

The workshop will provide some strategies for dealing with the changes to the Preliminary and HSC courses. The session will be practical and guide teachers through the new Preliminary content area: *Theatrical traditions and performance styles*.

The session will also discuss the management of the changes to the individual project.

Session 3: Assessment of the new HSC

The new HSC has meant a shift in the way students will be assessed and examined. This workshop will discuss some of these changes and discuss strategies for assessment in the drama classroom.

The following topics will be explored:

- Overview of standards-referenced assessment
- Different types of assessment, different types of tasks
- Development of a sample assessment task
- Sample responses for participants to assess.

The session will conclude with a question and answer forum and a discussion of resources for the new HSC drama course.

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Music

Workshops

During Term 4, a series of workshops on the new HSC will be available to teachers. The music workshops will take place in October and November and will focus on the most significant areas of change in the new music syllabuses.

The new Music 1, Music 2 and Music Extension syllabuses will replace the existing 2 Unit Course 1, 2 Unit (Common) and 3 Unit syllabuses.

Although the course structure and content of the new music syllabuses are very similar to the current ones, some of the changes that have been introduced have significant implications for both programming and assessment.

The new HSC music workshops will be divided into three sessions of discussion and practical workshop activities.

The first session will focus on similarities and differences between the new and the current syllabuses; the second will explore assessment issues, including portfolio assessment; the third will focus on programming issues and will include strategies for incorporating technology and improvisation into programs for Music 1, Music 2 and the Music Extension course.

Discussion of the *Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplement*, which contains the performance bands, marking guidelines and sample examination papers for Music 1, Music 2 and Music Extension, will also occur during the workshops.

One of the most significant changes for music is the shift to portfolio assessment of submitted works. As the finished work is now to be assessed at the external HSC examination, teachers will need to consider “process” and the notion of a “work in progress” in preparing their revised assessment schedules. Strategies for addressing this significant change will be explored at the HSC workshops and will be further supported by the Board of Studies in the support document currently under development.

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Visual arts

Stage 6 syllabus

Now that the new syllabus has reached schools, teachers are keen to ascertain the requirements and major changes of the new syllabus so that they can develop programming strategies for 2000.

Common questions are:

1. What are the essential differences between the current and new syllabuses?
2. What can I use from my current programs for the new syllabus?
3. Where do I start and how do I accommodate the full range of students?
4. What training and resources are available?
5. How do I plan for assessment?

Here is some information that might help you to answer these questions.

1. Differences between the current and new visual arts syllabuses

The basic difference of the new syllabus lies in the **content**. The three areas of content are **Practice**, **Frames** and **Conceptual framework**.

These areas of content indicate not only what to teach in the courses but how to respond to interests in the field of art. They offer a structure for organising, talking about and interpreting examples of artworks, processes, issues, practices, movements and ideas. Knowledge of these aspects of content and their components will enable students to set out a point of view that is informed and reflective.

Practice extends the notions of artmaking and art criticism and art history from the Years 7-10 syllabus. Students should be encouraged to appreciate these as discrete disciplines. They will start by understanding how practice is represented in the field of the visual arts and move towards being able to make these practices their own in studying and making. In the Years 7-10 syllabus, the practices act as organisers for programming. In the new senior syllabus, practice is a part of content, a body of knowledge.

The application of the *Frames* should be an extension of how they were used in the Years 7-10 syllabus. For example, the subjective frame needs to be extended



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from a focus on the student to refer to the “subjectivity” of all players implied in the content. Similarly, changes that have occurred in the field of art over the past twenty years help to formulate questions in the post-modern frame. These changes include the advent of a screen culture, consumerism in the arts, the changing nature of artists’ practice, and issues of reproduction and facsimile.

Finally the *Conceptual framework* emerges as a new component of content. It enables teachers and students to investigate the relationships between *artist*, *artwork*, *the world* and the *audience*, providing an explanation of the *art world*. The conceptual framework could be extended to indicate how representation is taken up by, and relates to, the players/agencies in the art world (e.g. how the world is represented). With the growing complexities of issues, processes, ideas, theories and practices in the field of art, the conceptual framework seeks to explain their meanings, relationships and applications.

The selection of subject matter, interests and themes in the visual arts is determined by how the frames, practice and conceptual framework are to be highlighted or focussed. Students and teachers are free to choose their preferred interests. The thrust of content shifts from areas of knowledge to “ways of knowing”. It is through this knowing that students demonstrate achievement of the outcomes.

The changes in content and the inclusion of outcomes have resulted in some significant changes to the **examination and assessment** requirements.

The compulsory question in Section I provides a common component for all students. This section has three questions. Each one is based on one of the three content areas. Questions 1-3 are allocated marks of 5, 8 and 12 respectively. This reflects the increasing degree of difficulty of the questions and the types of responses required. It also provides opportunities for students across the whole range of abilities to demonstrate their knowledge of the field.

In Section II students can demonstrate their ability to apply to the question examples they have studied in case studies and other investigations. More information on this will be published on the New HSC web site and in the next edition of **CURRICULUM SUPPORT**.

The use of the **Visual Arts Diary** remains basically the same. It provides a vehicle for students to integrate their art making and art studying and to evolve an ownership of their practice. It is here that students can provide evidence of their knowledge of *Practice*, *Frames* and *Conceptual framework* in their art making.

Following an investigation of at least two forms in the Preliminary course, the production of a **body of work** in the HSC course allows students to realise the significance of conceptual meaning, representation and resolution in art making. Their body of work may be individual items connected by process, concept, media or theme. This is already evident in current submissions of artworks.

The division of the Syllabus into **Preliminary** and **HSC courses** enables students to concentrate on acquisition of skills and understandings of the key elements of the content—*Practice*, *Frames* and *Conceptual framework*—as entities. The HSC course requires a deeper understanding and an integrated application of these entities.

2. Use of current programs

Teachers do not need to develop entirely new programs based on a selection of fresh areas of interest. Current programs have the potential to be adapted to meet the requirements of the new syllabus. As the shift of the syllabus is ideological and contains some new terminology, current programs can be renovated to incorporate these.

For example, teachers may have used programs that feature specific practice, themes or movement. Some teachers might be used to organising program material within the Focus Areas. Other teachers prefer to start the Preliminary course with investigations of such questions as “What is an artwork?” or “What is an artist?”

All of these are still valid as content for programs. They do, however, need some reviewing to include application of the new parts of content, such as the *Conceptual framework*. These terms are used overtly in the examination and will need to be known by students. The elements of content and terms emphasised in the outcomes need to be woven into programs. It is not expected that teachers can introduce all of the new areas of content and all elements at once. The content diagram of the Preliminary course implies concentration on a selected component at a time.

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It is advisable for teachers to select, for programming, content with which they feel comfortable, or select an area that will be stimulating for students. Make sure that students understand the basic terms and notions of the syllabus, such as *representation, resolution, conceptual, subjective, structural, framework, audience*. It might be that their respective understandings of some of these terms will vary, indeed, that their connotations are at odds with art-specific meanings.

3. Getting started and providing for the full range of students

To gain an understanding of how to develop a continuum of programs that lead to assessment and examination requirements, examine the syllabus and observe how the areas of content match up with the outcomes, and how these outcomes are aligned with the performance band descriptors.

The full range of students can achieve outcomes in much the same way that they do now. Teaching and learning activities can be organised and structured by the teacher to suit the students' needs and readiness to understand areas of syllabus content. Case studies are a means by which the teacher presents concepts which appropriately challenge each student.

It might be possible to encourage those students who wish to enrich their knowledge and skills in artmaking to take one of the content endorsed courses, such as Photography, Visual Design or Ceramics (page 9 of the syllabus).

4. Training and resources

Training for visual arts teachers will be available during October and November this year. Thirteen Stage 6 visual arts implementation workshops will be available across the state. Application forms should be in your school. You can also download them from the New HSC web site.

In these workshops, teachers will be given hand-outs as complementary resources to the sessions. For those teachers who cannot attend a workshop, the materials will be posted on the New HSC web site, www.newhsc.schools.nsw.edu.au. These materials will include some programming strategies, glossaries, essays, notes and summaries. You will also be able to obtain essays, articles and information on NSW HSC On-line in 2000. Even though this web site targets

primarily students, much of the material on it will also assist teachers in the inaugural year of the new syllabus.

The SCAN web site has been designed to support senior students. Check out the web site's program of exhibitions and events, and the profiles of artists and mediums. Participating in the discussion area would be a useful teaching strategy.

There are many resources in your classroom and community that you could exploit. Students are expected to understand the nature of art criticism, art history and art making as disciplines. A first-hand knowledge of these practices and how they operate in their own area is always valuable. If you are near commercial or regional galleries, or artist-run spaces, find out what their exhibition program is for 2000. You might identify some links with your program. Collect any art criticism in your local newspapers or journals. Images from an exhibition catalogue, together with an essay and a critique, are useful resources, especially if students do not have direct access to exhibitions. You might be able to procure some information from the curators of exhibitions about the theses that influence the selection of material. Curators can be seen as players in the field of audiences and therefore have definable relationships with *artists, artworks* and the "world" of the conceptual framework.

Watch out for exhibitions that tour your district. The *Ways of Being* exhibition, curated by Jennifer Hardy, is an exhibition organised by the Ivan Dougherty Gallery in Sydney. It is a collection of artworks by Australian artists from different cultural backgrounds. The exhibition will be at Gold Coast City Art Gallery from 13 August to 26 September and at Penrith Regional Art Gallery from 12 October to November. The education kit, *Ways of Being*, contains some valuable essays on art criticism and art history. Artists' statements give a colourful tapestry of the diverse practices of artists. For information about this kit contact the Ivan Dougherty Gallery, fax 9385 0603.

Make contact with artists in your area. There might be members of your local Aboriginal community who are practising artists. Invite them to visit your school and speak to students. It is particularly helpful for students to be able to make links with and connections between artworks, artists, local audiences, and their immediate environment. Prepare questions that reveal the types of information and relationships implied by the *Conceptual framework* and the *Frames*. It is imperative that students have some interaction with



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artworks, a first-hand experience as “audience”. In country areas this might involve a visit to an architect-designed building in the local town or a sculpture in a public place.

Revisit art history texts in your storeroom, for example, Janson, Gardner, Gombrich and Feldman. If you have not already done so, read the introduction or preface of these. This will enable you to ascertain the standpoint of the author and the aims of the text. This can then provide the basis for evaluating these texts and gaining insights into their function as art history.

5. Planning for assessment

This involves close consideration of such aspects of assessment as:

- the standards-referenced approach as distinct from a norm-referenced approach
- outcomes as expressing achievement
- weightings, tasks and recording
- internal and external assessment
- written examination sections and content
- the body of work.

The Board of Studies has recently (Week 1, Term 3) released the *Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplement* for Visual Arts, which explains assessment and examinations in more depth. An article on the general principles of assessment and reporting appears in this edition of **CURRICULUM SUPPORT**.

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Dance

The new Stage 6 Dance syllabus re-emphasises the foundation of the current syllabus, which advocates the study of dance as an art form in an educational context. Several issues relating to this foundation and the inclusion of new content are discussed below.

1. Dance as an art form in education

Learning in dance has been made more explicit by the changes to syllabus outcomes and content. These outcomes and content support the study of dance as an art form. Students are able to understand and value dance from an artistic, aesthetic and cultural

perspective and as a means of communicating ideas. They gain an appreciation of the diverse forms of dance including, in particular, dance as a work of art.

In the Rationale, the study of dance as an art form is inextricably linked to the three course components, *performance*, *composition* and *appreciation*. In the explanation of this link, it is clear that the study of dance as an art form is grounded in student learning across a broad practical and theoretical base.

Dance studies need to focus on more than one aspect of dance. Specialisation is encouraged in the HSC course, but only after students have gained fundamental knowledge and understanding, skills, and values and attitudes in the core which provide the foundation for their selection of a major study.

To this end, areas of study in performance, composition and appreciation have common elements e.g.

- The elements of dance are described in the same way in core performance and core composition.
- Organising movement and organising the dance (form/structure) are described in the same way in core composition and core appreciation.

By studying these common components, students develop a holistic appreciation of dance. For example, students can apply knowledge of the elements of dance gained through *performance* study to the generation of new movement material in *composition*. In the study of *appreciation*, students translate theory into practice by analysing how others have used the elements to create new ways of moving.

These commonalities are further threaded through the major studies.

2. Performance

Dance technique

The course content is designed around the study of a generic non-stylised *dance technique*. The areas of study focus on preparing the body to dance. The philosophical basis is that the acquisition of the broadest range of physical skills facilitates performance in any dance style. It is not enough for students to limit their study to one style. The definition of the technique as incorporating the fundamentals of classical ballet technique, modern dance technique, safe dance practice and anatomical principles of movement further explains this philosophy.

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Dance technique applied to dance performance

Through the study of dance technique, students develop knowledge, understanding and skills about what their body can do, which can then be applied to dance performance. Dance performance allows the student to execute the movement to its full extent rather than being a series of technical exercises. The content specifies how students can relate and apply their dance technique in a performance.

For example, a sequence consisting of a combination of triplets and turns, an arabesque and collapse into the floor can be viewed in terms of the alignment of the body in the balance and during the turn. Students executing the sequence can be assessed on the consistency of their demonstration of alignment, strength, balance and control in the performance of the sequence. Consistency in technique aids and enhances the quality of performance.

The core performance dance

The core performance “Dance” is the vehicle by which dance technique is performed. Combinations of movement sequences are developed as an outgrowth of sequential technical exercises. Students’ skill level is demonstrated through the execution of a selection of these sequences entitled the “Dance.” Teacher and students make the selection based on the complexity of the combinations, along with the capability of the student to execute them. The areas of study outline how the body skills are to be applied to the performance of the “Dance”. The syllabus suggests that the “Dance” be considered in terms of the way in which the sequences are organised to best present the appropriate level of technique. The relationship between dance technique and dance performance is enhanced when the selected vehicle demonstrates a consistency of technical competence and performance quality.

The major study work

In the HSC course, students specialise in an in-depth study of one core component. In Major Study Performance, students are expected to apply the knowledge, understanding and skills gained in the Preliminary and HSC courses to the performance of a “Work”.

The syllabus differentiates a “Dance” and a “Work” in terms of the context/intent. The “Work” is driven by thematic considerations. The implication of this for

students is that there is an emphasis on the interpretation of the choreographic vehicle, in relation to the areas of study. The syllabus states that assessment is based on creating a “unified whole.” The implication is that choices made are based on how and why they support the context/intent.

For example, movement choices need to be considered in relation to the style, rhythmical structure, phrasing and tempo of the selected music, if music is used as accompaniment. How the mood and atmosphere of the music are interpreted and demonstrated in the movement, and movement quality, become considerations for assessment. Unity is achieved when there is a strong link between the accompaniment and the physical realisation of the “Work”.

HSC dance workshops

Training for dance teachers will be available during October and November. (Refer to the HSC implementation calendar in your school).

The HSC dance workshops will deal with the issues discussed above, and others relating to the syllabus through four modules. The modules include practical workshops and discussions and the development of a resource package.

For those teachers unable to attend a workshop, the material (workshop sessions and handouts) will be posted on the New HSC web site:

www.newhsc.schools.edu.au