

English



CS HSC support strategy

Overview

The establishment, training and resourcing of school-based professional learning teams (PLTs) is central to the Department's HSC support strategy. PLTs will plan, implement and monitor their schools' projects to meet the learning needs of both staff and students.

Each school has received a grant to assist two or more team members to attend the district training day and school representatives to attend Local Interest Group (LIG) events.

Local Interest Group events scheduled for 1999 are as follows:

Local interest group events	Who will go	When
<p><i>LIG event 1: School structures and organisation</i> This one-day event provides a Board of Studies/VET update as well as solutions to whole-school implementation, including flexible structures, local solutions, and model timetables.</p>	Executive teachers with responsibilities in curriculum planning	Term 2 2-25 June
<p><i>LIG event 2: Syllabus implementation</i> These one-day events will identify syllabus implementation as well as teaching and learning issues in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • mathematics • sciences • biology. <p>A second one-day event is also planned in October for English.</p>	Head teachers and learning partners in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • mathematics • sciences. 	Term 3 16 August - 2 September
<p><i>LIG event 3: Assessment</i> A one-day event to provide a Board of Studies update on school assessment for the new HSC.</p>	Senior executive and head teachers	Term 4 11-29 October
		Term 4 2-26 November

The exact dates of these local group events will be advertised in newsletters, on the web site and via invitations to schools.

Further information about LIG events is available from Frances Plummer, telephone (02) 9886 7189.

Curriculum support	Assessment and reporting	Vocational education
<p>Curriculum support is provided through the new HSC professional development web site, as well as through newsletters, workshops in a range of subjects and State conferences. CURRICULUM SUPPORT will include an HSC supplement offering advice on programming, teaching and assessing.</p> <p>Contact officer for English: Paul Hardage Telephone: (02) 9886 7624</p>	<p>Assessment and reporting issues for the new HSC will be the focus of a series of bulletins.</p> <p>Contact officer: Peter Lorking Telephone: (02) 9886 7683</p>	<p>Vocational education conferences for teachers of curriculum industry frameworks will be held in each of the 34 districts with a VET-In-Schools Committee. District-based events for industry-specific teachers are also planned.</p> <p>Contact officer: Cathy Gerloff Telephone: (02) 9607 1326</p>



English

CS

What's new in the draft Stage 6 English syllabus?

By now we will all have had a chance to consider this draft in detail and send our comments to the Board of Studies. At this point, it is interesting to reflect on all the ways in which the five courses in the new syllabus will be different and challenging for us. Matt Brown, from Koorringal HS, writes:

Outcomes

All the courses are outcomes-based. These outcomes will direct and influence teaching and learning. Students will work to achieve the outcomes by responding to and composing increasingly complex texts in a variety of modes and media. Students will need to be assessed on how they demonstrate their achievement of the stated outcomes rather than on their performance in comparison with their cohort.

Teaching strategies

Generally, the courses are more challenging and more demanding, but explicit teaching will provide the extra support that all students will need.

There is a greater emphasis on the explicit teaching of how language works, of how texts make meaning, and of the skills needed to compose and respond to texts.

Many teachers have welcomed a move to the close and critical analysis of texts and language in a range of contexts.

All the courses direct students to a broad range of types of text in order to gain meaning from visual, oral and written language. Increased emphasis is given to students' creative skills.

Responding and composing are given equal attention. There is also an emphasis on independent and collaborative learning.

Texts

Texts remain a vital element of the new syllabus. The main difference in the new syllabus will be the increase in the variety and types of texts offered and the relationship between texts. Teachers will need to

consider how their text choices will be made within the modular structure of the courses, as well as how best to meet the needs and interests of their students, while satisfying course requirements.

The understanding and appreciation of language in a range of modes and the breadth of possible text choices is exciting and rewarding for students and teachers. The new types of text include electronic ones such as CD-ROMs, film, media and web sites. These texts need to be addressed, if not as a prescribed text within a module, then as additional texts.

Use and study of language

We are accustomed to working with prescribed texts as the central focus of our teaching and learning in both 2 Unit Related and 2 Unit General. There is clearly a paradigm shift in the draft syllabus, as study of a single text is a part of one of three modules in each of the Advanced and Standard courses. The study of language in a range of "personal, social, historical, cultural and workplace contexts" is where the emphasis is now to be placed. There will therefore be a need to provide students with the opportunities to explore how language works in a variety of contexts, using a variety of types of texts.

Choices of course

The possibility for Advanced course students to complete one or two of the Extension courses fulfils a curriculum demand that English teachers have been making for many years. Considerable enthusiasm has been expressed by teachers, who recognise the possibilities for study that these courses provide for high performing students.

On the other hand, there is now more support available for students who need it, particularly in the Fundamentals course, which is designed "to assist those students who are unlikely to achieve the outcomes of Stage 6 without additional assistance". The aim of the course is unquestionably praiseworthy, even though teachers have expressed concern about how readily the course will be taken up.

Terminology

New language is being used to describe what must now be taught and learnt. The glossary provides some sense of the changes we can expect. The most important revisions and additions to our lexicon are those terms that describe the processes used when addressing the ways in which students respond to or compose texts.

English



Technology

The syllabus writers were conscious of how new technologies have influenced the ways in which we make meaning. The draft syllabus includes these new technologies and encourages teachers and students to address these texts.

Some of us might be wary of electronic texts. However, it is important to recognise and accept that these texts are becoming increasingly important to our students. We recognise the influence of television, film and computers on society, and this syllabus ensures that Stage 6 students become critical and possibly creative users of these types of texts.

Assessment and examination

One of the flaws of the present syllabuses is their dependence on examinations to direct teaching and learning. The HSC examination remains significant. However, the requirement to complete a maximum of 30% HSC examination-type questions in the weighting of assessment work highlights the intention for teachers to develop and implement tasks that will more accurately reflect what students are able to do in English in non-HSC-examination-type tasks. Assessment should reflect course outcomes and ultimately what is taught and learnt.

The move from norm-referenced to standards-referenced assessment provides further emphasis on the clear intentions of this new syllabus.

Matt Brown
Koorringal High School

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Implementation of Stage 6 English

We welcome Gillian Lovell to the English team in the Curriculum Support Directorate. Gil has had considerable experience with Stage 6 English as a senior teacher, head of department, ETA councillor and senior examiner. Gil's role in 1999 will be to help us set up our processes and materials for implementation and support. Gil writes:

The new Stage 6 English syllabus will be with us in July, for implementation in 2000. It represents an exciting and challenging approach to English and some

new ways of approaching the subject at senior level. It is worth noting that this syllabus is closer to the spirit of the current Years 7-10 syllabus and represents progress in the achievement of a K-12 continuum. It will deliver flexibility and scope for using a wide range of written, oral, visual, media and multimedia texts and for offering a wide experience of language. It is exciting to see this syllabus take shape.

The Department is conscious of the needs of teachers, particularly given a demanding time line, and is developing a teacher training program and curriculum support materials.

Training and development

Training for teachers will be based on local interest groups (LIGs). Each LIG will have a facilitator who will provide training for representatives of all English faculties.

Fifty LIG English facilitators will be appointed and trained during May and June. In turn, LIG English facilitators will train all head teachers and learning partners in two separate events.

The first LIG training day will be held in August and the second is planned for October. LIG English facilitators will provide ongoing training in all schools, using networking processes.

Training will focus on:

- developing critical understanding of the rationale and theory base of both current practice and the new Stage 6 English syllabus, and
- adapting existing faculty programs and the development of new programs and teaching units, which will be published in CURRICULUM SUPPORT and on-line.

Curriculum support material

Curriculum materials will cover the new and challenging features of the syllabus.

There is an emphasis on a wide variety of texts, including film, media and multimedia texts, which requires teachers and students to engage actively in listening and viewing and to develop an understanding of how these texts make meaning.

All courses in the syllabus stress the inclusion of composing and responding to language. Composition refers to the written, spoken and visual texts produced



English

by students. Current practice tends to confine composition to interpretive and analytical written work, while the new syllabus assumes that imaginative composition will be valued as highly, and that composition may be realised in a variety of forms and media.

Other features, such as the study of texts within the framework of a module and the introduction of the major work in the Extension course, also require the development of strategies and processes to support teachers and to guide students.

The Department will draw on the expertise of teachers to help write curriculum materials and to undertake support roles as workshop facilitators.

Time line

May and June

Appointment and training of 50 LIG English facilitators.

June to September

LIG English facilitators to train all head teachers and learning partners.

August

First training day.

October

Second training day.

July to November

Publication of materials to complement training through **CURRICULUM SUPPORT** and the web site.

Gillian Lovell
Project officer

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The new HSC web site

<http://www.newhsc.edu.au>

Helpful hint for PLTs ...

Bookmark this address: Why not build in regular access to this site so your team can keep abreast of the latest information? Maybe your school librarian or Internet contact person can assist.

The new HSC web site supports secondary teachers across NSW in their professional development. It is a "one-stop shop" for the latest information about

initiatives, activities and resources for the new HSC. You can also share your issues, questions and ideas on-line with others in the learning community.

Check out the calendar of events

... to look at the timing of the year's major initiatives.

Register for discussion

... to join in a real on-line community, or just visit the site and observe discussions between teachers.

Visit the newsroom

... to find out the latest on professional development...

Access hot links to other sites

... to the Board of Studies, the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Commission, the Association of Independent Schools, NSW HSC On-line, and more.

Find out about resources

... to help you and your school to implement the new HSC.

Participate in professional development initiatives

... to support you and your school with specific elements of implementing the new HSC.

Read Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

... or ask a question of your own.

Provide your feedback

... on the site and related professional issues, using the form provided.