

Dance

2013 Chief Assessor's Report



Government
of South Australia

SACE
Board of SA

DANCE

2013 CHIEF ASSESSOR'S REPORT

OVERVIEW

Stage 2 Dance is continuing to develop as a subject. The teachers strive to give their students a comprehensive education in the dance world, and to develop a future audience that fully appreciates the intricacies of a dancer's career.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 1: Skills Development

Part 1: Choreography

Some students demonstrated a high standard in choreography, using imaginative themes, complex structures, and challenging material that resulted in outstanding work. Successful students spent time researching background material, planning, rehearsing, and refining movement options to create a strong final product. Students presented their work on stage in a theatre or in outdoor settings or specific locations that enhanced their subject matter.

In planning this task, teachers and students are aware that the piece must not exceed the 4-minute time limit.

Teachers are reminded to include program notes with moderation materials.

The choreography should be filmed from a reasonable distance so that a full view of the stage/performance space can be seen.

Part 2: Technique

Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their learning in this field through a variety of exercises in a specific technique. Most students presented work in contemporary dance, although the other techniques were represented. Students displayed a full range of technical ability, demonstrating teachers' emerging understanding of the standards

Teachers are encouraged to develop challenging and relevant material that engages all students and supports them to develop and build their confidence and skills. These skills can transfer successfully to their further performance work.

The subject outline states that the structured technique class can be taught in 'contemporary, jazz, classical, or break-dance genre'. Teachers are not expected to deviate from this list.

Teachers are to ensure that students are appropriately dressed so that the alignment of the back, hips, neck, and head is visible. Successful dance technique classes cover all aspects of the chosen genre. For example, contemporary dance would involve ten to twelve combinations. For classical ballet, jazz dance, tap dance, and

break-dance, certain elements may be combined to make slightly longer exercises that align with those of contemporary dance.

The best introductions are kept to 2 to 4 bars of music, giving students a minimal lead-in time.

A successful technique class demonstrates a level of complexity, with combinations performed on the right side then repeated on the left. Teachers are encouraged to work at a standard that challenges the students to master the skills at the highest possible level. Teachers can work with students of differing ability and develop exercises that give students the opportunity to succeed. Teachers are encouraged to show a broad depth of technical material and to be mindful of appropriate content for a school community.

Part 3: Folio

Students prepare a folio in choreography or technique. Most students submitted a written document although a multimodal presentation is an option. The more successful students presented a comprehensive coverage of their study with an in-depth analysis of the processes undertaken, using appropriate terminology. They reflected, and acknowledged their growth of understanding and recognition of the relevance of the material presented. The less successful students made superficial observations and did not effectively reflect on their learning.

Students submit the final polished piece and ensure that images and illustrations are annotated and are an integral part of the document.

The word count is stated at the end of the document.

Assessment Type 2: Written Response

Successful students presented well-structured responses and showed a depth of maturity and understanding of the topics. Teachers and students should plan questions which are clear and concise, and which will give students the best opportunity to achieve at the highest level. Past examination papers are a good starting point when constructing appropriate questions. The best responses were precise and kept to the limit of 1000 words.

Teachers and students are aware that Part 1: Historical Perspectives covers dance history before the past 25 years and that Part 2: Contemporary Issues focuses on the past 25 years, including the year of study.

It is useful for students to include the question they intend to answer at the beginning of their written response. A bibliography, showing evidence of the research undertaken, should be included at the end of the response.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 3: Performance

Generally the performances were of a high standard. Most students were appropriately challenged and therefore able to demonstrate their performance skills to the best of their ability. Some performances presented a minimal challenge to the

dancers, with unnecessarily repetitive and simple choreography. Students are expected to demonstrate a degree of technical complexity in performance choreography.

Although it is not a requirement that students are adept in a variety of techniques, the performance gives them opportunities to show their ability to adapt to a variety of moods and choreographic approaches. For example, a student whose strength is jazz technique may be required to perform a fast-paced energetic dance incorporating traditional jazz technique, a lyrical jazz dance that requires smoother transitions and longer extended lines of the body, a musical theatre style character-based dance, and a dance requiring the display of some partnering skills in an emotional context. Although the technique is jazz dance, each performance piece provides a different challenge for the dancer. There are the same expectations for variety in performance in any of the other dance techniques.

Most students demonstrate a sound knowledge of working collaboratively as a member of an ensemble, as well as working independently. The students who achieve at the highest level show an ability to adapt to a variety of choreographic material, to perform using different personas, and to adapt to different moods on stage. These students demonstrate an ability to apply their deep understanding of the nuances of the specific technique and to perform with sustained energy throughout the piece. They exude an expressive confidence that shows integrity towards the intention of the work. They also demonstrate the ability to relate to their fellow performers and to the audience with meaning, using an extensive variety of performance skills.

When choreographing movement for students, teachers are mindful of safe dance practice, and of providing the opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning against the performance standards. Teachers work with the guideline of 1-minute solos/duos/trios within the student's 15-minute stage time. When a large number of students are involved, teachers present them in smaller groups to ensure that markers can identify each student clearly.

Teachers are encouraged to aim for a range in music selection, avoiding similar rhythms and tempos. Teachers ensure that music chosen for the performance is appropriate for an educational setting, and avoid using songs with inappropriate lyrics.

Performances have been presented successfully in a variety of venues, from school centres to professional theatres. It is important to note that students are marked on their delivery of performance against the standards, regardless of the staging elements.

Teachers are asked to list students to match the SACE Board documentation. Teachers who present work that includes other year levels must clearly identify the students being assessed. Some schools chose to present a shorter performance that included only the students being assessed; however, if other year levels are used in the performance, teachers should be mindful of how the program is structured. Students should not be designated by colour of costume, as the stage lighting can distort colours. Numbers must be clearly displayed in a similar position on every dancer's costume. Teachers need to ensure that markers have an unobstructed view of the performing space/stage, with seats blocked out in front, behind, and next to them. Markers should be placed sufficiently well forward so that they can read the performers' numbers and see their faces.

The required documentation must be prepared before the assessment time and the predicted results sheet must be handed in a sealed envelope to the contact external assessor before the performance begins. Comments are to be made only on the performance notes sheets, using language from the specific features of the assessment design criteria, and must be written during the performance. Photographs on the performance notes sheets must be accurate representations of the students. At the end of the performance, teachers need to check that students' SACE registration numbers have been recorded correctly. Teachers provide a private appropriate space for all three assessors to complete their documentation.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

Teachers and students are aware that in the technique class the work is set and has been taught in class and rehearsed over an acceptable amount of time to be presented for assessment. The class is then filmed and captured on DVD for moderation. Teachers ensure that all students filmed in the structured technique class are enrolled in Stage 2 Dance.

A timeline should be given for each exercise so that the class can easily be tracked forward on the DVD.

In preparing materials for moderation, teachers provide a list of their students, their SACE registration numbers, task sheets, and assessment notes to accompany the student samples. Teachers annotate the work, highlight specific areas that meet the performance standards, and indicate the grade achieved.

Teachers and students need to be familiar with the SACE information on packaging moderation materials, including preparing non-written materials and submitting electronic files, on the Dance minisite.

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2104 the SACE Board will offer a Stage 2 Dance clarifying forum to support new and continuing teachers. Dance teachers are encouraged to network with other teachers of the subject and to participate in collegiate discussions about best classroom practices, resources, and standards.

Dance
Chief Assessor