

PROGRAMMING THE NEW HSC DRAMA SYLLABUS

The new HSC drama course has some important implications for programming and planning. In order to teach the new course effectively, teachers must take time to plan their teaching and assessment programs to meet the needs of their school, their students and their own areas of interest and expertise. This article will make some suggestions that may assist in the development of a program for the new HSC drama course.

Outcomes

Drama teachers will be very familiar with the use of outcomes. Outcomes were part of the 1993 syllabus and many teachers have been devising their own for the 7-10 syllabus.

The outcomes in the new syllabus are much more aligned to content than those in the old syllabus and will assist teachers in developing teaching and assessment strategies that meet the outcomes of the course. It is important to remember that all outcomes must be taught and all (except values and attitudes outcomes) assessed within the course.

The outcomes appear in the syllabus in terms of how they relate to Making, Performing and Critically Studying and also next to the content of each component. In designing an assessment program, teachers need to plan carefully to ensure they select a range of task types which cover all course outcomes and which best enable students to demonstrate their achievement.

Making, performing and critically studying

In drama teaching there is usually an implicit recognition of the place of making, performing and critically studying, even though we may have other terms for these processes. The new syllabus makes learning in these areas explicit, providing suggestions for the types of learning required in each area. The terms are defined in the syllabus in the following ways (Stage 6 Drama syllabus, page 15):

The practice of **making** in drama is characterised by learning that involves workshopping concepts, ideas and experiences through enquiry, research, analysis and experimentation.

The practice of **performing** in drama is characterised by learning that involves presenting drama and theatre to an audience.

The practice of **critically studying** in drama and theatre is characterised by learning that involves research, critical analysis, evaluation and reflection.

When planning the use of these organisers, ensure that you have provided learning experiences and assessment tasks to cover learning in these three areas. The learning expected of students is made explicit through these processes and there should be a balance among the content in your teaching. The latest *JEDA*, which is available from the Educational Drama Association, has some useful grids to assist you in the planning of making, performing and critically studying in the new syllabus.

Preliminary course

The Preliminary course is one of the major areas of change. The content of the area has been changed to make learning more explicit and to support articulation between the outcomes of the Preliminary and the HSC courses. As with the old course, the components of the Preliminary course are interrelated and should be taught in an integrated program of study.

In the Preliminary course, content in the component **improvisation, playbuilding and acting** has been defined more clearly. This component now attracts a 40% weighting.

Elements of production in performance includes a combination of previous syllabus content from *Elements of production* and *Performance* in the old syllabus. This area now describes the elements of production in relation to performance. This component now attracts a 30% weighting.

Theatrical traditions and performance styles is a new component that will provide preparation through experiential learning for the areas of study in the HSC course. In this component, students may explore any dramatic text or theatrical style not covered in the topics or texts for the HSC course. This component now attracts a 30% weighting.

The overall suggested weighting of tasks is 60% workshop and practical activities and 40% written reflection. The oral component of the old course has been removed and could now be assessed in the other components.

HSC course

In the HSC course, the major change has been to the written components making **Australian drama and theatre** the compulsory core. In the examination, students will answer a common question that covers both topics.

STUDENTS ARE TO STUDY ONE TOPIC ONLY IN THIS AREA.

In the other written component, **Studies in drama and theatre**, there are topics with Australian and non-Australian content. There will be one question only in the examination for each of these topics.

Clearer guidelines on the teaching of **group performance** have been included.

The **individual project** remains as described in the current Drama Syllabus.

The names of some projects have been changed slightly e.g.

Director's preparation production is now *Director's Folio*

Critical analysis research project is now *Applied research project*

Video is now *Video drama*

Poster program and advertising is now *Program and promotion*.

A rationale is required for each individual project.