

VCE Bulletin Supplement 3

Revised VCE LOTE Coursework survey report

2001 Studies

(Latin, Classical Greek, Arabic, Chinese Second Language, Chinese First Language, French, German, Greek, Indonesian Second Language, Indonesian First Language, Italian, Japanese Second Language, Japanese First Language, Korean Second Language, Korean First Language, Spanish, Vietnamese).

Introduction

Seventeen revised LOTE studies were implemented in Victorian schools in 2001. As part of the ongoing program of monitoring VCE implementation, teachers were invited to respond to a survey published as a supplement to the October 2001 *VCE Bulletin*. The survey included common questions associated with the administration and development of coursework and the impact of school-assessed coursework on teaching and learning within these LOTE studies.

The VCAA wishes to thank the schools, faculties and individual teachers who devoted their time to complete the survey and share their experience and views on revised VCE LOTE studies in the first year of implementation. The Authority would also like to acknowledge the range of approaches to teaching, course design and scheduling being implemented by schools. The LOTE Unit in particular has used this information to inform the 2002 support program for teachers of these studies and will continue to provide

advice and support material via the VCAA website and VCE LOTE Liaison Leaders.

Thirty-six per cent of schools teaching Units 3 and 4 in the 2001 revised LOTE studies responded to the survey. All school sectors were represented in the return. Individual teachers rather than faculties generally completed the surveys. The following reports provide feedback on the results of the 2001 Coursework Assessment Survey conducted at the end of Unit 4 for these revised LOTE studies.

Response by LOTE study

| Study | Number of survey responses |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Arabic | 3 |
| Chinese First Language | 9 |
| Chinese Second Language | 8 |
| Classical Greek | 0 |
| French | 29 |
| German | 28 |
| Greek | 3 |
| Indonesian First Language | 4 |
| Indonesian Second Language | 23 |
| Italian | 16 |
| Japanese First Language | 0 |
| Japanese Second Language | 33 |
| Korean First Language | 0 |
| Korean Second Language | 0 |
| Latin | 6 |
| Spanish | 0 |
| Vietnamese | 0 |
| Not identified | 4 |



Classical Greek and Latin

Six responses were received for Latin. Of the six respondents, four reported that the workload seemed reasonable or that there was reduced workload and stress amongst students. The other two stated that students did not work as well since they were adapting to new arrangements.

In terms of scheduling tasks, three of the respondents reported that they had not experienced problems. The problems experienced by the other teachers were mainly due to the school's overall scheduling of schooled-assessed coursework.

Strategies adopted for managing the coursework included planning a schedule well in advance and taking into account other school and student activities.

Scope of outcomes

As indicated in the table below, the majority of respondents reported that the scope of the tasks for each outcome for both Unit 3 and Unit 4 was adequate.

Scope of tasks to assess outcomes

| Unit 3 | adequate | inadequate |
|-----------|----------|------------|
| Outcome 1 | 5 | 1 |
| Outcome 2 | 6 | 0 |
| Outcome 3 | 5 | 1 |

| Unit 4 | adequate | inadequate |
|-----------|----------|------------|
| Outcome 1 | 6 | 0 |
| Outcome 2 | 5 | 1 |
| Outcome 3 | 6 | 0 |

Five of the six respondents used the VCAA criteria for assessment of the school-assessed coursework tasks. One respondent used the VCAA criteria but amended the set of criteria to assess Unit 4, Outcome 2. Another respondent stated that the criterion 'understanding of language usage' for Unit 4, Outcome 1 was too broad and embraced other criteria.

Other comments

Three of the respondents provided other comments. One stated that they were very happy with the new course and that they found that they had more time to teach with the revised VCE. There was a suggestion made that a published list of contact details for other Latin teachers would be useful and that mark sheets and a further explanation of how to allocate marks would be useful.

Second language studies: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese

Of the 372 providers of the second language Revised VCE LOTEs, 145 returned surveys to the Authority. This represented 39% of second language LOTE VCE providers. All sectors were represented in the returned responses.

A vast majority of teachers surveyed indicated that the revised VCE LOTE had a positive impact on the workload of students by mainly improving the spread of learning and production over the year. They reported that this encouraged students to work more consistently and more efficiently since they were better focussed. They noted that there had been a marked decrease in student stress. Some stated that they

preferred the revised VCE LOTE course and considered it to be both challenging and satisfying.

Scheduling of coursework

Sixty-two per cent of teachers who responded to the survey indicated that they had not experienced problems in scheduling tasks. Of those who had experienced difficulties, the main problems identified were due to school timetabling such as the scheduling of LOTE school-assessed coursework tasks at the same time as assessment tasks in other studies, lack of double sessions to complete assessment tasks and other activities such as excursion and sports events. A few reported problems due to student absenteeism, teaching a combined Years 11 and 12 class and the amount of time needed to assess a large class. Due to the brevity of Term 4, some teachers reported difficulty with scheduling their Unit 4 tasks.

Most teachers identified carefully planning a course outline on a weekly basis well in advance, publishing the year's plan and communicating it clearly to students at the start of the year as the major factors contributing to the successful management of coursework. The majority also stated that there was a requirement to submit a proposed timetable for school assessment to their VCE Curriculum Coordinator.

Scheduling of coursework

| Problem | Percentage |
|-----------|------------|
| No | 62% |
| Yes | 37% |
| Sometimes | 1% |

A variety of strategies were employed to manage coursework. Most reported working on two topics per term and completing one assessment task at the end of each topic or allowing 4 to 5 weeks for an outcome to be achieved. Tasks were scheduled regularly throughout the semester. Teachers reported allowing for flexibility in their schedule to accommodate the pace of student learning or student progress and workload, negotiating aspects of the curriculum with students, and avoiding clashes with other subjects and unexpected events.

Some teachers made use of double periods to complete the assessment tasks. A few reported using spare time to accommodate the completion of school-assessed coursework tasks.

Scheduling of detailed study

Teachers reported a variety of strategies in scheduling the detailed study. Those who organised it into one block of uninterrupted time, scheduled it to commence in Term 4. Those who began in Unit 3 organised it to finish in Term 4 before the oral examination. Some organised 3 to 4 weeks of study spread throughout the year or spread over 3 terms, for example, 1 period per 7-day cycle over Terms 1 to 3. The majority scheduled the related assessment task to be set in week 8 or 9, just before the end-of-year oral examination.

Scope of task to assess outcomes

As indicated in the tables below, the majority of teachers found the scope of the tasks for each outcome for both Unit 3 and Unit 4 to be adequate.

Scope of tasks to assess outcomes

| Unit 3 | adequate | inadequate | other | no response |
|-----------|----------|------------|-------|-------------|
| Outcome 1 | 88% | 6% | 1% | 5% |
| Outcome 2 | 80% | 13% | 2% | 5% |
| Outcome 3 | 84% | 9% | 2% | 5% |

| Unit 4 | adequate | inadequate | other | no response |
|-----------|----------|------------|-------|-------------|
| Outcome 1 | 80% | 13% | 1% | 6% |
| Outcome 2 | 82% | 8% | 3% | 7% |

For Unit 3, a few teachers commented that the word length for Outcome 1 should be increased. For Outcome 2, the few comments that were made reflected that for some languages, teachers were experiencing difficulty in accessing appropriate materials in setting the task. For Outcome 3, it was suggested that the length of the task should be increased. A few teachers needed further clarification of the task stating that the task as described in the Assessment Guide was unclear.

For Unit 4, one teacher stated the criteria for assessing the task for Outcome 1 was not appropriate since the criteria emphasised the accuracy of LOTE and not comprehension. Some experienced difficulty in setting a suitable task and requested more guidelines for setting a task for this Outcome. A few suggested that the task should be part of the detailed study. One teacher requested criteria for text-types in French.

For Outcome 2, it was suggested that the length of the oral task be increased. No statements were made about the written task for this outcome.

Criteria

Ninety-five per cent of the respondents reported using the VCAA criteria to assess the outcomes while 4% used a modified version of the VCAA criteria and 1% used other criteria, for example those devised by a language teachers' association.

More than one class – ensuring consistency

A variety of strategies were employed to ensure comparability of assessments. The most common approach to ensure consistency across classes was cross marking by using double-blind marking and then discussing any discrepancies.

Some teachers stated that they treated the classes as one group, covering the same syllabus/content and ensuring the same task and criteria were used.

Combined classes

Thirty-five per cent of the respondents had a combined class. Of these, 63% reported experiencing problems in scheduling and assessing the coursework. Of the four languages that offer first language (i.e. Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean), 25% had a combined class of first and second language students and 75% had a combined class of Year 11 and Year 12 students. The main problems identified included coping with different levels of students' skills and knowledge, trying to dedicate equal amounts of time to the two different groups of learners and organising topics so that the Year 11 students would not repeat them in Year 12.

Further implementation support

The majority of respondents commented favourably on their satisfaction with the information and support received from

the Authority. There were some requests for further support for the implementation of coursework and the main suggestions were as follows:

- more language resource materials for student use
- professional development/guidance in selecting listening materials and setting appropriate tasks
- more guidelines for setting listening and reading tasks
- more sample assessment tasks to ensure consistency of standard and annotated work samples for setting standards
- opportunities for course writing and sharing ideas and resources with other teachers
- more sample detailed studies and sample examination papers
- suggestions of topics and course materials

First language studies: Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean

Of the 66 providers of these First Language studies, 20% responded to the survey. Responses were received from teachers of Chinese and Indonesian.

The majority of respondents (76%) experienced no difficulties in scheduling coursework assessment tasks. Some added that they were happy with the course and spent more time teaching. Of those who reported difficulties, the major issue was scheduling the oral tasks with large classes. Other problems that were identified were school based, for example, extra-curricular activities and assemblies, and the need for more time allocation for large LOTE classes.

Scheduling of coursework

The majority of respondents reported that they had not experienced problems in scheduling the coursework. Strategies adopted in organising coursework assessment were the same as those identified above for the second language studies. That is, planning well in advance to establish dates but allowing flexibility, informing students of dates and negotiating with them if necessary, using double periods, setting the task at the end of a topic, fitting in with the school VCE time-table for the assessment tasks in other studies and, if there were Second Language students at the school, scheduling the tasks to take place at the same time as the Second Language assessment tasks.

Scheduling of coursework

| Problem | Percentage |
|---------|------------|
| No | 76% |
| Yes | 23% |
| Other | 1% |

Scheduling of the detailed study

Most teachers reported planning well in advance by briefing students on the purpose and details of the detailed study and discussing the topic with them. Some teachers reported beginning the detailed study at the end of Term 2 while the others completed it in one period of time usually at the beginning of Term 4.

Scope of tasks

The majority of teachers were satisfied with the scope of the tasks for each of the outcomes in both Unit 3 and Unit 4. Of those who reported that the scope of an outcome as

'inadequate', the main issues or areas of concern raised were as follows:

For Unit 3, it was suggested that the length of the response be increased for Outcome 1. For Outcome 2, teachers reported experiencing difficulties in finding suitable resources to set the task. For Unit 4, Outcome 2, a few teachers reported that timing and finding suitable resources were problematic, and that the length of response was too short.

Scope of tasks to assess outcomes

| Unit 3 | adequate | inadequate | no response |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Outcome 1 | 82% (14) | 12% (2) | 6% (1) |
| Outcome 2 | 82% (14) | 12% (2) | 6% (1) |
| Outcome 3 | 88% (15) | 6% (1) | 6% (1) |

| Unit 4 | adequate | inadequate | no response |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Outcome 1 | 94% (16) | 0% (0) | 6% (1) |
| Outcome 2 | 77% (13) | 6% (1) | 18% (3) |

All the respondents reported using the criteria produced by the Authority to assess the outcomes.

Where there was more than one Year 12 class in the school, teachers reported discussing the tasks to be set with the other teacher to ensure comparability and then cross marking. The number of respondents that had a combined class was six. Four of these respondents had a combined class of Years 11 and 12 students; one had a class consisting of Year 11, Year 12 First Language and Year 12 Second Language students; one had a combined class of Second and First Language students; and one had a combined class of Year 10, Year 11, Year 12 First Language and Year 12 Second Language students. All raised the issue of a lack of equal amounts of time

that could be given to the different groups of students, particularly where the level of skills and knowledge differed substantially.

As for the revised LOTE Second Language studies, the respondents were generally satisfied with the support and advice that had been provided by the Authority. The following areas were identified as needing further support or advice that would assist teachers in the implementation process.

- More language materials or resources that could be used (e.g. books, novels), especially resources that can be used for the detailed study
- Sample tasks to gauge standards
- More coursework sample units, especially coursework for a first language study which can complement the coursework for second language
- A hotline to provide answers and information.

Concluding remarks

A great deal of satisfaction was expressed with the workload, structure and scope of the school-assessed coursework, and the support and advice provided by the Authority. A number of respondents generally agreed that there was a need to share ideas and approaches between schools, noting the importance of teacher networks, and for the publication of samples of tasks and annotated work as a guide for teachers. For certain revised LOTE studies, a few noted the lack of readily available material/resources appropriate for students. Some expressed the need for more professional development in selection and adaptation of material for student use. Several teachers also noted the strengths and limitations of their own particular approaches to coursework assessment and the future directions they would adopt in planning/managing the coursework as a result of their experience in the first year of its implementation.



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