

# Board Bulletin



BOARD OF STUDIES NSW

October 1999 – Vol 8 No 8

## Support for the New HSC Syllabuses in Term 4

Since June this year schools have received new syllabuses, introductory support documents, and Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplements for the New Higher School Certificate.

To assist schools to implement the new courses the Board of Studies is preparing additional practically based material that will be available to schools in Term 4. This material will include resource lists, sample units of work, approaches to programming and ideas for teaching and learning.

### Languages

The New HSC curriculum offers 65 courses in 39 languages. Schools have already received new syllabuses for 11 Continuers Language courses, 10 Background Speaker Language courses, and 3 Classical Language courses. Currently new Continuers Language syllabuses are being developed in Modern Hebrew and Malay for distribution to schools in Term 4. In addition, draft syllabuses for 12 Modern and Classical Languages Extension courses are being developed for consultation in Term 1, 2000. The 22 current NAFLaSSL Language courses will be reviewed in 2000 for implementation in the Preliminary Year 2001.

### History Extension course

The purpose of the History Extension course is to enable students to build on the outcomes of the Stage 6 Ancient History and Modern History courses in relation to historiography, historical inquiry and communication.

Students have the opportunity to learn some of the more advanced skills of historical inquiry and to apply them by designing and conducting their own historical investigation. The new syllabus will be distributed to schools in Term 4 for implementation in the HSC year 2001.

### CEC evaluation

The 17 current Content Endorsed Courses (CECs) have been retained as part of the New Higher School Certificate. However, the Board is evaluating the current courses in terms of the White Paper requirements. The process of evaluation of the current Content Endorsed Courses commenced in Term 3. In Term 1, 2000, an evaluation consultation report will be distributed to schools for their consideration. Revised CECs will be distributed to schools for implementation in the Preliminary year 2001.

### Special education provisions

The New Higher School Certificate provides for students with special education needs. Students who meet the Special Program of Study eligibility requirements will be able to undertake Life Skills courses, and options within the VET Industry Curriculum Framework courses (see BB Sept 1999 Vol 8 No 7). The eight draft syllabuses for the new Life Skills courses have been distributed to schools for consultation during August and September and are now in the final phase of the syllabus development process. The syllabuses will be distributed to schools in Term 4. *continued page 6*



## Teachers Respond to Creative Arts K–6 Draft

**During Term 3, feedback about the *Creative Arts K–6 Draft Syllabus* and the *Creative Arts K–6 Draft Support Document* has been received.**

To date 354 survey responses to the consultation survey have been received, as well as ten non-survey responses from different organisations.

Feedback also came from a debriefing day, organised for the teachers from the 26 schools that have trialled the draft syllabus and draft support document during Term 2. This day also involved teachers reporting on the work samples produced as a result of teaching particular units. The teachers gave detailed comment and workshopped the issues raised during the focus meetings, including the use of indicators, the value of stage statements and work samples. The teachers also made proposals that could be used to further develop the syllabus and support

document. These will be taken into account in responding to matters raised through the consultation period.

Already a working party comprising K–6 Creative Arts Board Curriculum Committee members and Board officers has begun reviewing responses, although it is too early at this stage to identify trends. Meetings of teachers from different systems/sectors are scheduled for Term 4 to consider proposed amendments.

Further information about the *Creative Arts K–6 Draft Syllabus*, the *Creative Arts K–6 Draft Support Document*, the Creative Arts K–6 Survey and the trialling and consultation may be obtained from Julie Stevens, Senior Curriculum Officer Creative Arts, Office of the Board of Studies, E-mail [stevens@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au](mailto:stevens@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au) phone (02) 9367 8242, fax (02) 9367 8476.



## HSC and SC Important Dates

### Year 10

- 8 Oct** Grade collection schedules and profile collection sheets for special program of study sent to schools.
- 15 Oct** Latest date for principals to notify students of decision to issue an 'N' (non-satisfactory completion of course) determination and to provide the students with appeal forms.
- 19 Oct** Latest date for student appeals against an 'N' determination to be lodged with the principal.
- 27 Oct** Latest date for principals to notify students of school review of 'N' determinations.
- 29 Oct** Latest date for students to request a Board of Studies review of an 'N' determination through their principal.
- 8, 9 Nov** School Certificate Tests.
- 12 Nov** Grade collection schedules and profile collection sheets due at Board of Studies.
- 10 Dec** School Certificate documents dispatched to schools.

### Year 11

- 8 Oct** Vocational course module collection forms sent to schools.
- 15 Oct** Latest date for principals to notify students of decision to issue a 'U' (unsatisfactory completion of course) determination and to provide the students with appeal forms.
- 19 Oct** Latest date for student appeals against a 'U' determination to be lodged with the principal.
- 27 Oct** Latest date for principals to notify students of school review of 'N' determinations.
- 29 Oct** Latest date for students to request a Board of Studies review of a 'U' determination through their principal.
- 12 Nov** Vocational course module collection sheets due at the Board.
- 26 Nov** Preliminary Records of Achievement dispatched to schools.

### Year 12

- 8 Oct** Vocational course module collection forms sent to schools.
- 10 Oct** Completion date for 3 Unit Design and Technology Projects.
- 11 Oct** HSC Advice Line begins.
- 20 Oct** HSC written examinations begin.
- 25 Oct–5 Nov** Visual Arts Itinerant Practical Marking.
- 29 Oct** Assessment ranking sheets sent to schools.
- 29 Oct** Vocational course module collection sheets due at the Board.
- 29 Oct** Assessment ranking sheets for distribution to each

The *Board Bulletin* is a regular publication by the Board of Studies NSW. Principals are requested to circulate it among teachers and members of the School Council, P & C and parents. One copy should be filed for reference. Schools may only photocopy this publication for use by teachers, students and parents. Contributions or suggestions for articles are welcome.

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## Contents

Support for the New HSC Syllabuses in Term 4.....	1
Teachers Respond to Creative Arts K–6 Draft.....	1
President's Message.....	3
Upcoming events and important dates.....	3
Setting examinations in a standards referenced framework for the New HSC .....	4
New HSC on the web .....	4
<i>Official Notices centre liftout</i>	
DesignTech form.....	5
Client Services Column.....	6
A cognitive - developmental approach to ICT in teaching and learning .....	7
Hunter and Western NSW students have their say about Australia's future.....	8
Students get first-hand information about the New HSC.....	8

## CHECK YOUR MAILBOX



- ❖ Stage 6 Special Program of Study Draft Syllabus:
  - English
  - Workplace and Community-based Learning Life Skills
  - TAS Life Skills
  - Citizenship and Society Life Skills
  - Creative Arts Life Skills
  - PDHPE Life Skills
  - Mathematics Life Skills
  - Science Life Skills
- ❖ PDHPE K–6 Syllabus
- ❖ PDHPE K–6 Modules
- ❖ PDHPE K–6 Special Education Support Document
- ❖ Board Bulletin Vol 8 No 7
- ❖ On Board Term 3
- ❖ HSC Timetable
- ❖ HSC Exam Report 1998–French
- ❖ HSC Exam Report 1998–German

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## President's Message



*At this time of the year our attention tends to be drawn towards issues related to assessment. Indeed the massive operation of delivering this year's public examinations for the HSC and tests for the School Certificate is well under way.*

*One of the major changes to our thinking about assessment has been to move away from the emphasis on thinking primarily about the relative ordering of the progress of students to a focus instead on the description of what they know and are able to do. Standards referencing places the emphasis on describing achievement in terms of curriculum outcomes.*

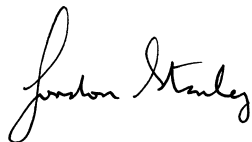
*We consider it important for this thinking to occur across the curriculum from K-12. The Primary Curriculum Committee of the Board has been working on a paper on standards referencing developed by Phil Lambert, which will be published on the Board's website to assist primary teachers.*

*Talking recently to groups of Year 10 students on standards referenced assessment, I found them to be enthusiastic about getting better information on their achievements. They felt the new system made more sense than the older system of reporting. Some who had older siblings in Year 12 this year said that their siblings would have liked to have their results in the new form.*

*Reporting outcomes against performance scales requires us to ensure that the scales adequately reflect the levels of curriculum outcomes appropriately. While a lot of professional activity has gone into the production of our New HSC performance scales they will be refined as we obtain more experience with them.*

*Officers of the Board have been busy in consultation across subject areas to assist in the transition from the New HSC sample papers to the specimen papers. One important aspect of this transition is to ensure that each paper fits broad common requirements for assessment in the new regime. Common principles for setting HSC examinations have been developed.*

*The significant thing about the new approach is that the emphasis is on professional judgements about the meaning of achievement. This will be reported in terms that allow future teachers, students, parents and employers to have a clearer understanding of what has been accomplished.*



(Professor) Gordon Stanley

## Forthcoming events and important dates

### HSC Advice Line

The Advice Line will operate from Monday 11 October to Tuesday 16 November 1999 from 4pm to 10pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm on Saturdays and 10am to 10pm on Sundays. It will be staffed by more than 700 highly experienced teachers who are able to help students with preparation for their exams and answer questions about the exam structure, terms or concepts in the text, how to construct an essay and answers to past exam papers.

### HSC commences

Wednesday 20 October 1999

### School Certificate tests

Monday 8 and Tuesday 9 November 1999

### HSC finishes

Wednesday 17 November 1999

### Minister's Young Designers Awards Exhibition

The Minister's Young Designers Awards Exhibition is a selection of excellent projects by Design and Technology students in Years 7 and 8. The exhibition will open at the Sydney Visitors' Centre on Wednesday 24 November 1999 and close on Wednesday, 26 January 2000.

### DesignTech

DesignTech 99 is an exhibition of outstanding Major Design Projects prepared for the 1999 Higher School Certificate Design and Technology course.

The exhibition will open at the Powerhouse Museum on Thursday 2 December 1999 and close on Tuesday 14 March 2000.

### School Certificate results

From Monday 13 December 1999

### HSC results (telephone and Internet)

Thursday 16 December 1999

### HSC results (postal)

Tuesday 21 December 1999

### ARTEXPRESS

An annual exhibition of premier works from 1999 HSC Visual Art students.

Art Gallery of NSW, 28 January 2000 – 19 March 2000

College of Fine Arts, 28 January 2000 – 19 March 2000

State Library, 28 January 2000 – 19 March 2000

David Jones, 17 January 2000 – 30 January 2000

National Art School, 3 February 2000 – 19 March 2000

### OnSTAGE

An annual showcase performance and exhibition of individual projects and group presentations by HSC Drama students at the Seymour Theatre, Sydney on Friday 11 and Saturday 12 February 2000.

### Encore

A concert of outstanding performances and compositions by HSC students on Thursday 24 February 2000 at the Sydney Opera House.



# Setting Examinations in a Standards Referenced Framework for the New HSC

## What will be different about examinations in the New HSC?

The key difference in all examinations for the New HSC is that they must contain questions that allow students to demonstrate their achievement of the syllabus outcomes. Each examination will be constructed to provide a representative sampling of a range of the syllabus outcomes and questions which will allow students to demonstrate their level of achievement at different levels in the performance scale.

## How will examinations be set for the New HSC?

Examination specifications for all subjects have been published as part of the syllabus document. The New HSC examinations in each subject will be set by examination committees in accordance with the specifications. The Board has developed a set of principles to guide all examiners in setting appropriate questions.


## Will teachers see examples of the new examinations?

Sample papers developed from the examination specifications have accompanied most syllabuses.

The sample paper is indicative of the types of questions and the coverage of content and outcomes that could be expected in an HSC examination.

Sample papers are now being converted into specimen examination papers. Specimen examination papers contain more detail about the layout, format and instructions for the new examinations. The specimen examination papers will act as a model to assist examination committees when they set examinations for 2001.

## How will specimen papers be developed?

Most questions in the sample papers will be used in the specimen examination papers. Currently, the sample papers are being further reviewed by subject experts and people with expertise in educational measurement to ensure that the questions are of good quality and reflect the intentions of the new syllabuses. As part of this process, feedback is being sought from practising teachers and other key groups through focus groups and surveys. Specimen examinations will then be made available to schools. 

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## New HSC on the Web

**The Board of Studies has worked with teachers over the last two years to produce New Higher School Certificate syllabuses, and extra teaching units, support materials and reference lists have also been developed.** The Board of Studies has now explored ways to make these additional materials available to teachers by using its website.

Over the next twelve months the Board of Studies website ([www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au)) will be updated frequently and regularly to add extra subject information and course materials for the New HSC. By checking the Board site regularly for their subject, teachers can keep up to date with new and developing approaches to teaching the HSC course in which they are interested.

Publishing in this way will provide teachers with choice about how they use the support materials. Some teachers may print sections that they intend using immediately while others will choose to

download an electronic version which they can modify to suit their needs.

Availability on the website will mean that materials can be updated frequently. When new references are discovered for a subject they will be identified on the site. As teaching suggestions and ideas are modified and improved, the subject site will be revised to include them. As assessment ideas and practices are developed, the website will list them.

In this way the best-practice ideas of teachers, professional associations and curriculum and assessment officers will be shared and readily available for use in classrooms.

Having had the foresight to develop a website that has been ranked as Australia's second most frequently accessed government website, the Board is now extremely well placed to provide new levels of service to teachers and schools.

For details see the November *Board Bulletin*. 

# ATTENTION: *all Design and Technology Teachers*

## DesignTech 99 student seminars at the Powerhouse Museum

### *What is DesignTech 99?*

An exhibition of outstanding Major Design Projects from 1999 HSC Design and Technology students.

### *Who are the seminars for?*

Design and Technology seminars will be presented separately to students in Year 11 and students in Year 12 and their teachers.

### *What is involved?*

The seminar program, which is presented by markers of Design and Technology, focuses on the Major Design Project. Activities include developing a project proposal and a simulated marking session. Information will also be provided about project management techniques. Seminars for the 3 Unit course will also be held.

### *When?*

Schools are asked to select a preferred date and time. The dates are:  
*Year 12:* Tuesday 29 February or Wednesday 1 March 2000.  
*Year 11:* Tuesday 7, Wednesday 8 or Thursday 9 March 2000.  
 The times for both seminars are either 9 am–12 pm or 12.30–3.30pm.

### *How much will it cost?*

Student seminars at the Powerhouse will cost \$15 per person. The cost includes entry to the museum, the three-hour seminar program and program notes. It does not include meals, travel or other publications.

**If you wish to view other exhibitions at the museum on the seminar day, please notify the Powerhouse school bookings (telephone (02) 9217 0222).**

### *Powerhouse Museum School Bookings*

If you wish to visit other exhibitions at the museum at any other time during the year, the cost is \$2 per student and you must book your school in through Powerhouse school bookings (telephone (02) 9217 0222).

### *How do I book for the student seminars?*

Please complete the booking form and return it with a cheque made payable to the Office of the Board of Studies by Wednesday 8 December 1999.

*For further details contact Teresa Renneberg, Exhibitions Coordinator on (02) 9367 8309*

**Booking Form  
 DesignTech 99  
 Student Seminars  
 at the Powerhouse  
 Office of the Board of Studies  
 GPO Box 5300  
 Sydney NSW 2001**

School _____
Address _____
_____ Postcode _____
Contact Teacher _____ Phone _____
Number of Students: Yr 11 = _____ Yr 12 = _____ Total = _____ @ \$15 = \$ _____
Number of Teachers: _____ @ \$15 = \$ _____
Total Cost \$ _____ (Number of 3 Unit students attending please indicate)

*Preferred Date (please tick box):*

#### Year 12 Seminars

*Tuesday 29 February 2000:*

9 am–12 pm       12.30 pm–3.30 pm

*Wednesday 1 March 2000:*

9 am–12 pm       12.30 pm–3.30 pm

*Thursday 2 March 2000:*

9 am–12 pm       12.30 pm–3.30 pm

#### Year 11 Seminars

*Tuesday 7 March 2000:*

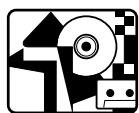
9 am–12 pm       12.30 pm–3.30 pm

*Wednesday 8 March 2000:*

9 am–12 pm       12.30 pm–3.30 pm

*Thursday 9 March 2000:*

9 am–12 pm       12.30 pm–3.30 pm



## CLIENT SERVICES COLUMN

One gigabyte of files from the Board website is downloaded by visitors every day. That's more than enough to fill 1000 floppy discs!

You are probably one of those visitors. If the files you are after are the New HSC 2001 syllabuses, we are in the process of making your task even easier.

While Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) files are easy to read, search and print from, they are quite difficult to copy and paste text from when you are making up your programs. You are only able to select and copy a page at a time to paste into your word-processor.

(Note: You can also select sections of text on the page, such as columns of text in a table by holding down the Control key (Option key on a Mac) while you drag your mouse to make a 'box'. You can then copy and paste into a table in your word-processor. This is not something easily accomplished in most word-processing software.)

To help solve this problem, we are converting the syllabus documents into Microsoft Word 97 (Word 98 for Macintoshes) files. If you check the Board website (click on the HSC 2001 syllabuses button) you will find at least 10 syllabuses in Word format as well as PDF.

Once you have downloaded them, you will find they are 'packaged' for safe transport over the web in ZIP format. This archival file format not only makes the document less prone to error, it makes the file smaller. However, to 'unpack' the file so that you can open it in your word-processor, you also need the free web utility Stuffit Expander (for Windows or Macintosh) or a similar utility such as Winzip.

The free Stuffit Expander utility can be downloaded and installed in a few minutes from <http://www.aladdinsys.com/expander>, or use the link on the Board web page where the syllabus documents can be found.

You can now open the document and copy and paste the contents into your own programs and teaching materials.

A word of warning about copyright, however. Reproduction of these materials in publications or elsewhere on the Internet is strictly forbidden. We are providing these MS Word files to make them easier for you to use in your classroom teaching. As has always been the case, if you are seeking to re-publish these materials, in whole or in part, in any form, you must contact the Board's Copyright Officer and seek permission (phone 9367 8289).

### Contact information

To place an order or to inquire about products and services you can contact Client Services by:

telephone: (02) 9367 8178 or

fax: (02) 9262 6270 or

e-mail: [clientservices@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au](mailto:clientservices@boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au) or

write to Client Services at GPO Box 5300 Sydney 2001.

Please supply an official purchase order or have credit card details available. There is a postage charge of \$4 for one item or \$8 for two or more items.

*Enquiries: (02) 9367 8331 Helen Kerr, Leader/Client Services Section.*



## Support for the New HSC Syllabuses in Term 4 *continued from page 1*

### Next phase of syllabus development — data collection and evaluation

The syllabus development process, which was endorsed by the Board in July 1998, and used to develop all the New HSC syllabuses, involves five steps:

- planning and promotion;
- writing brief development;
- syllabus development;
- handover for implementation; and
- data collection and evaluation.

Over the next few years, data will be collected by the Board to ascertain the extent to which the intentions of the New HSC syllabuses are being achieved. The intentions are described by the key elements of the syllabus including rationale, aims, objectives and outcomes. In the first instance data on subject selection patterns will be collected and subsequently data on individual subjects. The data will establish baseline information which will inform the Board's consideration of whether or not to commission the evaluation of a syllabus.

### Assessment and reporting

In June, July and August 1999 Examination, Assessment and Reporting Supplements for most Stage 6 courses

were distributed to schools. These documents provided sample examination papers, marking guidelines and draft performance bands.

Consultation on the sample papers is taking place during September and October to assist with the conversion into specimen examination papers. Teachers and key professional groups have been invited to comment on the sample papers.

Teachers are able to respond by either forwarding an individual response or, more formally, by using a survey available from the Board's website.

### Professional development

In November 1999, school principals and staff members with the responsibility for Stage 6 assessment policy and practices will have the opportunity to attend a Local Interest Group (LIG) event on standards referenced assessment in the New HSC. Participants will be provided with materials and strategies to support the shift to a standards referenced approach to internal assessment over the coming years.

Professional development support for the implementation of the New HSC will continue during 2000.



# A Cognitive-developmental Approach to ICT in Teaching and Learning

*This is a condensed version of a paper by the President of the Board of Studies, Professor Gordon Stanley about the impact of the information and communication technologies (ICT) on teaching and learning from a cognitive-developmental perspective.*

## Introduction

The information and communication technologies (ICT) present some of the biggest challenges to the established order in all our institutions, including our institutions of learning.

Yet, at this stage, there appears to be a considerable gap between the rhetoric of the technoenthusiast and the reality of contemporary experience in the classroom. The communication technologies, like other technology in education, have been seen as supporting pedagogy rather than in changing the nature of learning itself.

It is no longer appropriate to consider these technologies simply in terms of their instrumental influence on education. We must recognise that they are part of the infrastructure of the knowledge revolution, which is transforming the social and economic order (Castells, 1996).

## Cognitive-developmental perspective in the traditional learning context

Learning is a natural process, which involves discovering and constructing knowledge in a social context. Students do not arrive at school as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge. They bring many different experiences and constructions of knowledge to the formal learning environment.

These constructions are necessarily incomplete. As formal instruction proceeds in the classroom, the initial conceptions of knowledge are challenged and shaped into the conventions of knowledge as represented in the curriculum.

Teachers work within such curriculum frameworks to provide appropriate instruction according to the needs of their students. Depending on class size and ability range, the traditional classroom allows limited opportunities to finetune presentation to the individual students. Classroom learning involves conceptual change, as students embrace the construction of knowledge provided by formal instruction. The role of information in the traditional curriculum is tightly specified, and usually dominated by print. Textbooks provide structured sources for student learning.

Traditionally, formal instruction controlled the information being presented, so that sequences of learning could be related to formal structures of knowledge. Teachers were familiar with the texts and source material, which were then presented in ways that enabled the structures to be developed.

## The information and communication technology (ICT) learning context

With increased sophistication of software, cheap processing capacity and better linking of artificial intelligence and cognitive science, the contemporary pedagogical options with computers are considerable (Caillot, 1991). They include:

- a tutee role where the computer functions as a substitute or supplemental teacher (exercises, tutorials, simulations and model building, problem-solving educational games)
- a tool role where the computer can carry out tasks assigned by the student (information retrieval, word processing, laboratories, and application programs)
- a tutorage role where the student learns by teaching the computer as in Logo (exploration and discovery, microworlds)

This wider range of uses provides opportunities for significant change in classroom practice.

Modern educational software can provide customised development of skills, which were once only available in the classroom. In contrast to

traditional delivery, such programs have sophisticated structures which enable precise monitoring and reinforcement of skill development.

We are reaching a point where some basic skill development could be delivered routinely by such packages in schools, at home, or outsourced to commercial providers. Some parents are already doing this in relation to reading and mathematics.

A second aspect of student-centred learning may involve a shift in the locus of control from the teacher to the student. Important issues are emerging as students readily access electronic information sources such as the Internet and locally served sources such as electronic encyclopedias and databases. We need to understand what students are doing as they become engaged with these resources.

## Children's experience of computer technology

One of the significant aspects of ICT has been the growth of computer and Internet access in the home. Toni Downes (1999) commenced a study in 1995 involving over 400 Sydney children aged between five and 12 years who regularly used a computer in their homes. The focus of the study was on the children's perceptions of their computer activity.

Game playing on the computer was a daily activity for 23% of the sample. Categorising computer activity into playful and purposeful, leisure and work, it was found boys tended to focus on games rather than work-related activities. The distinction between purposeful and playful tasks was blurred. While engaged in purposeful tasks such as seeking information or writing, children commonly broke into episodes of playful activity to reach their goal. The playful sense came from a feeling of control and pleasure from the exploratory and interactive characteristics of the computer.

Concentration, attention to visual and auditory stimuli and quick decision making are common skill requirements of many games. Constant feedback about performance gives children a sense of their developing competence. About 70% of the sample believed they had learned a number of skills and strategies from playing computer games. Some were specific to individual games, some to games in general and some to general computing and software knowledge.

The challenge is to capture the playful and enjoyable aspects of computer use with developmental curriculum objectives.

## ICT in the school environment

Students who have had ongoing access to ICT typically have greater skills in information access and communication in this environment than their teachers.

Apparent sophistication of technological use can develop in very young children. The iconic mode of access to the computer world is developmentally accessible at an earlier age than was the case when computer access was through propositional statements. Keyboard skills may become very efficient while written skills remain rudimentary.

The widespread availability of e-mail communication is leading to a new social experience in which a cyber language is evolving.

Students with this experience face problems of understanding by those whose cognitive structures were developed in a pre-cyber world. The ICT world is one where visual and oral presentations occur alongside written material, and movement from one format to another is readily achieved.

Technology can enhance the interaction between teacher and students through e-mail and interactive forums. It can provide students with enhanced understanding of dynamic processes through simulation and virtual experiences.

While ICT has enormous potential for enhancing and extending educational opportunities, such gains will only occur if ICT use is targeted to specific learning objectives for which such use is advantageous. This means analysis of the separate elements of the technology/learning nexus needs to be made.



## Hunter and Western NSW students have their say about Australia's future

Nearly 200 students from 45 secondary schools in the Hunter and Western NSW have discussed the future of the Australian Constitution at two regional Constitutional Conventions.

The Minister for Education and Training, John Aquilina, said students participating in the regional conventions held at Newcastle City University and Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, showed an excellent understanding of constitutional issues.

'The conventions were a stimulating forum for students to discuss key issues and increase their understanding of the workings of the Australian Constitution,' Mr Aquilina said. Students discussed ways that the constitution may be improved in time for the referendum in November.

Speakers at the Hunter Convention in Newcastle were Councillor Greg Heys, Lord Mayor of Newcastle; Laurie Tabart, District Superintendent; Professor David Flint representing the Australians for a Constitutional Monarchy; Peter Grogan from the Republican Movement; Kate Sullivan from the Electoral Commission; and Professor Laurel Williams from Wollatuka Aboriginal Unit, Newcastle University.

Garth Leggatt represented the Australians for a Constitutional Monarchy at the western convention in Bathurst and Geoffrey Ward spoke on behalf of the Australian Republican Movement.

The speakers focused on issues concerning 'The Head of State' and students had the opportunity to discuss their own views on the future of the Australian Constitution.

'The conventions enabled students to gain a better understanding of the importance of civics and citizenship and the role they play in society,' Mr Aquilina said.

The Hunter and Western Constitutional Conventions were the first of 10 held around NSW. Representatives from these conventions were selected to participate in the State Convention to be held in Parliament House later this year.

Schools that participated in the Hunter Constitutional Convention:

All Saints (St Mary's)  
Avondale High School  
Belmont Christian College  
Corpus Christi College

Erina High School  
Forster High School  
Gorokan High School  
Green Point Catholic College  
Hunter School for Performing Arts  
Hunter Valley Grammar School  
Jesmond University High School  
Lake Macquarie High School  
Lambton High School  
Maitland High School  
Merewether High School  
Mount View High School  
Newcastle Grammar  
Northlakes High School  
Raymond Terrace High School  
Rutherford High School  
Scone Grammar  
Scone High School  
Singleton High School  
St Catherine's College  
St Francis Xavier College  
Terrigal High School  
Tomaree High School  
Waratah Technology High School  
Whitebridge High School  
Woy Woy High School

Schools that participated in the Western Constitutional Convention:

Bathurst High School  
Blayney High School  
Dubbo High School  
James Sheahan Catholic High, Orange  
Kandos High School  
Kelso High School  
MacKillop College, Bathurst  
Narromine High School  
Orange Christian School  
Springwood High School  
St John's College, Dubbo  
The Canobolas Rural Technology High, Orange  
The Scots School, Bathurst  
Willyama High School, Broken Hill

## Students get first-hand information about the New HSC

Students at St Michael's Regional High School had an opportunity to learn more about how country students will benefit from the New Higher School Certificate when President of the Board of Studies, Professor Gordon Stanley, visited their school last month to participate in the school's poetry recital. Professor Stanley talked about the stronger 2 Unit syllabuses, extension courses and the vocational education courses that will give students greater education and employment opportunities.

