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**Evaluation of the  
Physical Recreation Study Area Specification**

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Queensland  
Board of Senior Secondary School Studies

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## ***ABSTRACT***

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At the time of writing, 115 schools had students enrolled in the Physical Recreation study area specification (SAS). In phase 1 of the evaluation in 2000, 78 schools had expressed an interest in seeking registration to teach this SAS; 48 of these schools participated in phase 1, completing 56 data collection forms. During phase 2, teachers from 67 schools participating in the evaluation filled out 75 qualitative forms and 76 quantitative forms. During phase 3, teachers from 48 schools completed 52 data collection forms. Students completed 772 data collection forms.

The data gathered during phases 1 and 2 of the evaluation about the clarity of the document indicated that teachers experienced some anxiety and confusion about the requirements of this SAS, seeming to indicate that it is over-complex. Concerns about the clarity of the SAS may also have contributed to uncertainties expressed about the SAS's internal consistency: teachers may have expressed uncertainties about the internal consistency of the document because they were not confident about their understanding of the document as a whole, or the relationships of its components.

Teachers indicated that they appreciate the flexibility and range of the SAS, particularly in strand C, but that some of the content (particularly strands A and B) may be too theoretical. While some teachers seemed to feel that there is value in a physical recreation subject that places demands on students to "theorise", the content that caused most concern was contained in the core modules of the certificate that deal with clerical and administrative activities.

The process of developing a study plan may have been more time-consuming than it should have been for particular teachers because of the difficulties of understanding the SAS document. It appeared that substantial support to write the study plan for this SAS was needed in some cases and, although some expressed appreciation of the quality and helpfulness of assistance given by the Board's review officer, the quantitative data indicated that some teachers disagreed or were unsure that the Board provided useful feedback and support during the development and approval of their study plan. It appears that, for most teachers, this SAS provides a sound basis for teaching the subject and for generating a program of study, although some do not find it an easy subject to teach. Some would appreciate more support in the form of in-service training.

The comments made about learning experiences were more positive than for other aspects of the SAS. These indicated that the flexibility and scope of the SAS allow teachers to exercise creativity in designing learning experiences catering specifically for their students. Negative comments or data from some teachers in phases 1 and 2 relate to difficulties with the structure of the document, theoretical content, need for examples of learning experiences, repetitiveness of modules, and organisation of industry placement, as well as scope for meeting the special needs of some students.

It is clear that many teachers are finding the task of developing assessment tasks, criteria sheets and student profiles manageable. However, there were also requests for a range of exemplars of assessment: profiles, instruments, methods, and modules. For some teachers, two major difficulties are the integration of criteria-based and competency-based assessment, and the management of record keeping.

Although the resources listed in the SAS have been useful, there have also been problems obtaining resources, difficulties ranging from finding some of the

resources listed in the SAS to a lack of teacher time for this SAS. Teachers' comments suggest that this SAS requires considerable teacher support and professional development if it is to work well. Suggestions included more in-service training, visits from Board officers, networking with other teachers, sharing of resources and, of course, time to do these things.

Teachers' responses indicate that the appeal of this SAS for students is the variety and nature of the physical pursuits possible, the practical nature of the SAS and the opportunity for some to gain some kind of qualification. When teachers criticised the SAS they focused mainly on its vocational component, indicating that, although there is a reasonable balance of theoretical and practical content in the SAS, some of the clerical and administrative content of core modules in strands A and B is not suitable for the students most likely to select the subject.

The recommendations of the evaluation are as follows:

- R.1. That the SAS be revised in ways that simplify its structure and language, and clarify teacher uncertainties identified by this evaluation.
- R.2. That Board workshops be used to provide teachers with support in the areas of uncertainty about the SAS, designing study plans, and assessment identified by this evaluation.
- R.3. That the Office of the Board review the strategies and processes in place for providing teachers with support for the development of study plans.
- R.4. That employing authorities be advised of the resource problems teachers in this SAS are experiencing.

Although our data might support this, a recommendation has not been framed for review or removal of clerical and administrative content, since these relate to vocational certificate requirements.

## ***PURPOSES OF THE EVALUATION***

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The evaluation of the Physical Recreation SAS has been designed:

- to provide a sound and participative research basis for recommending whether the SAS ought to proceed to full implementation
- if implementation is recommended, to provide detailed information to the Board about the optimum development of the SAS in terms of:
  - the detail of revision of the SAS needed to make it a more effective curriculum document
  - resources and professional development for teachers
  - any other matters relevant to the successful implementation of the SAS in senior schools in Queensland.

SASs were introduced to rationalise the system of Board-registered subjects. The final report of this evaluation, therefore, will also assess the extent to which the introduction of this SAS, as part of a broader policy direction, has been successful in this task.

## ***HISTORY OF EVALUATIONS***

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Trialling of the first eight SASs began in 1997. These were:

- Hospitality Practices
- Business
- Land & Animal Systems<sup>1</sup>
- Industrial Skills
- Tourism
- Computer Studies
- English Communication
- Trade & Business Mathematics.

Evaluations of these SASs also began in 1997; the findings of these evaluations can be found in the 1999 report *Evaluations of Study Area Specifications*, which also includes interim findings from the evaluation of a ninth SAS, Literacy & Numeracy, the trialling of which began in 1998, and the final evaluation of which was published in 2000.

Trialling and evaluation of the Marine & Aquatic Practices SAS began in 1999, and the final evaluation was published in 2001.

In 2000 the Board's Policy and Evaluation Section also began evaluating three new SASs that were made available for open trial in that year: Social & Community Studies, Early Childhood Practices, and Physical Recreation. Early interim findings of these evaluations were published in 2000 and interim reports were produced in June 2001. The final evaluations of Social & Community Studies, and Early Childhood Practices, will be published at the same time as this report.

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<sup>1</sup> Since it was introduced, Land & Animal Systems has been renamed Agricultural & Horticultural Studies.

## ***STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT***

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This report includes a core report and two appendices. The core report provides overall discussion of background, research questions, method, overall findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Appendix A provides a detailed report of the findings and an extensive analysis of the data, as they relate to the recommendations.

Appendix B contains the research instruments used in each phase of the evaluation.



## ***BACKGROUND***

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### **The development of the study of physical recreation**

Reviews of the development of the curriculum area of physical recreation tend to emphasise how the social context has influenced this development, how the area itself has been considered at different times as being more or less linked to sport, health education, outdoor education and physical education, and how the changing demarcations in the field are themselves influenced by changes in the social context.

Rodwell (1999) explores how the development of physical education in Australia in the first half of the twentieth century was influenced by campaigners for eugenics — the physical and mental wellbeing of the Australian “race”. Driven by factors such as postwar reconstruction, the perceived social threat of the unemployed during the Depression, and the urbanisation of Australia, they tried to move physical education away from simple drills and towards a broader range of activities and studies, including recreational activities, sex education and nutrition. The eugenics movement, which in some manifestations in the 1930s and even the early 1940s expressed a degree of support for the Fascist regimes of Europe, nevertheless supported and influenced developments such as the surf lifesaving movement, the establishment of the first national parks, improved maternal health care and the spread of information about nutrition. Schools were considered a vital aspect of this campaign, and despite the lack of trained physical education teachers until the 1950s, some changes in practice did occur between the wars. However, “it was not until the 1950s that these ideals materialised in the form of school curricula for Australian citizens” (Rodwell 1999, p. 113). The eugenicists’ emphasis on the related importance of exercise, sport, recreation, outdoor activities, health and nutrition, rather than on the adequacy just of militaristic drills, is evident in later developments in the field of health, physical education and recreation (HPER).

Pearce (1998) recounts how the emphasis on various components of physical education has changed since the 1950s. Stages she identifies include “the physical training instructor”, moving “from the playing field into the bush”, an emphasis on competitive sport which “devalued the educational outcomes of the balanced program”, and the development of “expedition activities” which were considered “either as character-building commando-type exercises or ... as recreation” (p. 25).

Pearce’s concern about the educational consequences of an emphasis on competitive sport is echoed by Corbin (1996, p. 43) in an American context: “The evolution of college athletics as a business [in the 1950s] further increased pressure to win and coaches often neglected teaching assignments in favour of coaching responsibilities”. In the same period there was “a national trend that saw the development of separate physical education and athletic programs”, and also “the emergence of classes in health education and recreation” (p. 44). Later developments, in the 1970s, included “attempts to establish a body of knowledge” for physical education and turn it into a “discipline” (p. 45). Corbin expresses concern about “the fragmentation of areas within HPER” and suggests instead that “all areas within HPER have commonality” and that “these common features should be the center of our attention”. (p. 43).

Watkins (1979) also noted the “polarisation” of roles in physical education in Australia, and the “dichotomous way” that professionals speak of “fitness or recreation, health or physical education, sport or recreation, outdoor education or

sport” (p. 40), but saw (in 1979) the emergence of “a more recreational approach” and an involvement of the wider community in school programs for physical education (p. 38).

Brown and Banfield (1996, pp. 29–31) examine the social changes that may have influenced the various approaches to physical education. They note a shift from the emphasis at the start of the twentieth century on physical drills for the production of “fit and obedient workers to serve not only in the interests of national economic development but the defence of the British Empire”, to the emphasis from the 1930s to the 1960s, on “physical and moral hygiene” so that “a good bodily order reflected an inner order of sobriety and obedience to authority”. In the 1980s they saw a “retreat from the welfare state”, resulting in a greater emphasis on “the virtues of individuals managing their own health”:

While Health Education reformers worked busily in their classrooms making health-choosing individuals from a curious mixture of American “feel good” psychology and behaviourism, Physical Education teachers were re-creating their students at the bowling alley, fitness centres and outdoor environments.

In the 1990s, they noted a movement away from individualistic approaches towards a “social view” of health.

The Physical Recreation SAS is itself explicit and detailed about the social context in which it is to be studied:

Today’s technological society supports a variety of lifestyles. We have more flexible working hours, more part-time employment and an increase in the number of people who are either unemployed or retired. The commercialisation of leisure has become significant in our economic structure. At the same time, our society is carrying ever-increasing health costs incurred by those who have inactive lifestyles.

The sport and recreation industry has assumed increasing importance as a source of expanding employment opportunities.

The inclusion of VET modules in the Physical Recreation SAS might be seen as further evidence of the responsiveness of this field to changing social contexts.

### **Study area specifications**

Study area specifications are a relatively new form of Board-registered subject, in which the Board is responsible for the curriculum documents and schools are responsible for the study plans they develop within these specifications, and for assessment. In most SASs, students may study one or more strands, and can receive a level of achievement in each strand as well as records of competencies they demonstrate, and any certificates for which they have met the competency requirements. The competencies embedded in SASs are based on nationally recognised industry-endorsed competency standards, and the certificates are defined under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

The development of SASs began in 1996 and has continued in a context of:

- changing patterns of participation in senior studies
- developments in VET in schools.

In the next two sections, brief accounts of these two contexts are followed by a summary of the immediate reasons for the introduction of SASs: the rationalisation of old-style Board-registered subjects.

Curriculum is, of course, delivered by teachers. What teachers know and do has a greater impact on students’ achievements than any other single factor. The section on background concludes with a note on the diversity of backgrounds of teachers involved in SASs, including the Physical Recreation SAS.

## Changing patterns of participation in senior studies in Queensland

In Queensland the senior curriculum has continued to change in response to changing student needs. The proportion of OP-ineligible students has been increasing since 1989 at least, as indicated by table 1.

**Table 1: Changes in the student population 1989–2001**

Year	OP-eligible	OP-ineligible	Total	OP-eligible as a percentage of Year 12	OP-ineligible as a percentage of Year 12
1989	26 523	5 002	31 525	84.1	15.9
1990	26 828	5 206	32 034	83.7	16.3
1991	28 649	6 026	34 675	82.6	17.4
1992	28 577	6 924	35 501	80.5	19.5
1993	27 336	7 100	34 436	79.4	20.6
1994	25 985	7 406	33 391	77.8	22.2
1995	25 118	7 106	32 224	77.9	22.1
1996	24 893	7 870	32 763	76.0	24.0
1997	25 957	7 865	33 822	76.7	23.3
1998	26 214	8 594	34 808	75.3	24.5
1999	27 237	9 176	36 413	74.8	25.2
2000	27 836	10 374	38 210	72.9	27.1
2001	27 303	10 533	37 837	72.2	27.8

Completion rates<sup>2</sup> for senior studies rose steadily until 1992. Completion rates then dipped for three years, reaching a low point in 1995. They then appeared to be on the increase and were up for the fifth year in succession to 73 per cent of the age grouping 2000. There was a marked gap between the completion rates for females (77 per cent in 2000) and males (68 per cent in 2000). In 2001, the completion rate for females was down slightly to 76 per cent and for males was up slightly to 69 per cent.

## Developments in VET in schools

The Queensland experience of developing SASs with embedded VET has occurred in a national context of an increasing emphasis on VET in schools and a range of approaches to its implementation.

Queensland, like other states, has seen sustained growth in the provision of VET in schools. The senior curriculum in Australia has changed with the development of new subjects integrating both theoretical and more general studies with practical and “hands-on” studies into senior courses. The new SASs may be seen as examples of these new curriculum offerings across Australia. The extent of recent growth in the provision of VET in Queensland schools is suggested by table 2. (This table shows VET reported on Senior Certificates which is now very close to all the VET that is being delivered (see *A report on the AVETMISS Project, Phase 3.*)

<sup>2</sup> The completion rate is the number of students receiving a Senior Certificate expressed as a proportion of the relevant population. Figures given here are for age-weighted cohort rates rather than apparent retention rates.

**Table 2: Changes in VET in Queensland schools 1997–2001**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Senior Certificates issued	33 822	35 394	37 032	38 727	38 441
Students who received a result in one or more subjects with embedded VET	2 616	11 952	15 865	20 728	21 361
Modules/competencies printed on Senior Certificates as part of subjects with embedded VET	18 097	134 017	194 299	246 505	308 269
VET modules/competencies printed on Senior Certificates as part of non-SAS Board-registered subjects	0	5 305	6 887	5 040	4 921
Students with results in (TAFE) Recorded subjects	3 745	4 030	4 167	2 324	706

The practice of “embedding” VET is part of an Australia-wide trend to integrate VET into the senior secondary school curriculum. In Queensland there are currently five Board subjects and 14 SASs with 32 strands that provide students with opportunities to acquire industry-endorsed competencies as part of these subjects. (One strand within each SAS does not require schools to provide industry-endorsed competencies and a fifteenth SAS (Social & Community Studies) contains no industry-endorsed competencies). Results in all Board subjects are included in calculations of Overall Positions (OPs) and Field Positions (FPs). Results in SAS subjects are not included in OP and FP calculations.

The emphasis on workplace learning varies considerably across Australian states. Most Queensland senior students, whether they are studying SASs or any other subjects, take part in “work experience” rather than industry placement. Work experience for Queensland students is conducted under the provisions of work experience legislation; the few cases where industry placement is mandatory involve students in on-the-job training that is conducted under the provisions of the industry placement legislation. NSW has developed workplace guidelines, which are designed to ensure that students develop skills in the workplace, rather than simply doing routine tasks. The importance of this is supported by the student survey data obtained for all SASs as part of the 1999 report of evaluations of the first nine SASs.

Registration arrangements vary considerably across Australia. In Queensland, schools can register with the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (QBSSSS) as providers of VET delivered at AQF levels I and above, including VET delivered as part of SAS subjects. In Queensland, students who complete VET as part of Board or SAS subjects (and/or who have completed a number of Recorded subjects) receive a Senior Certificate that provides considerable detail about this VET. This information may include certificates, modules, industry-endorsed competencies, and industry standards, and is sufficiently large for some students to require their certificates to be printed on more than one sheet of A4 paper. (From 1997 to 1999, students with too many results to fit on one sheet of A4 paper received a Senior Certificate on A3 paper. In 2000 and 2001, an A3 sheet was not large enough to accommodate the achievements of every student receiving a Senior Certificate, so many students with VET had their Senior Certificate results printed on several sheets of A4 paper.)

Scrutiny of equivalent certificates in other states suggests there are substantial differences in the degree of detail about VET reported by Australian authorities

certificating senior studies (Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA)). However, there are some agreed-upon principles and commonalities in practices for reporting VET and other results. The agreed-upon national guidelines for certification and an account of certification practices in the different Australian states are given in a 1999 report produced by QBSSSS, *Principles for the Integrity, Quality and Long-Term Credibility of Certificates of Achievement* (1999). This report lends support to the view that Queensland is reporting a great deal more VET on its Senior Certificates than many other states.

### **The rationalisation of old-style Board-registered subjects**

SASs were developed following a government decision in 1995 that Board-registered subjects should be rationalised.

The old-style Board-registered subjects were defined by a work program and accredited by the Board; there was great diversity, and as many Board-registered subjects as there were work programs written by schools. They had only one level of quality control — accreditation by the Board of work programs as representing a coherent program of study suitable for senior students.

Schools used the system of Board-registered subjects to provide more practical and “hands-on” rather than theoretical subjects for their students, and also to provide numeracy and literacy courses for students who had not experienced much success in these areas in previous years of schooling.

Reasons for rationalising the old-style Board-registered subjects included the:

- large number of subjects
- cost of developing and accrediting work programs for each subject
- highly variable quality of these subjects
- lack of substance of some of these subjects
- fact that there were different names for essentially the same course
- perceived limited value or currency of results in these subjects
- general absence of effective quality controls.

In addition to fixing these problems, SASs were intended to contribute to the “convergence” of “vocational” and “general” education. They were intended also to continue to provide the flexibility delivered by the previous very wide range of Board-registered subjects. This original intention behind the design of SASs is an important benchmark for evaluating their effectiveness as curriculum documents today.

### **Teachers**

In our previous evaluations, we found that teachers of SASs have a diverse background and include:

- those who are relatively new to criteria-based assessment, e.g. those who do not have a long history of teaching Board subjects and working with the Board through its moderation system; many of these teachers have a trade background and/or have been teaching the old-style Board-registered subjects or school subjects
- those who are relatively new to competency-based assessment, e.g. those who have primarily taught Board subjects
- those who are new to both criteria-based and competency-based assessment, e.g. recent graduates of teaching qualifications

- some who have experience with both competency-based and criteria-based assessment, including teachers who have gained experience of integrating both in other SASs.

The variety of the backgrounds of SAS teachers is crucial to understanding the challenges these teachers have experienced in implementing the SASs in their schools. As evaluations of other SASs progressed, it became clear that difficulties teachers were experiencing with the SASs could be, and sometimes in their view almost certainly were, primarily about the challenges of implementing either criteria-based or competency-based assessment, and combining both these kinds of assessment. Our data on assessment, collected over the course of the evaluation, is also designed to explore these in-practice assessment issues.

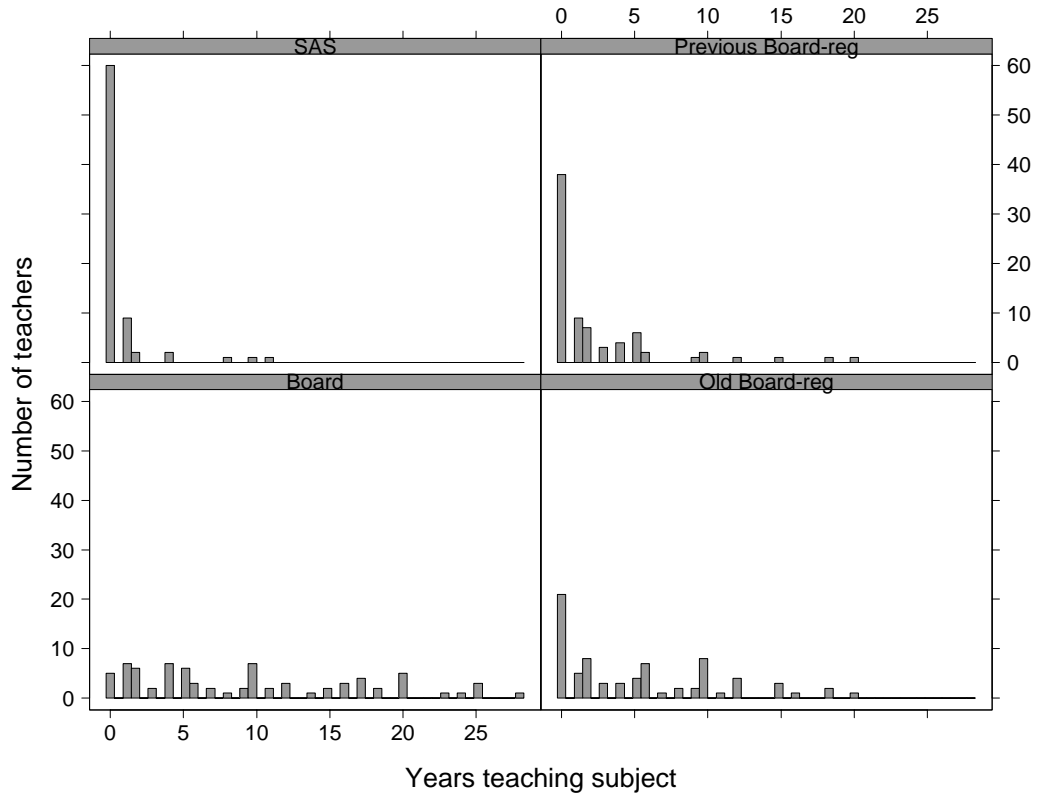
In addition, SAS classrooms include many students who have special needs. These special needs groups are diverse; they include students with different kinds of disabilities, students who have not experienced much success at school, students who are not well motivated, and students who are highly motivated and committed to the goal of being employed in the industry area after school. Clearly, teaching this diverse range of students is a job that makes high demands on teacher skills.

In summary, then, concerns about the SASs are not always about perceived limitations of the curriculum documents as such; they are often about the very substantial teacher delivery challenges, such as the discrepancy between what teachers had previously taught and what they are now, as SAS teachers, required to teach. Our evaluation of this SAS will aim to provide a deeper understanding of the nature of any difficulties with the SAS curriculum document experienced by teachers (as well as a sense of its strengths).

Our quantitative data from phase 2 (see appendix B for the research instruments) show that the teachers of Physical Recreation who responded to the survey came from a variety of backgrounds. Figure 1 shows that some have taught the Board-registered subject that in some schools was replaced by this SAS. Some have taught another old-style Board-registered subject. Some have also taught Board subjects. Figure 1 also shows that relatively few of these teachers have taught SAS Board-registered subjects before this.

The greater experience of teachers with Board subjects than Board-registered subjects may suggest that they will be, in general, familiar with criteria-based assessment, but may welcome advice on adapting this to the SAS context and on the integration of competency-based assessment with criteria-based assessment and some clear examples of integrated assessment tasks.

Figure 1: Types of teaching experience of teachers of Physical Recreation



## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

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The key research questions for this evaluation are necessarily many and varied, being in the first instance directed at establishing whether the SAS ought to proceed to full implementation and, in the second instance where implementation is recommended, offering detailed information about specific revisions required, resources or professional development required by teachers, as well as any other matters relevant to successful implementation.

The key research questions have been organised around three areas:

- the effectiveness of the SAS for teachers
- the effectiveness of the SAS for students
- the effectiveness of the SAS for the Queensland community (phase 3).

### **The effectiveness of the SASs for teachers**

Research questions for evaluating the effectiveness of SASs for teachers (in this and other evaluations of SASs) have been organised under seven subtopics:

1. *The language of the SAS*
  - How well does the SAS communicate intentions to teachers?
2. *The internal integrity of the SAS*
  - How good is the internal consistency of the components of each of the strands?
3. *The content of the SAS*
  - How suitable is the breadth and depth of each of the strands?
  - What is the nature and appropriateness of general and embedded vocational education components?
4. *Development of study plans using the SAS*
  - Can teachers translate the strands into effective study plans?
5. *Development of learning experiences using the SAS*
  - How useful is the SAS for teachers providing worthwhile learning experiences for students in the context of the trial schools?
6. *Assessment and the SAS*
  - How well developed, clarified and appropriate are the criteria and standards of assessment for the strands?
  - How well do schools combine summative information to make decisions about achievement in each criterion in each strand?
  - How useful is this SAS for teachers making valid and reliable assessments of student achievement?
  - How easily are teachers implementing competency-based assessment? How well are teachers handling the requirements of both criteria-based assessment and competency-based assessment?
7. *Resources*
  - What resources are needed to ensure effective teaching, learning and assessment in the strands?



## **The effectiveness of the SASs for students**

The research questions for evaluating the effectiveness of the SAS for students have been organised under four subtopics.

1. *The match between student needs and the SAS*
  - What specific needs in the student populations studied does the SAS meet/not meet? How well does the SAS match the needs of the student populations studied?
  - How well do embedded vocational education components meet the needs of students?
2. *The balance between practice and theory in the SAS*
  - Does the SAS provide students with an appropriate balance between practical and “hands-on” learning and theoretical learning experiences?
3. *The appropriateness for students of demands made by the SAS*
  - Are the demands of the strands appropriate for the students who undertake these studies?
4. *Students who are not participating in the SAS*
  - What groups of students are not participating in the SAS and why are they not participating? Should the SAS meet the needs of any of these other groups of students?

## **The effectiveness of the SASs for the Queensland community**

The discussion about the rationalisation of Board-registered subjects made clear that the SASs need to be evaluated in a particular policy context. They were intended to achieve some specific ends that could not be achieved so effectively with the old-style Board-registered subjects, particularly the convergence of “vocational” and “general” education.

For the evaluation of SASs, including Physical Recreation, it is therefore not enough simply to ask “How well do the SASs work for teachers and students?” The related question of how well the SASs do what they were designed to do has to be asked. Accordingly, the research questions that follow were designed using the definitions of what rationalising SASs was supposed to achieve. They have been organised under six subtopics. In this report, the data for Physical Recreation will be considered in the light of data from other SAS evaluations answering these broader questions.

1. *Reducing the number of Board-registered subjects*
  - What are the key issues in the reduction of the number of old-style Board-registered subjects?
2. *Better coordination and implementation of Board-registered subjects*
  - Does the new system provide better coordination of the development and implementation of Board-registered subjects?
3. *Cost effectiveness*
  - Has rationalising Board-registered subjects effectively reduced costs (i.e. the costs of developing and accrediting work programs for each individual subject versus the costs of developing and implementing SASs)?
4. *Improved value or currency of results*
  - Does the new system of Board-registered subjects mean improved value or currency of results (i.e. with some reference to the “old” system of Board-registered subjects)?

- Do SASs offer substantial improvement of the standardisation of results in Board-registered subjects?
5. *A better balance between theory and practice and the convergence of “vocational” and “general” education*
- Do SASs provide students with an appropriate balance between flexibility to suit local needs and standardisation of quality of subjects?
  - Have the SASs achieved the aim of convergence of “vocational” and “general” education?
6. *Improved outcomes for students*
- Do the new SASs provide students with subjects offering more meaningful knowledge and skills leading to better results (whether employment, further education and/or personal development)?

## **METHOD**

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This section summarises the research methods used in the three phases of this evaluation, and explains:

- the nature of the methods
- the rationale for the methods
- the complementary way in which these different research methods help answer the research questions.

### **Summary of methods**

For the evaluation of the Physical Recreation SAS, substantial written comments about the SAS were obtained: during phase 1, and teachers filled out 56 data collection forms; during phase 2, teachers filled out 75 qualitative forms and 76 quantitative forms; and during phase 3, teachers filled out 52 data collection forms.

It is important to consider these numbers in the context of participation of schools in this evaluation: in 2000, 48 schools participated in phase 1 of the evaluation (out of 78 schools that had expressed an interest in seeking registration). In March 2001, 67 schools participated in phase 2 of the evaluation (out of 115 schools with students enrolled in the SAS). In October 2001, 48 schools participated in phase 3 of the evaluation.

Quantitative data from surveys of teachers have been used in this evaluation as a cross-check of the written comments, complementing and supplementing these data. Quantitative data tell us, for example, whether teachers agreed or disagreed with a statement, but they cannot tell us why. Quantitative data help identify priority areas for development of the SAS (or, possibly, indicate together with written comments that the SAS ought not to proceed to full implementation).

The comments obtained from teachers in phase 1 provide an early and not always conclusive dataset that can be analysed to signal what were issues for teachers in the very early stages of the trial; these issues have been compared with the issues that are still, or are no longer, seen as important in later stages of the trial (as revealed by phase 2 and 3 data). Appendix A offers this analysis.

In phase 3, the evaluation team carried out an analysis of study plans developed from the SAS in order to gain some idea of the nature of the programs of study that schools typically develop, and a survey of a sample group of employers in the health and fitness industry. This survey took the form of a brief telephone interview to gather the views of employers about aspects related to the SAS.

### **Phase 1**

#### **What phase 1 achieved**

In phase 1 the evaluation team aimed to provide all teachers of Physical Recreation with an opportunity to express in writing their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the SAS document, as well as any other issues relevant to the implementation of the SAS. The evaluation team met personally with as many teachers of this SAS as possible to obtain accounts of their early experiences of the SAS and give them the message that the Board has made a commitment to a rigorous and substantial evaluation of their subjects that will convey their experiences to the Curriculum Committee.

## Who did what in phase 1

In March 2000, 78 schools had expressed interest in seeking registration for Physical Recreation, and the Board sent letters informing them of the evaluation and inviting them to attend the meetings. The meetings aimed to provide:

- the evaluation team with information about the broad range of issues for schools trialling Physical Recreation
- as many teachers as possible with the opportunity to meet face to face with members of the evaluation team at an early stage of the evaluation.

Fourteen meetings were conducted. Teachers recorded their experiences of implementing Physical Recreation on a qualitative data collection form; the number of data collection forms received for each strand is shown in table 3. Forty-eight schools were involved.

**Table 3: Data collection forms received in phase 1, by strand and by district**

District	Strand			
	Recreation Practices	Recreation Studies	Recreation Pursuits	Not stated
Brisbane South	3	8	1	2
Brisbane Ipswich	2	1		
Brisbane North	2	5		
Toowoomba		2		
Wide Bay	1	2	3	
Rockhampton	2	1		
Mackay		1	3	
Townsville	1	2	1	
Cairns	1			
Gold Coast	1	3	3	
Sunshine Coast		1	4	
Total	13	26	15	2

The data collection form (see appendix B) contained seven broad questions on seven topics designed to canvass all issues relevant to teachers' experiences of implementing SASs in schools; it also gave teachers the opportunity to make additional comments relevant to the implementation of the SAS in their school.

Each of the data collection forms from phase 1 was numbered and personal details including name, school, SAS and strand were recorded.

The data collection forms were used in the detailed discussion of teachers' comments that appears in appendix A.

## Phase 2

### What phase 2 achieved

In phase 2 the evaluation team aimed to provide teachers of this SAS with opportunities to provide more detail about the broad issues, concerns, and areas of satisfaction identified in phase 1. Phase 2 obtained both qualitative and quantitative data on similar issues, so that both datasets could work together as a cross-check of the findings for this phase.

## Who did what in phase 2

In March 2001, 14 meetings were held across Queensland, attended by 34 teachers. Table 4 provides some figures showing schools' responses to this phase of the evaluation.

**Table 4: Schools' response in phase 2**

Number of schools with students enrolled in Physical Recreation in 2001 (Years 11 & 12)	115
Number of schools that provided completed evaluation forms	67
Percentage of schools completing evaluation forms	58%
Number of schools that did not complete an evaluation form	48
Number of schools with only one or two students enrolled	5
Number of schools that could have been expected to respond and did not	43

From these meetings and later postings of the research instruments, 81 teachers (from the 115 schools that indicated they had enrolments) filled in 75 qualitative forms and 76 quantitative forms. The number of qualitative and quantitative data collection forms for each strand is given below. (A few teachers filled in a form for more than one strand.)

**Table 5: Qualitative data collection forms received in phase 2, by strand and by district**

District	Strand			
	Recreation Practices	Recreation Studies	Recreation Pursuits	Not stated
Brisbane South	4	4	4	
Brisbane Ipswich	2	1		2
Brisbane North	1	2	4	1
Toowoomba	3	1		
Wide Bay	1	2	4	
Rockhampton	2	3	2	
Mackay	2	1	3	
Townsville	1	2	3	
Cairns	2	2	3	1
Gold Coast	2	4	4	
Sunshine Coast	2	1	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>4</b>

**Table 6: Quantitative data collection forms received in phase 2, by strand and by district**

District	Strand			
	Recreation Practices	Recreation Studies	Recreation Pursuits	Not stated
Brisbane South	4	4	4	
Brisbane Ipswich	2	1		2
Brisbane North	1	2	4	1
Toowoomba	3	1		
Wide Bay	1	2	4	
Rockhampton	2	3	2	
Mackay	2	1	3	
Townsville	1	2	3	
Cairns	2	2	3	1
Gold Coast	2	4	4	
Sunshine Coast	2	1	3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>

The qualitative and quantitative data collection forms ask quite similar questions. The qualitative form offered teachers an opportunity to elaborate on the questions they had answered in phase 1, through the use of more detailed questions. The data obtained from these data collection forms are analysed in the appended report.

### Phase 3

#### What phase 3 achieved

In phase 3, the evaluation team obtained specific information about the content of the SAS, which could help pinpoint particular areas requiring revision. For instance, the qualitative phase 3 instrument asked teachers to list specific aspects of the SAS that are or are not meeting their students' needs. They were also asked questions about the aspirations of the students they were teaching. As was the case in phase 2, the quantitative instrument for this phase was designed to mirror these questions and help ensure that recommendations about content are supported by more than one kind of dataset. A survey instrument was also used to gather data from students in all schools offering the SAS.

#### Who did what in phase 3

In 2001, 115 schools were offering Physical Recreation. From the posting of forms to teachers we obtained 52 responses. From the posting of forms to students we obtained 772 responses. Table 6 provides some figures showing schools' response to this phase of the evaluation.

**Table 6: Schools' response in phase 3**

Number of schools with students enrolled in Physical Recreation in 2001 (Years 11 and 12)	115
Number of schools that provided completed evaluation forms	48
Percentage of schools completing evaluation forms	42%

From postings of the research instruments, 19 teachers filled in 16 forms and students filled in 281 forms. The number of forms received from teachers is shown in table 7.

**Table 7: Data collection forms received from teachers in phase 3, by strand and by district**

<i>District</i>	<i>Strand</i>		
	<i>Recreation Practices</i>	<i>Recreation Studies</i>	<i>Recreation Pursuits</i>
Brisbane Central	1		1
Brisbane South	1		2
Brisbane North	4	2	2
Brisbane East	1	2	
Brisbane Ipswich			
Gold Coast		1	3
Sunshine Coast		1	1
Toowoomba	3	2	3
Wide Bay	1	2	6
Mackay	2	2	2
Townsville			2
Rockhampton	1		2
Cairns	2	1	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>23</b>

These data collection forms included both quantitative and qualitative forms. As in the earlier phases these forms asked quite similar questions. The questions allowed teachers the opportunity to elaborate on some of the responses they had given earlier and also explored in more detail some of the areas touched on in phases 1 and 2.

The number of forms received from students is shown in table 8.

**Table 8: Data collection forms received from students in phase 3, by strand**

Recreation Practices	275
Recreation Studies	211
Recreation Pursuits	286
<b>Total</b>	<b>772</b>

The evaluation team carried out an analysis of a sample of the study plans developed from the SAS in order to gain some idea of the nature of the programs of study that schools typically develop.

A survey of a sample group of employers in the health and fitness industry was conducted by the evaluation team. This took the form of a brief telephone interview to gather the views of employers about aspects related to the SAS.

## **The approaches used to analyse data obtained for this evaluation**

### **What is the approach to qualitative data obtained from teachers?**

The majority of data obtained for this evaluation are language data in the form of written comments. The report aims to provide a narrative in appendix A that effectively synthesises all these comments.

The evaluation team did not try to classify and quantify each paragraph that teachers wrote. However, it should be emphasised that the point of the analyses of written comments in this appendix is to offer an account of the nature of teachers'

experiences, to “flesh out” particular issues in ways that convey the detail of teachers’ experiences of the SAS. This is why prolific quotations are offered in these analyses, so that readers get the flavour of comments that contribute to the synthesis of the findings and recommendations.

In an evaluation exercise that claims its recommendations are data-driven, and must be presented to committees who may want to question these recommendations, it is important that substantial space be devoted to describing the data that are the basis for the recommendations. This is the purpose of the report given in appendix A. Accordingly, the writing in the appended report is descriptive; under each research question we provide a synthesis of the available data, as well as substantiation of this synthesis by way of detailed descriptions of the data collected. The overall description under each research question is in turn the basis for the summaries of the findings given in this core report and the recommendations. Given the high-stakes nature of recommendations for change to curriculum documents, and the importance of having considered debates about whether evaluation findings are justified, illustrating the connections between the data and the recommendations is particularly crucial in reports like this. In short, we aim to ensure that our evaluation of curriculum is demonstrably driven by these data.



## OVERALL FINDINGS

The following pages provide the findings for this evaluation, and suggestions for action, with reference to each of the research questions. They give only the “big picture” for the Physical Recreation SAS. As noted previously, the detail of the findings and the evidence supporting the final recommendations for this SAS are given in appendix A.

### The effectiveness of SASs for teachers

<i>The language of the SAS</i>	
How well do SASs communicate intentions to teachers?	<p>Comments about the clarity of the document indicated that teachers have experienced some anxiety and confusion about the requirements of this SAS, which seems to indicate that it is overly complex. The major areas in which teachers indicated uncertainty are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the relationships between the different components of the SAS, such as the study area core, the “main aspects”, the modules and the competencies</li> <li>the structure and necessary components of the strands</li> <li>the requirements for assessment, especially the application of the exit criteria, and judging and recording the competencies.</li> </ul> <p>It appears that the majority of teachers have found this SAS is one that provides a sound basis for teaching the subject, that adequately defines the kinds of learning experiences to be offered to students and that can be used to generate a program of study. However, some teachers do not find this an easy subject to teach.</p> <p><i>Possible actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>simplify and clarify the structure of the strands and better explain relationships between components</li> <li>provide more explanatory information on assessment requirements particularly as they relate to exit criteria and competencies.</li> </ul>
<i>The internal integrity of the SAS</i>	
How good is the internal consistency of the components of each of the strands?	<p>Comments from teachers were mixed. They indicated some uncertainties or difficulties in this area, but this may have been related to their concerns about the clarity of the SAS: teachers may have expressed uncertainties about the internal consistency of the document because they were not confident about their understanding of the document as a whole, or the relationships of its components. It seems that there have been difficulties in identifying the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the relationship between the study area core and the four main aspects of the study area</li> <li>how the study area core and the four main aspects are to be integrated throughout the modules and other elements of the program of study</li> <li>a logical sequence in the modules, some of which are overlapping or repetitive.</li> </ul> <p><i>Possible action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide more information on sequencing of modules.</li> </ul>

<i>The content of the SAS</i>	
<p>How suitable is the breadth and depth of each of the strands?</p> <p>What is the nature and appropriateness of general and embedded vocational education components?</p>	<p>Comments about content were mixed. Positive comments related to the flexibility and range of the content, which teachers appreciate, particularly in strand C. They report that they can tailor a program of study that meets the specific needs of their students, allowing students to experience a range of exciting and challenging activities while gaining worthwhile knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Negative comments related mostly to the SAS content (particularly strands A and B) being too “theoretical”. However, some teachers seem to feel that there is value in a physical recreation subject that places demands on students to “theorise”. The content that causes most concern is contained in the core modules of the certificate that deal with clerical and administrative activities.</p> <p>A few teachers also find the number of physical pursuits stipulated for each of the strands too restricting. They reported that many of the students are average in ability and that some have poor literacy skills or lack motivation in the more theoretical areas of the curriculum and therefore learn best through practical activities and physical pursuits that they enjoy.</p> <p><i>Possible actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue to provide workshops on strategies for teaching clerical and administrative content</li> <li>• review the number of physical pursuits stipulated for each of the strands.</li> </ul>
<i>Development of study plans using the SAS</i>	
<p>Can teachers translate the strands into effective study plans?</p>	<p>Comments about the process of developing a study plan were also mixed. Negative comments related to difficulties teachers experienced in understanding the SAS document, which appear to have made the design of the study plan more time-consuming than it should have been.</p> <p>Some teachers expressed appreciation for the quality and helpfulness of assistance given by the review officer. However, other comments indicated that teachers require substantial support to write the study plan for this SAS and the quantitative data indicated that some teachers disagreed or were unsure that the Board provided useful feedback and support during the development and approval of their study plan. Despite the difficulties cited, it seems that by phase 2, most teachers felt that the study plan they had produced provided for them an effective basis for their implementation of the SAS.</p> <p>Phase 3 data confirmed the teachers’ desire for more support in the form of exemplars and in-service training.</p> <p><i>Possible action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review the strategies and processes in place for providing teachers with support for the development of study plans (see recommendation 4).</li> </ul>
<i>Development of learning experiences using the SAS</i>	
<p>How useful are the SASs for teachers providing worthwhile learning experiences for students in the context of the trial schools?</p>	<p>The comments made about learning experiences were more positive than for most other aspects of the SAS. These positive comments relate to the flexibility and scope of the SAS that allow teachers to exercise creativity in designing learning experiences that cater specifically for their students, indicating that the SAS is a useful basis for providing learning experiences.</p> <p>Negative comments or data from some teachers in phases 1 and 2 relate to difficulties with the structure of the document, theoretical content, need for examples of learning experiences, repetitiveness of modules and organisation of industry placement, as well as scope for meeting the special needs of some students.</p> <p><i>Possible actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue to provide workshops that offer teachers support in the area of negative comments stated</li> <li>• revise the SAS in consultation with special educators and teachers with particular expertise in delivering curriculum to students with special needs.</li> </ul>

<i>Assessment and the SAS</i>	
<p>How well developed, clarified and appropriate are the criteria and standards of assessment for the strands?</p> <p>How well do schools combine summative information to make decisions about achievement in each criterion in each strand?</p> <p>How useful is this SAS for teachers making valid and reliable assessments of students' achievements?</p> <p>How easily are teachers implementing competency-based assessment? How well are teachers handling the requirements of both criteria-based standards assessment and competency-based assessment?</p>	<p>It is clear that many teachers are finding developing assessment tasks, criteria sheets and student profiles manageable. However, this is not the case for all teachers and there were requests for a range of exemplars of assessment: profiles, instruments, methods, as well as "an example of a completed module so we know what to expect". The two major difficulties seem to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the integration of criteria-based and competency-based assessment</li> <li>• the management of record keeping, which is proving to be a time-consuming and unwieldy task, especially for those who offer strands A and B.</li> </ul> <p>In phase 3, there were also some suggestions to reconsider some of the wording of the standards.</p> <p>Possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue to provide workshops that offer exemplars as described and advice on record keeping and integration of criteria-based and competency-based assessment.</li> </ul>

<i>Resources</i>	
<p>What resources are needed to ensure effective teaching, learning and assessment in the strands?</p>	<p>Although teachers indicated that the resources listed in the SAS were useful, there have been problems obtaining resources of various kinds. The difficulties have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finding some of the resources listed in the SAS</li> <li>• identifying the resources useful to different components of the SAS, particularly the study area core and the four main aspects</li> <li>• accessing facilities and materials for physical recreation pursuits</li> <li>• working within the administrative constraints of the school e.g. timetabling, availability of resources and varying class sizes</li> <li>• lack of teacher time for this SAS.</li> </ul> <p>By phase 3, many teachers had overcome most of these difficulties.</p> <p><i>Possible action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inform employing authorities of the resource problems teachers in this SAS are experiencing (see recommendation 3).</li> </ul>

<i>Other issues</i>	
<p>What other issues should be considered in this SAS?</p>	<p>Teachers' comments on other issues affecting the SAS suggest that this SAS requires considerable teacher support and professional development if it is to work well. Suggestions included more in-service training, visits from Board personnel, networking with other teachers, sharing resources and, of course, time to do these things.</p> <p>Teachers expressed concern about teaching of strand A and questioned the usefulness of Certificate I in Recreation Practices to students for future employment.</p>

## The effectiveness of SASs for students

<i>The match between student needs and the SAS</i>	
<p>What specific needs in the student populations studied does the SAS meet/not meet? How well does the SAS match the needs of the student population studied?</p> <p>How well do embedded vocational education components meet the needs of students?</p>	<p>The phase 2 data from teachers indicated that the variety of physical activities that are the focus of the study area make this a very attractive option for many students. Other factors that are significant to the success of the study area are its practical nature and, for many students, the perception that it is less academic and less theoretical than Board subjects. A few teachers pointed to the opportunity to gain a coaching qualification or the Certificate 1 in Recreation Practices as a reason for selecting the study area. Most teachers seemed to feel that this is a worthwhile subject in the curriculum.</p> <p>Most criticism of the study area focused on the clerical and administrative elements of the core modules of the certificate. These were not seen as being appropriate for the students who would select the SAS.</p> <p>More than half of the responding teachers on the quantitative phase 2 instrument believe that the majority of the students taking this SAS are interested in and motivated by the subject, that they gain mostly positive learning experiences from the subject, and that a good proportion of them can experience at least some success in demonstrating vocational education competencies. However, teachers seem to be of the view that relatively few would be competent in enough modules to gain the certificate.</p> <p>Teachers and students alike were positive in their views about the usefulness of this SAS to students in helping them to develop employment-related, social and personal knowledge and skills.</p>
<i>The balance between practice and theory in the SAS</i>	
<p>Does the SAS provide students with an appropriate balance between practical and “hands-on” learning, and theoretical learning experiences?</p>	<p>Almost all of the written responses indicated that responding teachers and their students were relatively happy with the balance of practical work and theory in the SAS. In spite of these responses, many still suggested that the clerical and administration material should be removed or reduced in the vocational component of the SAS.</p> <p>The quantitative data for phase 2 indicated that although the balance of theory and practical content was not a major issue, it still seemed to be a substantial one, probably because of the clerical and administrative material.</p>
<i>The appropriateness for students of demands made by the SAS</i>	
<p>Are the demands of the strands appropriate for the students who undertake these studies?</p>	<p>The physical activities that are the focus of the SAS and the practical nature of much of the subject are seen to make this a suitable subject for many students. Teachers commented that it has integrated well with other programs and has allowed some non-academic and special-needs students to achieve some success. Many teachers also commented favourably on the flexibility of the SAS that made it easy to adapt to the needs of students although, as noted previously, they also pointed out that some of the modules were inappropriate for their students.</p>

<i>Students who are not participating in the SAS</i>	
<p>What groups of students are not participating in the SAS and why are they not participating? Should the SAS meet the needs of any of these other groups of students?</p>	<p>Some teachers are clearly of the view that significant factors in the selection of this SAS by students are its placement in the school's timetable, the fact that it is not an OP subject, and the lack of other subject choices that appeal. Some teachers commented that, in some cases, the fact that the SAS is not an OP subject deters students from choosing it. Others do not select the SAS because of the perception that it is sport-oriented and that they are not good enough at sport to succeed. For girls, this impression is compounded by the perception that classes are male-dominated.</p> <p>The quantitative data for phase 2 suggest that some teachers believe that there are students in their school who should be participating in the SAS but are not. These data also suggest that more than half of the responding teachers disagreed that subject selection processes encourage OP-eligible students to take the SAS if it would benefit them.</p>

### **The effectiveness of SASs for the Queensland community**

<i>Reducing the number of Board-registered subjects</i>	
<p>What are the key issues in the reduction of the number of old-style Board-registered subjects?</p>	<p>Board data (documented in this report) suggest that there has been an increase in the number of students taking old-style Board-registered subjects in some areas where SASs do not exist. The demand is strong for subjects, including Physical Recreation, that suit local needs.</p>

<i>Better coordination/implementation of Board-registered subjects</i>	
<p>Does the new system provide better coordination of the development and implementation of Board-registered subjects?</p>	<p>It appears that the Physical Recreation SAS and other SASs have brought greater coordination to the development of Board-registered subjects through offering greater rigour, development of "subject communities" of teachers, and for most of the SASs, greater use of nationally endorsed industry competency standards and registration of schools to deliver VET. The Board has also taken an increased role in coordinating the development of these subjects through its curriculum development, registration, accreditation and other functions. Our review of relevant papers describing the situation under the old-style Board-registered subjects suggests that these developed largely <i>ad hoc</i>.</p> <p>Speaking generally about our data for all evaluations, including this one, special education teachers have indicated that, before SASs were available, their students did not always have the opportunity to acquire nationally endorsed competencies and have these achievements reported on a Senior Certificate. It would appear that this SAS at least has a role in developing special education practices.</p>

<i>Cost-effectiveness</i>	
<p>Has rationalising Board-registered subjects effectively reduced costs (i.e. the costs of developing and accrediting work programs for each subject versus the costs of developing and implementing SASs)?</p>	<p>For schools, the costs of developing SASs may not be so high. However, the cost of human and physical resources required by many of the SASs, including Physical Recreation, may well be higher than for the old-style Board-registered subjects not including VET content. For the Board, the costs of SASs are higher in terms of curriculum development and support for implementation.</p>

<i>Improved value or currency of results</i>	
<p>Does the new system of Board-registered subjects mean improved value or currency of results (i.e. with some reference to the “old” system of Board-registered subjects)?</p> <p>Do SASs offer substantial improvement of the standardisation of results in Board-registered subjects?</p>	<p>The standardisation of curriculum documents and the reporting of the detail of VET in Senior Certificates should translate into better recognition by employers and the community of results in these subjects. However, evidence from employer meetings in evaluations of earlier SASs does not support the view that all employers understand or place great weight on VET results.</p> <p>Speaking generally about our data from all SAS evaluations, teachers of Physical Recreation, like teachers of other SASs, are concerned about the extent to which interpretations of competencies are “standardised” across the State. This appears as one of a range of concerns in our data on assessment issues, but we have no evidence that standardisation is occurring.</p>

<i>A better balance between theory and practice and the convergence of “vocational” and “general” education</i>	
<p>Do SASs provide students with an appropriate balance between flexibility to suit local needs and standardisation of quality of subjects?</p> <p>Have the SASs achieved the aim of convergence of “vocational “ and “general” education?</p>	<p>The data from Physical Recreation showed that teachers were generally positive about the flexibility of the SAS. However, teachers are having difficulty integrating criteria-based and competency-based assessment and, in terms of the broad aims of the SAS, they do not seem convinced that the SAS develops the “big picture” social awareness sometimes associated with “general” education.</p> <p>While teachers were positive about the balance of practical and theoretical content in this SAS, they indicated that they have some difficulty integrating the two and preparing students for employment and further study.</p> <p>Our data indicated the importance of using Board workshops to tell teachers about the full extent of flexibility available to them.</p>

<i>Improved outcomes for students</i>	
<p>Do the new SASs provide students with subjects offering more meaningful knowledge and skills leading to better results (whether employment, further education and/or personal development)?</p>	<p>The overall answer for this SAS is that it appears to be making a contribution to the task of giving students, including students with special needs, more meaningful knowledge and skills leading to better results. There is no evidence, however, that these outcomes lie in the area of employment.</p> <p>A survey of a sample group of employers indicated that Physical Recreation is helpful in developing basic industry knowledge and skills. Employers emphasised the need for students to have good levels of communication and interpersonal skills to be effective in the workplace. It appears that, as a rule, they are more likely to employ people with higher industry qualifications than they are to employ people on the strength of having the Certificate I in Recreation.</p>

## ***PARTICIPATION AND OUTCOMES IN BOARD-REGISTERED SUBJECTS — OLD AND NEW***

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In our previous SAS evaluation reports, analyses of participation and outcomes data have been very helpful in answering questions like “What are some of the characteristics of the group of students taking this SAS (e.g. gender, curriculum choices)? Are these characteristics different from the characteristics of students taking other SASs? And what is the distribution of levels of achievement received by students completing this SAS?” The analyses that can be produced using Board data on participation and outcomes can be considered part of the findings, and so are given in this section.

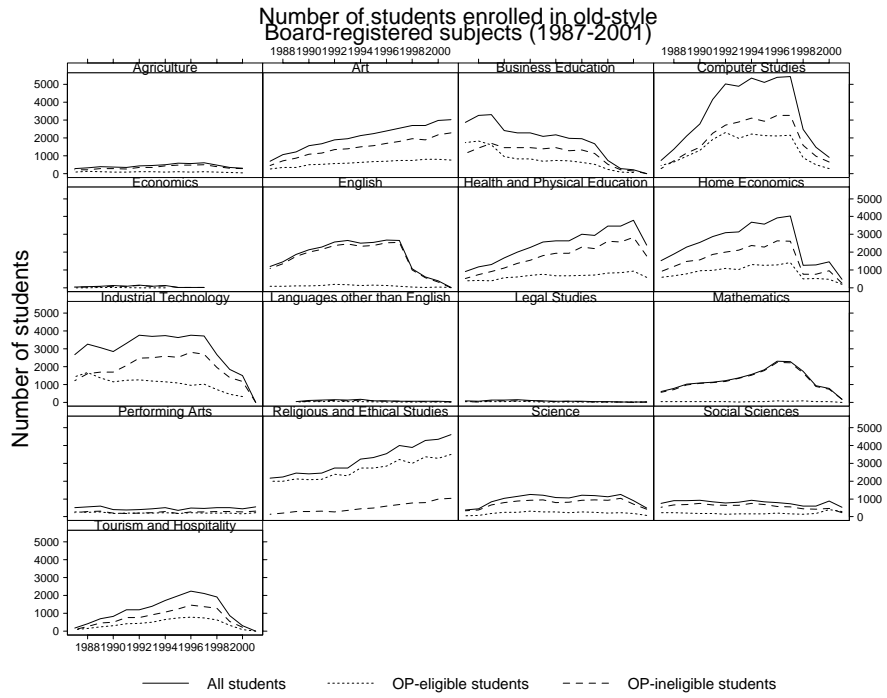
The discussion that follows is based on data gathered up to the end of 2001. These analyses allow us to understand the patterns of participation in old-style and SAS Board-registered subjects up to the end of 2001, and that is important to understanding the big picture for Physical Recreation.

### **Participation in Board-registered subjects — old and new**

In 1994, before proposals for the rationalisation of old-style Board-registered subjects were developed, over half of senior students took at least one Board-registered subject. Predictably, students who were OP-ineligible were more likely to take more Board-registered subjects; students who did not complete Senior were much more likely to take more Board-registered subjects.

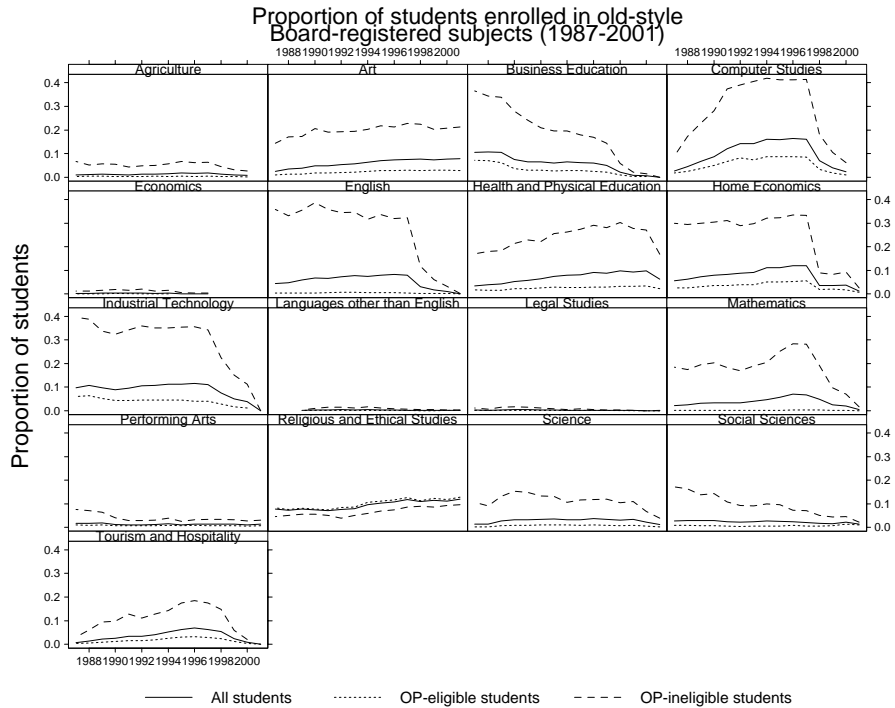
Figures 2 and 3 provide detailed information about enrolment trends in old-style Board-registered subjects from 1987 to 2001 (showing the data in terms of absolute numbers and proportions). Figure 2 shows the number of students enrolled in the various categories of old-style Board-registered subjects. Figure 3 shows these enrolments as proportions of the numbers of students enrolled in old-style Board-registered subjects (for OP-eligible, OP-ineligible and all students). It can be seen, not surprisingly, that the big declines have been in the areas where SASs have been developed. We can see that over the last ten years participation in old-style Board-registered subjects that could be described as health and physical recreation subjects has been increasing sharply. This suggests that there is a real demand for this kind of subject, particularly among OP-ineligible students.

**Figure 2: Number of students enrolled in old-style Board-registered subjects (1987–2001)**



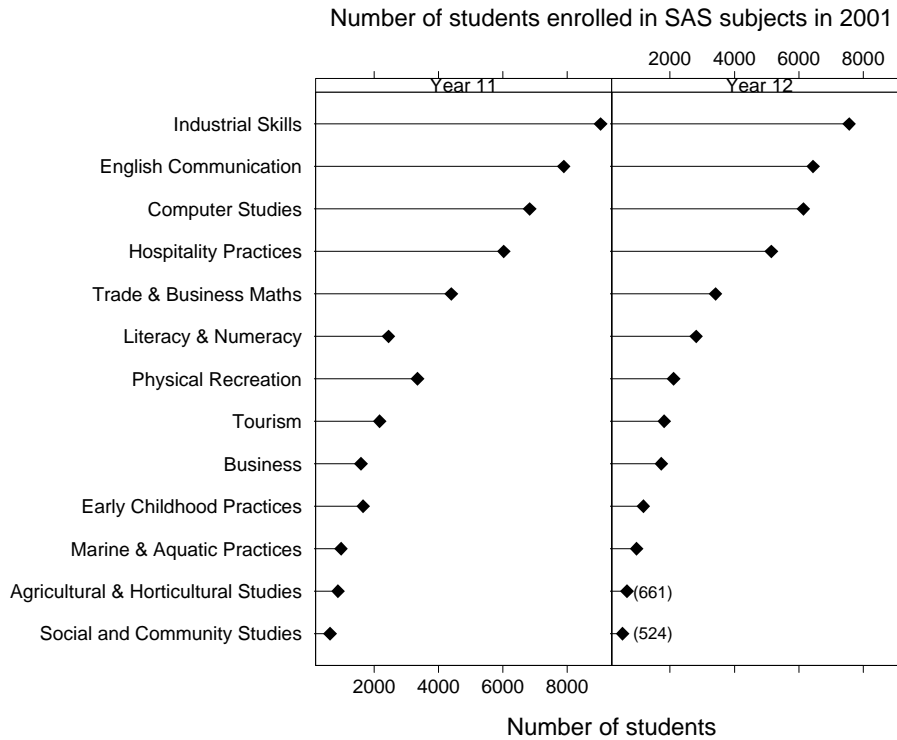


**Figure 3: Proportion of all students who take old-style Board-registered subjects (1987–2001)**

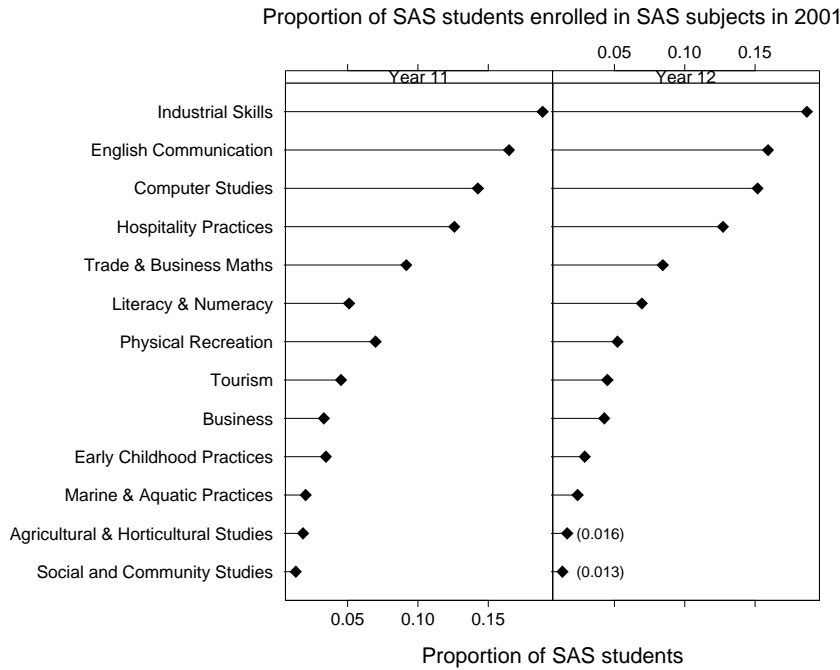


Figures 4 and 5 provide detailed information about enrolments and participation in SASs in 2001.

**Figure 4: Number of Year 11 and Year 12 students enrolled in SAS subjects in 2001**



**Figure 5: Proportion of SAS students enrolled in particular SAS subjects in 2001**



**Table 9: Count of female and male students in Year 11 and Year 12 enrolled in SAS subjects in 2001**

SAS	Year 11			Year 12		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Hospitality Practices	4035	1991	6026	3604	1540	5144
Business	1100	492	1592	1135	595	1730
Agricultural & Horticultural Studies	180	700	880	168	493	661
Industrial Skills	315	8717	9032	261	7301	7562
Tourism	1503	668	2171	1249	568	1817
Computer Studies	2856	3971	6827	2751	3389	6140
English Communication	2696	5191	7887	2259	4181	6440
Trade & Business Mathematics	1600	2794	4394	1360	2052	3412
Literacy & Numeracy	1118	1328	2446	1190	1618	2808
Marine & Aquatic Practices	241	729	970	240	720	960
Physical Recreation	883	2463	3346	516	1592	2108
Early Childhood Practices	1604	53	1657	1144	25	1169
Social & Community Studies	319	313	632	294	230	524

Figures 6 and 7 explore some issues about the characteristics, in terms of curriculum choices, of the group of students taking SASs compared with those not taking SASs, as well as differences between those taking the different SASs.

Figure 6 shows that the population of students taking some SASs (Literacy & Numeracy, Trade & Business Mathematics, and English Communication) are a little alike. These three groups do appear different from some other groups of

students taking SASs in terms of their curriculum choices; that is, they tend not to enrol in at least one Board subject to a greater extent, and they tend to enrol in the old-style Board-registered subjects to a relatively greater extent than students taking some other SASs. Students in Physical Recreation tend to take Board subjects and old-style Board-registered subjects to about the same extent as the whole group of students who take any SAS.

**Figure 6: Proportion of Year 12 students in SASs taking Board/old-style Board-registered subjects in 2001**

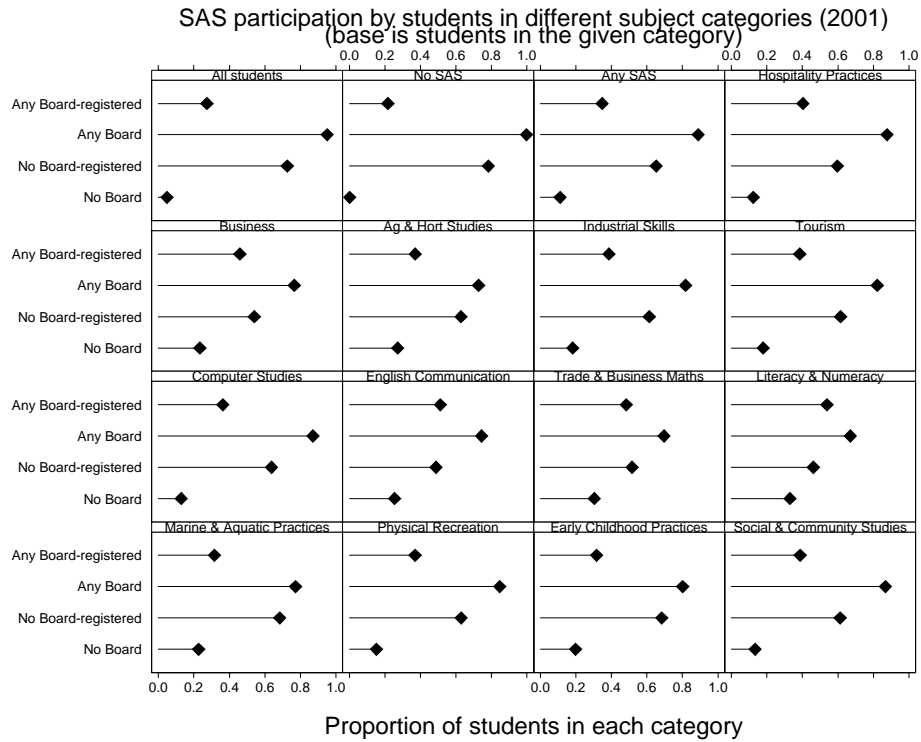
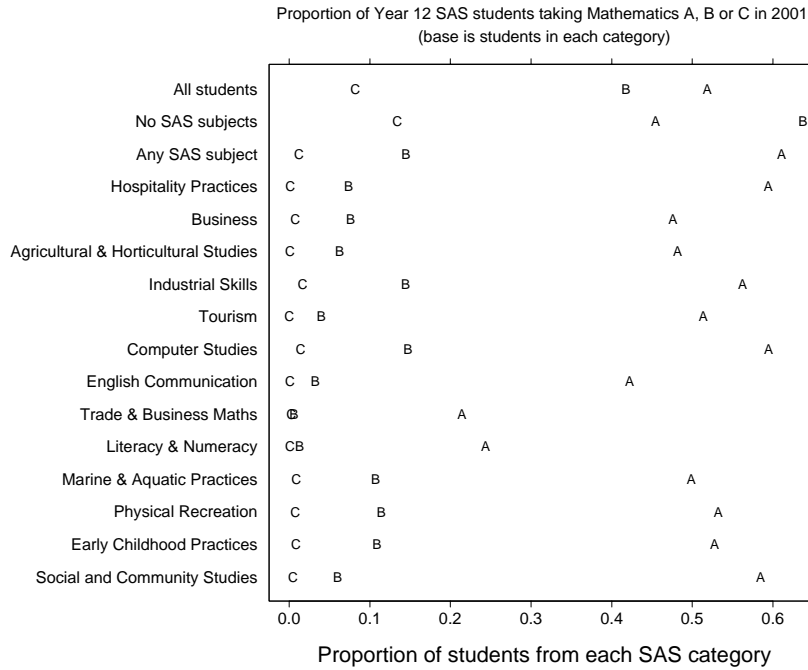


Figure 7 shows the proportion of students in each SAS category who are taking Board mathematics subjects. We can see again that some SASs really do seem to have different groups of students, in terms of their curriculum choices. For example, in some SASs, higher proportions of students take Mathematics A. However, students taking SASs tend not to take Mathematics C. Students taking Physical Recreation tend to take Mathematics A to about the same extent as the whole population of students.

**Figure 7: Proportion of Year 12 students in various SASs taking Mathematics A, B, C in 2001**



**Student outcomes**

Figures 8, 9 and 10 show some aspects of data for outcomes in Physical Recreation, together with data for other SASs.

Figure 8 shows the distribution of average levels of achievement in Board subjects for students who are also taking SASs and receiving a level of achievement in these; the figure also summarises the data for this for the old-style Board-registered subjects. The black diamond shows the median point, and the black line shows where most of the data points are. It can be seen, for example, that the group of students receiving a Very High Achievement in Physical Recreation tend to receive, on average, a Sound Achievement in their Board subjects. Generally speaking, when we look across the SASs, it appears that students who take Board subjects tend not to do as well in their Board subjects as they do in their SAS subjects.

**Figure 8: Achievement in SAS/Board-registered subjects and in Board subjects**

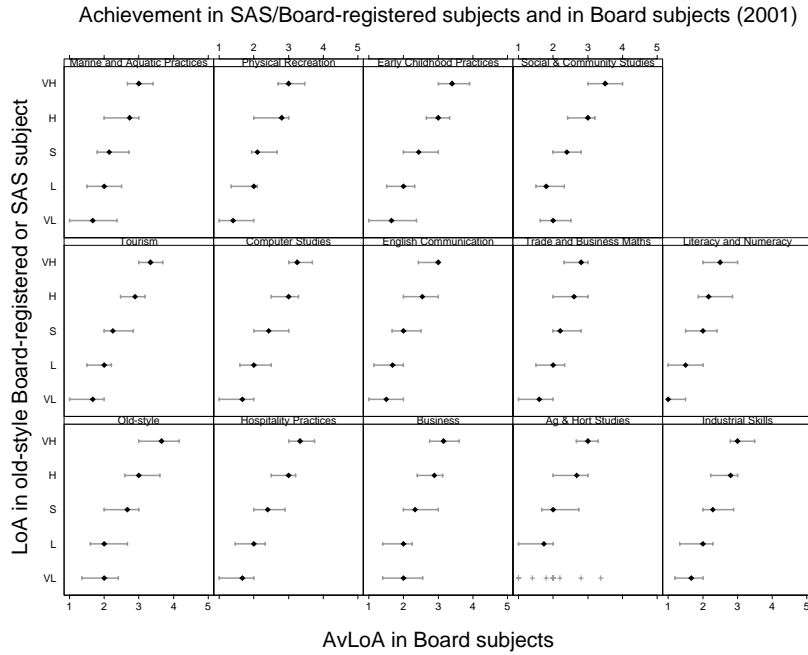


Figure 9 shows the extent to which the award of levels of achievement in each SAS was different from the overall distribution of levels of achievement for SAS and non-SAS Board-registered subjects. For example, we can see that, compared with the overall distribution of levels of achievement in all SAS and non-SAS subjects, the group of students taking Physical Recreation received more Very High Achievements and High Achievements, about the same number of Sound Achievements, and fewer Limited Achievements. This seems to be in keeping with data from teachers of Physical Recreation that this SAS is not too hard or too easy for most of their students.

**Figure 9: Amount that the distribution of levels of achievement within each SAS differs from the overall distribution of levels of achievement in all SAS and non-SAS Board-registered subjects in 2001**

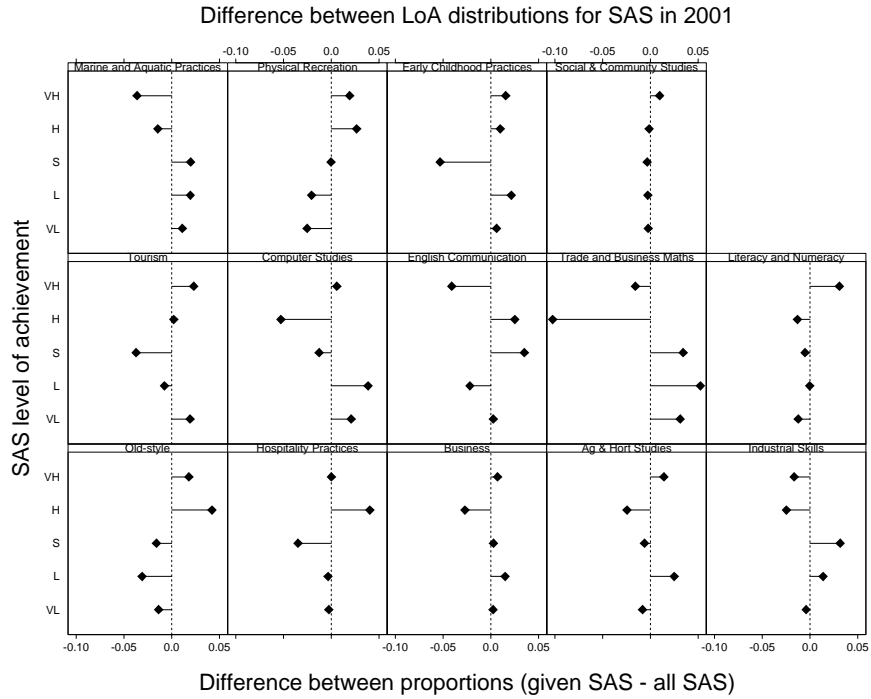
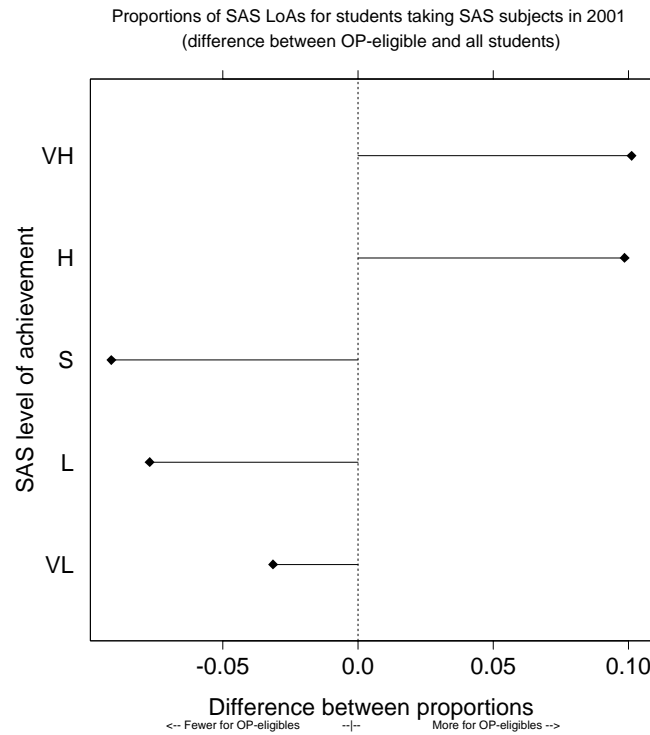


Figure 10 provides information for another kind of question about outcomes: “Are OP-eligible students more successful in SAS subjects than OP-ineligible students?” The answer is quite clearly that OP-eligible students taking SASs do receive more of the higher levels of achievement in the subjects that have a practical orientation.

**Figure 10: Proportions of SAS levels of achievement for students taking SAS subjects in 2001**

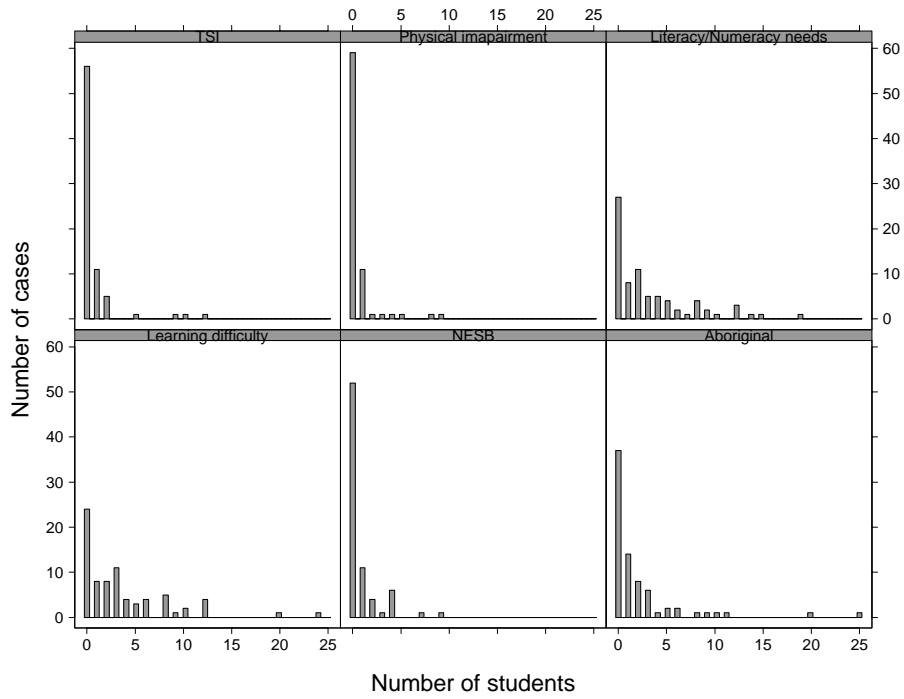


**Participation in Physical Recreation of students with special needs**

Figure 11, obtained from the phase 2 instrument (see appendix B), shows the numbers of students who may have special needs, in the classes of responding teachers in Physical Recreation. It suggests that, for example, there are classes with students who have some form of learning difficulty and classes with students who have special literacy or numeracy learning needs. Some of the students referred to may be in both of these groups.

This information may indicate that employing authorities could be advised that schools should keep classes small enough for teachers to support these students, perhaps with extra support personnel, and that other material resources, such as text materials, need to be suitable for these students. The cultural diversity of the student population is suggested by the presence of students with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds as well as non-English-speaking backgrounds.

**Figure 11: Number of Physical Recreation classes with particular numbers of students with special needs**





## ***CONCLUSIONS***

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The data indicate that teachers believe this SAS appeals to students because of the variety and nature of the physical pursuits that are possible, the practical nature of the SAS, and the opportunity it provides for some to gain some kind of qualification. The perceived flexibility and scope of the SAS allow teachers to develop suitable programs of study and to exercise creativity in designing learning experiences catering specifically for their students. Most find it manageable to develop assessment tasks, criteria sheets and student profiles.

The data also show that a major difficulty that teachers experienced was with the clarity of the document and with the internal consistency of the SAS, indicating it may be overly complex, thus making it difficult for teachers to understand how the parts fit together. Negative comments and data from some teachers in phases 1 and 2 relate to difficulties with the structure of the document, theoretical content, need for examples of learning experiences, repetitiveness of modules and organisation of industry placement, as well as scope for meeting the special needs of some students. It appears that, for a majority of teachers, this SAS provides a sound basis for teaching the subject and for generating a program of study, although some do not find it an easy subject to teach. Some would appreciate more support in the form of in-service training.

In the area of assessment, teachers are also having some difficulty with the integration of criteria-based and competency-based assessment and the management of record keeping.

## ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

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The recommendations that follow are those that our data support. The recommendations are:

**R.1:** That the SAS be revised in ways that simplify its structure and language, and clarify teacher uncertainties identified by this evaluation.

**R.2:** That Board workshops be used to provide teachers with support in the areas of uncertainty about the SAS, designing study plans, and assessment identified by this evaluation.

**R.3.:** That the Office of the Board review the strategies and processes in place for providing teachers with support for the development of study plans.

**R.4.:** That employing authorities be advised of the resource problems teachers in this SAS are experiencing.

### **Clerical and administrative content**

Although our data might support this, a recommendation has not been framed for review or removal of clerical and administrative content as these relate to vocational certificate requirements.

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## ***APPENDIX A: DETAILED REPORT OF FINDINGS***

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### ***DATA ANALYSIS***

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#### **The effectiveness of the SAS for teachers**

##### **The language of the SAS**

*How well does the SAS communicate its intentions to teachers?*

##### **Overall**

Comments indicated that teachers have experienced a level of anxiety and confusion about the requirements of this SAS, which seems to indicate that it is overly complex.

The major areas in which teachers indicated uncertainty are:

- the relationships between the different components of the SAS, such as the study area core, the “main aspects”, the modules and the competencies
- the structure and necessary components of the strands
- the requirements for assessment, especially the application of the exit criteria, and judging and recording the competencies.

It appears that the majority of teachers have found this SAS is one that provides a sound basis for teaching the subject, that adequately defines the kinds of learning experiences that are to be offered to students and that can be used to generate a program of study. However, some teachers do not find this an easy subject to teach.

##### **Phase 1**

The general theme in many of the phase 1 comments is that the SAS is not clear, that the structure and necessary components of each of the strands are difficult to understand, and teachers are having difficulty understanding how one component of the SAS relates to another (for example, the study area core and the competencies). The general sense in these comments is, as one teacher put it, that it is “difficult to work through the document” for reasons to do with its layout, organisation and the clarity of its language. One teacher said that what was needed was “a clearer directory for each strand”; another teacher commented that perhaps “indexing might help”.

Rather than seeing these problems as “teething” ones the evaluators are inclined to suggest that the difficulties are real ones to do with the document itself (teachers indicated that they are experiencing greater levels of confusion in response to this question about this SAS than other teachers have for most of our other evaluations of SASs).

There appears to be considerable confusion (in all the strands) about the nature of the study area core and its relationship to other components of the strands. This formed the largest “subset” of comments within the general body of comments about difficulty in understanding the SAS. Teachers seem unclear about what the core area is, and the role of the “main aspects”. For example, one teacher asked what the study area core “actually entails”; another teacher said “I am still unclear as to the relationship between the study area core and the program”. One teacher of strand C stated that what was confusing was the relationship between the “study

area core and main aspects”. Another teacher of strand C told us that “the relationship between the study area core and the main aspects of the study may stipulate 15 hours of study with no clear guidelines for content. If core is integrated and covered when you include the main aspects of study, why not explicitly state this?”

The difficulties teachers are having about understanding the structure, nature and content of the strands also seem to be making it harder for them to translate the SAS into a viable learning program for their students. One teacher expressed the difficulty in this way: “It is not clear how the modules can be linked to the learning that should be happening in the classroom”.

Some of the many comments about the lack of clarity of the SAS document stated confusions about the requirements of each of the strands (for assessment, for human resources, or simply the content requirements). For example, one teacher said that the SAS was “not prescriptive enough” and that the language in the SAS should be re-examined for its clarity. This comment was echoed by other teachers, one of whom commented: “assessment is too open. It needs to be more prescriptive”. A few teachers commented that they are uncertain about the “level of depth” required for assessment. In relation to content, another teacher of strand B said that there was confusion about the balance of theory and practical work: “a minimum of 50 per cent is timetabled for active participation. Does this mean there is not a minimum/maximum time for theory?” (see p. 27 of the SAS). The flavour of these sorts of comments generally was captured by one teacher who said that what was needed was a “clearer structure for the mandatory requirements for different aspects”.

Part of the difficulty of grasping this SAS document appears to be about locating information. For example, one teacher reported: “Initially I found it time-consuming searching for some areas of information e.g. when filling in the R9”. References to the difficulty of using the SAS document when filling in the Form R9 could also be found in a few other teachers’ comments.

Even those relatively few teachers who said that they were managing the complexities of the SAS document conveyed the sense that understanding it is a substantial endeavour. For example, one such teacher commented that it is “difficult to understand the key ideas. Takes a lot of re-reading to comprehend but after initial period of uncertainty has become a lot clearer and after consultation with others [we realised that] it is quite flexible”.

## **Phase 2**

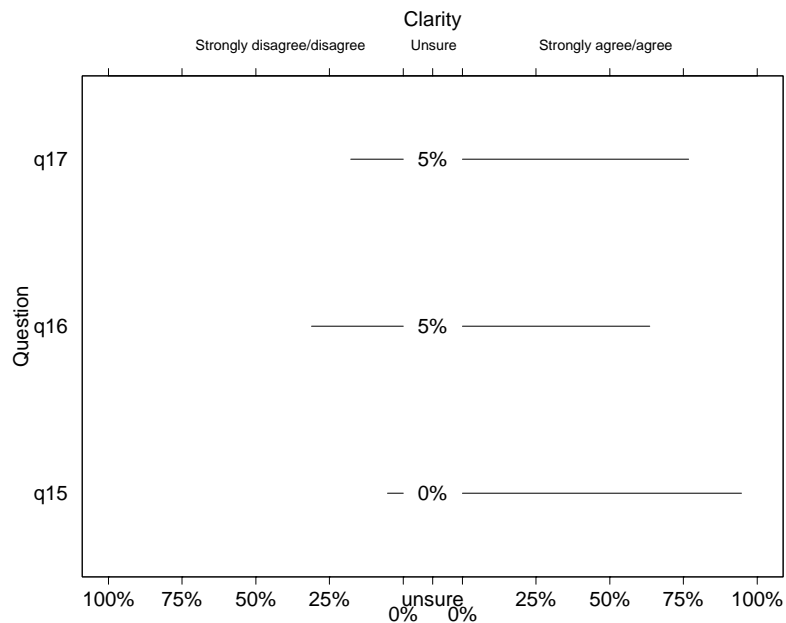
In phase 2 it would seem that teachers had overcome some of their initial problems with the clarity of the SAS. However, most teachers made some comment about difficulties they had faced, although there was little commonality in these. Most problems seemed to arise mainly from aspects of the modules in strands A and B. Teachers’ comments focused on the following issues and, unless otherwise indicated, each comment was made by one teacher only:

- a need for clearer information on how to design a course that includes all of the requirements
- a need for more sample programs of study in the SAS
- a need for clearer information on what is required for the outcomes
- how to offer and assess some of the outcomes in a school setting rather than in an industry setting
- the lack of a sequence for the modules

- the very general nature of some modules and the possibility that these may be covered in other SASs
- the difficulty of mapping a module or competency with the exit criteria and monitoring a diverse range of outcomes
- the complexity of accommodating modules, the criteria and the four main aspects
- a need for textbook-type resources that relate specifically to the four main aspects
- how to record assessment
- the difficulty of applying the criteria
- a need for clearer definitions of competence (a few teachers)
- a need for more assistance with the variety of suitable assessment tasks in the form of examples
- a need for more assistance in how to integrate the two kinds of assessment (a few teachers)
- the burden of paperwork
- the SAS being too much like Physical Education (a few teachers).

Our quantitative data from phase 2 (see appendix B for the research instrument) provide some confirmation of these views. Figure 12 suggests that learning outcomes are clearly stated in the SAS (Q15) but that teachers, while still generally agreeing that the document clearly and concisely explains assessment matters (Q16) and the human and physical resources for this SAS (Q17), do not do so to the same extent.

**Figure 12: Degree of clarity of the SAS document**



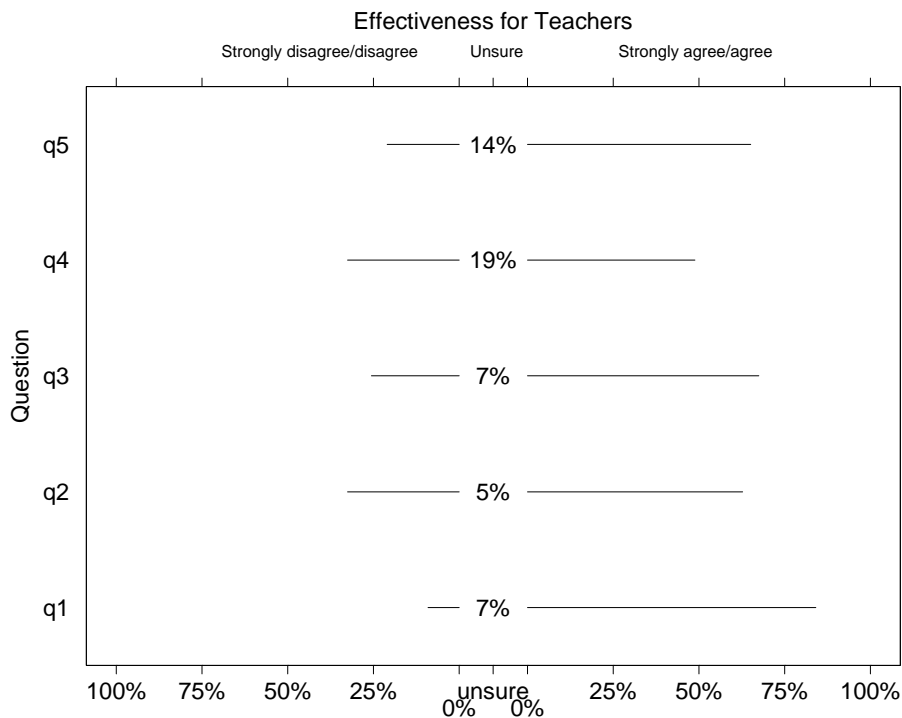
### Phase 3

Teachers of Physical Recreation were mostly positive in their views about the effectiveness of this SAS. Figure 13 from our phase 3 quantitative data (see appendix B for the research instrument) shows that more than three-quarters of the

responding teachers thought the document provides a sound basis for teaching the subject (Q1). Almost two-thirds of these teachers agreed that the document is easy to use (Q2) and more than two-thirds of them agreed that it adequately defines for them the kinds of learning experiences that should be included in a program of study (Q3). They were less positive about the suggestion that the SAS is easy to teach (Q4) with as many teachers disagreeing or being unsure that the SAS is easy to teach as there were teachers who agreed with the statement. More than half agreed that the human resource requirements for this SAS are appropriate (Q5).

It appears that the majority of teachers have found this SAS to be one that provides a sound basis for teaching the subject, that adequately defines the kinds of learning experiences that should be offered to students and that can be used to generate a program of study. However, some teachers do not find this an easy subject to teach.

**Figure 13: Effectiveness of the SAS for teachers**



**The internal integrity of the SAS**

*How good is the internal consistency of components of each of the strands?*

**Overall**

Comments from teachers were mixed. They indicated some uncertainties or difficulties in this area, but this may have been related to their concerns about the clarity of the SAS: teachers may have expressed uncertainties about the internal consistency of the document because they were not confident about their understanding of the document as a whole, or the relationships of its components.

It seems that there have been difficulties in identifying the following:

- the relationship between the study area core and the four main aspects of the study area

- how the study area core and the four main aspects are to be integrated throughout the modules and other elements of the program of study
- a logical sequence in the modules, some of which are overlapping or repetitive.

### **Phase 1**

Teachers were more positive about the internal consistency of the SAS document than they were about the clarity of the SAS document overall. About half the responding teachers indicated uncertainties or difficulties in response to this question, but these comments sometimes seemed to be about actually understanding the document and how the parts fit together (as described under the previous research question), rather than concerns that a particular strand did not mesh (although such comments could also be found).

For example, and in line with our previous observations, one teacher of strand A observed: “There seems to be some confusion in how the core area of study applies to the modules”. Another teacher said “there is confusion regarding the extent to which theoretical components are incorporated”. Another teacher of strand C expressed uncertainty about the relationship between the core and other components of the SAS. When discussing this some teachers also repeated difficulties they had indicated about using the SAS document to design the study plan. For example, one teacher of strand C told us that there is “no clearly stated relationship between the aspects of the study area and the mandated 15 hours of study area core. If 15 hours is required, why is it not demanded as evidence in the R9 study plan?”

The sense in some of the more negative comments is that the structure of the strands is unnecessarily complex. For example, one teacher said this:

I fail to see the relevance of dealing with the main aspects. Modules and school-based assessment form the basis of the subject. Since these are interlocking [mixed together], insisting that the main aspects also be used to plan units/course is a joke [extra justification that appears unnecessary].

About half the comments collected were positive. For example, a teacher of strand A commented that:

We have chosen the Coaching and Instruction functional area to accompany the core. We like the flexibility of adding extra modules, to increase the depth of content. We find that the course is integrating very nicely, and that by pursuing our physical activity we can create learning experiences that satisfy the core outcomes quite easily.

Yet often the positive comments suggest that teachers have struggled to see how the parts of the strand fit together. For example, one teacher noted that “the integrated study area core fits in well with physical recreation. However, I struggled with the idea that the core was not addressed separately but rather within the subject. I guess it is within the planning”. The sense in these positive comments is that teachers are experiencing a sharp learning curve in this SAS. One teacher reported:

I feel as though I am always searching for things that relate to the physical pursuit. Some performance outcomes are hard to relate to the physical activity. A positive element is that it has given me the opportunity to teach in this new way i.e. learning to incorporate meaning of an issue through physical activity. Ultimately I believe it is certainly more meaningful.

It may be too early to say how well teachers feel the components of the SAS fit together, because teachers seem to be struggling to understand the structure in the first place. One teacher said that “the modules of the certificate seem to be fitting in



quite well with the core study units, however, as this subject is only new and only one term has been completed, it is still difficult to comment on the fit”.

## **Phase 2**

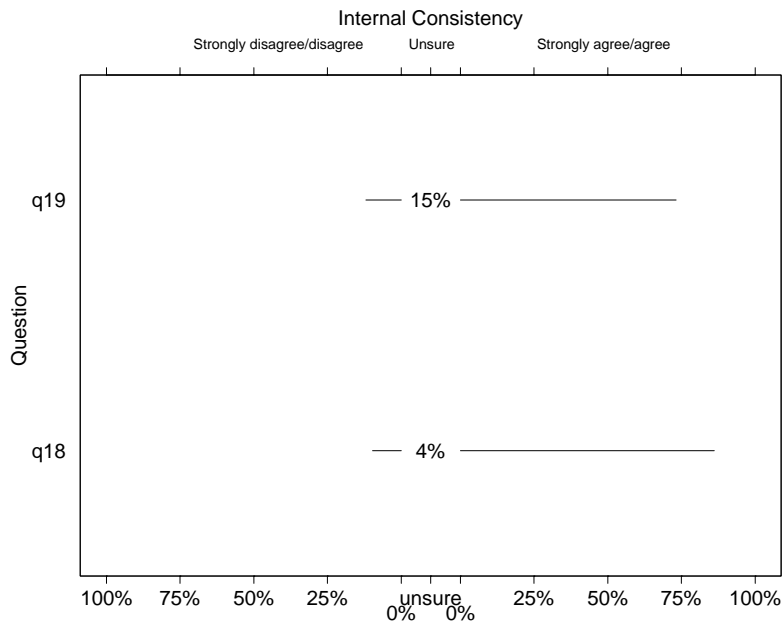
In phase 2, criticisms about the fit of the components of the SAS were not widespread, indicating perhaps that the earlier difficulties encountered with the structures of the strands had been overcome. One teacher, however, made the comment: “I believe it would be difficult for teachers new to the SAS to arrange all work around the four main aspects, which were chosen to encourage integrity of the SAS, i.e. so it wouldn’t become a run, jump and play subject”.

Difficulties are greatest in strands A and B. Programs of study for these strands involve planning a program of study to accommodate the four main aspects of the SAS, the physical pursuits and modules which lack a sequence and some of which are repetitive or overlapping. Some teachers are finding this a complex task. A few teachers indicated that the advice given by the modules needed to be clearer and that details in the SAS of how to implement assessment would have been helpful.

Most teachers were happy with the modules as a basis for developing a logical sequence of learning outcomes although a few reported that this needs a creative approach. Some teachers criticised the repetition and overlap among the modules and reported that some of these had been difficult to combine. Some teachers also pointed out that some learning outcomes (unspecified) were difficult to achieve or assess in a school setting.

Quantitative data from phase 2 seem to confirm these comments in part. Figure 14 shows that most teachers have found that the core provides a useful basis for the sequence of work (Q18). A significant number are unsure about or disagree with the suggestion that the learning outcomes of the vocational modules fit well with the more general learning outcomes (Q19).

**Figure 14: Degree of internal consistency of the components of the SAS**



### The content of the SAS

*How suitable is the breadth and depth of each of the strands? What is the nature and appropriateness of general and embedded vocational education components?*

#### Overall

Comments about content were mixed. Positive comments related to the flexibility and range of the content which teachers appreciate, particularly in strand C. They report that they can tailor a program of study that meets the specific needs of their students, allowing students to experience a range of exciting and challenging activities while gaining worthwhile knowledge and skills.

Negative comments related mostly to the SAS content (particularly strands A and B) being too “theoretical”. However, some teachers seem to feel that there is value in a physical recreation subject that places demands on students to “theorise”. The content that causes most concern is contained in the core modules of the certificate that deal with clerical and administrative activities. Teachers feel that this is not suitable for the students most likely to select this SAS.

A few teachers also find the number of physical pursuits stipulated for each of the strands too restricting. They reported that many of the students are average in ability and that some have poor literacy or lack motivation in the more theoretical areas of the curriculum and therefore learn best through practical activities and physical pursuits that they enjoy.

#### Phase 1

The comments about content were mixed, with about half positive, and about half negative. The negative comments related largely to the suggestion that the SAS content is too theoretical for students.

Positive comments related to the flexibility and range of the SAS. For example,

one teacher of strand A noted that the “content presented is excellent. There is a vast range of modules, and we are allowed to choose strands and paths to a wide range of interest and abilities”. Another teacher of strand A told us that “the lists of recreation pursuits are exhaustive, i.e. can choose activities based on teacher strengths, facilities etc. [and] suited to students’ needs”. Another teacher reported that “strand C meets our needs because we open their eyes to opportunities in sport and recreation and the confidence to possibly go out and participate in them as a participant, coach or referee”.

It appears that there are teachers who have chosen strand C because of a perception that there is too much “theory” in the other strands. One teacher said: “We as a school have only looked at the content in strand C. The structure allows us to foresee the programs of excellence in soccer and rugby league without the need to have theory overload”.

In the body of negative comments, strands A and B attracted more negative comments about their “theoretical” content than did strand C. For example, one teacher said that “strand A is too difficult, too dry, and not practical enough for the students that pick the course”. Another teacher reported that “strand A is not for the type of students who are selecting recreation [too much theory]”.

The comments from some teachers about strands A and B being too theoretical need to be interpreted carefully, not least because in our data for phase 1 they are balanced by a few comments from other teachers that only “some” students find the content “a bit too academic” or that there might be some value in having theory in a physical recreation subject. The sense in these balancing comments is that teachers feel the idea of a physical recreation subject that places demands on students to “theorise” is worth supporting, and may succeed over time, even if at this stage some or many students do not respond well to a subject that does not allow them to play sports all the time. For example, one teacher of strand A said that “Due to the clients we have at this school, the SAS is not meeting their needs. However, with a different group of students the content may meet their needs. This is a class/student problem not a SAS problem”. Another teacher’s comments about strand B seem to explain this reluctance to “blame” the SAS in a few comments:

For many of our students I believe the requirements are a little too academic.

However, I believe this is more a problem with the school — the way in which it has been presented to students thinking of taking the subject as if it was a previous “school” recreation subject. I believe that, given time, it will become more valued to the students as an academic subject and will better suit their needs.

Yet there were also a few negative comments about strand C. For example, one teacher told us that in this strand there are “not enough pursuits for the group of students participating. These students want to be involved in as many recreational pursuits as possible. They tend to get ‘bored’ doing one activity for an extended period of time”.

We emphasise, however, that positive comments about content in phase 1 included positive comments about all the strands, not just strand C.

## **Phase 2**

In phase 2 almost all responses indicated that teachers and students were happy with the level of flexibility possible in this SAS, some commenting that this was limited only by the skills of the teacher and the ability of students to adapt to student-directed learning. However, a few teachers felt that strand A did not allow the flexibility they wanted.

The data from teachers indicated that the range of physical activities available in the SAS allowed for students' interests to be accommodated. The practical nature of the study area and the perception that it was less academic and less theoretical than Board subjects made it an attractive option for many students. A few teachers cited as a reason for students to select the study area the possibility of gaining a coaching qualification or certificate, e.g. Bronze Medallion or Certificate 1 in Recreation Practices.

When asked whether the content of this SAS is more relevant or less relevant than the subject it replaces, most of the teachers who responded and who knew of a previous subject indicated that the SAS was more relevant than the subject it replaced, referring to its greater flexibility, variety and the possibility of a greater depth of coverage of content as well as the requirements of organisation and interpersonal interaction. However, some indicated that the number of physical pursuits permitted was too limited in comparison with the previous subject.

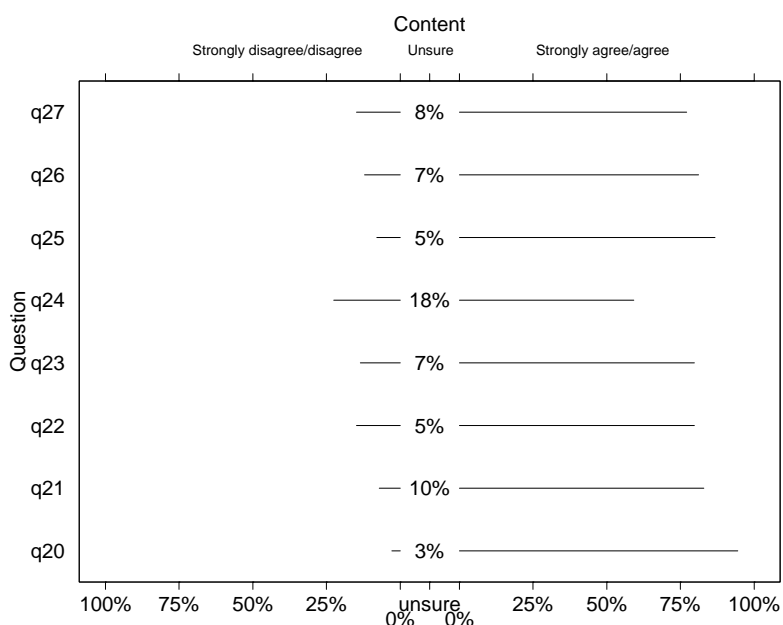
While some teachers were satisfied with the content of the SAS there were some quite specific suggestions for content that might be included. They included the addition of other certificates and qualifications (such as Royal Lifesaving), coaching and practical skills (such as risk assessment and use of the media), the addition of more theoretical content (such as sports administration, a critique of the sociology of leisure and the recreation industry), and information on lifelong recreational activities (including club structures and voluntary organisations).

A few teachers felt that the range of physical activities possible in the SAS was too limited, especially in strand A which permits only four physical pursuits, and they suggested relaxing the constraints of category and number of physical pursuits in order to provide students with more variety.

Most responses indicated that teachers and students were happy with the balance of practical work and theory in the SAS, saying in some cases that the balance is not dependent on the SAS document but on how the subject is structured in the school. Only one felt that the balance should change, to 70 per cent practical and 30 per cent theory. However, some teachers, including some who found the balance to be satisfactory, suggested that the clerical and administration material should be removed or reduced in the vocational component of the SAS because these modules were not active enough. These modules were seen as being inappropriate for the students who would select the SAS. One teacher commented that this is a physical subject and that it is "too easy for a teacher to make it very theoretically based if this area is included in the certificate strand". One teacher commented that many students with special needs take the subject for personal development rather than as a career pathway.

Figure 15 from our phase 2 quantitative data indicates that teachers generally perceive the content of the SAS to be suitable for their students in most aspects. An exception to this seems to be their view of the SAS having the "right amount of theory" which about a quarter of these responding teachers either disagreed with or were unsure about (Q22), perhaps having in mind the clerical and administrative material of the vocational modules. The quantitative data also indicated that well over a third of the responding teachers were unsure or disagreed that the SAS was more relevant to their students than the subject it replaced (Q24) although this was balanced against the fact that more than half felt that it was more relevant.

**Figure 15: Teacher perceptions about the content of the SAS in phase 2**



### Phase 3

In phase 3, teachers were asked what had worked well and not so well for their students. They reported overwhelmingly that the popularity and success of this SAS were due to the practical nature of the subject and, in particular, the physical activities that are required. Some commented favourably on the integration of the practical and the theoretical in the SAS, saying for instance, that the “highly practical course allowed students to conceptualise theory components and made for a better understanding”. Those who had chosen the Functional Area of Coaching and Instruction to complete the requirements of Certificate I in Recreation Practices reported that students appreciated the opportunity to develop skills in coaching. Some commented on their success in incorporating other qualifications into the program of study such as those in coaching, Senior First Aid and the Bronze Medallion.

Some teachers were pleased with the student involvement in group projects such as the organisation of competitions. For a few schools, community participation and the development of links between the school and the community had contributed to the overall success of the subject. A few remarked on the development of student participation, student leadership and communication. One commented: “the class has developed into an effective group through cooperation and responsibility in organising camps, sporting activities, achieving well in module [VET] theory”.

When teachers were asked what had not gone so well in the program of study this year, some said they had found it difficult to integrate the theory component of the SAS with the practical, or that there was too much theory. This was linked with their concerns about the abilities and attitudes of the students. Some pointed out that most of the students who chose this subject were average in ability and some have poor literacy. This, combined with a lack of motivation amongst some students, made it difficult for teachers to maintain student interest in theoretical aspects of the subject. Some of the difficulties experienced with assessment also

resulted from student abilities and attitudes, as many students were unable or unwilling to undertake written assessment tasks.

For some teachers, school timetabling, class size and clashes with other vocational subject activities had caused difficulties, especially in dealing with the practical elements of the subject. They said that timetabling needed to be flexible for successful management of the necessary range of physical pursuits and other practical activities. Two commented that their camp program had been unsuccessful due mainly to its cost for students. Use of community resources and facilities had not been entirely successful for a few teachers when instructors or speakers had not turned up or facilities had been overbooked, causing some disruption to the program.

A few respondents reported problems with administrative aspects of the SAS such as the transition from the previous Board-registered program to the SAS, composite classes, changes in the program made necessary by staff changes or community facilities being unavailable, and the burden of paperwork caused by the need to record student outcomes in the student record books and track the modules.

In response to a question about sections of the SAS that do not effectively do what they were designed to do, a few teachers focused on the nature of the strands, one saying that strands A and B impose heavy workloads on teachers but do not meet the needs of the majority of students who take the subject. Another suggested that strand B should be removed from the SAS and that strand A should be made more appropriate to a school setting. One teacher said that more guidance is needed on the “formats of work programs”. One teacher also questioned the relevance of Certificate I in Recreation to gaining future employment and said that students do not see the certificate as being of value.

In comments that focused specifically on the content of the SAS, one teacher said there were not enough physical or outdoor modules, and another said that the number of physical pursuits allowed in strand C cannot be organised into a course. One teacher said the SAS document does “not mention the participation of individuals in physical activity as a part of the course”. A few teachers suggested that the four main aspects of the SAS be removed or absorbed into the theoretical elements of the modules and one commented that there is no relationship between the four main aspects and the criteria for the SAS. A few teachers asked for more information about content, resources and assessment, more indicators for assessment, or more guidance on how to apply the criteria with examples of their use.

Almost all teachers who responded said that the aims and objectives were reflected in the content of the SAS, although one said that many of them are “extremely superficial given the expected duration of courses”. Two commented that the objective of “Evaluating” is difficult to deal with.

When asked whether the VET components of the SAS provide students with the outcomes they need, two-thirds of the responding teachers agreed that they were suitable for their students. A few referred to the success of the modules that were “hands on” such as CAI009 Organise and Conduct Activities, and COP002 Optimise Physical Capabilities, because students could see how they would use them on the job, and the coaching modules which “help the students to develop organization, problem-solving, coaching and communication skills”. However, other teachers said that students had not been interested in using the VET components for recognition or that, because there was little flexibility in interpreting the content of the learning outcomes, they did not suit their students.

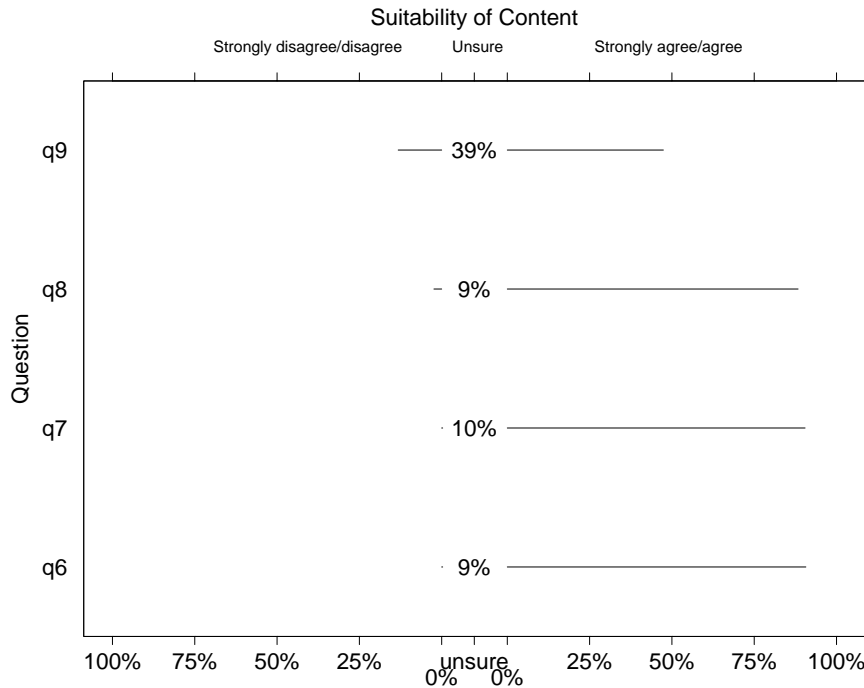
When asked to identify additional areas of content that should be included in the SAS, most teachers either did not respond or said that the SAS was flexible enough to cater for most programs. There were a few suggestions for the SAS to provide opportunity to achieve certificates in Senior First Aid, and Royal and Surf Lifesaving. A few teachers asked for greater opportunity to do more coaching and more outdoor activities. There were very few areas suggested for removal from the SAS. However, a few pointed out that “administration modules are difficult to integrate into a school-based program” because time is restricted, or teacher skills in this area are limited or material resources are unavailable. One teacher said that the four main aspects do not relate well to strand A.

When asked what parts of the content interested students most and least, almost all of those who responded said that practical and physical activities were the most popular components of the subject. Outdoor pursuits and coaching activities were also mentioned by a few teachers. A few reported that their students showed most interest in related content such as main aspects 3 and 4, working with and leading groups, or organising events. Two commented that students liked anything that resulted in courses that deliver certificates such as Senior First Aid, Bronze Medallion, Resuscitation, Level II Coaching, and Royal and Surf Lifesaving. Most of the responding teachers reported that students were least interested in theory or work related to administration. A few also listed aspects of safety, risk awareness and health concerns, and content from some of the four main aspects as being unpopular content.

In response to a question about the VET components of the SAS, some teachers said that the components provide students with the outcomes they need. They supported this by saying that some students are able to articulate competencies to further study or traineeships, that many of the outcomes such as the development of teamwork and leadership are relevant to industries other than the recreation industry, and that the coaching modules help students to develop skills in organisation, communication, problem solving, coaching and communication. Some teachers did not agree that the VET components provide students with the outcomes they need. A few said that most of the students have not been interested in using the VET components for recognition. Two said that the outcomes of the SAS should be the development of qualities and skills such as leadership.

The quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for the research instrument) provides further information about the suitability of the content of the SAS. Figure 16 shows that almost all the teachers who responded agreed that the content of the subject meets the stated aims and objectives of the SAS (Q6, Q7). Similarly, more than three-quarters of the teachers agreed that the content of the SAS is equally suited to both male and female students (Q8). However, nearly two-thirds of the teachers disagreed or were unsure that the VET components are a valuable part of the content of the SAS (Q9).

**Figure 16: Teacher perceptions about the content of the SAS in phase 3**



**Development of study plans using the SAS**

*Can teachers translate the strands into effective study plans?*

**Overall**

Comments about the process of developing a study plan were mixed. Negative comments related to difficulties teachers experienced in understanding the SAS document, which appear to have made the design of the study plan more time consuming than it should have been.

Some teachers expressed appreciation for the quality and helpfulness of assistance given by the review officer. However, other comments indicated that teachers require substantial support to write the study plan for this SAS and the quantitative data indicated that some teachers disagreed or were unsure that the Board provided useful feedback and support during the development and approval of their study plan. It was clear that many teachers would appreciate more workshops from the Board, especially in the early stages of the development of a school program of study.

Despite the difficulties cited, it seems that, by phase 2, most teachers felt that the study plan they had produced provided them with an effective basis for their implementation of the SAS.

Phase 3 data confirmed the teachers’ desire for more support in the form of exemplars and in-service training.

**Phase 1**

Almost half the teachers indicated confusion and/or difficulty over the design of the study plan, just over half were positive about this process, and more than a few



teachers wrote approvingly about the quality and helpfulness of assistance given by the review officer (whether in workshops or by telephone).

Negative comments suggested that these teachers feel “all at sea” with the SAS document and that designing the study plan has been a more time-consuming exercise than it should be. For example, one teacher reported that there had been “lots of questions about hours and modules that required extra phone calls and chasing to find answers” (this teacher had not been to a workshop). Another teacher noted that using the SAS to develop the study plan has been “very difficult ... we are unsure of what is required due to the ‘loose’ outlines given for strand B”. Another teacher of strand B said “the curriculum document is confusing and needs some simplifying. I find myself flicking backwards and forwards constantly. I can put together a basic outline but am unsure as to its merits”.

In the body of negative or uncertain comments about the Form R9 process are a few comments about assessment items: integrating the content in relation to the assessment items and the overall planning of assessment items.

Positive comments suggest that just over half these teachers have experienced very little difficulty designing the study plan (perhaps more of these teachers attended the workshop). What some teachers perceived as a weakness (lack of detail about what to do), other teachers saw as a strength. For example, one teacher told us that the Form R9 has a “very good format as it is easy to fill out (not too much detail required). Using the curriculum document wasn’t difficult as learning outcomes are well explained”.

However, the positive comments themselves provide support for the view that writing the study plan in this SAS at least requires quite a few supports (and that is a real resource issue for the Board and schools). For example, one teacher wrote: “I found the SAS in conjunction with seminars and conversations with persons working within Physical Recreation helped me produce a study plan! Already the study plan needs adjustment”. Another teacher noted: “We think that we have been able to do this reasonably well. We have interpreted things broadly, we are prepared to push a few boundaries ...”. Whether the Board has the resources to provide as many teachers who need it with detailed feedback on their Form R9 is one question raised by the indication in our data that meeting these needs is quite resource-intensive.

A few comments from teachers suggest that it is too early to tell; these teachers were perhaps waiting for Board feedback on their Form R9 before they were prepared to say the process had worked well for them. As one teacher wrote, it “depends on how our R9 is received”.

At least one teacher asked for the SAS document to include “a broad description of how to design an R9”.

## **Phase 2**

In phase 2 almost all written responses from teachers who had been involved in the process of development and accreditation of the study plan indicated satisfaction. Support and feedback from Board staff were appreciated. However, one teacher commented that the level of in-service training was insufficient and one had found the “grid matrix” unhelpful. One teacher commented that the syllabus in Physical Education had been more helpful than the SAS document in designing the program of study.

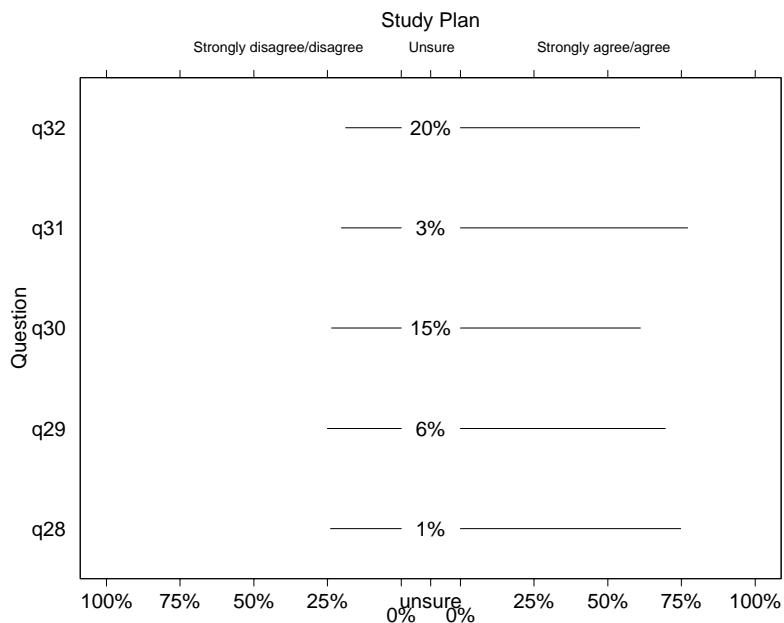
There was some criticism that the time expectations for some of the modules were either too long or too short. One teacher felt there were too many assessment

decisions to be made.

Most teachers indicated that they were well satisfied with the study plan they had developed as a good basis for their teaching although a few commented that this was only a starting point as the study plan was not intended as a teaching document and some adjustment to their original intentions had been necessary.

Figure 17 from the quantitative data of phase 2 indicates that most teachers are satisfied with the study plans and their production. However, more than a third of the responding teachers were unsure, or disagreed that the Board provided useful feedback and support during the process of development and approval of their study plans (Q30). Figure 17 also gives an indication that, for some, the time taken for the teaching of the modules was not consistent with what had been expected (Q32).

**Figure 17: Teacher satisfaction with study plans and their development in phase 2**



### Phase 3

In phase 3, the evaluation team analysed a sample of the study plans developed from the SAS in order to gain some idea of the nature of the programs of study that schools typically develop.

Strand A (Recreation Practices) of the SAS requires students to satisfy the requirements of Certificate I in Recreation Practices by achieving competency in all the learning outcomes of the core modules and of the modules that make up either the Functional Area of Administration or the Functional Area of Coaching and Instruction. None of the accredited school study plans sampled indicated that the Functional Area of Administration had been included as part of the program of study.

Schools may also include optional extension elective modules. Almost all of the sample study plans included some of these modules in the program of study. The optional extension elective modules most commonly included were RAC004

Control Small, Uncomplicated Emergencies; CAI008 Plan and Prepare Activities; CAI009 Organise and Conduct Activities; ORE001 Implement Minimum Environmental Impact Practices; and ORE 019 Respond to an Outdoor Recreation Emergency. The modules chosen least often were COP003 Optimise Mental Capabilities; COP005 Maintain and Improve Financial Viability; and CAN003 Apply Complex Inland Canoeing or Kayaking Skills on Grade 2 Water.

Strand B (Recreation Studies) requires students to achieve competency in all the learning outcomes of the modules selected from Certificate I in Recreation Practices for the program of study. It is not possible to achieve Certificate I in Recreation Practices through strand B.

It was difficult to find a pattern of selection of modules from an examination of the samples of accredited school study plans. However, the study plans showed that the core modules most commonly chosen were ADM006 The Recreation Industry; RAC001 Emergency Situations; and RAC002 Prevent Emergencies. The study plans sampled showed that none of the schools had selected modules from the Functional Area of Administration. Most had selected at least one module from the Functional Area of Coaching. The optional extension elective modules most commonly chosen for this strand were COP002 Optimise Physical Capabilities; COP004 Perform in an Event or Activity; and ORE019 Respond to an Outdoor Recreation Emergency.

Strand C (Recreation Pursuits) offers flexibility to schools to develop units of work based on selected recreation pursuits and the four main aspects integral to the study area. No vocational modules may be offered in this strand. Almost all of the study plans sampled outlined the program of study solely in terms of the recreation pursuits selected, e.g. Racquet sports, Golf, Fitness1 and 2. The exception was the study plan for a sport specialisation program in rugby league which included topics such as Anatomy and physiology of the human body, Sports injuries in contact sports, Sports psychology, and Sports administration.

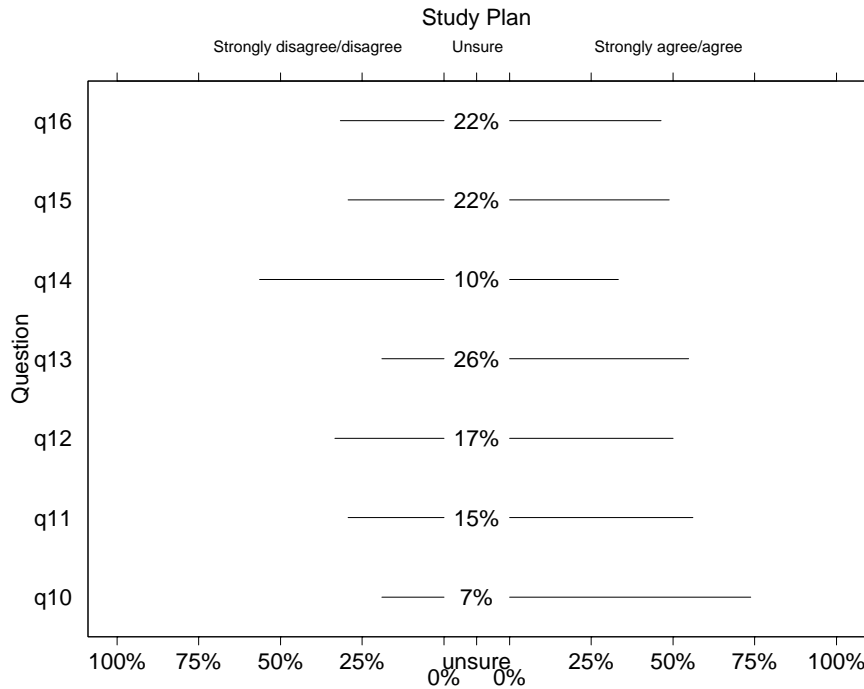
When teachers were asked what further advice should be included in the SAS to give further support in the development and accreditation of the study plan, about half of those who responded said that no extra advice was needed. However, a few teachers in each case suggested that the SAS could include examples of units that deal with the four main aspects, examples of study plans, examples of suitable assessment tasks and advice on how to link and integrate the four main aspects. One asked for advice on how to reduce the paperwork involved in tracking modules, and one suggested removing the four main aspects from the SAS.

When asked what further support from the Board could be provided, some teachers suggested that it would be helpful if the Board provided more sample study plans, units of work, assessment tasks or criteria sheets, and perhaps some examples of the application of standards to assessment tasks. A few asked for more in-service training and one suggested that, in the early stages of the introduction of the SAS in a school, an officer of the Board or an experienced teacher should visit the school.

Figure 18 from the quantitative data of phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) shows that three-quarters of the teachers agreed that the study plan had provided a useful basis for their teaching of the subject (Q10). Half of them agreed that the information in the SAS document about the development and accreditation of a study plan is clear and simple and is adequate (Q11, Q12). However, nearly a third of the remaining teachers disagreed that the SAS provided enough information.

More than half of the teachers agreed that Board workshops dealt adequately with the development of study plans, but more than two-thirds disagreed that they had had enough face-to-face contact with officers from the Board when they were developing the study plan (Q13, Q14). Half of them agreed that they had attended enough workshops in the development of the study plan and that Board support for the process was adequate (Q15, Q16). However, in each of these matters, almost one-third disagreed with the statements, suggesting that teachers would appreciate more contact and support from the Board.

**Figure 18: Teacher satisfaction with study plans and their development in phase 3**



**Development of learning experiences using the SAS**

*How useful is the SAS for teachers providing worthwhile learning experiences for students in the context of the trial schools?*

**Overall**

Comments about learning experiences were more positive than for most other aspects of the SAS. These positive comments relate to the flexibility and scope of the SAS that allow teachers to exercise creativity in designing learning experiences that cater specifically for their students, indicating that the SAS is a useful basis for providing learning experiences.

Negative comments from some teachers in phases 1 and 2 relate to difficulties with the structure of the document, theoretical content, need for examples of learning experiences, repetitiveness of modules and organisation of industry placement, as well as scope for meeting the special needs of some students.

## Phase 1

Around two-thirds of the teachers providing comments were positive about the usefulness of the SAS as a basis for providing learning experiences. However around a third of teachers were more negative or confused about how to develop learning experiences using this SAS, for reasons that seem to echo the problems we have discussed in our other data. Overall, though, the comments suggest a more positive response than we obtained for some other areas of our research enquiry (e.g. the clarity of the SAS).

Positive comments about learning experiences include approving comments about the flexibility of the SAS, and its scope for pursuing excellence in recreational pursuits. For example, one teacher reported that the learning experiences that can be developed from the SAS allow the teacher to cater to different styles of learning. Another teacher commented that “module requirements are able to be met in a wide range of experiences”. One teacher noted that “flexibility in content allows for our programs of excellence in soccer”.

Teachers also commented approvingly about the specific features of the SAS that can be used to develop learning experiences. For example, one teacher said “I have found that listing the specific performance criteria in each learning outcome very helpful in ‘fleshing out’ learning experiences for the students”.

In the body of positive comments there are also observations that seem to qualify the concerns of other teachers about there being “too much theory” in the SAS. For example, one teacher commented that the SAS is “overall a great concept and extremely relevant and well suited for schools. The learning experiences are exhaustive and give the impression that the course, particularly strand A, is too theory-based. However, upon closer scrutiny, the experiences can be easily covered”.

In the positive comments there are also a few indicating uncertainty. For example, one teacher wrote that “the outline seems to be well set out and quite clear, but the only problem is that I am unsure to which depth and how comprehensively the topics need to be covered”. Another teacher noted that the SAS was “excellent” in terms of learning experiences, “however, some of our staff are unsure of the sports pursuits requirements for expected learning experiences ... Does archery get assessed?” One teacher simply wrote that the SAS was “very vague” on learning experiences (a few teachers noted that the success of the SAS depended heavily on the experience of the teacher).

Some teachers made only negative comments about the SAS in response to the question on the research instrument about learning experiences. These seem by and large to be related to concerns about theoretical content, the clarity of the SAS, and the degree of guidance it gives (flexibility may be represented as a strength and as a weakness in our teacher data). For example, one teacher of strand A reported that there is “too much theory” in strand A and “not enough prac.”. Another teacher said: “The SAS provides some *ideas* for worthwhile learning experiences. But no depth”. This uncertainty about depth was echoed by at least one other teacher who wrote that the SAS was “a little vague on the depth of study required”. One teacher wrote: “I think flexibility may, at times, be a downfall in terms of clarity of assessment/evaluation etc.”. Another teacher noted that “examples are needed of how to develop worthwhile learning experiences that achieve unit cohesion. It is very possible that units will lack cohesion as ‘study area core’ and ‘core modules’ need to be woven into units ... Page 19 needs to be redeveloped to show ‘apply,

acquire, evaluate' learning experiences for content topic blocks".<sup>3</sup> One teacher also told us that industry standards may also be uncertain.

Some teachers also asked for more examples of learning experiences, perhaps in the SAS document.

Two teachers indicated that some VET requirements seem trivial. In line with comments about the SAS possibly being too industry-based to meet the needs of some students, one teacher noted that the SAS was "difficult to pitch to a workplace when most students are not interested".

## **Phase 2**

Almost all teachers felt that they could develop effective learning experiences from the modules. Some, however, criticised aspects of the modules, indicating that they had found some modules confusing, vague or repetitive (a few teachers in each case). Most teachers were happy that there were clear links between many of the vocational and general learning outcomes. They seemed to feel that schools could exercise a good deal of creativity in planning their programs of study and that because of the links with school-based activities, repeated delivery of the modules is possible. There were comments, however, that the modules are not in a logical sequence and that some of the modules seem too general and may be dealt with in other SASs (probably referring to the core modules of Administration). Also mentioned as being difficult was mapping a module or competency with the exit criteria and monitoring a diverse range of outcomes. One teacher asked for more examples of learning experiences.

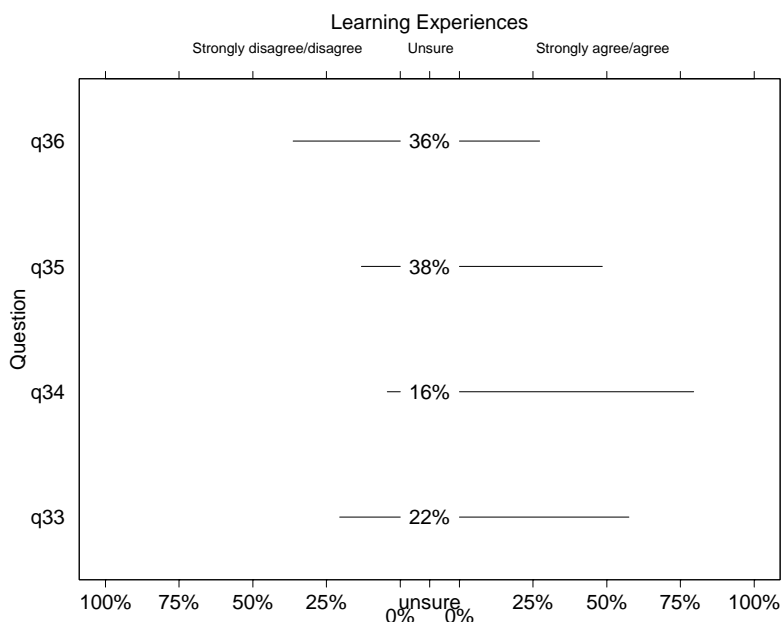
The quantitative data for phase 2 (see appendix B for research instrument) as shown in Figure 19, also suggested that most responding teachers felt that the learning outcomes in the vocational modules provide a good basis for developing worthwhile learning experiences (Q34). Nearly a quarter of them were unsure and nearly a quarter disagreed that this SAS really helps students with special needs acquire meaningful knowledge and skills (Q33).

Figure 19 also suggests that over a half of the responding teachers were unsure or disagreed that industry placements in the local community can easily be organised (Q36), and many were uncertain whether students could gain meaningful learning experiences from industry placement or work experience (Q35). These perceptions may have related to the written comments that suggest that few of these teachers have been involved in the process of placing students and that industry placement in this SAS has been fairly limited so far.

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<sup>3</sup> This teacher also raised another question about p. 19: "Should an enquiry process be used consistently? — currently some content topics are in question form, others not"

**Figure 19: Teachers’ opinions about the development of worthwhile learning experiences**



**Assessment and the SAS**

*How well developed, clarified and appropriate are the criteria and standards of assessment for the strands? How well do schools combine summative information to make decisions about achievement in each criterion in each strand? How useful is this SAS for teachers making valid and reliable assessments of students’ achievements? How easily are teachers implementing competency-based assessment? How well are teachers handling the requirements of both criteria-based assessment, and competency-based assessment?*

**Overall**

It is clear that many teachers are finding it manageable to develop assessment tasks, criteria sheets and student profiles. However, this is not the case for all teachers and there were requests for a range of exemplars of assessment: profiles, instruments, methods, as well as “an example of a completed module so we know what to expect”.

The two major difficulties seem to be:

- the integration of criteria-based and competency-based assessment
- the management of record keeping which is proving to be a time-consuming and unwieldy task, especially for those who offer strand A or B.

In phase 3, there were also some suggestions to reconsider some of the wording of the standards.

**Phase 1**

In phase 1, many teachers appeared to be experiencing considerable difficulties or uncertainty about assessment; some felt it is too early to say whether assessment is working well, and some were having little difficulty. When we consider the more

negative or uncertain comments in the light of the positive comments, it appears that what we noted about flexibility being seen as both a strength and a weaknesses is also quite true of these comments.

The teachers who signalled that assessment was not going so well seem to be experiencing the range of problems we have documented in other SASs, possibly compounded by the perceived lack of clarity of the SAS document:

- a dominant sense that there is not enough guidance in the SAS on assessment; for example, one teacher wrote that “there is not enough direction on the theory/practical requirements i.e. it appears that through participation in a recreation pursuit all criteria can be met”; another teacher reported that “the document gives a broad overview of assessment, but no specific examples of how each module can be satisfied”
- difficulties understanding “to what depth and level of understanding students need to know” when designing assessment
- difficulties managing assessment and minimising record keeping (one teacher said that “as a teacher you have a mindset re assessing everything so as to substantiate grades”)
- difficulties understanding and integrating the different components of the SAS when planning and developing assessment
- difficulties integrating competency-based assessment and criteria-based assessment; one teacher told us that the use of exit levels of achievement is unhelpful for students
- difficulties using and understanding VET assessment requirements for the first time (for example, one teacher asked when it is “OK to sign off? — when the student has shown competency once? twice? three times?”; another teacher asked about recognition of prior learning)
- perceptions that the “type of clientele attracted to this subject (OP-ineligible students) means that assessment is often difficult”.

Some teachers who signalled that assessment was working well seem to be comfortable with the scope the SAS gives, and with the idea of integrating different components of the SAS. For example, one teacher wrote approvingly about “the concept of major assessment items which contribute to many module outcomes”. Another teacher noted that the SAS gives teachers the scope to “be very flexible with assessment, which makes it easy to change or modify according to the needs of the students”. Another teacher noted that “the module guidelines are very clear and as professionals with a high degree of sport/outdoor etc. knowledge and interest, assessment decisions are easy”.

Teachers also asked for more exemplars of assessment: profiles, instruments, methods, as well as “an example of a completed module so we know what to expect”.

## **Phase 2**

In phase 2 the development of assessment tasks seemed to be manageable for many teachers but record keeping was proving to be time consuming and unwieldy, and some teachers complained that “record keeping verges on nightmare properties — two sets of marking schemes, double recording of all assessment. This area has to be looked at”. A few teachers suggested that more assistance in the form of examples would help, especially in the integration of the two kinds of assessment which some were finding difficult.



Although many teachers reported that assessment tasks, criteria sheets and marking schemes were possible to develop from the SAS document, and that the definitions of competence were clear, some commented that they were finding the process difficult. Some asked for more examples in the SAS. A few felt that the definitions of *competence* could be clearer.

Many teachers indicated that they were satisfied with the information in the SAS regarding the development of profiles and determination of levels of achievement in this SAS. A few suggested that more specific examples of profiles would assist.

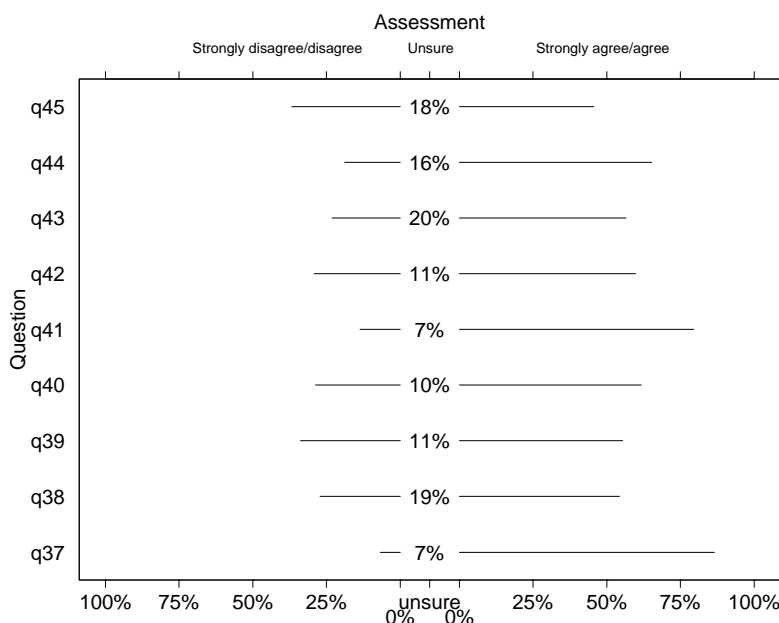
Almost all teachers seemed to understand that students were to be given a number of opportunities to demonstrate competency. However, practice varied widely from allowing at least two attempts, to “multiple opportunities” with larger tasks being designed to allow this. Most teachers seemed to offer several opportunities for students to demonstrate competency.

Figure 20 from the quantitative data for phase 2 gives information on assessment matters. Generally, the responses are more negative than in other aspects, although it shows that most of the responding teachers are satisfied that they can develop a variety of sound assessment instruments from the SAS (Q37). Significant issues are the integration of criteria-based and competency-based assessment and the ease of developing criteria sheets (Q38, Q39). Another issue of concern arising from the quantitative data seems to be the support in the SAS for developing student profiles (Q40), although this was not an area of significant criticism in the written comments. Some teachers indicated uncertainty about the effectiveness of advice in the SAS about the following:

- development of an efficient and effective method for recording student achievement (Q42)
- whether the SAS is clear about what teachers should do to give students repeated attempts to demonstrate competency (Q43)
- whether the SAS is clear in its definitions of competency (Q44).

Some teachers also reported some difficulty in providing for students to make repeated attempts to demonstrate competency (Q45).

**Figure 20: Teachers' views of assessment in phase 2**



### Phase 3

Responses to questions about assessment were less negative than previously and some teachers said that they were having no difficulties. However, the problems with assessment that teachers did report were much the same as in earlier phases.

About a third of the teachers said that integration and streamlining of competency-based assessment presented a challenge. Comments were that it is often difficult to select a suitable assessment task to assess the vocational learning outcomes. About a fifth of the responding teachers were having some difficulty with the development or application of the criteria. A few were also finding it difficult to develop tasks that meet the requirements of both the competencies and the criteria, thereby avoiding “doubling up” on assessment. A few teachers complained that the paperwork involved was too great.

Almost all teachers who responded said the quantity of assessment required was acceptable. Some said that they had initially thought that there was too much assessment but had learned how to reduce the number of assessment tasks. A few complained about the amount of paperwork involved. One said: “Record keeping is impossible. I spend more than half my school time on module tracking and monitoring”.

Almost all were satisfied that the exit criteria relate to the most important aspects of the subject. One said that the exit criteria assess “a student’s physical ability, knowledge of terminology, decision making, working in groups, showing leadership and showing knowledge of safety”. However, a few teachers disagreed, one saying: “consideration should be given to participation”. Another thought that the criteria should focus on communication, leadership and instruction skills that are “a necessary component of the recreation industry”.

Almost all the teachers thought the exit standards are set at the right level of difficulty. Amongst the few who thought they were too difficult was one who said they were too much like the standards for the Board subject, Physical Education.

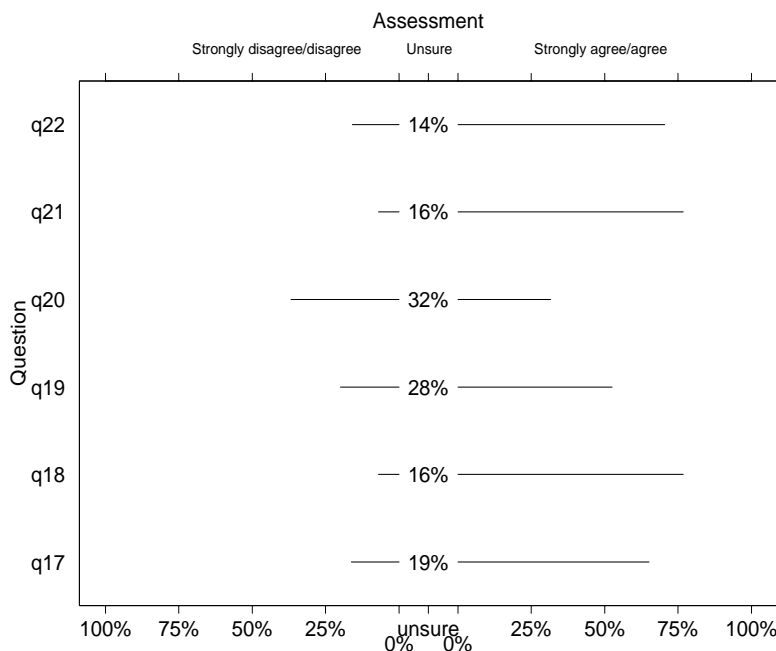
Another observed that the descriptors are too difficult for the students who take the subject and are “longwinded”, especially in Applying and Evaluating. Another commented that there is not enough differentiation between the A and the B standards for Acquiring, and was concerned about the emphasis on consistency of performance in the A, B and C standards. One commented that the standards set for levels D and E are too difficult.

There were few suggestions for changes to the advice in the SAS on assessment. One teacher suggested toning down the level of difficulty and one asked that there be a reduction in the number of modules and in the amount of paperwork needed for the SAS. One commented that the assessment techniques included in the SAS should reflect the fact that more than 50 per cent of time in a program of study is to be devoted to physical pursuits.

In response to a question about whether there should be any changes to advice about integrating general and vocational assessment, more than half the teachers said that no changes were needed. Suggestions for improvement were to clarify the advice about strand A units of work, to provide clear statements of the expected standards for competency, and to include advice on combining competency-based and criteria-based assessment. A few teachers also asked that some examples of integrated assessment be included in the SAS, on the website, or in a resources kit.

The quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) seem to support the generally more positive comments in phase 3 about designing assessment tasks. Figure 21 shows that two-thirds of the responding teachers agreed that the descriptions of assessment techniques in the SAS are helpful, and three-quarters agreed that there is sufficient variety in the assessment techniques suggested in the document (Q17, Q18). Half agreed that they had been able to design assessment instruments that integrate vocational components of the subject (Q19). However, fewer than one-third were of the view that the SAS provides adequate advice about the integration of competency-based and criteria-based assessment (Q20). They were more positive about the advice given on exit criteria with three-quarters agreeing that this allowed them to make sound assessment decisions (Q21) and a similar number agreeing that the SAS gives clear advice about how to arrive at exit levels of achievement (Q22).

**Figure 21: Teachers’ views of assessment in phase 3**



## Resources

*What resources are needed to ensure effective teaching, learning and assessment in the strands?*

### Overall

Although teachers indicated that the resources listed in the SAS were useful, there have also been problems obtaining resources of various kinds. The difficulties have included:

- finding some of the resources listed in the SAS
- identifying the resources useful to different components of the SAS, particularly the study area core and the four main aspects
- accessing facilities and materials for physical recreation pursuits
- working within the administrative constraints of the school e.g. timetabling, availability of resources and varying class sizes
- lack of teacher time for this SAS.

### Phase 1

The comments were mixed, with more than half the responding teachers indicating problems obtaining resources (mostly material as opposed to human resources).

Resource problems identified in phase 1 comments are wide-ranging:

- lack of print resources for teaching and learning, particularly when physical recreation studies previously had a much stronger practical emphasis (i.e. an emphasis on sport and recreational pursuits)
- difficulties finding the resources listed in the SAS, as well as difficulties knowing what resources relate to the study core, and perceptions that the resource lists in the SAS are limited (although there was at least one other comment that the resource lists are extensive)
- lack of access to facilities and materials for physical recreation pursuits, and inability to pay for them; at least one apparently isolated school reported that they have problems participating in team sports: “recruiting from a wide geographic area, we have no-one to play”
- problems funding travel costs for students
- difficulties simply finding the time to plan and deliver this resource-intensive subject
- by phase 3, many teachers had overcome most of these difficulties.

In the comments about the above resource concerns, teachers described how they are having to “beg and borrow” resources. Such observations were made even by teachers who stated that they were satisfied with their resources; it appears that these teachers are also using equipment they own, or other staff members own, to ensure that their students have access to the SAS learning experiences.

There were a few teacher comments about their schools’ inability to offer strand A because they could not meet the human resource requirements, but such comments did not suggest strong concerns about this.

Positive comments from teachers indicated that schools that have a stronger profile of physical recreation studies are, not surprisingly, better placed to resource this SAS. For example, one teacher said the school did have enough resources for this SAS: “I am lucky that a similar vocational education subject has been taught and there is some information and resources already there”.

Another teacher made a comment that suggests the obvious point that some schools do have considerable resources available for this SAS: “Obviously resources determine selection of activities especially the pursuit choices. I have no problem with funds available at our school (we have just spent \$10 000 on rock climbing equipment)”. A few other comments indicate that strategies like outsourcing and pooling resources have helped schools, although off-campus options and “accessing outside agencies” were also identified as having prohibitive costs to a few schools. One teacher commented: “The Government Department of Sport and Recreation has been very helpful”.

In the body of positive comments about resources, there are also comments that the flexibility of the SAS, particularly strand C, has helped teachers avoid problems with resources.

## **Phase 2**

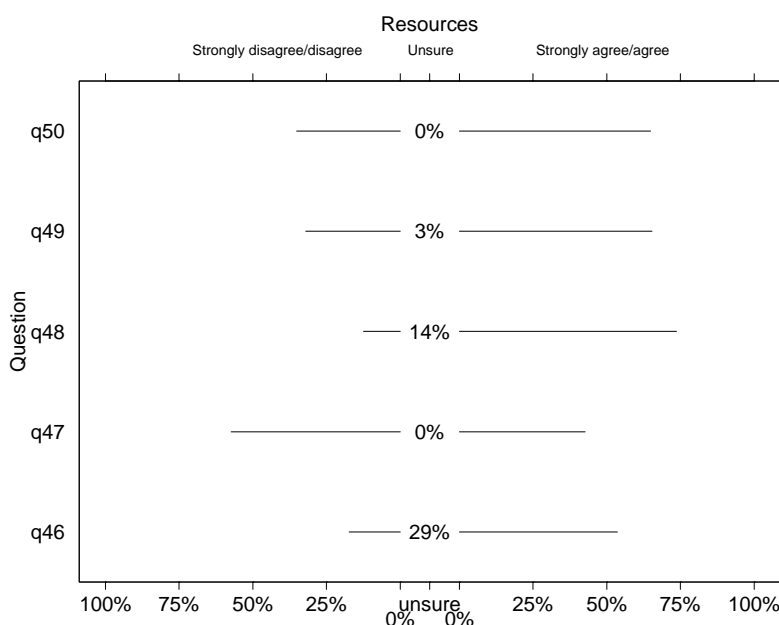
In phase 2, many responses indicated that the resources identified in the SAS were suitable and had been helpful. However, it was obvious that teachers of this SAS also draw upon a wider range of resources available to them in the subject area and that resourcing, both human and physical, was a major issue. Comments on resources available varied from: “Community resources are not available to us so we struggle in that regard” to: “Resources are excellent”. This seemed to be an area of concern to many teachers and, along with the related issues of timetabling and class size, had a significant influence on the physical pursuits that could be offered.

With less material resourcing issues, it would seem that, for this SAS to be taught effectively, the timetable needs to allow for some blocks of time in the form of, say, a double period at least once a week and that classes should be kept to something like 15 to 20 students.

The issue of industry experience for students seems to be a difficult one for this SAS. Many teachers have not been involved in organising industry placements or work experience for their students. In some schools, work experience had been organised across a number of industries but students had not chosen work experience in the recreation industry. In small towns, opportunities appear to be very limited for work experience in the recreation industry. Most of the teachers who had been involved in organising placements had found this a difficult task but all felt that industry experience was very worthwhile for students if it were possible to arrange.

In the quantitative data from phase 2, figure 22 provides information about resourcing and supports the written comments made by teachers. While responding teachers generally indicated that the resources listed in the SAS have been helpful (Q48), they experienced a range of other resource problems. About half of the these teachers disagreed or were uncertain that the human resource requirements of the SAS were necessary (Q46). A significant area of concern appeared to be the amount of time they needed to spend on this subject (Q47). Opinions varied in the matters of resources available in the school and how well administrative arrangements in schools were working (Q49, Q50) but few, if any, teachers expressed any uncertainty on these matters.

**Figure 22: Teacher perceptions about resources in phase 2**



### Phase 3

In phase 3, teachers seemed to have resolved many of their earlier concerns about resources. Some commented that the SAS document had been helpful in offering a guide to the kind of resources that would be useful but most have also gone beyond this and had found their own resources, drawing especially on materials that are appropriate to Physical Education, and accessing local community resources and facilities. The resources listed in the SAS that were cited as being particularly helpful were those related to coaching and outdoor education. Teachers gave some details of resources that could be included in the SAS as follows:

*An introduction to Topographic Maps*, Lewis, G. B. (available from Map sales, AUSLIG, PO Box 2 Belconnen, ACT 2616).

*Beginning Coaching Level 1* (Manual and workbook), Australian Coaching Council.

*Beginning Coaching*, Davis, D., Kimmet, T. & Auty, M. 1995, *VCE Book 1*, Macmillan Education, Aust.

*Bushpeople's Guide to Bushwalking in South-East Queensland*, Bushpeople Publications.

*Inside and Out: A Health and physical education textbook*, Wright, P. 1992.

*Life Be In It: Games Manual: Teaching children's games*, Belka, D. E. 1994.

*Managing Risks in Outdoor Activities*, Haddock, C. 1993, NZ Mountain Safety Council.

*Outdoor Education: VCE Units 1 and 2*, Cantwell, J., Nelson, Australia.

*PE Teacher's Complete Fitness and Skills Development*, Carpenter, J. 2000, West Nyack, NY.

*Smart Sport: The ultimate reference manual for sports people*, De Costella, R. & Clews, W., AIS.

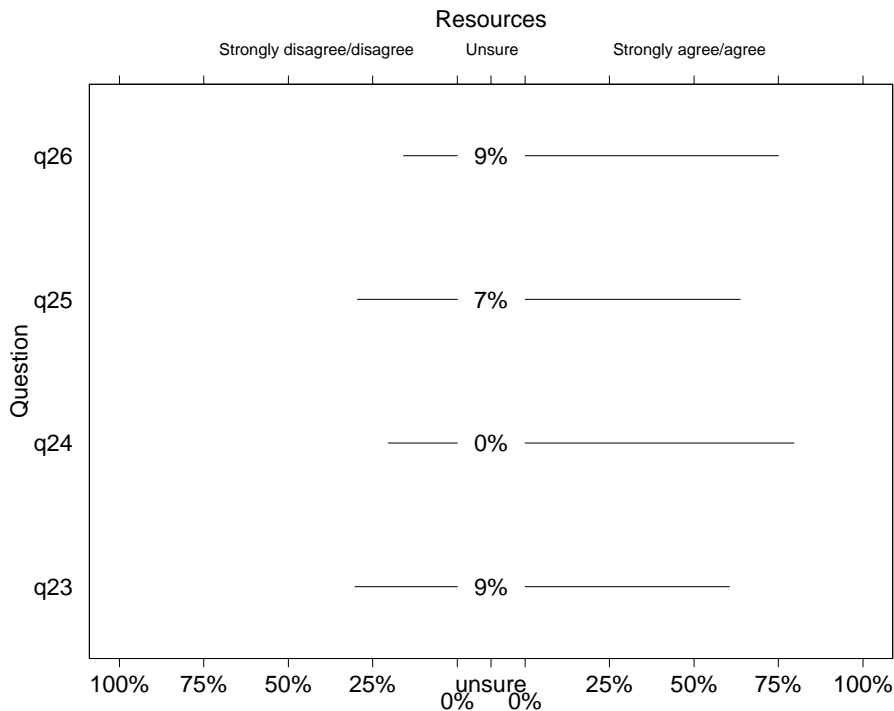
*Surf Survival*, 1991, SLSA (available from state headquarters, South Brisbane).

Traditional Aboriginal and Islander games (modified games).

The quantitative data for phase 3 in figure 23 (see appendix B for research

instrument) indicate that nearly two-thirds of the responding teachers agreed that the SAS gave enough specific advice about useful resources (Q23). More than three-quarters agreed that there were enough material resources of the right kind in their schools to deliver the SAS (Q24). About two-thirds were satisfied with the administrative issue of timetabling in their schools and three-quarters agreed that class sizes in their schools are workable (Q25, Q26).

**Figure 23: Teacher perceptions about resources in phase 3**



## Other issues

### Overall

Teachers' comments on other issues affecting the SAS suggest that this SAS requires considerable teacher support and professional development if it is to work well. Suggestions included more in-service training, visits from Board personnel, networking with other teachers, sharing of resources and, of course, time to do these things.

Teachers expressed concern about teaching strand A and questioned the usefulness of Certificate I in Recreation Practices to students for employment in the future.

### Phase 1

In the phase 1 additional comments, teachers asked for more support. Some specific suggestions made are as follows:

- workshops to be held earlier in the year
- the Board to provide visits to schools by Board officers who can advise on the full range of problems the school is experiencing

- the SAS to be available on the Board’s website
- a CD-ROM for industry employers showing what this SAS offers
- information about other schools offering the SAS so that teachers can network and share ideas (one teacher said schools should “cluster” to develop this SAS)
- better definition of the pathways to industry and TAFE in the SAS document.

## **Phase 2**

Responses indicated that this SAS is meeting a significant need. It has integrated well with other programs and has allowed some non-academic and special-needs students to achieve some success. However, the very heavy workload that the SAS entails has troubled some teachers and around one-third expressed a need for more support of some kind, whether in-service training, meetings with teachers from other schools, workshops or resources. Several said that time for planning was needed.

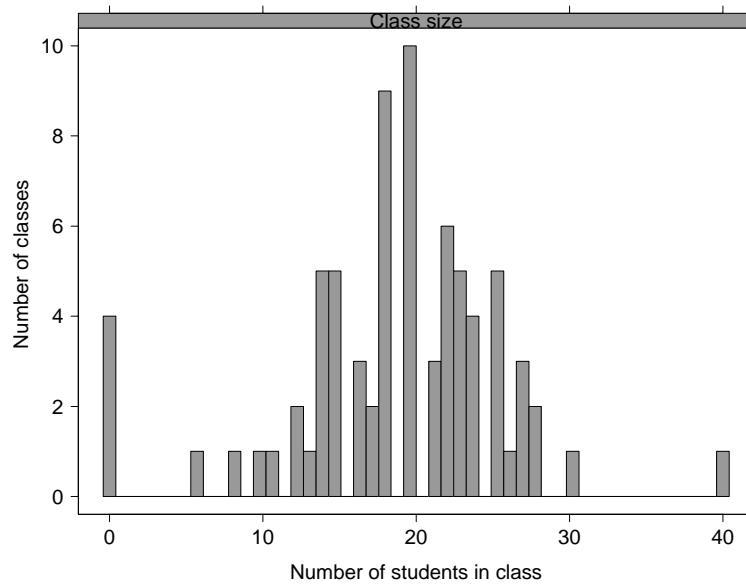
A few comments indicated uncertainty about the implications of the SAS document with one teacher complaining that the document is ambiguous, and a few complaining of having difficulty with aspects of assessment. One teacher said that the SAS is too much like Physical Education while another said that the Physical Education syllabus had been of more assistance than the SAS document. Other comments indicated that:

- very few of the students who take the subject are potential employees in the recreation industry
- many students are not motivated to undertake the theoretical aspects of the subject
- record keeping is difficult
- the SAS is too much like the parallel Board subject
- the SAS should be “working in conjunction with the ITAB” in order to offer certificate courses that are linked to industry needs.

Figure 24 from the quantitative data for phase 2 indicates that a number of classes are larger than the 15 to 20 that SAS teachers often suggest as an appropriate size. This is a significant issue given the presence of groups of students with special needs (see figure 8 in the core report).



**Figure 24: Number of students in classes**



### Phase 3

In phase 3, teachers were asked what further advice they would give to the Board. Although the SAS seems to be making a valuable contribution to the curriculum, the teachers indicated some concern about managing the subject. Some of the comments in relation to the VET components were:

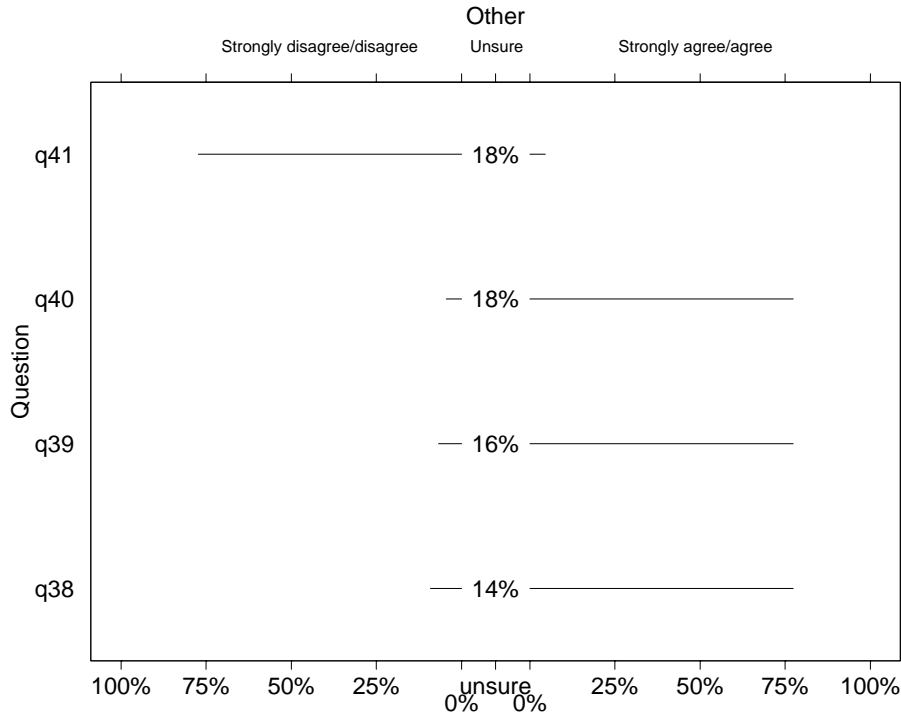
- teaching the subject through strand A or strand B seems to require teaching two disparate subjects with quite separate requirements for, firstly, the school subject and, secondly, for the completion of VET modules
- the requirements for strand A are unrealistic because, generally, teachers are unqualified to teach it and there is far too much paperwork involved in the record keeping
- some students express more interest in gaining certificates in first aid, coaching, workplace health and safety rather than Certificate I in Recreation
- the option of providing for a Certificate II course should be considered as students think the Certificate I is not very helpful to them in gaining employment.

Teachers also suggested that:

- Physical Recreation SAS should be more different from the Board subject, Physical Education; at present, it follows too closely
- the SAS document should present the content of the subject from a practical perspective because this is the way the subject is to be presented to students in the classroom
- the SAS should include a recommendation for schools to timetable blocks of time for practical activities, especially if activities outside the school are planned.

Figure 25 from the quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) shows that teachers who responded to the survey were positive about the future of the SAS. More than three-quarters were of the opinion that the SAS was progressing well in the school, that students would want to take the subject in the future and that the school would be keen to offer the SAS in the future (Q38, Q39, 40). When asked about their participation in professional development for this SAS, more than three-quarters of the teachers disagreed that the opportunities available to them had been appropriate (Q41).

**Figure 25: Teachers’ views of the future of the SAS, phase 3**



**The effectiveness of the SAS for students**

**Overall**

Teachers’ responses to the survey indicate that the appeal of this SAS for students is the variety and nature of the physical pursuits that are possible, the practical nature of the SAS and the opportunity for some to gain a qualification. They seemed to feel that the majority of students are interested in and motivated by the subject and that it is too difficult or too easy for only a small number of their students. The perceived flexibility of the SAS also allows teachers to adapt it to suit the needs of their students. They seemed to suggest that for some students the decision whether to select this as a subject for study is influenced by such practicalities as its placement in the school timetable or by perceptions about the subject as being sport-oriented. Teachers indicate that they believe that it is a worthwhile subject in the school curriculum.

When teachers criticised the SAS they focused mainly on the vocational component. They indicated that, although there is a reasonable balance of

theoretical and practical content in the SAS, some of the modules in strands A and B are not suitable for the students most likely to select the subject. They referred especially to the clerical and administrative material of some of the core modules.

Teachers and students alike were positive in their views about the usefulness of this SAS to students in helping them to develop employment-related, social and personal knowledge and skills.

### **The match between student needs and the SAS**

*What specific needs in the student population does the SAS meet/not meet? How well does the SAS match the needs of the student populations studied? How well do embedded vocational education components meet the needs of students?*

Earlier data from teachers indicated that the variety of physical activities that are the focus of the study area make this a very attractive option for many students. As one teacher pointed out, the SAS “offers unique opportunities to experience pursuits they would not otherwise be involved in, e.g. rock climbing, camping, lifesaving, sports medicine” and another commented that physical activities in the SAS are more exciting than those in Physical Education.

Other factors that are significant to the success of the SAS are its practical nature and, for many students, the perception that it is less academic and less theoretical than Board subjects. A few teachers pointed to the opportunity to gain a coaching qualification or the Certificate 1 in Recreation Practices as a reason for selecting the SAS. Few seemed to think that the possibility of employment in the recreation industry had been significant to the choices that students have made.

Most teachers seemed to feel that this was a worthwhile subject in the curriculum. One teacher commented that it contributes to the “whole school social goals” and that students taking the subject can act as role models for younger students, especially those who are the “cool ‘at risk’ boys” and who are taking on a “strong, positive, non-aggressive role within the school”.

Almost all schools surveyed had previously offered a Board-registered subject in this area of the curriculum. The teachers in these schools mostly indicated that the SAS was more relevant to the students than the subject it had replaced, citing its greater variety and the depth of treatment possible and its requirements of organisation and interpersonal interaction. A few teachers, however, felt that the range of physical activities possible was more limited than in the subject previously offered. A suggestion from a few teachers was to relax the constraints of category and number of physical pursuits to provide students with more variety.

One teacher who felt that the SAS was less relevant to students than the subject previously offered was concerned that Senior First Aid and other modules previously available in Recreation Certificates I and II could not be offered as a part of the SAS. Another felt that the SAS would be less relevant to students if the school chose to offer strand A or B.

Most criticism focused on the clerical and administrative elements of the core modules of the certificate. These were seen mostly as being unsuitable for the students who would select the SAS. One teacher commented that many students with special needs take the subject as personal development rather than as preparation for a career.

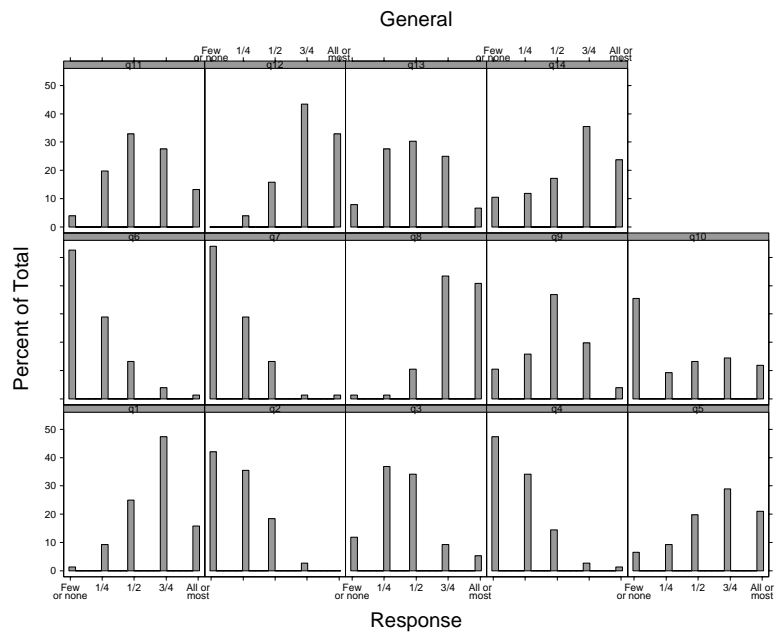
The quantitative data from phase 2 confirm many of the written comments. Figure 23 indicates that teachers tend to believe that at least half students find this SAS to be relevant to their needs, although there were some who did not (Q11).

Most teachers indicated that students can develop useful practical knowledge and skills in the subject (Q12) but some of the responding teachers indicated that this is true for only up to a half of their students. Most teachers also indicated that a good proportion of their students find that it helps them develop theoretical knowledge and skills (Q13).

Figure 26 also indicates that more than half the responding teachers believe that the majority of the students taking this SAS are interested in and motivated by the subject (Q1), that they gain mostly positive learning experiences from the subject (Q8) and that a good proportion of them can experience at least some success in demonstrating vocational education competencies (Q5). However, teachers seem to be of the view that relatively few will be competent in enough modules to gain the certificate (Q10). Also, it would appear that the majority of students do not choose this SAS with a view to future employment in the area (Q2).

This suggests that Physical Recreation provides a positive experience for many students but that an area for consideration may be the nature of the certificate and its integration in the subject.

**Figure 26: Teachers' views of the effectiveness of the SAS for students in phase 2**



### Phase 3

In this SAS, almost all teachers reported that students responded best to the practical components of the subject. They enjoyed the physical pursuits, especially the outdoor activities and coaching experience. When asked what students had been least interested in, most teachers said that they did not enjoy theoretical and administrative material, including work on the four main aspects of the SAS.

Teachers reported that few students left the subject during the year. Some said that none had left but that a number had joined. Most of those who did drop the subject were leaving school, usually to take up work and in some cases to undertake traineeships or further study at TAFE. In a few cases, students chose another subject or SAS more closely linked to job skills that they needed, such as

Industrial Skills. A few students dropped the subject because they were not willing to be involved in working in groups or to undertake activities that require self-motivation and motivating others, because they were “not willing to be involved in vigorous physical activity”, or because “they don’t enjoy swimming”. One found the subject “boring”. One teacher suggested that “the theory assignment may have been a reason” and one said that the theory was too challenging.

About a third of the teachers said that students joined the subject during the year because of the variety of practical activities and the variety of outcomes offered by the subject. Other reasons given for students joining the subject were:

- some have found the theory components of Board subjects, including Physical Education, too difficult
- students see the subject as being relevant to them
- the practical work involved, and the opportunity to gain skills in communication and leadership while having fun and participating in outdoor education activities
- some were attracted to the subject by the reports of other students who find it to be enjoyable
- the subject was seen as less academic than Board subjects and different from “normal subjects”
- the subject allows for the opportunity to coach primary students
- some students are able to gain qualifications in first aid
- some students with poor literacy find the subject attractive.

When asked how their students have reacted to the SAS, most of the responding teachers said that the response from students was excellent. They said that, in most cases, students were enthusiastic, were enjoying the range of activities, some of which they had not participated in before, were developing useful skills, and some were gaining formal qualifications. However, some teachers qualified their comments by saying that many students found the theory of the SAS difficult or uninteresting. One pointed out that some of their students have short attention spans, are “hands-on” learners and enjoy physical activity. A few reported that enthusiasm was difficult to engender because some students just wanted to play sport and they did not care whether they succeeded in the subject, thus disadvantaging other students. One teacher said that “none of them seems to be interested in the recreation industry as an option for employment. They enjoy the practical side of the subject but seem to place the small amount of theory we do as not important”.

In the qualitative comments for phase 3, students said that they enjoyed the practical activities that make up the subject. Many said there was nothing they did not enjoy about the subject. They enjoyed being active and playing sport with their friends. Some of them said it was an easy and interesting subject. They liked the teamwork involved and they enjoyed learning the range of sports offered. Some said they enjoyed outdoor activities such as camping. Some appreciated the opportunity to develop communication and interpersonal skills. When asked what they did not enjoy, some students said they did not like the assessment, especially any that involved much writing. Others said, however, that the assessment was not onerous. Some said they did not like the theory involved in the subject.

More than half the teachers who responded thought the subject would be of direct use to students after they left school. One commented that it was useful for those who find work in “the armed services, national parks, camping stores (retail),

kayaking, whitewater instruction, attempt entry into emergency services, further study”. Some of these teachers pointed out that it is valuable even for those who do not take up employment in the fitness or recreation industries. One said: “It will be most useful in their social lives. They will have the skills necessary to join a golf club, to play beach volleyball ... go to an event where they will be required ... to play sport or organise activities. They will have ‘real life’ skills”. Some thought the subject would be of limited or no direct use in employment. Even these said: “only in terms of communication and leadership” or “not in employment but in life, yes!”

The qualitative responses from students indicated that, although some students did not know what they would do when they left school, many others indicated a wide range of intended destinations after they completed Year 12. At least a third said they planned to undertake some form of tertiary study, either at university or TAFE. Many of the remainder indicated that they hoped to go straight into employment or take up an apprenticeship or traineeship. Many indicated that they hoped to go into employment associated with health services, the fitness industry, sport and recreation, and tourism, in positions such as sport and recreation officer, lifeguard, nurse, and physical education teacher. Many students said they would take up an apprenticeship or go into the armed forces, the police service, the hospitality industry, retailing, business, entertainment or a trade.

Students thought that the SAS would help them directly to get into and work in areas associated with physical activity, health, policing, teaching or recreation. Many students who wished to work in other areas said the subject would help them personally, because it had taught them about health and nutrition and had encouraged them to keep fit. Some said the coaching qualifications and certificates such as the Bronze Medallion and the Certificate in Senior First Aid that they had gained would help them to achieve their employment goal.

When asked what students were learning from this subject, teachers identified key knowledge and skills that ranged from those that were employment-related to knowledge of health, fitness and safety issues, knowledge of sports, knowledge of the recreation industry and workplace practices, and an understanding of recreation in Australian society, to the development of creativity, physical and sporting skills, social, organisational and negotiation skills.

Figure 27 from the quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) shows that, of the teachers who responded to the survey, half were of the opinion that the perceived status of the SAS in the school affected whether students take the subject and half thought that parent perceptions of the SAS affected student decisions to take it (Q27, Q28). Well over three-quarters of them were of the view that the subject develops the personal interests of students (Q29). About a quarter of the teachers agreed that most of their students have undertaken relevant industry placement or work experience but more than half disagreed with this (Q30). More than a third agreed that there are sufficient opportunities in their community for work experience (Q31).

Well over three-quarters of the teachers disagreed that the SAS is too hard for their students and a similar number disagreed that it is too easy for their students (Q32, Q33). About half agreed that there is too much theory in the SAS for some of their students (Q34) but well over three-quarters agreed that the balance of practical and theory in the SAS is appropriate. More than three-quarters of the responding teachers agreed that most of their students were making good progress and more than three-quarters were of the opinion that most of their students would be satisfied with what they gained from this subject (Q36, Q37).

**Figure 27: Teachers' views of the effectiveness of the SAS for students in phase 3**

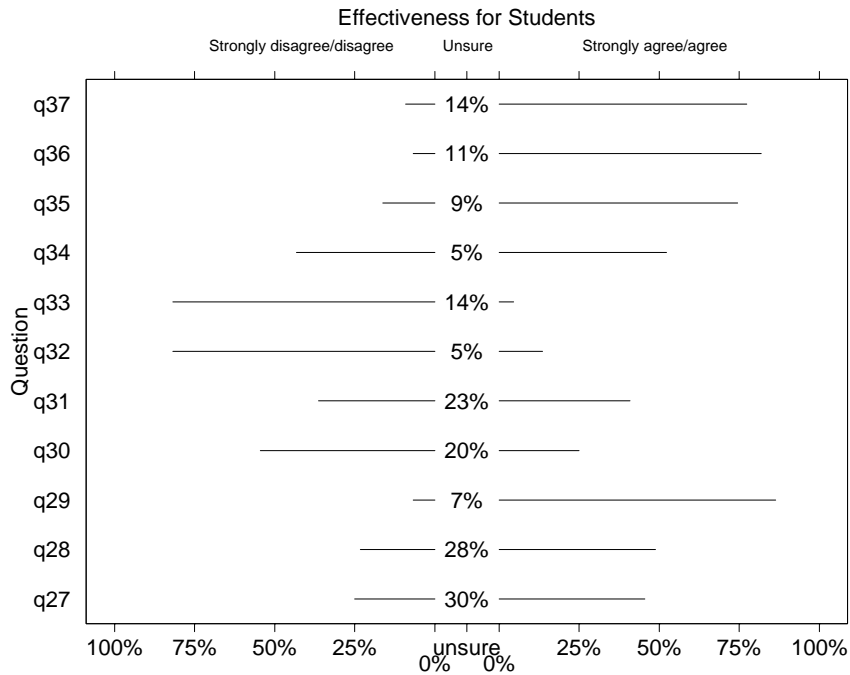


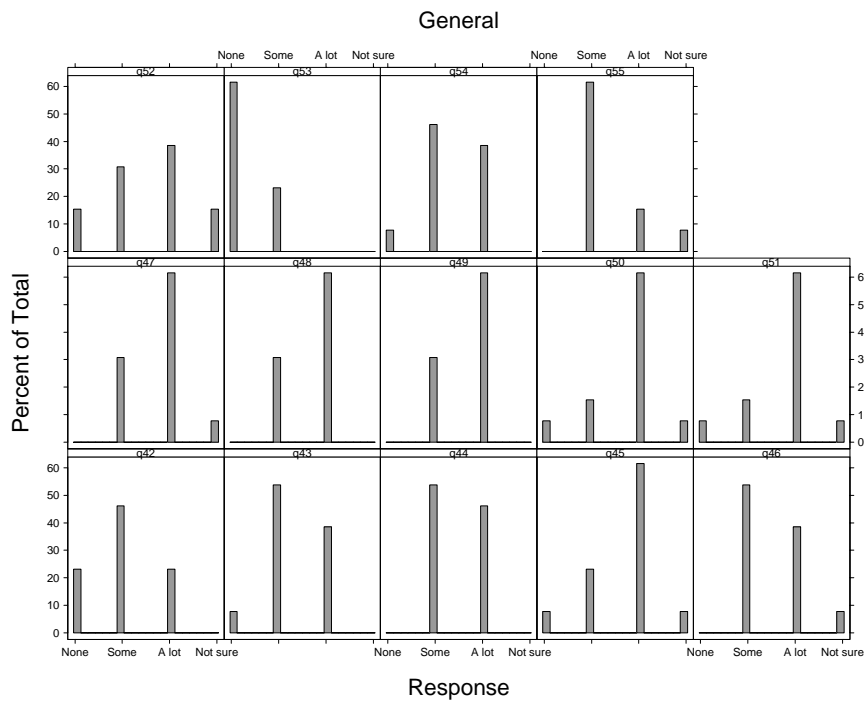
Figure 28 from the quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) indicates that teachers were positive in their views about the preparation for the future provided by the SAS. Almost all agreed that the SAS is of some help or a lot of help in the preparation of students for further study at TAFE (Q42) and almost all agreed that the SAS helps in preparation for employment in the specific industry area (Q43). Almost all agreed that it is of some help or that it is a lot of help in the preparation of students for employment generally (Q44).

Almost all teachers agreed that the SAS helps in the development of responsible attitudes to work, with more than half of these agreeing that it helps a lot (Q45). Similarly, almost all responding teachers agreed that the SAS is of some help or a lot of help in developing self-knowledge and self-esteem (Q46). More than half of the teachers who responded agreed that the SAS helps a lot in the development of useful generic knowledge and skills and more than a third agreed that it is of some help (Q47). More than three-quarters agreed that it is of some help or a lot of help in the development of interpersonal communication skills (Q48).

This SAS was seen as being helpful in developing some of the key competencies. Almost two-thirds of the responding teachers agreed that the SAS is

of some help and a fifth agreed that it is a lot of help in developing the skills of collecting, analysing and organising information (Q49). In the cases of communicating ideas and information (Q50) almost two-thirds of the teachers agreed that the SAS is a lot of help and a third agreed that it was of some help. They were even more positive about the help that the SAS gives in developing skills in planning and organising activities, with almost all agreeing that it is of some help or a lot of help (Q51). The level of agreement was not so high for the development by the SAS of the key competency “Working with others and in teams”, with nearly half the teachers either disagreeing or not sure that the SAS was helpful in this (Q52). Almost half disagreed or were unsure that the SAS develops the key competency “Using mathematical ideas and techniques” (Q53). More than three-quarters agreed that the SAS helped in developing the skills of solving problems and using technology (Q54, Q55).

**Figure 28: Preparation for the future needs of students**



Many students thought the SAS would help them after they left school, some saying that it had given them information about nutrition, health and fitness, and sports. Some said the subject was teaching them how to work in a group or team and how to explain and justify their opinions. A few said they had learned to plan and organise activities events during the course. Others cited the benefits that had resulted from their learning the interpersonal skills needed to work with others and take on leadership roles and gaining the confidence required to speak up in a group. When asked whether they would leave school if they were offered a job or apprenticeship, nearly two-thirds of the students said they would not.

Figure 29 from the quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) provides further information about the views of students taking the SAS. When students were asked why they had chosen this SAS, almost all responded that they had expected to enjoy it and more than three-quarters said they had chosen it because they wanted to learn practical skills (Q5.1, Q5.2). The

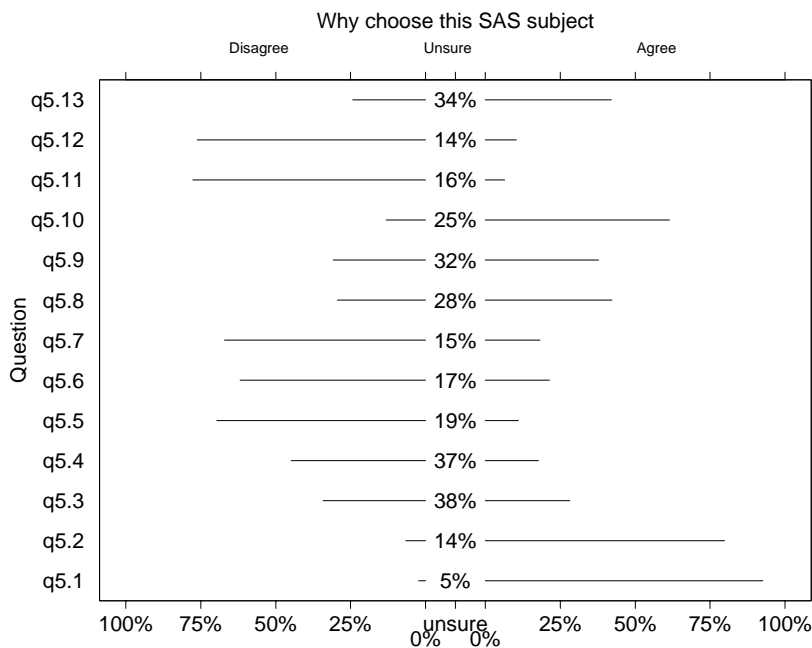


possibility of its helping them to find work after Year 12 was a factor in the choice of subject for only a quarter of the students (Q5.3). Even fewer chose the subject because they thought it would help them go to TAFE after Year 12 (5.4).

Few students said that they were strongly influenced to take the subject by the views of their family (Q5.5), by the choice made by a friend (Q5.7), or by the views of the school guidance officer (Q5.11). However, liking the teacher of the subject was a factor in the choice for more than a third of the students (Q5.9). It appears that adequate subject choices were available to most students, since fewer than one-quarter of the students agreed that they had few choices available to them when they chose the subject (Q5.6, Q5.12).

More than one-third of the students agreed that they had chosen the subject because they thought it would fit in well with other subjects (Q5.8), more than two-thirds agreed that they had thought it would be useful and relevant to them (Q5.10) and more than two-thirds agreed that their decision to take the subject had been influenced by the desire to get a useful qualification by doing this subject (Q5.13).

**Figure 29: Why students choose the SAS**



In the qualitative comments for phase 3, many students said that they would advise other students to choose the subject. The kinds of students who would be best suited, they thought, would be students who are active people, who want an easy subject, like practical work, want to be outdoors, and are enthusiastic about sport and fitness.

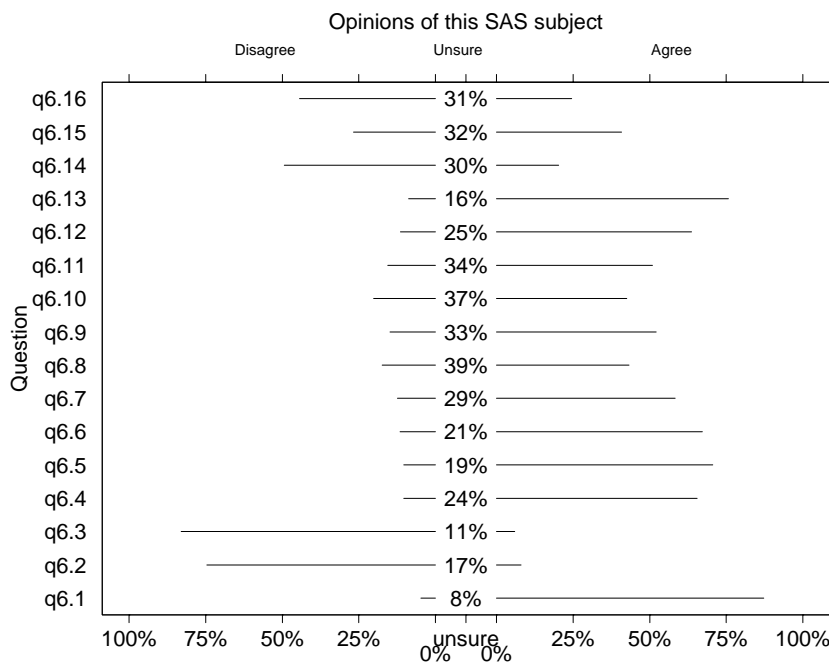
In general, students were of the opinion that they had benefited from taking the subject. Figure 30 from the quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) shows that almost all of them agreed that they enjoyed it (Q6.1) and almost all disagreed that they were bored by the subject (Q6.2). Very few students wanted to drop it (Q6.3).

Almost three-quarters of the students agreed that the subject was more interesting than most of their other subjects (Q6.4), about three-quarters of them

agreed that they were learning useful knowledge and skills and that these were skills they could use when they left school, and more than half of them agreed that they were learning lots of new things in the subject (Q6.5, Q6.6, Q6.7). Almost half the students disagreed or were unsure that the subject was making them feel good about themselves (Q6.8) and half of them agreed that one of the skills they were learning from the subject was how to get along with other people (Q6.9).

Students were quite positive about how helpful this SAS is for developing some of the key competencies. About a third of the students agreed that they were learning to collect, analyse and organise information (Q6.10), about half agreed that they were learning to communicate ideas and information (Q6.11), and about two-thirds agreed that they were learning to plan and organise activities in the subject (Q6.12). More than three-quarters of the students agreed that it was helping them to learn to work with others and in teams (Q6.13), probably reflecting the focus on team sports in the SAS. More than three-quarters of them disagreed or were unsure that they were learning the key competency of using mathematical ideas and techniques (Q6.14). More than a third agreed that the SAS was helping them to learn to solve problems (Q6.15). More than three-quarters disagreed that they were learning to use technology in the subject (Q6.16).

**Figure 30: Students' opinions about the SAS**



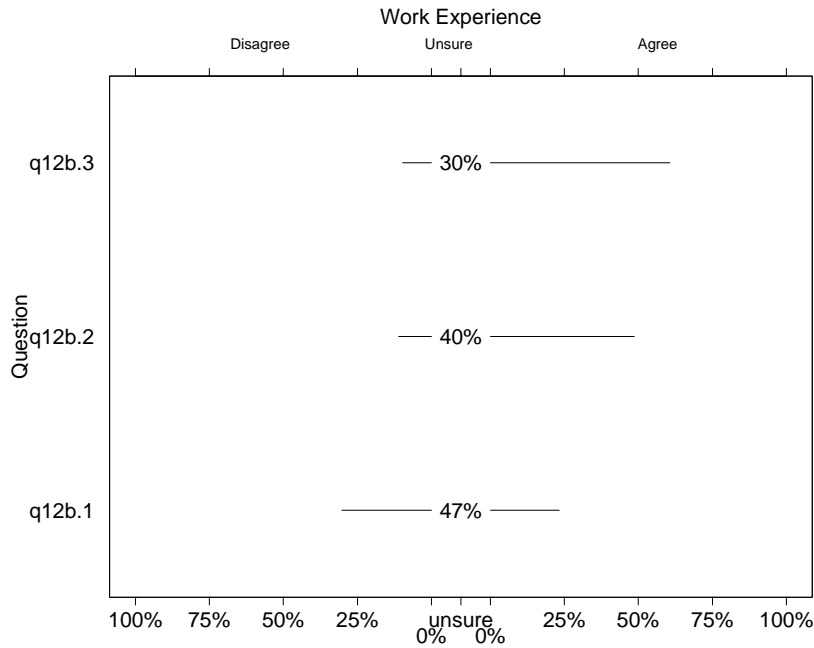
When asked what useful knowledge and skills they were learning in the subject, students said they were learning how to participate properly, how to get along with people, and how to work in groups. Some were learning independence, leadership skills, and organisational skills. Some were developing useful skills in communication, problem solving, orienteering, compass work and map reading. Some students also said that, as well as learning the skills involved in a number of sports, they had developed useful coaching skills. They had learned about fitness, nutrition, first aid, lifesaving, and sports administration.

Some students mentioned things they would like to be learning in the subject.

These included more about the human body, anatomy and sports psychology. Some also wanted to learn about safety, resuscitation, survival, camping and bush skills.

Almost all of the students in this SAS said they did work experience during the program of study (Q12). Figure 31 from the quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) shows that, for those students who did work experience in this SAS, it was a fairly positive experience. Only about a quarter agreed that they mainly did routine things, not new things (Q12b.1), half of them agreed that they learned things that they wanted to learn (Q12b.2) and almost two-thirds agreed that they learned things that will be useful to them (Q12b.3).

**Figure 31: Student views on work experience**



**The balance between practice and theory in the SAS**

*Does the SAS provide students with an appropriate balance between practical and “hands on” learning, and theoretical learning experiences?*

Almost all the written responses indicated that responding teachers and their students were relatively happy with the balance of practical work and theory in the SAS. Despite this, many responses still suggested that the clerical and administration material should be removed or reduced in the vocational component of the SAS.

In the quantitative data for phase 2, a substantial number of responding teachers indicated that half or fewer of their students were happy with the balance of theory and practical content of the SAS (Q14). However, over half the teachers indicated that between three-quarters to almost all of their students were happy with the balance. This seems to suggest that, although the balance of theory and practical content is not a major issue, it still is a substantial one, most probably because of the clerical and administrative material in the SAS.

Figure 32 from the quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) shows how students perceived the nature of classroom activities they

experienced. About one-third reported that they spent some or half of the class time on practical activities and about half of the students said that they spent half or most of their class time on practical activities.

**Figure 32: Students' perceptions of classroom activities**

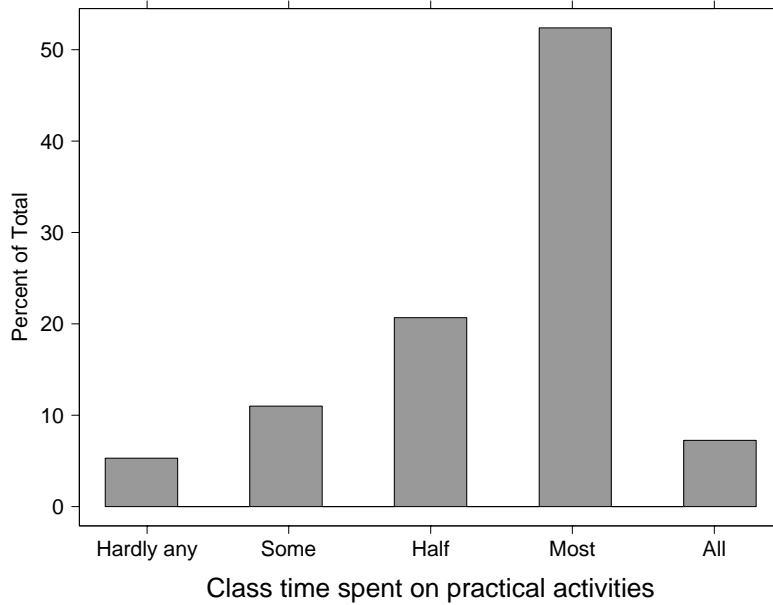


Figure 33 from the quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) shows what students perceived as the main activity in class (Q10). Fewer than a fifth in each case said they mostly worked on their own, using booklets or other materials, listening to the teacher and taking notes, taking part in group discussions. More than half said the main activity was participating in practical activities.

**Figure 33: Students' perceptions of main activities in class**

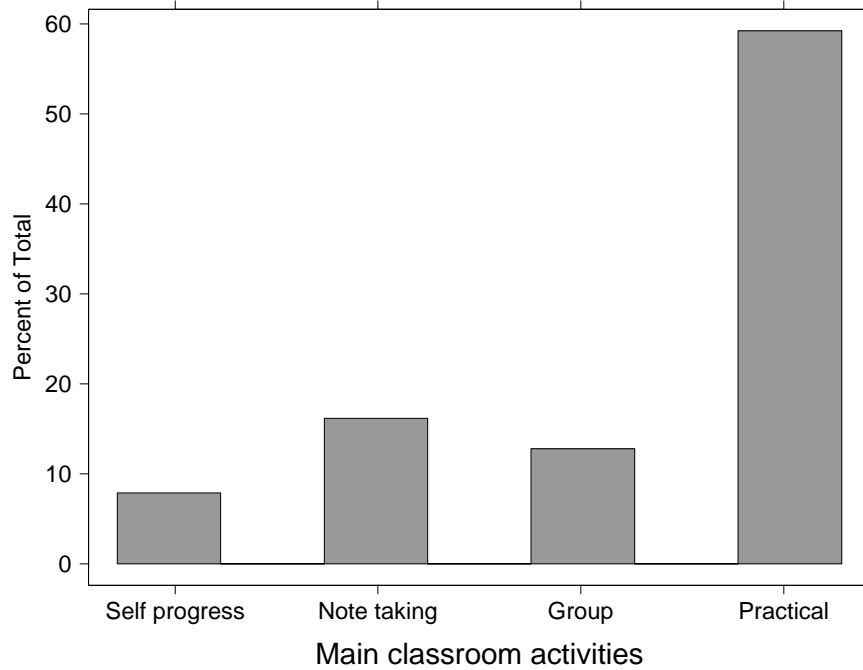
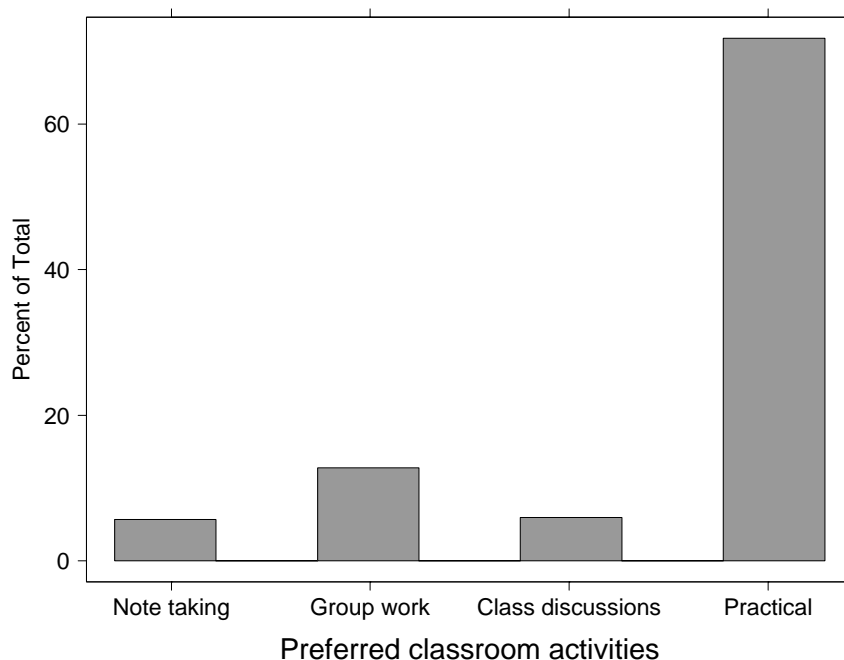


Figure 34 from the quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) shows that few of the students surveyed preferred to learn by listening to the teacher and taking notes, and fewer than one-fifth preferred to learn by taking part in group work. Few of them preferred as taking part in class discussions. More than two-thirds of the students said that their preference was doing practical activities (Q8).

**Figure 34: Students' preferred classroom activities**



### **The appropriateness for students of demands made by the SAS**

*Are the demands of the strand appropriate for the students who undertake these studies?*

The physical activities that are the focus of the SAS and the practical nature of much of the subject are seen to make this a suitable subject for many students. Teachers commented that it has integrated well with other programs and has allowed some non-academic and special-needs students to achieve some success. Many teachers also commented favourably on the flexibility of the SAS which made it easy to adapt to the needs of students, although as previously noted, they also pointed out that some of the modules were inappropriate for their students.

The quantitative data for phase 2 indicated that teachers thought that the SAS was too difficult for a small number of their students (Q6) and also that it is too easy for a small number (Q7).

The quantitative data for phase 3 in figure 35 (see appendix B for research instrument) show that more than three-quarters of the teachers disagreed with the statement that the SAS is too difficult for a substantial proportion of their students (Q6). Again, more than three-quarters disagreed with the statement that it is too easy for a substantial proportion (Q7). This suggests that the level of difficulty of the SAS is about right.

**Figure 35: Teacher views of the demands of the SAS**

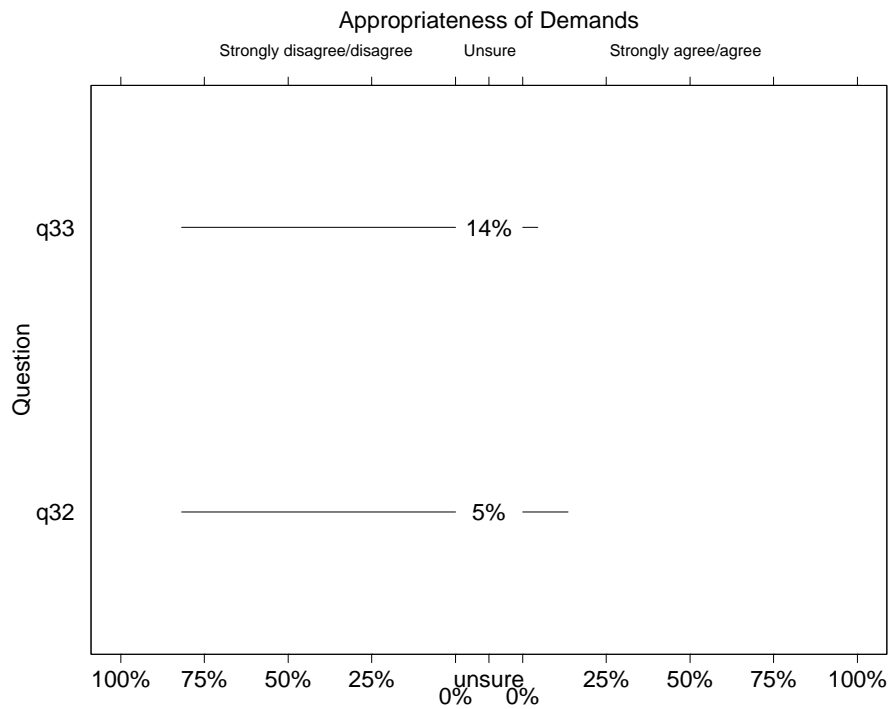
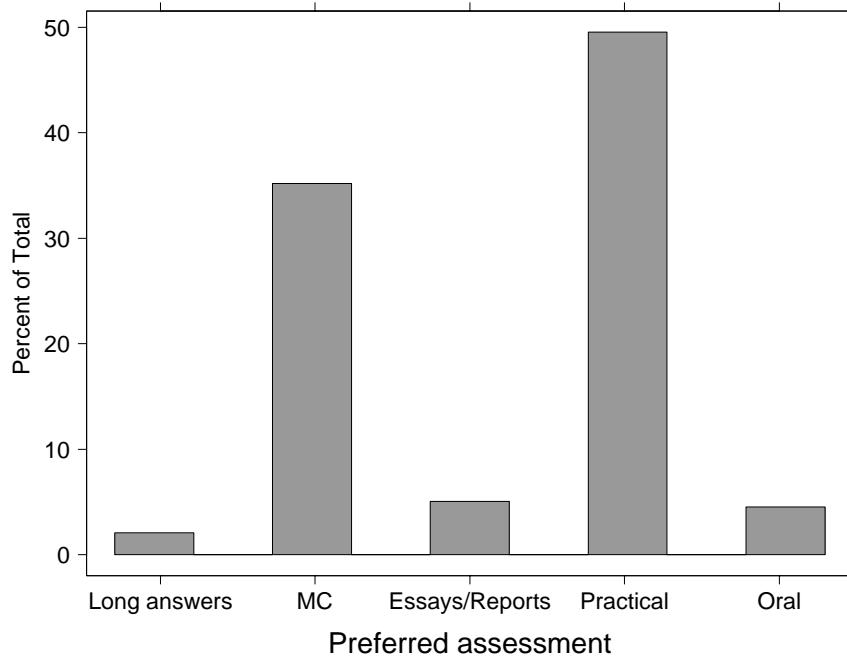


Figure 36 from the quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) shows students' preferences in assessment (Q9). More than a third indicated that they preferred multiple choice tests and almost half stated their first preference as teacher observation of practical activities.

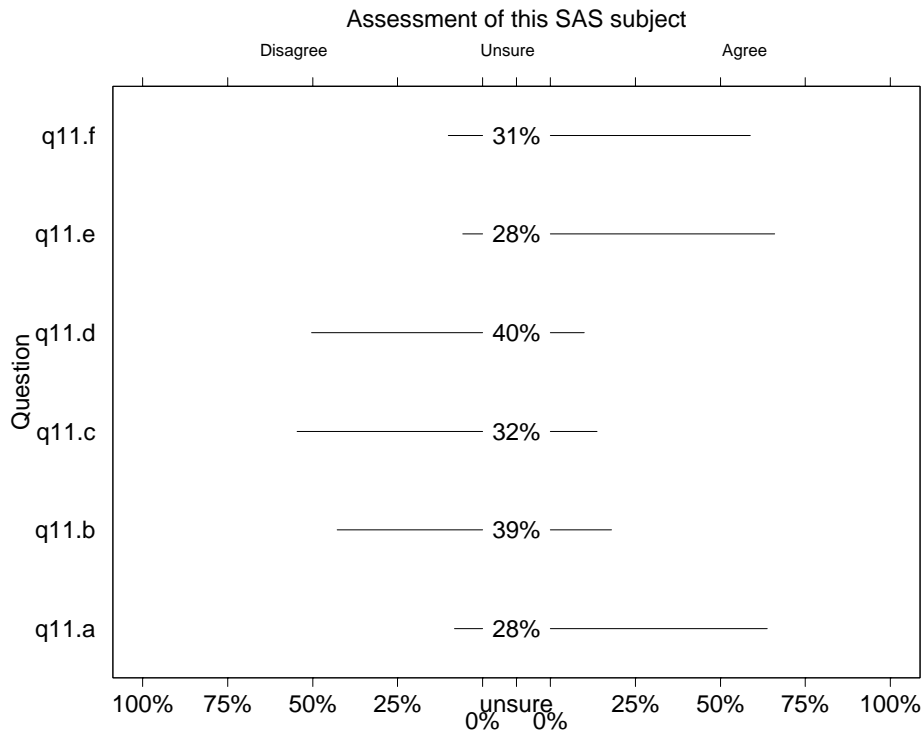
Figure 36: Students' preferences in assessment



When asked for their views about the assessment they had actually experienced, they were fairly positive. Figure 37 from the quantitative data for phase 3 (see appendix B for research instrument) shows that about two-thirds agreed that there was variety in the tasks they had undertaken (Q11.a). More than three-quarters disagreed or were unsure that there was too much assessment (Q11.b) and fewer than a fifth agreed with the statements that the assessment was too hard or too easy (Q11.c, Q11.d). Two-thirds of the students agreed that they had understood what they needed to do in order to do well in the assessment tasks (Q11.e). More than half thought that the assessment tasks were helping them to learn (Q11.f).



**Figure 37: Students' perceptions about assessment experienced**



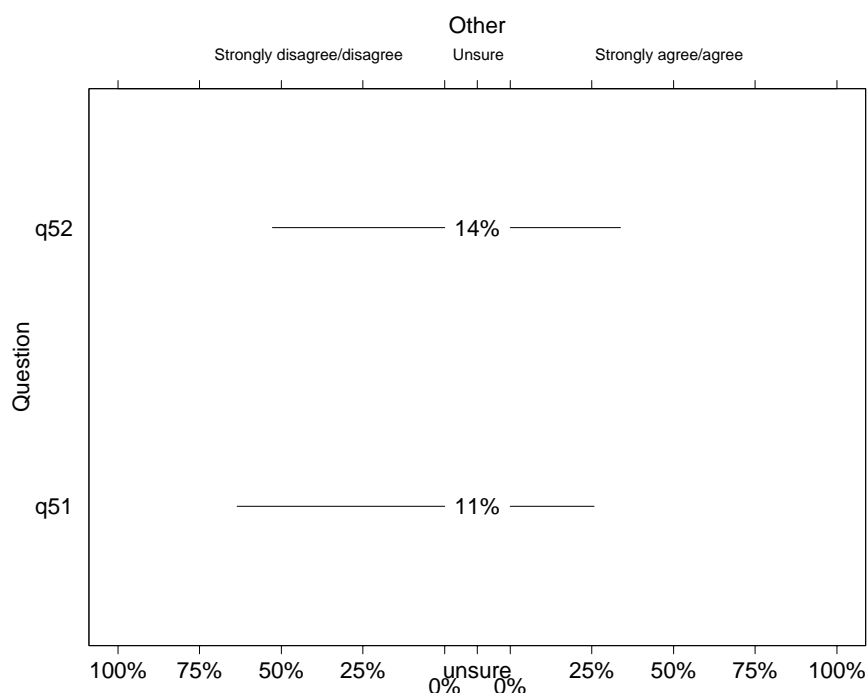
**Students who are not participating in the SAS**

*What groups of students are not participating in the SAS and why are they not participating? Should the SAS meet the needs of any of these other groups of students?*

Some teachers are clearly of the view that significant factors in the selection of this SAS by students is its placement in the school’s timetable, the fact that it is not an OP subject, or the lack of other subject choices that appeal. Some teachers commented that, in some cases, the fact that the SAS is not an OP subject deters students from choosing it. Others do not select the SAS because of the perception that it is sport-oriented and that they are not good enough at sport to succeed. For girls, this impression is compounded by the perception that classes are male-dominated.

The quantitative data for phase 2 in figure 38 (see appendix B for research instrument) show that some teachers believe there were students in their school who should be participating in the SAS but are not (Q51). This figure also suggests that more than half the responding teachers disagreed that subject selection processes encouraged OP-eligible students to take the SAS if it would benefit them (Q52).

**Figure 38: Students not participating in the SAS**



In phase 3, teachers offered few suggestions for changes to the content that might make the SAS more attractive. One teacher argued for the certificate to be at a level II with negotiated credits or advanced standing, with TAFEs offering certificates at levels III and IV in Recreation because “currently there is no benefit in attaining a level I or II certificate”. A few teachers suggested that the number of physical pursuits permitted in the program of study should be increased, especially in strand A, and a few suggested there should be less theory. One said there should be a greater focus on the role of physical activity and healthy lifestyle, one of the four main aspects. Another suggested greater opportunities to demonstrate and practise leadership skills. One teacher suggested incorporating a level II certificate because students need this to gain employment in the industry.

### **The effectiveness of the SAS for the Queensland community**

A survey of a sample group of employers indicated that the SAS is helpful in developing basic industry knowledge and skills. Employers emphasised the need for students to have good levels of communication and interpersonal skills if they were to be effective in the workplace. It appears that, as a rule, they are more likely to employ people with higher industry qualifications than Certificate I in Recreation.

The survey was conducted by the evaluation team and took the form of brief telephone interviews to gather the views of a small number of employers in the health and fitness industry about aspects related to the SAS. The findings of this survey are indicative only. The telephone interviews were intended to provide quick access to a range of views which may then help inform the revision of the study area specification. This form of contact allowed for individual interaction with interviewees, and further probing into responses where needed.

A few employers had previous knowledge of the Training Package for Outdoor

Recreation or National Community Recreation and a few knew of Certificate I in Recreation Practices and the study area specification in Physical Recreation because these had been brought to their attention by students on work experience.

Half the employers said they would not employ school leavers in their organisation because the level of qualifications necessary for the fitness industry would preclude them. Those who would take a school leaver would do so only if the employee already had suitable accreditation. All of the employers interviewed took students into their organisation for work experience and all were of the opinion that work experience was valuable or even essential for students, one commenting that it was valuable to the industry as well.

The employers felt that work experience allowed students to form some career direction, gain some necessary life experience and develop some practical skills. Mostly they commented that work experience was not a great imposition on their time and they were happy to have the students.

Employers had had varying experiences with students and were well aware that some were not suited to their industry. Some liked to meet the students first and try to screen out those who lacked interest and motivation. They said that during their work experience, students usually followed other staff members and gained a little experience in all areas. Some employers tried to roster students on shifts or have them involved at the busier times of the day to give them a realistic experience; however, this was difficult if students were able to attend only during school hours.

When employers were asked about the skills of school leavers entering employment, they commented mostly on the necessity for communication skills and “people skills” no matter what the applicant’s level of knowledge about the industry. One said that school students don’t think complex problems through because they don’t have enough experience of this and that they lack self-confidence and self-esteem.

When asked how work experience could be improved, suggestions included the need for development of communication and interpersonal skills so that students know how to communicate appropriately with clients and colleagues. Employers saw communication and teamwork as being especially important and suggested that efficient administrative work and some knowledge of financial matters would be useful areas to develop. Two said that the time for work experience was too short to give the students all the experience they would like and one of these suggested that work experience as the equivalent of a part-time job over a school term would be preferable to the more usual short-term arrangement.

Most of the employers said that, in a prospective employee, they would be looking for appropriate industry qualifications and a good base knowledge before anything else. Then they would gauge the applicant’s personality for such qualities as good interaction with others, teamwork, initiative and willingness to take direction. They would also look for maturity, confidence and a bright and confident attitude to their work. Employers said that they usually found that there was a reasonable match between industry qualifications and what they needed in an employee, although it appeared that few applicants have sufficient practical experience. In most cases, if offered a choice between a student from school and a student from a TAFE college, the employers said they would take the TAFE student, because their TAFE studies would be more focused on the specific industry, and students from TAFE would be more likely to have useful practical experience in the industry.

***APPENDIX B: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS***

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