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From CATs to course work: senior mathematics teachers' feedback on the VCE 2000.

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Following the 1997 review of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), the school-based extended Common Assessment Task (CAT) was to be discontinued in the revised VCE due to perceived problems with authentication of students' work and excessive student and teacher workloads. To address these concerns, this task was replaced in 2000 with what was conceived of as a more flexible school assessed coursework structure with a limited number of smaller tasks of reduced scope undertaken mainly in class. This paper presents survey findings of VCE mathematics teachers' views on the first year of implementation of the new structure. High teacher workload remains a significant issue in the VCE across all school sectors, but previous teacher concerns with high student workload and authentication of student work have apparently diminished. Interesting group differences emerged on the issue of authentication revealing the ongoing complexity of this issue. In terms of the type of tasks used for school-assessed coursework, many teachers reported they did not restrict themselves to those most likely to be considered of direct assistance for examination preparation. The data from this study will provide an important baseline for future research. (Introduction)

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