



GENERAL COMMENTS

This report addresses a range of issues to be considered in preparation for the examination. The requirements for this examination are described on page 31 of the *VCE Dance Study Design* and the Assessment Criteria. These documents can be downloaded from the VCAA website: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

Venue/performance issues

If a student is using props they need to be already set up when assessors enter the examination room so as not to delay the assessment schedule for other students.

Students must not bring into the examination room any substance which may alter the flooring, unless the substance is in a container or placed on a large mat provided by the student. If a student wishes to light a candle as part of his/her props, the same procedure for protecting the floor surface applies.

Bare feet or appropriate dance footwear must be worn when performing the solos as part of safe dance practice; socks are not appropriate.

If the performance is interrupted, the student should continue performing as soon as possible. The music should not be turned off unless the student clearly indicates to the assessors that he/she does not wish to continue with his/her performance.

Students need to wear tights and leotard or other costume which enables the line of the body to be seen when presenting their Technique Solo. Costumes which include long floppy trousers or long non-transparent skirts are not suitable.

Students should perform at a reasonable distance from the assessors. This distance should enable the assessors to see all aspects of the student's dance movements throughout the performance.

It is important that the recordings accompanying performances are of a good quality for both the students and assessors to hear without distortion. It is recommended that students have their music recorded at the beginning of a new cassette tape or CD with sufficient 'lead in' time, as well as having a spare cassette tape or CD that has a second recording of the music. It is important that students have their music cued when assessors enter the assessment room to avoid unnecessary waiting. Teachers are reminded that all recorded music accompanying the student's performance should be provided on cassette tape. This requirement is included in the information which accompanies the 'Statement of Intention' form sent to schools in Term 3.

Definitions of the terms used in the *VCE Dance Study Design* are published on pages 19–21 of *The Arts VCE Dance Implementation Resource Kit*, April 2001. This kit can be downloaded from the VCAA website <www.vcaa.vic.edu.au>. It is essential that students are familiar with all these terms and apply them throughout their practical work.

Technique Solo

The Technique Solo, based on the key knowledge and skills specified for Unit 3 Outcome 3, is designed to assess student's ability to demonstrate a range of physical skills through a range of body actions and the varied use of the elements of movement in solo performance.

Overall, students addressed all aspects of the task equally well. Students who presented accomplished performances demonstrated a high standard of technique by presenting excellent control of a range of physical skills through various body actions. These students also demonstrated an excellent understanding of contrasting qualities of movement through presenting a wide range of variation in time, space and energy combinations, and maintained excellent skills in projection throughout the performance.

Criteria 1 to 4 demonstrate control of a range of physical skills within a range of body actions

In the study design, body actions include Gesture, Locomotion, Elevation, Falling and Turning. Teachers need to guide students' ability to show variation within each action to allow different physical skills to be shown. For example, repeating an eight-count phrase of turns on the diagonal from two feet to two feet will not show different physical skills though the body action of turning. Not showing variation will result in a lower score than might otherwise be achieved. Opportunities for learning and experimenting with different ways of demonstrating physical skills through various body actions should be included in technique classes undertaken on a weekly basis.

There are many approaches to developing a student's technique. For example, the student's favoured dance technique/s could be used as a starting point to develop a personal movement vocabulary. A number of sources or one dance technique may be used to plan ways of developing student's awareness of various physical skills through body actions. Teaching of specific technique could be complemented through incorporating improvisation as a method for the student's exploration of new material.

Methods of teaching to develop student's technique used should be informed by knowledge of the safe use of the dancer's body. Knowledge developed in Unit 1 Outcome 1 can be applied in a practical way as students learn to safely execute various physical skills/body actions.

The choice of technique/s used in the dance should allow student to address each of the criteria at the highest level.

Criteria 5 to 7 demonstrate skill in the use of the elements of movement, namely time, space and energy

Most students demonstrated a sound level of skill in varying the use of all the elements of movement throughout their solo. The *Revised VCE Dance Teachers' Resource Booklet 2001*, a joint project of the VCAA and The Australian Dance Council (Ausdance), includes information on the expressive use of the elements of movement and approaches to studying contrasting qualities of movement. This information could be used as a starting point when developing teaching activities relating to the elements of movement.

Criterion 8 demonstrate skill in the use of projection

It is important that students allocate sufficient time to develop their skills in projection during the rehearsal process. It appeared that some students were not well rehearsed and concentrated too heavily on remembering and/or executing the movement. Students are reminded that their performance should demonstrate use of whole body focus and control in transitions between movements.

Other issues

Teachers should consider the use of checklists designed to help students monitor the degree to which they have included all aspects of the examination criteria.

Students' learning opportunities can be enhanced by inclusion of sequential and integrated learning activities across all outcomes. For example, theoretical understanding of the use of physical skills, body actions and the elements of movements can be developed when completing Unit 3 Outcome 1. This understanding can then be used as a starting point from which to clarify all aspects of the task for the technique solo. The learnt group dance work in Unit 3 Outcome 2 should extend and develop the student's use of physical skills, body actions and the elements of movement through the accurate reproduction of challenging movement phrases. Aspects of learning activities undertaken in Unit 3 Outcome 3 should consolidate students' understanding of physical skills, body actions and the elements of movement through exploring, learning and refining a wide range of body actions which vary the time, space and energy.

Participation in set technique classes where students reproduce movement phrases is an effective way for students to develop a range of body actions which vary the use of time, space and energy. Experience in using improvisation techniques can assist students to develop their personal movement vocabulary.

Exploration and selection of movements are crucial stages of the dance-making processes. At these stages students should aim to challenge themselves and extend their existing skills and movement vocabulary. Teachers can assist by monitoring the level of difficulty within the movements and advise students to include safe movements which challenge them but still remain within their capabilities. Knowledge and understanding of safe dance principles developed in the Dance Technique area of study should be applied in all practical activities including performance work.

The choice of expressive intention on which the Technique Solo is based should influence the score achieved on the criteria. Some students base their expressive intention on the exploration of a range of body actions and the use of the elements of movement. Other students use an additional stimulus and base their expressive intention on an idea or theme which will enhance their ability to explore a broad range of physical skills, body actions and the elements of movement. Whatever type of expressive intention is chosen it should not restrict the student's ability to address the criteria to the highest possible standard.

The Technique Solo should be presented as a single uninterrupted performance of between at least two and a half minutes to five minutes in duration.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The criteria for the award of grades are designed to assess performance skills and a range of movement skills and are used for direct assessment. Each criterion is weighted equally and is marked on an eight-point scale (0–7) that assesses the extent to which the performance demonstrates the required qualities.

Criterion 1 Control of body alignment and coordination of body parts within a range of body actions

A high level performance demonstrated excellent control of body alignment and coordination when a range of body actions were being executed. This involved maintenance of appropriate muscle tone; safe and appropriate alignment of head, shoulder girdle, hip, knee and ankle joints; and complex coordination of body parts.

Criterion 2 Maintenance of stamina and control of muscular strength within a range of body actions

A high level performance demonstrated optimum use of stamina and excellent control of muscular strength within a range of body actions. This involved use of balanced positions; complex turns, falls and elevated movements; and very fast or very slow movements.

Criterion 3 Control in the use of balance within a range of body actions

A high level performance demonstrated excellent control in the use of balance within a range of body actions. This involved balances using various body parts as well as appropriate use of balance in complex turns, falls and elevated movements.

Criterion 4 Control in the use of flexibility within a range of body actions

A high level performance demonstrated excellent control in the use of flexibility within a range of body actions. This involved flexible use of all joints.

Criterion 5 Skill in the varied use of time

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in the use of time. This involved complex use of both rhythm and tempo.

Criterion 6 Skill in the varied use of space

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in the use of space/body shape. This involves the use of a range of curved and angular movements in both the upper and lower parts of the body.

Criterion 7 Skill in the varied use of energy

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in the use of energy. This involves use of movements ranging from fluent to bound use of flow, and light to strong use of force.

Criterion 8 Skill in projection

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in the use of whole body focus and control in transitions between movements.

Composition Solo

The Composition Solo, based on the key knowledge and skills specified for Unit 4 Outcome 2, is designed to assess students' ability to demonstrate solo compositional skills through the expressive use of spatial organisation and the composing of a unified composition. A unified dance composition includes a clear beginning, development/s and resolution.

Students demonstrated a good understanding of spatial organisation and use of a beginning and development/s to form a unified composition. However, overall results indicated that many students did not perform well on Criterion 7 in relation to other criteria. Students need to understand the importance of the resolution in unifying a dance work and be given opportunities to experiment with different ways of resolving a work.

Students who crafted outstanding compositions demonstrated a sophisticated use of spatial design to communicate their expressive intention. They also demonstrated an excellent capacity to select and arrange movement expressively, through the use of phrases, to form a unified composition that had a clear beginning, development/s and resolution. These students also maintained excellent performance skills throughout the solo performance.

Criteria 1 to 4 demonstrate skill in the varied use of spatial organisation

The study design defines spatial organisation as including the use of direction, level, focus and dimension. Students should include a range of each of these aspects in their Composition Solo. An understanding of spatial organisation can initially be developed in a theoretical way when completing Unit 4 Outcome 1.

Criteria 5 to 7 demonstrate skill in the varied arrangement of movement into thematically related phrases and sections to express the intention of the student in a unified composition

An understanding of the expressive use of phrases and sections can be developed in a theoretical way when completing Unit 4 Outcome 1 and should build on an understanding of the relationship between the elements of dance design (expressive intention, form and movement vocabulary) developed in Unit 3 Outcome 1.

Criterion 8 use of performance skills in communicating the expressive intention

It is important that students allocate sufficient time to develop their performance skills during the rehearsal process.

Other issues

Choosing and refining an expressive intention on which the composition solo will be based can be influential in determining the score achieved on the criteria. The expressive intention must provide students with enough scope to develop and present a unified composition with a clear beginning, development and resolution. The expressive intention should also provide stimulus for the movement vocabulary and spatial organisation to be developed.

Composition Solos which were awarded lower marks generally presented an expressive intention which was either unsuitable for addressing the criteria or appeared to be far too complex for the experience and/or dance skills of the students. In order to ensure the choice of expressive intention is appropriate, teachers need to consider the types of processes students will use in order to select their expressive intention. In some cases, it was evident that students had not given sufficient thought to how the selection of their expressive intention could be translated to the set criteria before commencing their dance making processes. *The Revised VCE Dance Teacher's Resource Booklet 2001*, a joint project of the VCAA and Ausdance, includes information on the role of the expressive intention, as well as ideas for selecting and researching an expressive intention for a dance work. Students could use these ideas in relation to the assessment criteria, when going through the process of selecting an expressive intention.

Common faults in low scoring composition solos also included selecting a movement vocabulary which did not reflect the chosen expressive intention. Such dances often began with several phrases of gestural movement to communicate the expressive intention, and then lapsed into a series of movement sequences which clearly did not develop or relate to the student's chosen intention. Students need to ensure the movements are selected and arranged through the use of choreographic devices to form a unified relationship between the beginning, development/s and resolution, and to communicate their expressive intention as outlined on the pro forma presented to the assessors.

Low scoring composition solos often did not use an appropriate compositional form to create a unified composition. Following the structure of the music does not create a beginning, development and resolution for a dance work based on an expressive intention.

Another common fault was the use of gestural movements which reflected the lyrics of the music. The movement vocabulary needs to be sufficiently developed in each section to convey the chosen expressive intention. The choice of expressive intention needs to allow for a change in the movement vocabulary.

Most students completed the set pro forma provided by the VCAA outlining the expressive intention of their Composition Solo from beginning to resolution. Students must be careful to provide succinct information concerning the expressive intention given to each section of the solo. It is not necessary to describe the use of spatial organisation or the movement vocabulary used. Teachers should guide the writing of this pro forma as part of the process involved in developing the Composition Solo as the solo is marked against this outline.

If students choose to combine more than one music selection it is important they consider why it is necessary. Students need to be aware that combining for example three different pieces of music does not automatically mean that a unified piece of music is formed. If students do combine music they need to ensure there are appropriate transitions between the pieces and that in combination, a clear musical structure is formed. Any cuts in the music need to be clean, as badly cut music will affect the transitions between the sections. The choice of music should enhance the students' ability to find movement solutions in communicating the expressive intention.

Knowledge and understanding of safe dance principles developed in the Dance Technique area of study should be applied in all areas of dance making including performance work.

The Composition Solo should be presented as a single uninterrupted performance of at least two and a half minutes and a maximum of five minutes in duration.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The criteria for the award of grades assess performance skills and a range of composition skills and are used for direct assessment. Each criterion is weighted equally and is marked on an eight-point scale (0–7) that assesses the extent to which the performance demonstrates:

Criterion 1 Skill in the varied use of direction to communicate the student's expressive intention

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in the expressive use of direction in order to effectively communicate the student's expressive intention. This involved movement performed in circular, diagonal, forward, backward, sideways, upward and downward directions.

Criterion 2 Skill in the varied use of level to communicate the student's expressive intention

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in the expressive use of levels in order to effectively communicate the student's expressive intention. This involved movement performed on a range of levels from high to low.

Criterion 3 Skill in the varied use of focus to communicate the student's expressive intention

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in the expressive use of focus to effectively communicate the student's expressive intention. This involved varied use of head, eye and body focus.

Criterion 4 Skill in the varied use of dimension to communicate the student's expressive intention

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in the expressive use of dimension to effectively communicate the student's expressive intention. This involved movement shapes ranging from small to large.

Criterion 5 Skill in the selection of movement vocabulary and expressive arrangement of movement to form a unified composition with a clear beginning

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in expressively selecting and arranging movement, to form a clear beginning in the dance work. This involves establishment of movement material, through linking movement into phrases that effectively introduced and communicated the student's expressive intention.

Criterion 6 Skill in the selection of movement vocabulary and expressive arrangement of movement to form a unified composition with a clear development

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in expressively selecting and arranging movement, to form a clear development in the dance work. This involved introduction of new aspects of movement that effectively communicated the expressive intention of the student in relation to the movement material introduced in the beginning.

Criterion 7 Skill in the selection of movement vocabulary and expressive arrangement of movement to form a unified composition with a clear resolution

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in expressively selecting and arranging movement, to form a clear resolution in the dance work. This involved the use of movement material that clearly resolved and unified the dance work in relation to the movement material used in the beginning and development.

Criterion 8 Use of performance skills in communicating the student's expressive intention

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in maintaining for example, appropriate levels of energy, expressive use of movement and use of facial expression.

© VCAA 2003

Published by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
41 St Andrews Place, East Melbourne 3002

Photocopying: This publication can only be photocopied for the use of students and teachers in Victorian Schools.

