

Dance GA 2: Performance examination

Venue/performance issues

Students must not bring into the examination room any water, sand or other substance that might alter the surface of the flooring, unless the substance is in a container and 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 procedures for protecting the floor surface apply.

If the performance is interrupted, the student should continue the dance work as soon as possible after the interruption. The music (if used) should not be turned off unless the student has clearly indicated to the assessors that he/she does not wish to proceed with his/her performance.

Students should dance 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.

Most students managed their allotted practice time effectively and did not physically exhaust themselves prior to the assessment of the performance.

Some students used poor quality recordings to accompany their performances. It is important that the recording is clear and loud enough for both the assessors and the student to hear. It is recommended that students have their music recorded at the beginning of the tape which should have sufficient 'lead in' time, as well as have a spare tape that has a second recording of the music. Teachers are reminded that all recorded music accompanying the student's performance should be provided on cassette tape.

Definitions of terms used in the *VCE Dance Study design* were published on pages 19–21 of *The Arts: VCE Dance Implementation Resource Kit*, April 2001. It is essential that students are familiar with all these terms and use them consistently in all discussion and written work related to practical activities.

Technique solo

The Technique solo, based on the key knowledge and skills specified for Outcome 3 Unit 3, is designed to assess students' ability to demonstrate 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 generally had good control of movement as well as skill in varying the use of the elements of movement. Students who presented very accomplished performances demonstrated a broad range of body actions through excellent control of physical skills. These students also demonstrated a broad range of contrasting qualities of movement through varying the way in which time, space and energy were combined and maintained excellent skills in projection throughout the performance.

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

In the study design, body actions include turning, elevation, falling, gesture and locomotion. Teachers need to ensure that students are given opportunities to consider, experiment and learn different ways of demonstrating physical skills through a range of body actions. As noted in previous Assessment Reports, some students were particularly skilled in executing certain types of body actions but included limited types of other body actions. This resulted in lower scores than students might have otherwise achieved if they had thought of different ways in which physical skills could have been demonstrated.

There are many different ways of developing the student's capacity for movement. For example, the students' favoured dance technique/s could be used as a starting point to develop their movement vocabulary. A number of sources or one dance technique may be used to plan ways of developing students' physical skills and body actions. Teaching of specific technique/s should be complemented through the use of improvisation as a method of developing students' skill in exploring new and original movement.

Whatever approach is taken to develop students' technique, the method of teaching will need to 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 physical skills and body actions. The choice of technique/s should also allow the student to meet all aspects of the criteria.

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

In general, students demonstrated good skill in varying the use of all the elements of movement. Students need to be aware that the choice of expressive intention for their dance work should not prevent them from including movements which range from fluent to bound use of flow and from light to strong use of force. The *Revised VCE Dance Teachers' Resource Booklet 2001*, a joint project of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and The Australian Dance Council, 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 and learning activities relating to the elements of movement.

Criterion 8 Students have to demonstrate skill in projection

For Criterion 8, 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. This detracted from their ability to demonstrate use of whole body focus and control in transitions between movements.

Teachers should consider the use of check lists or pro formas designed to help students monitor the degree to which they have included all aspects of these criteria.

Planning of sequential and integrated learning activities across all outcomes needs to be taken into consideration to enhance students' learning opportunities. Aspects of learning activities undertaken in Outcomes 2 and 3 should inform students' understanding of physical skills, body actions, time, space and energy. Dance technique classes should help students apply their understanding of physical skills, body actions and the elements of movement through exploring, learning and refining a range of body actions which vary the use of time, space and energy. While students should undertake set exercises that challenge them to develop a range of body actions which vary the use of time, space and energy, it is essential that they also undertake improvisations to develop their own personal movement vocabulary. Improvisation helps to develop the student's ability to respond creatively when exploring a range of body actions, varied through the elements of movement. The learnt group dance work in Unit 3 Outcome 2 should also extend and refine the student's movement vocabulary (note that this outcome is not assessed in the end-of-year performance examination). An understanding of physical skills, body actions and the elements of movement can initially be developed in a theoretical way when completing Outcome 1 Unit 3.

For some students the choice of expressive intention on which the Technique solo is based can be crucial in determining the score achieved on the criteria. Some students base their expressive intention on an exploration of a range of body actions and the use of the elements of movement itself. Other students need additional stimulus and base their expressive intention on an idea or theme which will enhance their ability to explore a broad range of movement and variation in the use of the elements of movement. Whatever type of expressive intention is chosen, it should not restrict the student's ability to address the criteria at the highest possible standard. Teachers should advise students regarding the influence that different types of expressive intentions can have on the student ability to meet the criteria.

Students should challenge themselves when exploring and selecting movements. Teachers will need to monitor the level of difficulty within the movements and advise students to include safe movements that 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.

Students need to wear a leotard, unitard or other costume that enables the full line of the body to be seen when presenting their Technique solo. Floppy long trousers and non-transparent long skirts are not suitable clothing.

The Technique 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 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:

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 each body action were being executed. This involved maintenance of appropriate levels of muscle tone; safe use of 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 a very high level 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 rhythm and tempo.

Criterion 6 Skill in the varied use of space

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

Criterion 8 Skill in projection

A high level performance demonstrated excellent skill in 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 Outcome 2 Unit 4, 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 a clear resolution.

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

Students who created very competent compositions demonstrated sophisticated use of spatial design in order to communicate the expressive intention of their dance work. 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 very clear beginning, development/s and resolution. These students also maintained excellent performance skills throughout the solo performance.

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

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

Criteria 5 to 7 Students have to 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 Outcome 1 Unit 4 and should build on an understanding of the relationship between the elements of dance design; namely, expressive intention, form and movement vocabulary developed in Outcome 1 in Unit 3.

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

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

The choice of expressive intention on which the Composition solo is based can be crucial in determining the score achieved on the criteria. As noted in previous Assessment Reports, some of the students' choice of expressive intention was unsuitable for addressing the criteria or appeared to be beyond the student's experience. In order to ensure that the chosen expressive intention is realistic, teachers need to consider the types of processes that students will use in order to select an appropriate expressive intention. It was evident that some students had not researched or explored their expressive intention before major work on the dance work commenced. The *Revised VCE Dance Teachers' Resource Booklet 2001*, a joint project of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and The Australian Dance Council, 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.

Some students still selected movements which developed little or no clear relationship with the expressive intention. They often began their dances with a couple of gestures to communicate the expressive intention then fell back into a series of stylistic sequences of movements which clearly had no relationship to the expressive intention. Whatever the expressive intention, students need to ensure the movements are selected and arranged to communicate the expressive intention and form a unified relationship between the beginning, development/s and resolution of the solo dance work.

Students are required to complete a pro forma provided by the VCAA outlining the expressive intention of their Composition solo from beginning to resolution. Most students completed the pro forma satisfactorily. Some students did not provide sufficient information about the expressive intention of the dance work and described the use of spatial organisation instead. Teachers need to remind students that the language used in the student's outline of the expressive intention must be consistent with the language used in the *VCE Dance Study design*. Explanations of terms used in the *VCE Dance Study design* and other associated terms are provided on pages 15–17 of *The Arts VCE Dance Implementation Resource Kit*, April 2001.

If students choose to combine two or more pieces of music it is essential that they carefully consider why it is necessary. Students need to be aware that combining 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 needs to be clean when combining pieces, as extraneous noise can affect the quality of the overall performance. The choice of music should enhance the students' ability to find creative movement solutions in communicating their expressive intention. It

might, of course, be appropriate to cover the face at times, for example with a mask or hood, depending on what the student is expressing through the dance work.

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 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, forwards, backwards, sideways, upwards and/or downwards 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 in order 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 use of dimension in movement in order to effectively communicate the student's expressive intention. This involved movement shapes ranging from large to small.

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 involved 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/s

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, in order 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 the development/s.

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.