2020 VCE Dance performance examination report

General comments

In 2020 the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority produced an examination based on the *VCE Dance Adjusted Study Design for 2020 only*.

In 2020 the Dance Solo performance examination consisted of the performance of one solo, the cohesive composition. The number of solos presented for assessment was updated in 2020 to reflect the restrictions brought about by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Student work presented during the examination period reflected this change.

Specific information

Cohesive composition solo

Students’ skills in artistry were evident in the 2020 examination. Students benefited from working through a planning and researching stage, and the better performances communicated a clear intention. Students thought about the number of sections they wanted to present, the selection and final arrangement of the movement vocabulary.

The selection of production elements such as costumes and music were appropriate. Students who developed their own soundtrack had edited the music well and ensured there was cohesion in the final version. Music with and without lyrics was used.

Statement of Intention

This year students based their cohesive composition solos on a range of different intentions. Students who scored highly wrote concise and clear statements that were not too simplistic or formula-based.

Some students selected intentions that were overly complex. This hindered their ability to select and arrange appropriate movement vocabulary that reflected the intention. Students need to consider the ‘less is more’ motto when writing out their statement. Too much information, including statements that are not evident in the choreography, makes it difficult for assessors to interpret.

Selection of movement

Some students included unnecessary movements that didn’t relate directly to the intention. Often students relied too heavily on presenting technique rather than selecting movement vocabulary that reflected their statement. Some included a series of literal gestures in place of complex and original movement selections, while others chose to create movement to reflect the lyrics of the music rather than the language stated in the intention. This reduced the students’ ability to show skill in choreography and reflect the prescribed criteria.

Arrangement of movement to create a formal structure

Some students did not identify the overarching formal structure of the dance and did not outline what part of the intention related to each section. This is an important aspect of the examination as students need to draw the attention of the assessors to each section of the solo.

Students also often identified an incorrect formal structure on the Statement of Intention. For example, some stated that the formal structure was binary (A, B) when the solo clearly had three sections. Others stated that the formal structure was ternary (A, B, A), then included a narrative intention that outlined three different sections.

When filling out the formal structure on the Statement of Intention, students need to ensure they provide a ‘known’ choreographic structure and not the structure of the music. The formal structure should be accompanied by the number of sections they intend to present, as this allows the assessors to mark directly against this information. No other information is required.

Arrangement of movement using choreographic devices

The arrangement of choreographic devices to structure the sections and communicate the intention was generally not handled as well. When students outline the devices for the assessors to read, they are alerting the panel to a particular aspect of the choreography. Therefore, it wasn’t necessary for students to include a long ‘list’ of different choreographic devices without any movement example(s). For instance, if stating that a motif had been incorporated, students needed to include the movement example.

In their performances students often did not clearly integrate the stated choreographic device(s) to effectively structure and progress the intention. The statement of the choreographic device(s) used should be accurate and reflect what is present in the choreography.

Often the choice of choreographic devices was not appropriate for the stated intention and/or not integrated/developed to create the required cohesion between the sections.

Arrangement of movement using the elements of spatial organisation

The spatial elements of eye/body focus and level were generally handled better than direction and dimension throughout the choreography. Lower scoring performances didn’t purposely manipulate all elements of spatial organisation to reflect their intention. Students need to address how these elements will be manipulated and arranged in the planning stages of the choreography by thinking about how different combinations of level, direction, eye/body focus and personal dimension could be used to reflect their intended ideas.

Performance practices and artistry

Students were required to demonstrate skill in the use of performance practices and artistry to communicate the intention to the audience. This was achieved by the majority of students. Students generally demonstrated commitment in the communication of the intention and were able to deliver an artistic interpretation of their ideas.