



GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2007 Dance written examination paper underwent a change in format to reflect the re-accredited *Dance VCE Study Design*. As in previous years, the examination questions were based on the key knowledge and skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4. Students were required to demonstrate their understanding of choreographic principles and the prescribed works studied in both units.

The examination paper was comprised of six questions, which included a scenario question that required students to apply their knowledge and understanding of processes involved in the learning, safe rehearsal and performance of a group dance work. Questions 4, 5 and 6 related to dance works selected from the Prescribed List of dance works published annually in the *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET*. Responses indicated that the students had studied appropriate works selected from the current prescribed list. Teachers should note that the prescribed list has not changed for 2008. All questions were compulsory and students could not attain high marks if they did not answer all questions.

The marks allocated for each question will vary from year to year and are indicated on the examination paper at the end of each question. Students should use this information to plan the length and/or amount of detail required for each response. Students undertaking VCE Dance in 2008 can use aspects of past written examinations from 2001–2006 which are consistent with the revised format of the study design and other material, such as assessment reports and sample examination material, available on the VCAA website <www.vcaa.vic.edu.au> to assist in their examination preparation.

Students should read each question carefully to ensure that they understand what is being tested. They should identify the key words and phrases, consider how the weighting of each question will impact upon the depth of knowledge required and ensure they cover all aspects of the question in their response.

Students who gained high marks in all questions demonstrated consistent use of correct terminology as well as detailed knowledge and understanding of the key knowledge and skills relevant to each question.

Students who did not gain high marks did not provide sufficient detail, displayed a limited understanding of the concept(s) involved, and/or showed limited knowledge of appropriate dance terminology. The glossary attached to the re-accredited study design contains explanations of the terms used in the study. It is essential that students become familiar with these terms early in the year and use them consistently in all written tasks, including the examination. Diagrams were awarded marks only if they provided information that was additional to written responses.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	13	2	9	6	10	6	53	4.2

This question tested students' understanding of Outcome 2 of Unit 3, the processes involved in the choreography, rehearsal and performance of a solo dance work.

High-scoring responses correctly identified and defined three different movement creation processes. Full marks were only awarded for the required definitions if the answer demonstrated a clear understanding of each movement creation process selected.

Appropriate processes included any of:

- improvisation
- selection
- arrangement
- evaluation
- refinement.

Generally this question was well understood; however, some students lapsed into a description of various choreographic processes, which affected their overall score.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

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Improvisation: experimenting with unchoreographed movement using one or more stimuli including music, criteria, a theme, a central movement, and many more.

Arrangement: the distribution, ordering and linking of individual movements, short sequences/phrases or larger sections using techniques such as choreographic devices.

Refinement: the fine tuning, improvement and adjustments of choreographed movement using a variety of techniques eg. feedback, slow rehearsal, checklists, recording, etc.

Question 2

This question tested students' understanding of Outcome 2 of Unit 4, the Composition Solo.

Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	37	63	0.6

Responses that gained the mark correctly listed of all three parts that form the structure of a unified composition: beginning, development(s) and resolution.

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	15	46	15	24	1.5

Responses that gained high marks used correct dance terminology to accurately explain how the selected expressive intention created the sections of a unified composition.

To answer this part of the question effectively students needed to make some reference to how the expressive intention 'created' the sections of a unified composition. This required students to include in their explanation an account of how they created a unified composition by linking their discussion of the expressive intention to aspects of structure such as the use of transitions, motif, how phrases were linked to create sections, highlights/climaxes and/or formal structure.

Low-scoring responses often lapsed into a synopsis of the expressive intention from beginning to resolution without making any links to the structure of a unified composition.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response to both parts of the question.

2a.

Beginning (the first section of the solo/ laying out the initial theme); Development (creating a contrast or a development of the theme); Resolution (creating a logical conclusion).

2b.

My expressive intention included three clearly outlined sections. Beginning (detained), development (manipulated) and resolution (freed). This allowed me to create a problem in the beginning section (being detained), explore it through the development by varying the movement vocabulary (manipulation) and resolve the problem with different choices of movement vocabulary in the resolution (escape to freedom). The three sections were clearly different but unified by the use of clear transitions to create a unified composition and a narrative formal structure.

Question 3

This question tested students' understanding of Outcome 3 of Unit 3, dance technique.

Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	2	10	26	62	2.5

Responses that gained high marks outlined three correct or appropriate aspects of dance technique that a dancer must be aware of when dancing in a group context.

Answers needed to reflect the key knowledge and skills outlined in Unit 3, Outcome 3 under the heading Dance Technique. Appropriate aspects of dance technique may have included any of:

- warm up/down and safe stretching techniques with reference to specific muscle groups
- alignment principles; that is, plumb line, core stability, etc.

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- use of safe dance techniques in the execution of all body actions; for example, spotting when turning, sequential bending through the joints of the body when falling, correct preparations and landings when elevating, etc.
- safe practice when working with, or taking rehearsals with, others.

Each aspect of technique needed to be referred to in a group context.

Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	13	6	25	10	22	4	19	3.1

Responses that gained high marks presented a plausible explanation of why each aspect of dance technique outlined in part a. of the question is important when dancing in a group context. To achieve full marks students needed to present three clear explanations that linked to their response to part a. Explanations that did not relate to a group context were not awarded marks as the focus of the question was on the importance to all members of the group.

In general, most students answered part a. correctly, showing a sound understanding of various aspects of dance technique. However, many students did not extend this information in part b. Low-scoring responses either did not offer an accurate and/or plausible explanation or presented information which applied to the individual dancer not a group of dancers.

Following is an excerpt of a high level response to both parts of the question:

Part a. outlined a correct aspect of dance technique.

Maintaining the alignment principle of core and trunk stability by switching on the abdominal and gluteal muscle group.

This was explained further in part b.

Each dancer in the group must maintain their core and trunk stability as this will not only allow more accurate reproduction of the choreography but also lower the risk of falling in the pathway of others and causing injury because engaging core stability aids in balance and can therefore correctly maintain this physical skill while executing complex group choreography.

Question 4

Work chosen	None	1	2	3	4	5	6
%	0	56	12	13	15	1	3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Average
%	2	0	2	1	4	2	8	2	5	3	9	3	13	3	9	3	9	2	21	11.9

This question tested students' understanding of Outcome 1 of Unit 3 – cultural influences on solo prescribed works.

Responses that gained high marks:

- identified and described three relevant cultural influences on the choreographer's choice of movement vocabulary
- presented a succinct explanation of how each of the three cultural influences identified impacted on the choreographer's choices of movement vocabulary
- presented a description of a movement or movement phrase that resulted from, or was influenced by, each of the three cultural influences identified. Often students selected three very different examples of movements or movement phrases to avoid repetition in their answer.

Low-scoring responses showed a limited understanding of the cultural influence(s). The impact of the identified cultural influence was either discussed in an inaccurate or limited way or not discussed at all, and most failed to provide a movement example or discussed the movement vocabulary using too much detail.

Very low-scoring responses tended to describe the choreographer's methods for arranging movement, the choreographer's use of the elements of movement and/or the expressive intention in relation to the selection of movement vocabulary.

Following is an excerpt from a response which achieved a high mark.

A historical influence on Alvin Ailey's choice of movement vocabulary in the solo 'Cry' would have been Ailey's early training with Lester Horton. Horton created a dance technique which explored different ways the body could move. His explorations took the form of 'studies'. Some of the studies developed balance, some strength and others worked



on the swinging action of the body. In the Horton technique the dancer developed an awareness of space and projected strength. The techniques learnt from Horton impact upon Ailey's choreography in the solo 'Cry'. Variations of these techniques can be seen throughout the solo and underpin the movement vocabulary used within the sections. For example, during the development section of 'Cry' the manipulation of the Horton technique is evident, most obviously when the soloist performs a series of single turns punctuated with sharp, held diagonal gestures of the arms and torso. This example reflects the Horton technique as it focuses on the use of elongated lines, balances and diagonal tensions.

Question 5

Work chosen	None	1	2	3	4	5	6
%	1	21	15	37	19	1	6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	8	1	5	3	6	3	5	2	7	3	6	3	6	5	6	5	6	4	7	3	6	10.2

This question tested students' understanding of Outcome 1 of Unit 3, choreographic principles associated with solo prescribed works. Responses that gained high marks:

- accurately identified and described the choreographer's use of body actions to communicate the expressive intention in two different movement phrases
- accurately described the choreographic manipulation of all three elements of movement (time, space and energy) to communicate the expressive intention in each of the two movement phrases identified
- **described the expressive intention communicated in each of the two movement phrases identified.**

Lower-scoring responses provided insufficient detailed examples when describing the elements of movement and/or focused on the description of body actions used to communicate the expressive intention.

Very low-scoring responses did not use correct terminology when describing the use of body actions and/or the manipulation of the elements of movement. For example, energy was described in terms of 'high' or 'low', or space in terms of 'lots of space'.

Marks were not awarded if the expressive intention for each movement phrase was not stated or if movement phrases were not identified (that is, the whole dance was discussed).

Following is an excerpt from a response which achieved a high mark.

The expressive intention of Percussion 4 is the celebration of dance and masculinity of the male dancer. The first movement phrase I have chosen is from the opening sequence when the male soloist is located in the centre of the stage. Gesture was used in this phrase when the dancer brushes his hair back to show confidence and the masculinity of the dancer. The phrase progresses to show more technically challenging movements, the dancer performs a series of fouette turns, high elevated leaps, and turning elevations before finishing in stillness when the performer holds a position. To communicate the expressive intention Bob Fosse manipulates time by using the accents in the music to create an even rhythm, and the tempo throughout the phrase accelerates to become fast. The duration of the phrase is long to create a sense of space within the phrase. Space is manipulated through the use of curved and angular body shapes. Curved shape is evident in the upper body particularly the arms which open and close with ease, and angular shapes are evident in the lower body especially when the knee joint is held in flexion during the turns. The phrase begins in axial position and travels through space using a diagonal direction, a high level and a large use of dimension to convey the masculinity and showmanship of the dancer. The use of energy also supports the expressive intention. The qualities explored are percussive (shrugging shoulders on beat of the music) and sustained/suspended when performing fouettes and leaps while maintaining a strong force and bound flow.

Question 6

Work chosen	None	1	2	3	4	5
%	0	16	40	7	19	17

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	20	1	9	3	6	3	5	3	6	2	8	2	7	3	5	2	4	1	2	1	8	7.9

This question tested students' understanding of Outcome 1 of Unit 4, choreographic principles associated with group prescribed works. The question required students to select one prescribed group work studied in Unit 4 and articulate ways



in which the choreographer manipulated the four elements of spatial organisation (level, dimension, focus and direction) to communicate the expressive intention.

The question invited an extended response to which marks were assigned using the bands of descriptors described below.

Band 1: 16–20 marks

- Answers in this range demonstrated a very comprehensive knowledge of the prescribed work through a highly detailed understanding of the use of spatial organisation to convey the expressive intention throughout the work.
- Answers were analytical and insightful, examining the work in appropriate and accurate detail using specific movement examples.
- Information was relevant and well organised, making the student's meaning very clear.
- Dance terminology was employed in a sophisticated way.

Band 2: 11–15 marks

- Answers in this range demonstrated a sound knowledge of the prescribed work through a fairly detailed understanding of the use of spatial organisation used to convey the expressive intention throughout the work; however the analysis may have contained some inconsistencies, i.e. some elements of spatial organisation may have been analysed in less depth.
- Answers were, on the whole, analytical and sometimes insightful, examining the work in appropriate detail using some specific movement examples.
- Information was mostly relevant and organised, making the student's meaning clear.
- Dance terminology was used to good effect within the answer.

Band 3: 6–10 marks

- Answers in this range demonstrated some knowledge of the prescribed work but there was a limited understanding of the use of spatial organisation to communicate the expressive intention throughout the work, i.e. not all elements of spatial organisation were addressed and discussion of the expressive intention was limited or not linked to the discussion of spatial organisation.
- Answers were, on the whole, descriptive rather than analytical, examining the work in little detail with limited use of specific movement examples to illustrate the answer.
- Simple information was expressed clearly, but more complex subject matter was handled in an awkward or imprecise manner.
- Answers lacked the use, where appropriate, of dance terminology, or it may have been misused.

Band 4: 0–5 marks

- Answers may have shown only scant knowledge and understanding of the prescribed work, with very limited or inappropriate use of specific movement examples to illustrate the answer.
- The information may have included some relevant points, but these were random rather than being organised as part of a coherent structure.
- Dance terminology was rarely used and/or, where it was used, may have been misapplied, making the answer difficult to follow.

Low-scoring responses often incorporated incorrect terminology when discussing spatial organisation. For example, the use of 'direction' was confused with pathways or the general use of space, such as '*the use of direction was direct*' or '*the direction was facing forwards*'. Correct terminology must be used in order to gain marks. Students should be made aware of this fact throughout the teaching of the course, and methods for testing students' knowledge of correct dance terminology must be implemented throughout the year.

It was disappointing to see many students confuse the term 'spatial organisation' with 'group structures'. Responses that focused on discussing movement examples performed in canon, contrast, unison and/or asymmetrical and symmetrical groupings unfortunately did not correctly answer the question and therefore could not be awarded marks.

The following is an excerpt from a response typical of Band 1.

'Stamping Ground' by Jiri Kylian

In the beginning section of the dance the spatial organisation of dimension was evident in the group of six forming a small, tight and compact cluster, reflecting a family of animals preparing to hunt together. The dimension of the group is expanded in height when the male dancers standing tall behind their partners, looking around to search for any

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potential danger. Dimension continues to be used to communicate the intent when a group of three create a small compact shape with evidence of width through the front dancer as they expand their arms forward as a defence mechanism towards the other pack. Dimension is also evident through the middle dancer peeping over her parents shoulder, manipulating the height and further expanding the forward shape as she's curious to see what she is being protected from. This element is also displayed during the mating trio with the three male dancers as they form a small, tight and compact shape with one dancer fan kicking over the other two creating an expansion to the shape to communicate he is showing off to his possible mates his qualities as he encourages them to mate.