



DANCE

General course

Year 12 syllabus for teaching from 2027

Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

Important information

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) has revised the course rationale and aims, and updated the General Capabilities to create clearer connections with the syllabus content.

This syllabus is effective from 1 January 2027.

Users of this syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the Authority on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

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Rationale

The Dance General course provides students the opportunity to explore various forms of dance genres/styles and develop skills in choreography. Dance is a physical art in which students can discover and demonstrate new ways to communicate ideas and emotions through movement. It has been part of human communication, as a means of expression and storytelling, throughout time and in all cultures of the world.

The course explores practical aspects of dance, including choreography, performance and contextual knowledge. Through developing dance skills in different genres/styles, students build their movement repertoire. The theoretical aspect of the course develops students' understanding of the historical, cultural and social aspects of dance.

Students in the course develop a range of physical and creative skills. Importantly, they learn about safe dance practices, including an understanding of injury prevention, while also developing their overall strength and fitness. By exploring the history of dance, students develop their knowledge and critical capacity when reflecting on dance works.

The skills and knowledge gained in the course have practical applications outside of dance, as students experience increased confidence and develop real-life skills in teamwork and collaboration. Beyond the practice of dancing, students will also develop an understanding of design concepts, costume, lighting, props and sets.

Through the course, students acquire lifelong skills that support both personal and professional development, whether pursuing dance or applying its skills in other fields. Although the course can prepare students for post-school opportunities in dance and the performing arts, the course also provides them with valuable transferable skills which can be applied to careers in areas such as education, health sciences and event management.

Aims

The Dance General course aims to develop students':

- ability to articulate and explore ideas
- skills in processes and performance
- ability to create dance for a range of functions, audiences and contexts
- understanding of the contextual relationships of dance
- ability to evaluate dance in performance
- transferable skills in creative problem-solving, collaboration, innovation, flexibility, social skills, self-regulation and leadership.

Organisation

This course is organised into a Year 11 syllabus and a Year 12 syllabus. The cognitive complexity of the syllabus content increases from Year 11 to Year 12.

Structure of the syllabus

The Year 12 syllabus is divided into two units which are delivered as a pair. The notional time for the pair of units is 110 class contact hours.

Unit 3 – Popular culture

This unit focuses on the exploration of dance in popular culture and how this leads to a wider understanding of the diverse contexts and functions of dance in society.

Unit 4 – Australian dance

This unit focuses on the diverse range of functions and contexts of dance in Australia. Students critically analyse their own cultural beliefs and values in relation to traditional and contemporary dance forms and styles, and develop an understanding of their own dance heritage.

Each unit includes:

- a unit description – a short description of the focus of the unit
- unit content – the content to be taught and learned.

Organisation of content

This course is divided into three content areas:

- Choreography
- Performance
- Contextual knowledge.

Suggested genres

Examples of genres that may be studied in this course include, but are not limited to contemporary, ballet, jazz, hip-hop, tap, ballroom and cultural dance, for example, Spanish, Indian.

Representation of the General Capabilities

The General Capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will support students to live and work successfully now and into the future. They are not assessed unless identified within the specified unit content. Teachers should find opportunities to incorporate the following General Capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Dance General course.

Critical and creative thinking

Students develop problem-solving skills through movement improvisation, creative expression by linking movement to concepts, and analytical skills through reflective evaluation. The course encourages risk-taking, curiosity and creative expression, and students develop critical and creative thinking skills as they pose questions, explore ideas, consider possibilities, and make choices.

Ethical understanding

Students develop their ethical understanding by exploring dance and its purpose across cultures and contexts, building respect and sensitivity. Their artistic integrity grows through authentic interpretation of choreographic intent, while their responsible practice develops through safe participation guidelines and understanding of basic nutrition. These experiences foster students' ethical decision-making in creating and evaluating dance works.

Intercultural understanding

Students explore diverse cultural dance contexts, studying ritualistic, artistic and social functions across cultures. They develop global perspectives as they examine how cultural contexts influence dance forms. This understanding encourages open-mindedness toward different perspectives and appreciation for the cultural diversity in dance.

Literacy

Students develop multiple literacies and build oral literacy through dance terminology, visual literacy via movement exploration, text-based literacy through critical response using specialised vocabulary, and digital literacy by engaging with production technology. These practices develop students' literacy skills, helping them to express emotions, communicate with others and express analysis and critique.

Numeracy

Dance creation involves numerical concepts as students manipulate space, time and form. Students develop measurement skills when using dance elements (body, dynamics, space and time – BDST), pattern recognition through choreographic devices like canon and unison, and proportional thinking via symmetrical shapes and alignment principles. These understandings enhance their awareness of and appreciation for spatial relationships within compositions.

Personal and social capability

The course promotes self-discipline through safe technique, goal-setting by developing genre-specific skills, and collaboration through effective rehearsal practices and theatre etiquette. These capabilities help students communicate effectively, work collaboratively, make group decisions and demonstrate leadership.

Addressing the other General Capabilities

Although the following General Capability has not been identified as a focus in the Dance General Year 12 syllabus, teachers may find opportunities to incorporate it into the teaching and learning program.

- Digital literacy

Such opportunities may occur through the application of different contexts, pedagogical practices and/or assessment strategies that relate to the syllabus as part of the teaching and learning program.

Summary representation of the General Capabilities in the Dance General course

The unit content and assessment types for this course provide students with the opportunity to develop the General Capabilities summarised in the table below.

Year	Course	Course type	General Capabilities						
			CCT	DL	EU	IU	L	N	PSC
Year 11	Dance (GEDAN)	General	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year 12	Dance (GTDAN)	General	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Key

CCT: Critical and creative thinking, DL: Digital literacy, EU: Ethical understanding, IU: Intercultural understanding, L: Literacy, N: Numeracy, PSC: Personal and social capability

Representation of the Cross-curriculum Priorities

The Cross-curriculum Priorities address the contemporary issues that students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate them into the teaching and learning program for the Dance General course. The Cross-curriculum Priorities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures carry an ancient tradition with stories that communicate histories of indigenous Australia that are both unique and share parallels with other ancient cultures. Exploration of the history and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples provides a rich opportunity to build a greater understanding of a part of Australian history and society as well as foster values of mutual understanding and respect between cultures included under the broad identity of this country.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

The Asia region represents a highly diverse spectrum of cultures, traditions and peoples with a third of the world's population located north of Australia. Engaging in a respectful exploration of particular traditions from countries like China, India, North Korea, South Korea and Japan, for example, enables students to understand more deeply the values and histories of our near neighbours with whom we share important interrelationships.

Sustainability

Students use the exploratory and creative platform of Dance to develop world views that recognise the importance of social justice, healthy ecosystems and effective action for sustainability.

Sustainability provides engaging and thought-provoking contexts in which to explore the nature of dance making and responding, and enables the investigation of the interrelated nature of social, economic and ecological systems.

Unit 3 – Popular culture

Unit description

Within the broad focus of popular culture, teachers select learning contexts that relate to the interests of their students and build upon the understandings that they have already acquired.

Through practical lessons, students use safe dance practices and improved physical competencies to acquire genre-specific technique. Performance qualities and etiquette are improved through increased opportunities for performance of popular styles. Students solve choreographic tasks to produce dance works incorporating dance element, choreographic processes, technology and design concepts that reflect current popular trends.

The exploration of dance in popular culture leads to a wider understanding of the diverse contexts and functions of dance in our society.

Unit content

An understanding of the Year 11 content is assumed knowledge for students in Year 12. It is recommended that students studying Unit 3 and Unit 4 have completed Unit 1 and Unit 2.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Suggested genres

Examples of genres that may be studied in this course include, but are not limited to contemporary, ballet, jazz, hip-hop, tap, ballroom and cultural dance, for example, Spanish, Indian.

Choreography

Choreographic processes

- selection and combination of the elements of dance: body, dynamics, space, time (BDST)
- choreographic devices: unison, canon, motif, contrast and repetition
- choreographic structure: narrative, binary
- incorporation of ideas from dance forms of diverse times and places
- movement exploration through improvisation
- documentation of choreographic ideas

Design concepts

- exploration of different cultural contexts past and present to provide inspiration for design concepts related to:
 - lighting
 - music/sound
 - technology
 - costume
 - props, sets, staging
- design concepts that reflect current popular trends

Performance

Technique and skills

- exercises and sequences that require a competent level of the components of fitness:
 - strength
 - flexibility
 - coordination
 - muscular endurance
 - cardiovascular endurance
- development of dance skills in:
 - floor work
 - standing work
 - turning
 - travelling
 - elevation
- technique focusing on correct and accurate retention and execution specific to the dance genre
- increasingly complex and extended sequences
- safe execution of technique and skills

Safe and healthy dance

- warm-up and cool-down specific to genre and class needs
- principles of safe exercising:
 - frequency
 - intensity
 - type
 - time

Anatomy

- neutral alignment to facilitate ease of movement
- biomechanical principles of movement:
 - centre of gravity
 - base of support
 - balance
 - motion
 - transfer of weight

Performance qualities and preparation responsibilities

- techniques for focus and concentration for retention of complex sequences
- performance of popular dance genres/styles
- theatre etiquette, such as responsible backstage behaviour, care of costumes, props and set
- performance for particular audiences and performance spaces

Contextual knowledge

Dance language

- use of dance terminology and language to compare past and popular genres
- use of dance terminology and language to respond to, reflect on and evaluate dance using given frameworks

Functions and contexts of dance

- dance genres/styles from diverse cultures and different times

Case study

Within the focus of popular culture students must investigate **one** case study chosen from the following:

- dance companies
- choreographers
- dancers
- dance genre/style.

The case study must investigate the following:

- historical background information
- historical, cultural and social context in terms of time and place
- influences of popular culture.

Unit 4 – Australian dance

Unit description

Within the broad focus of Australian dance, teachers select learning contexts that relate to the interests of their students and build upon the understandings that they have already acquired.

Through practical lessons, students incorporate safe dance practices and demonstrate consistent improvement in physical competencies in acquiring genre-specific technique. Opportunities to perform in increasingly formal environments enhance the ability to develop individual stage presence.

An understanding of the diverse range of functions and contexts of dance in Australia enables students to make relevant comparisons between their own dance and the dance of others. They analyse their own cultural beliefs and values in relation to traditional and contemporary dance forms and styles, and develop deeper understandings of their own dance heritage.

Unit content

This unit builds on the content covered in Unit 3.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Suggested genres

Examples of genres that may be studied in this course include, but are not limited to contemporary, ballet, jazz, hip-hop, tap, ballroom and cultural dance, for example, Spanish, Indian.

Choreography

Choreographic processes

- manipulate the elements of dance: body, dynamics, space, time (BDST) to reflect concept
- choreographic devices: accumulation and retrograde
- choreographic structure: rondo
- improvisational skills – introduction to improvisation plan
- choreographic plans

Design concepts

- choices of design concepts to reflect concept and convey meaning and effect:
 - lighting
 - music/sound
 - technology
 - costume
 - props, sets, staging

Performance

Technique and skills

- exercises and sequences that require a competent level of the components of fitness:
 - strength
 - flexibility
 - coordination
 - muscular endurance
 - cardiovascular endurance
- development of dance skills in:
 - floor work
 - standing work
 - turning
 - travelling
 - elevation
- technique focusing on correct and accurate retention and execution specific to the dance genre
- increasingly complex and extended sequences
- safe execution of technique and skills

Safe and healthy dance

- warm-up and cool-down specific to genre and class needs
- injury prevention and treatment

Anatomy

- recognise neutral alignment to facilitate ease of movement
- physical implementation of biomechanical principles of movement in locomotor and non-locomotor movement:
 - centre of gravity
 - base of support
 - balance
 - motion
 - transfer of weight

Performance qualities and preparation responsibilities

- rehearsal techniques for performance
- warm-up appropriate for performance
- demonstration of appropriate theatre etiquette
- performance of movement with accuracy and style
- maintenance of performance focus

Contextual knowledge

Dance language

- use a range of dance terminology to respond to, reflect on, and evaluate dance
- use given frameworks for describing, analysing, interpreting and evaluating dance

Functions and contexts of dance

- broad overview of the development of dance in Australia from the twentieth century to the present
- Aboriginal dance and its influences

Case study

Within the focus of Australian dance, students must investigate **one** case study chosen from the following:

- Australian dance companies
- Australian choreographers.

The case study must investigate the following:

- historical background information
- relevant dance works – significance of the dance work, choreographic intent, choreographic devices, choreographic structures, movement choices and design concepts
- historical, cultural and social context in terms of time and place
- ways cultural identity can be represented through dance.

School-based assessment

The *Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Manual* contains essential information on principles, policies and procedures for school-based assessment that needs to be read in conjunction with this syllabus.

Teachers design school-based assessment tasks to meet the needs of students. The table below provides details of the assessment types for the Dance General Year 12 syllabus and the weighting for each assessment type.

Assessment table – Year 12

Type of assessment	Weighting
Performance/production Exploring ideas, improvising, manipulating the elements of dance and using choreographic devices and structures to create original dance. Demonstrating competence in the use of technical dance skills, techniques/styles, interpreting choreographic intent and performance qualities in a range of performance contexts. A practical test is included in this assessment type.	65%
Response Response to, analysis and evaluation of own, others' or professional dance works using a range of critical frameworks and primary and secondary sources. Research work in which students plan, conduct and communicate case studies. The focus of case studies may include dance works of companies and/or choreographers. Each should be explored in relation to a range of contextual factors (historical, cultural and social) and explore a range of primary and secondary sources. The findings may be communicated in any appropriate form, for example, written, oral or graphical, or various combinations of these.	20%
Externally set task A written task or item or set of items of 50 minutes duration developed by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority and administered by the school.	15%

Teachers are required to use the assessment table to develop an assessment outline for the pair of units.

The assessment outline must:

- include a set of assessment tasks
- include a general description of each task
- indicate the unit content to be assessed
- indicate a weighting for each task and each assessment type
- include the approximate timing of each task (for example, the week the task is conducted, or the issue and submission dates for an extended task).

In the assessment outline for the pair of units, each assessment type must be included at least once over the year/pair of units. The externally set task occurs in Term 2.

The set of assessment tasks must provide a representative sampling of the content for Unit 3 and Unit 4.

Assessment tasks not administered under test/controlled conditions require appropriate validation/authentication processes.

Externally set task

All students enrolled in the Dance General Year 12 course will complete the externally set task developed by the Authority. Schools are required to administer this task in Term 2 at a time prescribed by the Authority.

Externally set task design brief – Year 12

Time	50 minutes
Format	Written
	Conducted under invigilated conditions
	Typically between two and four questions
	Can require students to refer to viewed dance performances (live or digital), own performances or other dance processes in a reflective writing task
Content	The Authority informs schools during Term 3 of the previous year of the Unit 3 syllabus content on which the task will be based

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information.

Grading

Schools report student achievement in terms of the following grades:

Grade	Interpretation
A	Excellent achievement
B	High achievement
C	Satisfactory achievement
D	Limited achievement
E	Very low achievement

The teacher prepares a ranked list and assigns the student a grade for the pair of units. The grade is based on the student's overall performance as judged by reference to a set of pre-determined standards. These standards are defined by grade descriptions and annotated work samples. The grade descriptions for the Dance General Year 12 syllabus are provided in Appendix 1. They can also be accessed, together with annotated work samples, through the Guide to Grades link on the course page of the Authority website at www.scsa.wa.edu.au.

To be assigned a grade, a student must have had the opportunity to complete the education program, including the assessment program (unless the school accepts that there are exceptional and justifiable circumstances).

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information about the use of a ranked list in the process of assigning grades.

Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 12

A	Demonstrates consistently skilled execution of technical dance skills incorporating control of the body, fluency, quality of line, breadth of movement, and pliancy in use of weight.
	Maintains accomplished performance qualities; demonstrating consistent commitment to the movement and performance focus.
	Creates dance which clearly and effectively communicates choreographic intent. Sustains a skilled selection and manipulation of the elements of dance, choreographic structure and devices.
	Uses effective and consistent problem-solving techniques and rehearsal strategies when working individually and collaboratively; demonstrates responsibility.
	Analyses in detail how the elements of dance, choreographic structure and devices, and design concepts are used to communicate the choreographic intent of a dance work.
	Uses case studies to examine and coherently communicate the significance of the functions and contexts of dance.
	Develops responses that include substantial evidence with justification, and accurate and relevant dance terminology.
B	Demonstrates skilled execution of technical dance skills incorporating control of the body, fluency, quality of line, breadth of movement and use of weight.
	Maintains appropriate performance qualities; demonstrating commitment to the movement and performance focus.
	Creates dance which communicates choreographic intent with some effectiveness. Uses a skilled selection and manipulation of the elements of dance, choreographic structure and devices.
	Uses effective problem-solving techniques and rehearsal strategies when working individually and collaboratively.
	Describes in detail how the elements of dance, choreographic structure and devices, and design concepts are used to communicate the choreographic intent of a dance work.
	Uses case studies to examine and clearly communicate the functions and contexts of dance.
	Develops responses that include a range of evidence with justification and relevant dance terminology.

C	Demonstrates control over most technical dance skills with some inconsistencies in body placement, fluency, quality of line, breadth of movement, and/or use of weight.
	Performs mostly with commitment to the movement and performance focus.
	Creates dance communicating choreographic intent with developing clarity. Selects and uses the elements of dance, choreographic structure and devices; sometimes in a familiar way.
	Uses some effective problem-solving techniques and rehearsal strategies when working individually and collaboratively.
	Describes in some detail how the elements of dance, choreographic structure and devices, and design concepts are used to communicate the choreographic intent of a dance work.
	Uses case studies to communicate in some detail, the functions and contexts of dance.
	Develops responses that include some evidence with justification and dance terminology.
D	Demonstrates some technical dance skills competently but not consistently.
	Performs inconsistently; sometimes lacking commitment to the movement and focus.
	Creates dance with tenuous links to choreographic intent. Demonstrates simplistic and/or familiar use of the elements of dance, choreographic structure and devices.
	Uses few problem-solving techniques and rehearsal strategies when working individually and collaboratively.
	Outlines in a superficial way how the elements of dance, choreographic structure and devices, and design concepts are used to communicate the choreographic intent of a dance work.
	Uses case studies to communicate in a superficial way, the functions and contexts of dance.
	Develops responses that are often supported with little evidence and/or minimal dance terminology.
E	Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient assessment tasks to be assigned a higher grade.

Appendix 2 – Glossary

This glossary is provided to enable a common understanding of the key terms in this syllabus.

Abstraction

A choreographic device where a literal movement is manipulated to open the associations with the movement for an audience and remove its narrative elements.

Accumulation

A choreographic device where new movements are added to existing movements in a successive manner. It generally begins with move 1, then 1 + 2, then 1 + 2 + 3. The word was used by Trisha Brown in 1971 to name a solo dance work based on adding one movement gesture to another, one at a time, and repeating the growing phrase with each new movement. As Trisha Brown's works are so widely known, this word has spread among the dance community and it is used nowadays to talk about a way of creating choreography as a choreographic device.

Aesthetics

Exploring through performance and responses to dance, the role of human senses in making meaning and creating emotional or other experiences. Aesthetics relates to the principles and science of what engages our sensory attention and leads us to respond in particular ways.

Analysing dance

This may be thought of as identifying the formal structures of dance and looking at the relationships between the elements of dance, choreographic devices and structure and/or design concepts with the choreographic intent.

For example, 'The choreographer manipulated the dancers in space to create symmetrical shapes and moments of stillness, and interspersed complex movement phrases with sections of improvisation.'

Anatomy

Understanding how the body reacts to movement. Applying physical skills and understandings of biomechanics and kinesiology in both experiential and theoretical contexts.

Artistic dance

Dance that is performed primarily to express ideas and/or to entertain an audience. The dance often portrays and interprets aspects of life in order to challenge or confirm the values of the audience.

Asymmetrical

A shape made by the body that has no line of reflection. An unbalanced proportion in the design of the shape.

Balance

The equal distribution of weight. Harmonious arrangement of parts.

Base of support

Base of support is a two-dimensional area bounded by the points of contact of the body with the ground. The larger the area of the base of support, the easier it is to achieve and maintain balance.

Binary

A two-part choreographic structure with an A theme and a B theme (AB). The binary form consists of two distinct self-contained sections that share either a character or quality, i.e. the same tempo, movement quality or style.

Body

As an element of dance, it encompasses:

- body awareness – this centres on consciousness of the body in space, including body shapes, body bases, body parts, body zones, locomotor and non-locomotor movements
- body bases – the body parts that support the rest of the body, e.g. when standing the feet are the body base
- body parts – legs, arms, head, torso, hands and feet
- body activity – weight transference, travelling, turning, rising and falling
- body shapes – curved, straight, open, closed, symmetrical and asymmetrical
- body zones – body areas of right side, left side (sagittal plane), front, back (frontal or coronal plane), upper half or lower half (transverse plane).

Canon

A choreographic device that reflects the musical form of the same name, in which individuals and groups perform the same movement phrase beginning at different times.

Choreography

The art of planning and arranging dance movements into a meaningful whole; the process of building a composition; a finished dance work.

Choreographic devices

Tools of the choreographer used for the creation of dances, such as abstraction, canon, motif, contrast, accumulation, repetition, retrograde, fragmentation and embellishment.

Choreographic intent

The purpose behind the composition or performance of movement.

Choreographic processes

The fundamentally accepted methods for creating dances.

Choreographic structure

The preconceived plan for the arrangement of movement in a particular structure, that a choreographer uses when creating a dance. Examples of such structures includes AB (binary), ABA (ternary), rondo (ABACA), theme and variation (A, A1, A2, A3), and narrative.

Contemporary dance

Contemporary dance is a broadly inclusive term to describe an approach to dance that draws on modern dance elements, classical ballet, release work and other forms of dance, often reflective of the creative innovations of particular dance choreographers and directors. Contemporary dance may also draw on other dance forms, including, popular dance and forms from other cultures and times. Many contemporary dance pieces reflect explorations of structure and body dynamics in space/time.

Contrast

A choreographic device where dance elements are altered to create oppositions, thus making contrasts, such as, high/low or big/little.

Cool down

Following dancing, the dancer should allow the body to gradually warm down (cool down). Abruptly stopping vigorous activity causes pooling of the blood, sluggish circulation which hampers removal of waste products, cramping, soreness and even fainting. Light activity and stretching after the dance class is recommended.

Culture

The values, attitudes, customs, practices, language and conventions commonly shared by a particular group, that forms a part of their identity and contributes towards a sense of shared understanding.

Describing dance

This may be thought of as seeing and identifying the elements of dance, choreographic devices, structure and/or design concepts. For example, 'The lead dancer moved rapidly across the stage to join a trio of male dancers waiting in a tableau. The dancers then performed a canon.'

Design concepts

The use of design and technology to enhance dance. This includes lighting, music/sound, technology, costume, props, sets and staging. See Technology.

Dynamics

As an element of dance, it focuses on the weight and force of power needed to produce and/or manipulate a movement.

Dynamic qualities

Shadings in the amount of dynamics, intensity, power and subtle variation in the treatment of contrasts. The manner in which dynamics are applied, continued or arrested. Dynamic qualities can be described as floating, swinging, sudden, smooth, sharp, percussive, vibratory and explosive. By manipulating the dynamics in a movement, the choreographer creates certain qualities e.g. a light, free flowing movement may create a dream-like quality, and constrained movement may create an aggressive mood.

Elements of dance

The basic (key) components of dance: Body, Dynamics, Space, Time (BDST). These elements can be combined and manipulated to communicate and express meaning through movement. See Body, Dynamics, Space and Time.

Embellishment

A choreographic device where detail is added to the original movement sequence.

Evaluating dance

This may be thought of as making judgements about the dance, based on identified criteria. For example, 'The contrast of movement and music from one section to the next was quite spectacular, reinforcing the theme of the damage to the changing environment. It made me feel quite disturbed.'

Fall and recovery

The process in movement yielding to, and resisting, gravity. A theory invented by modern dance pioneer Doris Humphrey.

Focus

Conscious attention toward a certain point, using eyes, body parts, or the direction in which the dancer faces. Focus is not just confined to the eyes; it also involves using the whole body to project and communicate the intention of the dance.

Fragmentation

A choreographic device, where only a part of the movement sequence/motif is manipulated. A movement is broken down into smaller units.

Genre

A specific category of dance that has a tradition or history, and is identifiable by specific characteristics and social and cultural contexts, e.g. classical ballet, jazz, contemporary or tap.

Historical context

The historical context focuses on when the dance was made. The relevant developments in that era may influence the dance.

Improvisation

Improvisational structures permit the dancer elements of freedom and creativity in making movement and dances. The dancer can employ any number of strategies and creative responses to pursue an outcome where the result is not fully known; for example:

- a floor plan which is 'scored' but in which the movement is unknown; or
- where the movement is designed but the floor plan is open and the dancer is given the freedom to make the spatial decisions.

Other decisions might affect the timing, choice of music or any elements of BEST.

Improvisation plan

A plan is a map for making dance. It is a frame of ideas that shapes the dance. It can range from highly specific and detailed structures to a general and loosely defined set of options. It is like the rules of a game where the outcome is unknown and there are multiple variations of how you play/interact/respond.

Interpreting dance

This may be thought of as translating, reading or making sense of the dance work. For example, 'the shapes were sharp and awkward, and although the dancers were together they conveyed the image of pain, loneliness and isolation.'

Kinesiology

The study of the activity of muscles, and the functioning, mechanics and structures of the body parts involved in movement. Mechanics refers to the effect that energy and other forces have upon the body.

Levels

The altitude of a movement in relation to its distance from the floor; the height of the dance floor. There are three levels:

- low – close to the floor with the intention downwards
- medium – the level of everyday walking
- high – any movement done with elevation, not necessarily a jump. It implies a lifting of the chest and an upward focus.

Locomotor movement

Travelling movements involving a change in location of the body in space. The basic locomotor steps are walk, run, jump; irregular rhythmic combinations are skip, slide and gallop.

Motif

A movement, gesture or short movement phrase which has the potential to be developed during the dance/work. A movement motif functions as choreographic device within the choreography. It can contain the essence of the completed piece and is usually repeated with integrity and manipulated throughout the dance.

Movement phrase

Two or more movement ideas linked together.

A series of movements linked together to make a distinctive pattern.

Movement sequence

A series of movements, longer than a phrase, but shorter than a section of a dance.

Musicality

The music elements of a dance performance. Attention and sensitivity to the musical ear while creating or performing.

Narrative

A choreographic structure that follows a specific storyline and intends to convey specific information through that story.

Neutral alignment

Reflecting the strongest and most balanced alignment of the spine, including the three curves of the spine that appear naturally in a healthy spine: at the neck, the thoracic region and the lumbar/pelvic region. Neutral alignment also reflects correct alignment of the ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles to create a line directly down the side of the body, from the ears down, through to the feet of the dancer. A further imaginary line, also of great assistance in achieving neutral alignment, runs down the centre of the body (looking from the front) and corresponds to the median plane which divides the body into equal right and left halves.

Non-locomotor movement

Movement occurring above a stationary base; movement of the body around its own axis. Also called axial movement, it includes bending, stretching, pushing, pulling, bouncing, swinging, shaking and twisting.

Parallel

Feet in anatomical position, knees in line with arches of feet and directly under hip joint, fist width apart, 'train tracks'.

Pathways

Patterns created in the air, or on the floor by the body or body parts, as a dancer or dancers move through space.

Performance persona

Being cognisant of choreographic intent and how to convey a sense of 'character' (including emotion, mood, tone and/ or atmosphere) through the sustained use of body, facial expression and gesture.

Personal style

A distinctive or individualistic manner of expressing an idea. The dancer is capable of communicating a sense of physical and/or emotional connection to the movement material. Rather than 'presenting', they have a tangible sense of presence, awareness and embodiment that includes other dancers in the space and audience. This quality may be influenced by body structure, type of training, prior dance experience, personality and individual BEST preferences.

Placement

A balanced alignment of the body, hips, torso, limbs, head, knees and rib cage.

Projection

The communication of meaning through extension and focus of the body.

Repetition

A choreographic device whereby a movement or motif are repeated exactly for emphasis or to gain interest.

Retrograde

Another choreographic device used to create dance compositions that produce variations on a movement phrase. The movement phrase is performed backwards, as if rewinding a video. This can be a challenging device because of the way in which the human body is constructed and may require some physical compromises and creative decision-making on the part of the dancer.

For example, rewinding video.

Ritual dance

Dance that is primarily performed in religious or other rites, and reflects specific cultural customs.

Rondo

A choreographic structure of three or more themes with an alternating return to the main theme (ABACADA).

Safe dance practices

The practice of selecting and executing movement safely. The focus is on providing dance activities and exercises which allows students to participate without risk of injury. All dance movement should be performed relevant to an individual's body type and capabilities. Safe dance practices also include safe emotional spaces, where individuals are able to take creative risks in a supportive learning environment.

Social dance

Dance that is primarily performed for the enjoyment of the participants.

Social context

A dance work that refers to the society or culture in which it is made and reflects the dynamics within that society or culture. For example, lifestyle, socio-economic status, employment and race may influence, or be reflected in, the dance work.

Space

Where the body moves, including level, dimension (3D and 4D), direction (up, down, left, right, forward, backward, diagonal), active space (the meaning the space takes through the dance), positive space (the space the dancer occupies), negative space (space outside the positive space), pathways (creation of shapes through the space), personal (area around the dancer's body) and performance space (the area designated for the dance performance). See Levels.

Style

Within the broad categorisation of genre, it is possible to draw further distinctions between constituent groups and identify them as particular styles. For example, ballet (genre) may be identified as romantic, classical or modern in style. More specific styles may relate to the country/origin, or the company or community who performed the dance. Choreographers also have their own distinctive styles (which may change and develop over time).

Symmetrical

A shape made by the body that has a line of reflection (mirror line). A balanced, even design.

Technical skills

Combinations of proficiencies in control, accuracy, strength, alignment, balance and coordination. This will include the acquisition of appropriate strength, flexibility, coordination and endurance in the performance of body actions, locomotor and non-locomotor movement and developed to be performed in specific dance styles and genres.

Technique

The acquisition and execution of dance skills within a dance genre or style.

Technology

Equipment used to help create, present, explain, document, view, interpret, analyse or learn about dance works, including dance props (e.g. scarf, chair), electronic media (e.g. video, computers) and production technology (e.g. lighting, costume, sound).

Ternary

A three-part choreographic structure in which the second section contrasts with the first section (ABA). The third section is a restatement of the first section in a condensed, abbreviated, or extended form.

Theme and variation

A choreographic structure, in which a dance phrase or section of a dance, is followed by subsequent phrases or sections that are variations of the original, usually for the sake of variety (A, A1, A2, A3).

Time

Time refers to how long a dance takes, including metre, tempo, momentum, accent, duration, phrasing, rhythmic patterns, stillness and beat.

Turned out

A term used to describe a dance position where you stand with your legs and feet facing outwards. Your feet may be either together or apart, and involves the rotation of the thigh bone in the hip socket. All rotations are functional and should occur at the hip. The lower leg and foot remain aligned with the femur.

Unison

Two or more people performing the same movement at the same time.

Warm-up

Activities that raise the core body temperature and loosen the muscles before dancing. Movements are designed to raise the core body temperature and bring the mind into focus for the activities to follow.

