Drama

Victorian Certificate of Education

The images shown above represent a cross section of works covering sculpture, textiles, assemblage, drawing, photography, prints, painting and electronic media as exhibited in VCE Top Arts.
Latoya BARTON
The sunset (detail)
from a series of twenty-four
9.0 x 9.0 cm each, oil on board

Tarkan ERTURK
Village (detail)
201.0 x 170.0 cm
synthetic polymer paint, on cotton duck

Liana RASCHILLA
Teapot from the Crazy Alice set
19.0 x 22.0 x 22.0 cm
earthware, clear glaze, lustres

Nigel BROWN
Unlimited physics (detail)
90.0 x 440.0 x 70.0 cm
composition board, steel, loudspeakers,
CD player, amplifier, glass

Kate WOOLLEY
Sarah (detail)
76.0 x 101.0 cm, oil on canvas

Chris ELLIS
Tranquility (detail)
35.0 x 22.5 cm
gelatin silver photograph

Christian HART
Within without (detail)
digital film, 6 minutes

Kristian LUCAS
Me, myself, / and you (detail)
56.0 x 102.0 cm
oil on canvas

Merryn ALLEN
Japanese illusions (detail)
centre back: 74.0 cm, waist (flat): 42.0 cm
polyester cotton

Ping (Irene VINCENT)
Boxes (detail)
colour photograph

James ATKINS
Light cascades (detail)
three works, 32.0 x 32.0 x 5.0 cm each
glass, flourescent light, metal

Tim JOINER
14 seconds (detail)
digital film, 1.30 minutes

Lucy McNAMARA
Precariously (detail)
156.0 x 61.0 x 61.0 cm
painted wood, oil paint, egg shells, glue, stainless steel wire

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VCE Drama: Advice for teachers
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Advice for teachers

This publication is a companion document for the VCE Drama Study Design and provides advice about designing teaching and learning activities, for Units 1–4.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Units 1 to 4 of the Drama study provide students with the opportunity to engage in a range of learning activities. In addition to demonstrating their understanding and mastery of the content and skills specific to the study, students may also develop employability skills through their learning activities.

The nationally agreed employability skills* are: Communication; Planning and organising; Teamwork; Problem solving; Self-management; Initiative and enterprise; Technology; and Learning.

Each employability skill contains a number of facets that have a broad coverage of all employment contexts and are designed to describe all employees. The table below links those facets that may be understood and applied in a school or non-employment related setting to the types of assessment commonly undertaken within the VCE study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment task</th>
<th>Employability skills: selected facets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Initiative and enterprise (generating a range of options; initiating innovative solutions; being creative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning and organising (planning the use of resources including time management; weighing up risk, evaluating alternatives and applying evaluation criteria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem solving (developing practical solutions; testing assumptions taking the context of data and circumstances into account)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-management (evaluating and monitoring own performance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team work (working as an individual and as a member of a team; knowing how to define a role as part of the team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary report of activities:</td>
<td>Communication (writing to the needs of the audience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Documenting use of play-making processes</td>
<td>Planning and organising (collecting, analysing and organising information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Script writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Play-making analysis</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*The employability skills are derived from the Employability Skills Framework (Employability Skills for the Future, 2002), developed by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Business Council of Australia, and published by the (former) Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training.
### DEVELOPING A COURSE

A course outlines the nature and sequence of teaching and learning necessary for students to demonstrate achievement of the set of outcomes for a unit. The areas of study broadly describe the learning context and the knowledge required for the demonstration of each outcome. Outcomes are introduced by summary statements and are followed by the key knowledge and key skills which relate to the outcomes.

Teachers must develop courses that include appropriate learning activities to enable students to develop the key knowledge and key skills identified in the outcome statements in each unit.

For Units 1 and 2, teachers must select assessment tasks from the list provided. Tasks should provide a variety and the mix of tasks should reflect the fact that different types of tasks suit different knowledge and skills and different learning styles. Tasks do not have to be lengthy to make a decision about student demonstration of achievement of an outcome.

In Units 3 and 4, assessment is more structured. For Unit 3, Outcomes 1, 2 and 3, and Unit 4, Outcomes 1 and 3, the assessment tasks for School-assessed Coursework are prescribed. The contribution that each outcome makes to the total score for School-assessed Coursework is also stipulated.

Teachers must develop courses that include appropriate learning activities to enable students to develop the knowledge and skills identified in the outcome statements in each unit.

In developing courses for VCE Drama, it is important to interweave the theoretical with the practical. The study of Drama needs to be tempered with the practical application of theories and experiences.

### Devised drama

All performance work presented by students in VCE Drama is work they have devised. Teachers should develop a course that introduces students to different ways of exploring the dramatic potential of stimulus material, developing performances and communicating stories to audiences.

### Stimulus material

In VCE Drama stimulus material is used as the starting point of the play-making process. Teachers provide stimulus material for all work devised in VCE Drama except for Unit 4, Outcome 2. In each unit students should use stimulus material in a range of forms such as words, phrases, cartoons, poetry, lyrics, themes, excerpts from a novel, film, television, excerpts from a blog, a name, a place, an idea and a concept. Stimulus material can be used to ensure that students engage with a range of performance styles, theatrical conventions and dramatic elements in each unit and across units. Stimulus material can also be structured to introduce students to particular performance styles, for example, styles from non-western cultures or to focus on use of specific techniques or conventions. When developing a course teachers should include learning activities that assist students to develop an understanding of the processes that can be employed when using stimulus material to devise drama. Learning activities
could include responding imaginatively, brainstorming, research and experimenting with ideas and ways to create dramatic images or scenes. For example, a teacher might provide initial stimulus material such as a word, theme or quote and ask students to source additional material.

**Scripts**

In VCE Drama scripts created by other drama practitioners can be used as stimulus or further reading material to guide and focus development of devised solo and ensemble performances across Units 1 to 4. A script is more than a series of words and stage directions on a page and in VCE Drama script excerpts can be used in learning activities that focus on different performance styles or manipulation of dramatic elements or conventions.

In VCE Drama students use a creative process to devise drama and are not required to interpret scripts written by other practitioners. In this context, scripts should be used to support students’ engagement with the play-making process. For example, students might read Andrew Bovell’s *Speaking in Tongues* as a prompt for discussing heightened use of language, and from there develop a similarly structured scene with overlapping/repeated dialogue.

Students also develop working scripts as part of the play-making process. There is no required format for these scripts. Whilst including dialogue, students should be encouraged to find ways of expressing a script that complements the form of the work or the play-making process they are using.

Creating a script should involve a process of editing and refinement. Where possible, students should be encouraged to improvise a scene or idea first, prior to it being ‘written up’ in a format that uses dialogue or records what was accomplished. For example, students could try the same scene several ways; initially, with words, then using mime or gesture, and then expressing it symbolically or by just using sounds or movement.

**Play-making techniques**

Students use play-making techniques as a set of tools that underpin the creative process they use to devise drama in response to stimulus material. Each of the techniques should be used within the creative process. Use of different play-making techniques enables students to express their character, theme or message in ways other than in words or dialogue – supporting the use of non-naturalism within drama, taking it beyond the realms of naturalism. Drama involves a process of ‘showing to an audience, not telling’. There is no set order for using the techniques and each may be revisited across the creative process. For example, to devise a drama work students might use:

- **Researching**
  Collect material such as poems, cartoons, song lyrics, pictures, and images, facts, opinions and questions and comments relevant to the stimulus material.

- **Brainstorming**
  Place the research findings in a random order in a virtual or paper journal or on a sheet of paper and experiment with ideas suggested by the material. Diagrammatically or visually, represent the ideas that develop through use of charts or in a cartoon format.
  Use visualisation techniques to imagine characters that might be part of the drama, a dramatic moment or an aspect of a scene.
Improvising  
Use techniques such as
- role-play to explore possible threads in the story or narrative
- trialling different ways of presenting a scene such as using only words, only mime or gesture, symbolically or just using sounds and movement
- experimenting with different ways of ordering the material to create meaning
- experimenting with different performance styles and ways of using and manipulating dramatic elements or conventions
- personification, for example, physicalising objects or locations to create transformations
- hot-seating to explore aspects of a character.

Scripting  
Documenting ideas, dramatic moments, scenes etc. as a record of what has been accomplished. The script should include the key ideas being explored and the intended shape of the drama, for example on cards or in digital form.

Editing  
Reviewing material developed through improvisation and scripting and ordering or developing to build the dramatic form and shape the narrative, apply a specific performance style or convention, considering the transition from one scene to another or the varied ways in which characters, places and objects can be transformed, for example to condense ideas to intensify the narrative through action rather than dialogue.

Rehearsing  
Blocking and running the work, trialling ways of applying expressive and performance skills to present the ideas in the drama with conviction, using props and/or set, establishing an actor–audience relationship, communicating meaning, building confidence as a performer.

Refining  
Seeking and implementing feedback, ensuring performance meets requirements such as a time-limit or use of transformations, dramatic elements, performance styles or conventions; deepening communication of ideas by exaggerating aspects of the performance, for example using heightened language, symbols, gesture or movement.

Performance styles  
The focus of VCE Drama is on non-naturalistic performance styles. In Unit 1 students are introduced to both naturalism and non-naturalism and begin to explore differences between these styles and ways the two can be integrated to create eclectic works. For example, students may begin by developing a naturalistic character and then manipulate dramatic elements and conventions to explore and present ideas or stories conceptually and experiment with ways of passing comment on, or responding to, aspects of the real world rather than merely reflecting the world. Across Units 1 to 4, but particularly in Units 3 and 4, students should be exposed to learning activities that build their knowledge and skill in applying a range of non-naturalistic ways to use stagecraft, acting styles, manipulate dramatic elements or employ conventions to define and enhance the performance. Students should develop skills in transforming character, time, place and object, and using transitions to make the transformations happen. This can involve focusing on the moment when the transformation actually happens or on how the transformation is being achieved.
By exploring a range of stimulus material and performance structures, teachers can ensure that across Units 1 to 4 students are exposed to learning about a wide range of non-naturalistic performance styles and the work of relevant practitioners such as Antonin Artaud (Theatre of Cruelty), Bertolt Brecht (Epic Theatre) and Jerzy Grotowski (Poor Theatre) or performance styles from non-western cultures such as Butoh or mask dramas from Bali or Korea.

**Expressive skills**

In VCE Drama, students use the expressive skills of voice, movement, gesture and facial expression. Each of these skills can be applied independently or in combination with any or all of the others. Across Units 1 to 4 students should explore ways of using the expressive skills as a tool-kit to communicate stories and characters. For example, students might perform a scene using only movement and gesture and seek feedback from an audience about the clarity of their expression. Students might also complete workshops to develop specific skills or techniques such as those associated with a performance style. For example:

- **Voice** – workshops or exercises focusing on projection, experimenting with verbal and vocal sounds of different pitch, tone or duration; tongue-twisters, alliteration, colouring words, emphasising verbs.
- **Movement** – workshops based on Laban techniques, exploring the ways actors move through space to communicate characters.
- **Gesture** – using the body or body parts to represent objects or creating symbols through body shape.
- **Facial expression** – exercises focusing on miming reactions to words, using exaggerated expressions to communicate meaning.

As students develop their ability to apply expressive skills, they should also discuss their work to build their capacity to analyse an actor’s use of expressive skills.

**Performance skills**

Performance skills are developed over time and should be explored in both practical workshops and through analysis of other actors’ work. As with expressive skills, performance skills can be used individually and in combination. Students should develop awareness of particular ways that performance skills are used in different non-naturalistic performance styles; for example, by exploring use of timing to create comedy or pathos.

**Plays in performance**

For Unit 3, students must attend performance/s selected from the VCE Prescribed Drama Unit 3 Playlist published annually on the VCAA website. In Units 1 and 2, there is no prescribed list of plays for Outcome 4 and students may attend play/s presented by regional, local, metropolitan and/or community-based theatre groups. Care must be taken to select performances that expose students to high-quality work that is both challenging and entertaining. Note that for Units 1 and 2, students may not attend work by other school students.

**SUITABLE RESOURCES**

Courses must be developed within the framework of the study design: the areas of study, outcome statements, and key knowledge and key skills.

A list of suitable resources for this study has been compiled and is available via the Drama study page on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority website: [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/studies/index.html](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/studies/index.html).
LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Implementation advice and example learning activities for each unit are provided below. Examples in the shaded boxes are explained in detail in accompanying boxes.

Teachers should consider these activities in conjunction with the key knowledge and key skills identified for each outcome within the study.

Unit 1: Dramatic storytelling

AREA OF STUDY 1: Creating a devised performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 1</th>
<th>Examples of learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devise and document solo and/or ensemble drama work/s based on experiences and/or stories.</td>
<td>explore dramatic possibilities in stories such as Around the World in 80 days, Shantaram, The Great Race, The Travels of Michael Palin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>create still digital images or create living postcards of people on holidays in exotic locations and then bring them to life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>use other art forms such as painting, poetry, sculpture, digital photography or music as a stimulus for character creation; focus on dramatic elements such as climax, mood and symbol to create either a solo or small group performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>use stimulus material related to being on a journey or travelling to devise a solo or ensemble drama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AREA OF STUDY 2: Presenting a devised performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 2</th>
<th>Examples of learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perform a devised drama work/s to an audience.</td>
<td>perform a solo and/or ensemble performance/s to a live audience based on a range of stimulus material relevant to personal, cultural and community experiences and stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rehearsal and refinement activities to develop skills in sustaining character, committing to role, manipulating dramatic elements, using stagecraft and manipulating performance and expressive skills in performance, focus on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sustaining character in performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ensuring commitment to role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• using stagecraft to enhance the performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• manipulating performance skills and expressive skills in performance to build stage presence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advice for teachers

VCE Drama 2014–2018

AREA OF STUDY 3: Analysing a devised performance

Outcome 3

Analyse the development and performance to an audience of their non-naturalistic devised work.

Examples of learning activities

- discuss and document different ways that you experimented before deciding how to present a solo and/or ensemble work/s to an audience
- maintain a workbook which records the stages in the development of characters, from research to performance
- create a podcast, much like an actor’s commentary, that analyses the decisions made when devising your solo or ensemble work
- evaluate the devised drama in a short report; use documentation generated during the developmental stages, as well as commentary about the performance

Detailed example

This example is in three parts. Together these parts extend the shaded learning activities from Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

Notes:

- These activities can also be undertaken using other stories, ideas or themes.
- Specific play-making techniques are listed as a focus for each part of the example. Other play-making techniques may also be used.
- Information such as choice of performance styles can also be provided as part of the stimulus. This example allows students to include aspects of naturalistic and non-naturalistic styles in their work.
- Teachers should provide students with a timeline for the task, for example by indicating key dates for showing work in progress, final rehearsals, preparation of the performance space, performance and/or bump-out and debrief.

Outcome 1

USING STIMULUS MATERIAL TO DEVISE SOLO OR ENSEMBLE DRAMA

Theme: ‘Being on a Journey’ or ‘Travelling’

Students collect, share, explore and discuss ideas about journeys and travelling. For example, they:

- use improvisation to explore actions and emotions associated with being on a journey or travelling, such as anticipation, saying goodbye, being in a new place, encountering an unknown situation, feelings of loss or separation, being transported or arriving
- explore stories about family holidays, estrangement, refugees and exile, considering ways that conventions such as sound, song and/or pathos could be used to develop the dramatic potential of the stories
- create a naturalistic small-group performance in which family and friends farewell the travellers; create circumstances in which people are forced to undertake a journey and use them as the basis for scene creation
- experiment with the same scene non-naturalistically using only sounds, gestures, stillness and tableaux or have each character step out of the scene and address the audience directly; contrast these scenes with those of travellers in countries such as China or India; use theatre styles and conventions of the place visited such as Beijing Opera or the film style of Bollywood to tell the stories
- create scenes and stories where people become lost or displaced and are forced to undertake a journey; for example, devise a contemporary drama based on a story about a ‘prodigal son’; use a narrator and storyboard the piece to outline characters and actions; ensure the moral of the story is clear.

Students develop ideas and dramatic material, and use ICT tools and strategies to document their work, and evaluate and refine ideas. They use this material to devise and document a working script.

continued
Outcome 2

REFINING, REHEARSING AND PERFORMING
DEVISED DRAMA

Students rehearse their work using the working script developed in the Outcome 1 activity as a guide. They make decisions about:

- where their work will be performed and how they will use the performance space
- manipulation of expressive skills, performance skills, dramatic elements and stagecraft.

They evaluate and refine their work and continue to edit and refine the working script and to document their work. For example, they might use a mobile device to film the ensemble performance in rehearsal, watch the recording, evaluate the work in progress and then refine the work by editing the script and making directorial decisions for further refinement.

Teachers provide directorial feedback to students on the performances, commenting on their ability to communicate meaning to an audience and the effectiveness of their character development.

Students present the ensemble to an audience, focusing on manipulation of expressive skills, performance skills, dramatic elements and stagecraft.

Outcome 3

EVALUATING DEVISED DRAMA

Students use documentation they have maintained throughout the task to discuss and evaluate the development and performance. They prepare a short report that includes examples from the documentation and commentary that evaluates their work.
AREA OF STUDY 4: Analysing drama performances presented by other practitioners

**Outcome 4**

Analyse the portrayal of stories and characters in a drama performance by professional or other drama practitioners.

**Examples of learning activities**

- Prior to seeing a drama performance, prepare and rehearse a scene from the script; consider possibilities for character interpretation, direction and use of stagecraft or design.
- Research the playwright and performance style of the production the class has seen, prepare a written report or prepare and present a multimedia report.
- Discuss the performance the class has seen, focusing on character development or use of the dramatic and stagecraft elements.
- Interview actor/s and/or director/s involved in a drama performance.

**Detailed example**

**INTERVIEWING ACTOR/S AND/OR DIRECTOR/S**

- After viewing a performance of a drama performance, devise a series of questions for the actor/s and/or director/s, focusing on:
  - production aims or intentions
  - directorial choices
  - use of dramatic elements, theatrical conventions and stagecraft
  - use of expressive skills
  - approach to creating an actor-audience relationship.
  - movement, mine and percussion/sound.

- Contact the theatre company by phone or email and arrange the interview time and location.
- Interview one or more actors and/or the director/s. Record responses and include commentary.
- Write a short report that could be published in a newspaper or online. Send a copy to the theatre company.
Unit 2: Non-naturalistic Australian drama

AREA OF STUDY 1: Using Australia as inspiration

Outcome 1
Devise and document the processes used to create a solo or ensemble non-naturalistic performance work.

Examples of learning activities
- manipulate dramatic elements and theatrical conventions in the performance of an ensemble work that focuses on a contemporary issue
- use and manipulate stagecraft to enhance use of selected performance style/s in a solo or ensemble performance of a work that reflects changed attitudes to a theme explored in an early Australian play
- explore ways of using and manipulating stagecraft
- create and maintain a clear actor-audience relationship in an ensemble work about an historic or a local Australian landmark, monument, place or building

AREA OF STUDY 2: Presenting a devised performance

Outcome 2
Present a performance of a devised non-naturalistic work to an audience.

Examples of learning activities
- perform a solo or ensemble devised work based on a person, an event, an issue, a place, an artwork, a text and/or an icon from a contemporary or historical Australian context to a live audience
- focus on:
  - sustaining character in performance
  - ensuring commitment to role
  - using stagecraft to enhance the performance
  - manipulating performance skills and expressive skills in performance to build stage presence
**Detailed example 1: Refers to Outcomes 1 and 2**

**EXPLORATION OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES**

**Outcome 1**
Select a contemporary issue that affects a broad range of people within the community, for example obesity, water usage, animal rights or gambling.

And
- In groups of three to five create an ensemble performance that uses conventions of street theatre, exaggeration, caricature and circus. The performance should be about 15-20 minutes in length.
- Explore the selected issue and research relevant information through the use of books, interview and/or the Internet.
- In workshops, experiment with dramatic elements such as contrast, sound and rhythm. Highlight these in various scenes. Also focus on stagecraft that can easily be transformed such as costumes made of pieces of fabric, boxes and make-up.
- Explore characters, stories and conventions of Commedia dell’Arte.

**Outcome 2**
- Experiment with the conventions of exaggerated movement and caricature through cartoons and superhero characters and villains such as The Joker, Spiderman or Cat Woman.
- Explore circus skills such as juggling, tumbling, clowning.
- Refine scenes to minimise dialogue and maximise action. Explore caricature and large, exaggerated clown-like characters.

**Detailed example 2 (not shown)**

**EXPLORATION OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES**

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- Explore characters, stories and conventions of Commedia dell’Arte.

**Outcome 2**
- In rehearsal, focus on developing and extending individual expressive skills, particularly voice.
- Present the play to an audience outside the school or classroom, for example at a local shopping centre, school fete, main street, post office or primary school.
- Create and maintain an actor–audience relationship through working very closely to the audience or performing in and around them.
**Detailed example 2: Refers to Outcomes 1 and 2**

**THE SEARCH FOR A PLACE**

**Outcome 1**
Use either an historic or a local Australian landmark, monument, place or building as a source of stimulus material and create an ensemble performance which highlights and focuses on the significance to the community of a particular place or building. In exploring the material:

- Research and interview people associated with the place through books, the Internet, stories and/or oral histories.
- Improvise stories associated with the place.
- Create solo performances of characters associated with the place.
- Create a montage of sound and images based on memories and facts and stories about the place.
- Write scripts and document information about the place using a range of resources – diaries, advertisements, journals, photographs and newsreels.
- Explore the use and effect of dramatic elements, stagecraft and a variety of conventions on the piece.

For example, create a performance work based on the struggle to establish the Queen Victoria Hospital for Women:

- Research the “shilling fund” and documents, and stories from the period.
- Compare and contrast modern surgical and medical scenes with those from the late nineteenth century.
- Compare and contrast the changing attitudes to women throughout the century.
- Experiment with theatre styles and conventions such as transformation of time/place/object, use of narrator and/or melodrama.
- Experiment with the use of fact interspersed with song, dance, advertisements of the period, newspaper articles and poetry.

**Outcome 2**

- In groups of three to five, rehearse the work, experimenting with the placement of the audience. Seat them in the centre of the space or create a hospital scene and seat the audience on beds or in an operating theatre.
- Perform the work focusing on using theatrical conventions appropriate to the selected performance style/s.
AREA OF STUDY 3: Analysing a devised performance

**Outcome 3**

Analyse the creation, development and performance to an audience of their non-naturalistic devised work.

**Examples of learning activities**

- Explore ways of using drama terminology to analyse and/or evaluate devised performance work; refer to specific examples and descriptions of moments from your devised work, including use or manipulation of dramatic elements, stagecraft, conventions and/or performance styles.
- Use a journal or log book to record ways in which ensemble or solo work is created; include annotations that analyse and evaluate the processes involved.
- Write a short report that analyses and evaluates key features of a performance of a drama work that uses Australia as inspiration.

**Detailed example**

**ANALYSING AND EVALUATING A DEvised PERFORMANCE INSPIRED BY AUSTRALIA**

During development of the performance, maintain a workbook or journal. After the drama has been performed, as a class, discuss:

- Ways in which subject matter for the performance was explored to create and storyboard the text and other elements of a script.
- How dramatic elements and theatrical conventions helped shape the work.
- The ways in which stagecraft contributed to the overall success of the work.
- The impact of working in the chosen performance space, for example a non-traditional theatre space such as a shopping centre or neighbourhood park.
- The effect the work had on the audience.

Record ideas presented during the discussion. Later, create an oral presentation that:

- Analyses viewpoints that emerged during the discussion.
- Evaluates processes used in the development and presentation of the work.
AREA OF STUDY 4: Analysing Australian drama performance

**Outcome 4**

**Examples of learning activities**

- Analyse a performance of an Australian drama work.
- Use printed material, the Internet and/or CD-ROMs to research the playwright and/or theatre company, issue/content/theme/s and performance styles of the play prior to seeing a performance.
- After a performance participate in class discussion and focus on use and manipulation of dramatic elements.
- Offer a personal opinion/s on the extent to which the direction and stagecraft effectively gave meaning to the playscript or text.
- Prepare an analytical response to the performance.

**Detailed example**

AN ANALYSIS OF A PERFORMANCE OF AN AUSTRALIAN DRAMA WORK

Preparing an analytical response to a performance involves using drama language, terminology and expressions to give examples from the performance to support opinions and statements. In the analytical process:

- Identify the performance styles and theatrical conventions used in the performance and give your opinion on whether or not they were effective in interpreting the playscript or text.
- Based on a prior reading of the playscript or text, give opinions on whether or not the performers realised their characters effectively.
- Discuss characteristics of the work that can be considered as ‘Australian’.
- Discuss the direction of the performance, identifying ways in which the director used dramatic elements such as climax, conflict, contrast, mood, rhythm, sound, space, symbol, timing, tension and focus to enhance the playscript or text.
- Evaluate the use of stagecraft such as costumes, props, make-up, lighting and sound in the interpretation of the playscript or text.
- Give opinions on the overall effectiveness of the performance, taking into consideration audience response.
- Present the analysis in written form.
**Unit 3: Devised non-naturalistic ensemble performance**

**AREA OF STUDY 1: Devising and presenting non-naturalistic ensemble performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 1</th>
<th>Examples of learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and present character/s within a devised non-naturalistic ensemble performance.</td>
<td>use printed material, the Internet, and/or CD-ROMs to research selected writings of theatre practitioners such as Brecht, Peter Brook, Grotowski and Artaud in order to increase understanding of the theories on which their theatre works are based; experiment with ways of using these theories to create characters in ensemble performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>explore ways of using non-naturalistic styles and conventions to interpret a range of stimulus material, for example:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• create a series of tableaux of climactic moments in a story, myth or legend and link them with narration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• use music and movement to convey the rhythm of poetry</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• find ways of conveying conflict and tension</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• select objects that symbolise themes or characters in a piece of music and incorporate them into drama/movement work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• experiment with transformation of time when dramatising a story, myth or legend</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• interpret the mood of a visual artwork using music or movement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• play multiple roles when dramatising stimulus material and explore ways of transforming from one character to another on stage using techniques such as morphing or snap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• develop characters in an ensemble performance based on a selected theme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Form groups of between three and six and using the adage ‘All that glitters is not gold’ discuss and explore ideas, identify issues and brainstorm possibilities to be dramatised in a non-naturalistic ensemble performance.

Engage in the following activities in order to develop the ensemble using conventions of expressionist drama – exaggeration, white face, large gestures and facial expressions:

- Explore a range of stimulus material – the Greek myth ‘King Midas’, films such as Wall Street, Billionaire, Boiler Room or Cabaret, songs such as Michael Jackson’s ‘Money’, or Madonna’s ‘Material Girl’, definitions of ‘affluenza’ for example http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/affluenza, advertising material from magazines such as Vogue or selected excerpts from Status Anxiety by Alain de Botton.
- Create a montage of sounds and images that depict casinos, gambling venues and lifestyles of the rich and famous.
- Explore dramatic and cinematic styles such as German Expressionism and Film Noir through films such as Metropolis and The Maltese Falcon.
- Utilise ideas from these films within a series of scenes and improvisations where money is the major incentive.
- Experiment with masks, dance and exaggerated movement to create images, scenes and characters that represent greed, poverty, wealth and exploitation.
- Explore the Epic theatre style and conventions of Brecht and the music of Kurt Weill. Create contrasting scenes and use music as a way of creating irony and making social commentary.
- Use Epic theatre conventions such as signs, direct audience address and narration.
- Explore the characters in soap operas such as ‘Dynasty’, ‘Gossip Girl’, or ‘The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills’ and/or ‘Dallas’ and use them as a basis for creating scenes of exaggeration and caricature.
- Examine stagecraft such as the use of black and white in costumes, the effects of using harsh, white lighting on faces and the use of shadows.
- Over a period of three to five weeks, collect information about the effects of gambling on our society. Collect historical information about the Great Depression of 1929 and the Recession of the 1980s.
- Put together a blog or photostory with advertisements from TV and magazines that show how ‘need’ can be created through advertising, for example advertisements that offer a luxury lifestyle or the easy use of credit.
AREA OF STUDY 2: Responding to devised ensemble performances

**Outcome 2**

Analyse the use of processes, techniques and skills to create and present a devised ensemble performance.

**Examples of learning activities**

- use a mind-mapping application to keep a record of ways in which characters are developed and performed in an ensemble performance
- maintain an online blog recording the development and performance of an ensemble performance; use evidence from the workbook/folio to analyse processes used
- describe ways of using non-naturalistic performance styles and conventions to interpret a range of stimulus material
- discuss the impact of non-naturalistic performance styles on completed ensemble work and evaluate their effectiveness

**Detailed example**

**RECORDING ON A BLOG PROCESSES USED TO DEVELOP AND PRESENT A NON-NATURALISTIC ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE**

During development of the ensemble work, maintain an online blog for the group where each member contributes content relating to aspects of the performance-making process. For example, include material relating to:

- characters
- stagecraft
- dramatic elements
- theatrical conventions
- non-naturalistic performance style/s
- stimulus material, script
- ways group used collaborative processes to realise aims and intentions.

Activities on the blog could include:

- inserting links to research material such as websites
- embedding videos of reference material
- posting a mind-map created during brainstorming about the dramatic potential of stimulus material
- uploading and commenting on scene descriptions for improvisation
- posting a rehearsal schedule for the development of dramatic material
- posting information about non-naturalistic use of conventions relevant to performance style/s being used in the drama
- commenting on ideas posted on the blog by other group members and discussing aspects of the developing ensemble in-between classes and planning next steps of the play-making process
- uploading and editing working scripts
- embedding stimulus images of properties
- posting costume sketches and images
- posting an individual reflection on performance and expressive skills being used in the ensemble work
- posting a diary-style account of the ensemble group’s progress.

After the work has been performed, discuss the use of processes with the whole class and then the ensemble group. Note differing views and opinions. Each student then uses notes from the discussion and content from the blog as resources for a report that analyses and evaluates processes that can be used to develop and present ensemble works.
AREA OF STUDY 3: Analysing non-naturalistic performance

**Outcome 3**

Analysed and evaluated a non-naturalistic performance.

**Examples of learning activities**

- ways in which non-naturalistic performance styles were used in the performance;
- use the theories of theatre practitioners such as Brecht, Grotowski and Artaud to support statements about the use of non-naturalism in the performance;
- describe ways in which the characters in the performance used non-naturalistic performance styles and conventions such as caricature or mask;
- write an analysis of the performance, incorporating examples from the performance to support statements and opinions;
- analyse actor/s’ use of expressive skills including voice, movement, facial expression and gesture.

**Detailed example**

ANALYSIS OF A NON-NATURALISTIC PERFORMANCE

After viewing the performance, list the ways non-naturalism was applied using subheadings such as performance styles, theatrical conventions, manipulation of stagecraft, dramatic elements. As a class, discuss ways in which:

- non-naturalistic performance styles were used;
- theatrical conventions shaped the form of a performance, for example through use of a narrator or chorus;
- dramatic elements were manipulated in a performance, for example use of timing and tension.

- stagecraft elements were manipulated in a performance, for example slides projected onto a cyclorama.

Use software or apps to create a word cloud or a mind-map that identifies features of the performance. Evaluate key opinions expressed during discussion.

Individually, students compare viewpoints expressed in the class discussion with their own perspective. They then write a report that analyses and evaluates non-naturalistic characteristics in the performance.
Unit 4: Non-naturalistic solo performance

Creating a solo performance in this unit requires the use of processes to develop character, actions and stories. Students need to understand the range of skills and abilities involved in exploring the potential of ideas and using dramatic elements, stagecraft, theatrical conventions and performance styles to communicate their ideas through the performance. Ultimately, too, the creation of the solo performance is as much about self-management planning and working to a timeline as it is about performance.

AREA OF STUDY 1: Working with stimulus material

This area of study is designed to highlight for students the ways that play-making techniques can be used to explore the dramatic potential of given stimulus material and devise a solo performance that meets specific requirements. This work should be undertaken within a short time frame, for example two weeks, and does not require overly polished or refined performances. The assessment task for this outcome focuses on students’ use of processes rather than on performance skills. The stimulus material chosen for this task should be deliberately limited in scope so that students’ energies are focused on developing their understanding of relevant play-making techniques. This task should develop students’ understanding of how to approach the task of devising and presenting a solo performance and build their ability to work independently. It is not appropriate to use material from solo performance examination prescribed structures from either the current or previous years.

Outcome 1

Devise a solo performance in response to stimulus material and describe the non-naturalistic qualities of the performance.

**Examples of learning activities**

- explore the dramatic potential of stimulus material such as a proverb or phrase for creating a solo performance of one to two minutes

- using improvisation, experiment with techniques for achieving transformation of character, time, place and object; use techniques such as freeze-frame, giving/receiving, meld or pulse

- use improvisation techniques and sit in the ‘hot-seat’ – this activity involves audience members asking questions of the character

- brainstorm and create a mind-map that identifies ways of using dramatic elements, performance and expressive skills and stagecraft to develop and enhance non-naturalistic qualities of a devised solo performance
**Detailed example**

DEVISING A SHORT SOLO PERFORMANCE BASED ON A PROVERB OR PHRASE

This task should be undertaken over about two weeks and completed largely in class.

Provide students with the following information and instructions:

**Character**
THE DOG

**Stimulus**
- ‘Every dog has its day’ or
- ‘The dog days are over’ or
- ‘The black dog of depression’ or
- ‘Wo/man’s best friend’

**Performance focus**
Choose one of the above proverbs/phrases and devise a short (one to two minute) performance that explores the meaning of the proverb/phrase. In your performance, you must show transformations of character, time, place and object.

Write a statement of about 50 words that identifies two to three non-naturalistic qualities of your performance.

Perform your solo to the class.

Use two to three of the following play-making techniques:
- researching – the meaning of the proverb, for example, vox pop interviews, internet research, dictionary
- brainstorming – explore the dramatic potential of different interpretations of the proverb revealed by research
- improvising – ways of transforming character, time, place and object in your performance
- scripting – develop and record the sequence of events in your performance using, for example, a story board
- editing – review your material and delete duplication
- rehearsing – time your performance, blocking your performance to use multiple levels within a small performance space
- refining – seek feedback and adjust your performance in response.

As you develop your performance, note key ideas and processes you use. Review this information and write a brief statement of about 50 words that identifies two to three non-naturalistic qualities of your performance. For example, describe how transformation of character, time, place and object, was used to communicate ideas about the meaning of the proverb/phrase.
AREA OF STUDY 2: Devising a non-naturalistic solo performance

Creating a solo performance requires students to undertake intensive research, make connections and judgments and apply values to both the prescribed character and the world and/or circumstances in which they are placed.

Outcome 1 prepares students for Outcome 2 by requiring them to use a range of processes to create, develop and present a solo performance. For Outcome 2, teachers need to ensure that students:

• understand the scope and nature of the prescribed structure
• are familiar with all terminology and the specifics of the ‘question/s’ raised by the structure of the construction, development, rehearsal and performance of the solo
• can establish clear and achievable timelines for completion
• are given opportunities to develop a character/s and a ‘working’ script
• are encouraged to deepen their understanding of the selected character/s and their world
• extend and develop performance skills and confidence, by providing opportunities for students to show their work to others.

Before selecting a character/s, students should consider the scope and possibilities of each of the prescribed structures published by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. After selecting a structure, students should:

• analyse the structure and ensure that they understand the requirements
• develop a journal or checklist where they can document how they are including each of the requirements of the prescribed structure in their performance; for example, how they are using the prescribed dramatic elements or how they are portraying specific actions. The performance should be shaped by the prescribed dramatic elements, performance styles and theatrical conventions.

The following considerations need to be taken into account when undertaking Outcome 2 in a school setting. The performance skills of focus and energy are vital to drama performance. Attention to detail is paramount. This includes choices such as costume, hair, shoes, jewellery and props. Everyday street-wear or theatre blacks are not normally considered a costume and may detract from the overall performance and intention of the piece.

Outcome 2

Create, develop and perform a non-naturalistic drama solo in response to a prescribed structure.

Examples of learning activities

• explore a range of play-making techniques for constructing a solo performance based on the selected character
• discuss the nature of the task, set character and assigned parameters of the performance
• develop working definitions of set terms, conventions and language of the chosen prescribed structure
• construct/write a character biography for each character in the performance
• storyboard the structure of the performance, referencing use of each play-making technique
• experiment with different transformation techniques
• experiment with characterisation to explore a range of vocal styles/voices
• improvise using a selected prop/s to explore a range of transformations
• illustrate through a diagram or drawing the use of the performance space
Detailed example

TECHNIQUES FOR CONSTRUCTING A SOLO PERFORMANCE

Select a prescribed structure from the list published in the VCE Drama Performance Examination and:

• Establish timelines whereby tasks or a number of scenes or minutes should be completed; ensure that students perform and show selected scenes of their work; set a final performance date; make this a performance to, for example, colleagues, parents or friends.

• Undertake research from a variety of sources, such as books, the Internet, family members, friends, oral histories. Develop a storyboard, possible line of action and a working script to investigate the time period in which the character is set and the language, customs, family/social mores, roles, structures, politics and economics of the ‘world’ of the character, such as nineteenth century Russia or 1930s Working Class Australia.

• Experiment with the assigned dramatic elements and theatrical conventions to understand how the final piece may be shaped and given direction, such as finding a symbol (like a piece of bread) for the character or for the period or use exaggerated movement, for example, stillness and silence, to show hunger during the Great Depression.

• Experiment with the actor-audience relationship.

• Select appropriate research to begin a small scene and experiment or replay the same scene through the use of dialogue, mime, silence or song, using ‘jibberish’ instead of words, or using character transformation to present the scene from a variety of different character perspectives.

• Having developed a scene, experiment with interesting transitions. Enhance the piece through the inclusion of song or movement, slowly setting up the next scene with sounds, the re-contextualisation of the final line of dialogue or the use of a recurring image or motif.

• Experiment with prescribed elements such as mood or climax through the use of music or poetry; underscore scenes of dialogue with appropriate and interesting sounds or music, such as a saxophone solo, the sound of wind or rain or the use of classical music to create irony or build to a crescendo.

• Evaluate the work in order to reduce scenes with a lot of dialogue to one or two lines; strip the piece bare to focus on what is really important and what is superfluous; reduce actions, dialogue and expressions to their minimum and focus on simplicity, clarity and refine all expressive skills and ways of communicating emotions.

• Rehearse using set, costumes, props, make-up etc. and refine performance to deal with any problems that arise.

• Write a Statement of Intention that accurately reflects the nature and breadth of the performance, and is easily understood.

• Time and perform the piece to an audience other than the teacher, respond to feedback, and criticism by further refining the work.
AREA OF STUDY 3: Analysing devised non-naturalistic solo performance

**Outcome 3**

Analyse and evaluate the creation, development and presentation of a devised non-naturalistic solo performance.

**Examples of learning activities**

- create a record of the development and performance of character/s in the solo performance, for example maintain a workbook/folio/blog that records development of ideas relating to use of the prescribed dramatic elements;
- use this workbook as a means to reflect on the process.

**Detailed example**

CREATE A SERIES OF QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE KEY KNOWLEDGE AND KEY SKILLS EXPLORED IN OUTCOME 2

Students reflect upon, analyse and describe the range of processes they underwent to create their solo performance. They document:
- their assigned dramatic elements
- how theatrical conventions were selected and manipulated
- their use of stimulus material in developing and creating their solo performance
- how they used expressive skills to embody characters and transform between characters
- associated performance styles.

See Unit 3, Outcome 2, for advice on developing and maintaining a record of a play-making process.

Students discuss in detail the processes they used to create their solo performance.

They record and document the use of play-making techniques in the development of their performance, including documentation of:
- research
- brainstorming
- improvisation
- stages of script development
- editing
- rehearsing
- refining
- performance.
SCHOOL-ASSESSED COURSEWORK

In Units 3 and 4 teachers must select appropriate tasks from the assessment table provided for each unit. Advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors to assist teachers in designing and marking assessment tasks will be published online by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority in an assessment handbook. The following is an example of a teacher’s assessment program using a selection of the tasks from the Units 3 and 4 assessment tables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Marks allocated</th>
<th>Assessment tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 1</strong></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Creation and performance to an audience of a devised ensemble work in which the student uses performance skills and expressive skills to transform character, time, place and object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and present character/s within a devised non-naturalistic ensemble performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 2</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A written report that analyses and evaluates the processes involved in the development and presentation of characters, stagecraft, dramatic elements, conventions, non-naturalistic performance styles within the ensemble work created for Outcome 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse the use of processes, techniques and skills to create and present a devised ensemble performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 3</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A written report analysing and evaluating ways dramatic elements, conventions and stagecraft were manipulated, and characters represented, in a performance in a non-naturalistic style selected from the VCE Drama Unit 3 Playlist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse and evaluate a non-naturalistic performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total marks for Unit 3</strong></td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 1</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A short written statement that identifies the non-naturalistic qualities of the performance and A one to three minute presentation of a solo response to given stimulus material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devise a solo performance in response to given stimulus material and describe the non-naturalistic qualities of the performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 3</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A written report that uses drama terminology to analyse and evaluate the solo performance developed in Outcome 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse and evaluate the creation, development and presentation of a devised non-naturalistic solo performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total marks for Unit 4</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
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</tbody>
</table>