



Teaching dance: Staging content

The draft *Creative Arts K-6* Syllabus identifies a content model for each subject within the syllabus. For dance, the model includes:

- **Objectives**, or content organisers: performing, composing and appreciating.
- **Elements of dance**: Action, space, time, dynamics, relationships and structure.
- **Teaching contexts**: teacher-directed, student compositions and cultural and historic dances.
- **Teaching/learning process**: exploring, developing, reflecting.

This content model makes explicit the inter-relationship of all these components.

Students learn about dance by performing dances, by creating original dance works and by viewing and discussing dance. Every dance experience should extend students' understanding of one or more of the elements of dance. Learning through a range of dance contexts gives students a broader understanding of dance as an art form.

Learning in dance needs to be cyclic, with dance content revisited across the stages. Appropriate content and learning experiences will be guided by end-of-stage outcomes.

The following overview suggests appropriate content for stages 1-3, in performing, composing and appreciating experiences. It has been developed by dance consultants to help teachers program dance material appropriate for each staged group.

Suggested overview of content for dance K-6

Performing

Stage one

Students will be able to perform:

- **basic movement skills** with confidence. Examples include:
non locomotor: bend, stretch, sway, roll, swing, gesture.
locomotor: walk, run, jump, skip, hop, gallop, slide.
- **simple combinations** of basic movement skills. Example: 4 runs, 3 jumps, gallop.

Students will perform, demonstrating:

- **contrast in movement quality**. Example: light and fast, strong and slow.
- an understanding of **elements of time**. Example: simple beat, tempo

Students will develop an **awareness of safe dance practice**

- alignment of feet, ankles and knees; alignment of the spine
- jumping safely.

Stage two

Students will be able to perform:

- more complex **locomotor and non-locomotor sequences**. Example: run, freeze, step, turn, jump, roll, gesture
- movement combinations that **emphasise and isolate specific body parts**.

Students will perform, demonstrating:

- a **greater range of movement quality**. Examples include: emotional quality, simple characterisations.
- an ability to **control elements of space and time**. Examples include: performing movements that extend the body into the space, controlling action and stillness, moving to a regular beat.

Students will demonstrate their **understanding of safe dance practice** by:

- maintaining correct alignment when standing and performing simple exercises
- developing a vocabulary to describe parts of the body.

Stage three

Students will be able to perform:

- locomotor and non-locomotor sequences that include **more complex coordinations** of body parts. Examples include: arms and legs moving at different times or speeds and through different planes.
- dance sequences to **different time signatures**
- a range of dance types from different contexts, with confidence. Examples include: contemporary, popular, folk and traditional dances.

Students will perform, demonstrating:

- a **wide range of movement quality**. Examples include: abstract qualities such as sustained, percussive, vibratory, forceful, suspended; quality that represents mood or character in a stylised way.
- an ability to **vary the elements of dance**. Examples include: varying movement to suit a new beat, rhythm or musical mood.

Students will demonstrate **safe dance practices** by:

- performing technical exercises correctly (on the floor and standing)
- maintaining alignment when travelling.



Composing

Stage one	Stage two	Stage three
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore aspects of space. Examples include: personal space, the space around them, relationships with others in space, creating group tableaux, changing levels and direction of actions. • create shapes in response to a stimulus. Examples include: big shapes, small shapes, curved, square, tall, spikey, tired, animal. • link shapes by moving from one shape to another in a specific order. 	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the elements of dance to vary movements they create. Examples include: level, direction, size, pathway, tempo, duration. • create symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes. • combine movement ideas to create phrases of movement, developing simple transitions to move from one shape or movement to another. 	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore more complex aspects of the elements of dance. Examples include: rhythm, acceleration and deceleration, 3-dimensional space, viewpoint, floor patterns, formations, contrasting and complementary relationships. • create original shapes that communicate intent. • use movement quality to communicate intent e.g. tense, pushing and pulling, forceful and percussive movements to communicate the concept <i>magnetic</i>. • explore ways to structure movement. Examples include: repetition, contrast, traditional or conventional forms.
<p>Students will demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an ability to work in pairs and in small groups • responsiveness to a variety of stimuli 	<p>Students will demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an ability to compose individually, in pairs and in larger groups. • an ability to make judgements about their own creative work • an ability to use correct terminology when describing composition works. 	<p>Students will demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • problem-solving skills when working individually, in pairs, or in small and large groups. • an ability to reflect on and refine their creative work.

Appreciating

Stage one	Stage two	Stage three
<p>Students look for, and identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elements of dance that they have explored in their own performing and composing experiences. Examples include: different shapes, direction, level, the use of dancers in the space, themes of dances. 	<p>Students look for and identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dance movement in relation to themes (establishing meaning). • the use of dance elements in works. Examples include: simple actions, use of space, movement qualities, relationships and groupings of dancers. 	<p>Students respond to works they view by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describing dancers' actions, elements of dance used and visual and aural elements that support the work. Examples include: the locomotor action and pathway that the dancer travels, the structuring of sections within the dance, the mood of the music, the design of the setting. • identifying relationships between movement content and choreographic intent • evaluating, judging and valuing their own work and the work of others.
<p>Students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding about dance as an art form by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talking about dance • discussing dance they like, expressing preferences • drawing pictures of dancers, the stage, costumes • writing short, guided responses to dances they view. 	<p>Students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding about dance as an art form by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing personal responses about dance works they view • sustaining a discussion guided by focus questions • formulating questions about dance • keeping a dance journal that includes ideas for making dances, observations and notes, drawings, notation, clippings. 	<p>Students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding about dance as an art form by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using dance-specific vocabulary in written responses • writing detailed descriptions, individual and group responses • developing a contextual understanding of works they view.

This overview was compiled by: Pat Dance-Wilson, District Arts Consultant, Bankstown/Fairfield;
Chris Richards, Dance Consultant, Creative Arts Unit and Deidhre Wauchop, Senior Curriculum Adviser, Creative Arts Unit