

Unit 39: **Choreographic Principles**

Unit code: **Y/502/5215**

QCF Level 3: **BTEC National**

Credit value: **10**

Guided learning hours: **60**

● **Aim and purpose**

The aim of this unit is to develop learners' knowledge of the process of choreography. This will be achieved through a series of practical tasks giving learners the opportunity to explore movement design and to create dance for performance for themselves and their peers.

● **Unit introduction**

Many dancers are also choreographers and this unit will equip learners with the tools to enable them to make dance for themselves and for other dancers. The process of choreography is exciting and stimulating. Learners will be encouraged to explore their creativity and experiment with a range of dance styles, techniques and movement vocabulary within a supportive framework.

Learners will discover how dances are created, how to use stimulus material to initiate their work and how to develop and organise their ideas into performance material. They will become aware of the stages of choreography, from initial stimulus, experimentation and manipulation of ideas, the selection of material, refinement, rehearsal and ultimately performance. In practical workshops learners will be given the opportunity to work from a range of stimulus material to include visual art, text, music, sound and current affairs and to experiment with a range of accompaniments, including silence.

Learners will be guided through the theoretical aspects of the principles of choreography and taught how to apply them practically with dancers in a variety of situations, ranging from solo composition through to ensemble group work. Learners will be required to evaluate their work during the choreographic process and post performance and will be encouraged to record their observations and provide suggestions for improvement and development. This process will build learners' confidence in their abilities as choreographers and provide them with a framework for future choreographic tasks.

● **Learning outcomes**

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to apply compositional structures and devices in the creation of dance work
- 2 Know how to respond to, and work with, different stimuli
- 3 Be able to work effectively with dancers
- 4 Understand the choreographic process and the performance of dance composition.

Unit content

1 Be able to apply compositional structures and devices in the creation of dance work

Structures: at least two of the following: binary, ternary, rondo, narrative, theme and variation, abstract, chance

Devices: motif development; unison; canon; repetition; dynamic variation; contrast; climax; highlights; proportion and balance; logical sequencing; unity; symmetry; asymmetry; inversion; stillness

2 Know how to respond to, and work with, different stimuli

Stimuli: at least two of the following: music, poetry, text, characters, current affairs, paintings, photographs, sculpture, spoken word, sound, moving image, abstract concepts, objects, professional repertoire

Using stimulus material: discussion, improvisation, interpretation of stimulus material, experimentation; selection and rejection, evaluation, manipulation of stimulus, development of ideas

3 Be able to work effectively with dancers

Number of performers: work with at least two of the following: solo, duo, trio, small groups, larger groups

Working relationships: cooperation; listening; valuing the work of others; organisation; focus

4 Understand the choreographic process and the performance of dance composition

Evaluate process: interpretation of stimulus; selection of movement material; devices and structures used; working relationship with dancers; time management; rehearsals; strengths and weaknesses

Evaluate performance: effect on the audience; strengths and weaknesses; communication of ideas; intention and meaning

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 create dance material which demonstrates the use of compositional structures and devices [CT]	M1 create dance material which demonstrates a comprehensive use of compositional structures and devices	D1 create innovative and well-structured dance material which demonstrates a thorough use and effect of compositional structures and devices
P2 explore the potential of stimuli, demonstrating appropriate responses [CT]	M2 explore the potential of stimuli, demonstrating appropriate and developed responses	D2 explore the full potential of stimuli, demonstrating complex and developed responses
P3 demonstrate a working method with dancers showing an awareness of their needs and abilities, when creating dance material	M3 adapt choreographic intentions to the capabilities of dancers when creating dance material	D3 work with dancers to fully communicate choreographic intentions that are successfully realised in performance
P4 evaluate the choreographic process and performance, giving an outlined analysis. [RL]	M4 evaluate the choreographic process and performance, with a clear breakdown of the development of the dance material, and the final presentation.	D4 evaluate the choreographic process and performance, with a detailed analysis of the means used to create the work, and the final presentation.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers CT – creative thinkers	RL – reflective learners TW – team workers	SM – self-managers EP – effective participators
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Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

An active, experimental approach is required to fully realise this unit. A substantial amount of time must be allowed for experimentation and the selection and rejection of movement in order to create dance material. This activity will take place in a dance studio or other comparable environment with, ideally, video/DVD playback facilities. Work in progress should be viewed as valuable and integral to the creative process.

Tutors should introduce learners to a range of stimulus material and provide the underpinning knowledge of choreographic structures and devices. This could be delivered via small choreographic tasks closely supervised by the tutor who provides a range of stimulus material and leads the choreographic sessions to ensure the appropriate understanding of structures and devices. This approach will enable learners to understand fully the process of choreography. Included should be the observation of the work of professional choreographers, either live or recorded, to illustrate the application of choreographic principles. Learners should be encouraged to view a range of dance material to support their understanding and develop their creativity. With experience, learners should be able to work from stimulus material of their own choice to create independent dance works.

Work in class and rehearsal should allow tutors to record observations of learners' work during the choreographic process. Performance, rehearsal and work in class should be recorded on video/DVD to be used as a tool for critical analysis by learners and tutors. Reflection and self-analysis should be encouraged as a way to heighten understanding and improve skills. The introduction of a reflective journal in the early stages, to run throughout the delivery of this unit, would help to embed good study habits and encourage a reflective and analytical approach to creating dance. A variety of feedback methods should be employed such as individual tutorials, self-assessment and analysis, peer and tutor feedback, informal discussion and observation notes. Learners should be encouraged to discuss their work and seek feedback from tutors and peers.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to unit and structure of the programme – whole class.
Practical work in class exploring choreographic devices and compositional structures working from a variety of stimulus material – ongoing throughout the programme.
P1, P2, P3, M1, M2, M3, D1, D2, D3
Assignment 1 – Reflective Journal – P4, M4, D4
Reflective journal to record ongoing choreographic process and experimentation to inform assignment evaluations.
Assignment 2 – Duet Choreography – P1, P2, P3, M1, M2, M3, D1, D2, D3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• class time to develop movement material• rehearsals• presentation of completed practical work/assessment.
Class work – how to evaluate P4, M4, D4

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Post-performance evaluation preparation and delivery – viva voce, PowerPoint or written evaluation. **P4, M4, D4**

Feedback session.

Assignment 3: Group Work Creating Material for Showcase Performance – P1, P2, P3, M1, M2, M3, D1, D2, D3

- tutor-led introduction
- small-group work in class to develop movement vocabulary
- rehearsals – small groups and ensemble
- performance(s)/assessment.

Post-performance evaluation preparation and delivery – viva voce, PowerPoint or written evaluation. **P4, M4, D4**

Feedback session.

Assessment

It is suggested that each learner must produce at least two pieces of choreography lasting between two and three minutes as a minimum. This will give learners the opportunity to show that they understand the application of choreographic structures and devices, that they are able to interpret stimulus material and that they can work effectively with dancers. Tutors can evidence the choreographic process for assessment purposes by producing observation notes during the development sessions along with video recording work in progress.

Learners must choreograph, or contribute to the choreography of, at least two of the following: solo, duo, trio or group piece in which they may, or may not, perform. The piece can be part of a longer group dance, but each choreographer's individual contribution must be identified. Dances must be recorded on video for assessment and verification purposes. Written and/or oral evidence in the form of a choreographic log, working notes or a final evaluation that supports and explains the choreographic process and the final performance must be produced. Tutors may decide to introduce a reflective journal or logbook to encourage learners to record the choreographic process and reflect on the work undertaken in creative workshops.

Learning outcome 1 could be evidenced throughout by tutor observation reports. Careful, detailed records will need to be kept for internal and external verification purposes. Video/DVD evidence of learner work in choreographic workshops could also provide suitable evidence if it has been edited effectively to show appropriate detail. Hours of footage of class work is not appropriate. The reflective journal could be used as supplementary evidence to support the understanding of compositional structures and devices. Tutors may wish to give specific guidance as to the layout of the journal and the topics to be covered with each new task to ensure appropriate information is captured for assessment purposes. The performance of the completed dance work will show how compositional structures and devices have been used by learners in the creation of their dance material. Evidence required for learning outcome 1 maps directly to grading criterion 1.

Grading criterion 1:

For P1, learners will produce choreographic material that shows the use of some compositional structures and devices. Their work will be limited and the most obvious structures and devices, eg narrative or rondo structures, unison, canon and motif development in a simple form, used to create the dance material.

For M1, the use of choreographic structures and devices will be more developed and it will be clear that learners understand how to use structures and devices in interesting and more complex ways.

For D1, learners will produce choreographic material that shows, through the choice of movement material and the way in which it is structured into a finished work, that they thoroughly understand how to apply choreographic structures and devices and that they can use them to create complex, innovative and engaging dance material.

Learning outcomes 2 and 3 could be evidenced in a very similar ways to learning outcome 1. The assessment of this whole unit, which maps directly from learning outcomes to grading criteria, relies heavily on tutor observation and the recording of appropriate evidence on to video/DVD for verification purposes.

The reflective journal could provide supporting evidence, but it is what actually happens in the creative workshops that provides the majority of the evidence for learning outcomes and grading criteria 1, 2 and 3. The final performance evidences the finished product and this in itself illustrates a level of understanding for learning outcomes and grading criteria 1 and 2. Primarily this unit is about the understanding, and the application, of the choreographic process. Tutors should be able to tell by watching their learners the level of understanding achieved and the application of their choreographic skills, including the management of other dancers, as required by learning outcome and grading criteria 3. For learning outcome 2 the initial selection of stimulus material and then the development of ideas and the creative response to working with the chosen stimuli will provide evidence for grading criteria 2 at pass, merit or distinction as appropriate.

Grading criterion 2:

For P2, learners will demonstrate the most obvious responses to stimulus material, and as a result generate dance material that is quite 'safe' and predictable in response to the chosen stimulus.

For M2, learners will explore the stimulus material further, being more inclined to try out new ideas and go beyond the obvious. Learners will be prepared to experiment and improvise in order to find more developed responses to the stimulus material.

For D2, learners will go way beyond the obvious and will be prepared to experiment, evaluate, improvise and reevaluate the dance material in order to fully explore the potential of the stimulus material, and as a result will create innovate and challenging movement vocabulary.

Grading criterion 3:

For P3, learners will be able to work with dancers to create dance material that reflects the dancers' abilities when they perform the completed dance. Learners will be aware of the limits of the dancers and create appropriate material. Pass level learners may compromise their choreographic intentions to suit the dancers.

For M3, learners will be more sensitive to the needs and abilities of the dancers and will be able to challenge them further while trying to realise their choreographic intentions.

For D3, learners will find ways of working with the dancers so that their choreographic intentions can be fully realised in performance while respecting and coping with the needs and abilities of the dancers. Distinction level learners will manage the dancers effectively in order to get the best from them.

Learning outcome 4 could be evidenced in a variety of ways. The learning outcome and grading criteria 4 require learners to evaluate the choreographic process and the final performance of the finished dance pieces. Tutors may choose to ask their learners to compile a written report or essay, produce a PowerPoint presentation or take part in a *viva voce* in order to meet the requirements of grading criteria 4. Whichever method is chosen, the reflective journal could be used to provide supporting evidence.

Grading criterion 4:

For P4, learners will be able to reflect on the choreographic process and the final performance of the dance work in a limited way. They will be able to identify obvious strengths and weaknesses in the process and the performance and make broad suggestions for improvement.

For M4, learners will be able to reflect on the choreographic process and analyse what happened, what worked well and what could be improved in some detail. They will also be able to do the same with the final performance.

For D4, learners will be able to analyse the choreographic process and the final performance in considerable detail. They will be able to identify a range of strengths and weaknesses showing insight and perception and make well thought out suggestions for improvement.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2, P3, M1, M2, M3, D1, D2, D3, P4, M4, D4	Reflective Journal (ongoing throughout the delivery of this unit, recording choreographic process, use of stimuli, working with other dancers) Evaluation of process and performance for assignments 2, 3 and 4.	Throughout each choreographic task, learners will record their thoughts and feelings, strengths and areas for development. Final evaluation of process and performance for assignments 2, 3 and 4.	Notebook or diary. Or Essay Or Video/DVD recording to camera. Viva voce.
P1, P2, P3, M1, M2, M3, D1, D2, D3	Duet Choreography	Learners will work in pairs to create a duet piece. Tutor will give a choice of stimuli material.	Tutor observations throughout the choreographic process. Video/DVD of creative workshops. Video/DVD of final performance.
P1, P2, P3, M1, M2, M3, D1, D2, D3	Group Work Creating Material for Showcase Performance	Learners will work in small groups to create dance material for a showcase performance.	Tutor observations throughout the choreographic process. Video/DVD of creative workshops. Video/DVD of final performance.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Performing and Production Arts sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Performing and Production Arts suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Performing Arts Individual Showcase and Performance	The Development of Dance	Choreographing Dances
Exploring Dance Skills	Performing Dance	Dance Performance

Essential resources

A practical dance space with sprung floor and mirrors; access to video/DVD recording and playback equipment; appropriate sound equipment; library of professional dance repertoire on video or DVD.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres are encouraged to develop links with professional dance companies and choreographers. Opportunities to take part in choreographic workshops, attend talks by choreographers and experience live dance performance should be built into the delivery of this unit if at all possible. Appropriate links with dance HE providers and local dance agencies should also be developed.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Ashley L – *Essential Guide to Dance, Third Edition* (Hodder Education, 2008) ISBN 9780340968383

Auty J and Harrison K – *Dance Ideas for Teachers, Students, Children* (Hodder Arnold, 1991)
ISBN 9780340427705

Blom L A and Tarin Chaplin T – *The Intimate Act of Choreography* (Dance Books, 1995)
ISBN 9781852730109

Copeland R and Cohen M (editor) – *What is Dance?* (Oxford University Press, 1983) ISBN 9780195031973

Humphrey D – *The Art of Making Dances* (Dance Books, 1997) ISBN 9781852730536

Minton S C – *Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation, Third Edition* (Human Kinetics Europe, 2007) ISBN 9780736064767

Smith-Autard J – *Dance Composition: A Practical Guide to Creative Success in Dance Making, Fifth Edition* (A&C Black, 2004) ISBN 9780713668247

Websites

www.dancebooks.co.uk

They carry a range of books, CDs, class CDs, videos and DVDs on all forms of dance.

www.phoenixdancetheatre.co.uk

Phoenix Dance Theatre Company.

www.rambert.org.uk

Rambert Dance Company. Touring of Contemporary Dance in theatres, resources including DVDs and education packs, 'learning and participation' department offers workshops, residencies and Inset Days.

www.surrey.ac.uk/NRCD

The National Resource Centre for Dance (NRCD) is a non-profit national archive and resource provider for dance and movement.

www.theplace.org.uk

Richard Alston Dance Company.

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Creative thinkers	generating dance ideas and exploring possibilities working from stimulus material to create dance material
Reflective learners	reviewing and reflecting on the choreographic process reviewing and reflecting on the finished dance piece
Team workers	working with other dancers to create dance material
Effective participants	taking part in the choreographic process and performance with other learners.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	researching choreographers and their professional work to develop their understanding and experience of choreography carrying out research to generate stimulus material
Creative thinkers	experimenting with movement, timing, dynamics, space and relationships adapting and modifying movement phrases looking at ways to interpret stimulus material
Reflective learners	inviting feedback on their work from tutors and peers evaluating their experiences and learning to inform future progress setting actions for future improvement
Team workers	taking responsibility for their own role in the choreographic process contributing positively to discussions on the development of group material
Self-managers	coping with the pressure of producing dance material in time for a scheduled performance responding positively to challenges, seeking advice and support when needed
Effective participants	discussing issues related to the choreographic process and positively seeking solutions.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience
English	word processing documents
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	discussing choreographic ideas discussing the development of stimulus material discussing and reviewing the development of the dance material, making suggestions for improvement. orally presenting their evaluation of the process and performance taking part in a viva voce
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	reading research information about individual choreographers researching stimulus material
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	updating the choreographic log (reflective journal) writing evaluation essay.