

**Theatre Studies GA 1 and 2: Unit 3
Theatre Studies GA 1 and 2: Unit 4**

UNIT 3

This report is provided for the first year of implementation of this study and is based on the coursework audit and VCAA statistical data.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Outcome 1

Apply stagecraft to interpret a playscript for performance to an audience and demonstrate understanding of the stages of the production process.

Task type options

Practical application of two areas of stagecraft in all four stages of the production process, and demonstration of understanding of how selected stagecraft can be effectively applied to interpret a playscript in performance to an audience.

Commonly addressed tasks

Teachers commonly addressed the four stages of production very well. A timeframe was set up at the commencement of the year documenting what the four stages of production were and when each stage would be assessed by the teacher. Assessment varied. Some teachers collected student logbooks at the conclusion of each stage of production and assessed their contribution to the production at each specific stage while other teachers chose to set up interview times at the conclusion of each stage of production. Each student presented their log book at the interview and the work achieved at each stage. Another option employed by teachers was to set a test at the conclusion of each stage of production and assess the students through a series of questions related to their stagecraft tasks at each stage of production.

The Stagecraft Specification printed in the *VCE Theatre Studies Study Design* was commonly used as a guide for Stagecraft duties and responsibilities at each of the four stages of production.

Teachers stressed the importance of students thoroughly documenting their work in each area of stagecraft in a log book or diary thus ensuring a comprehensive basis from which to compile work for Outcome 2.

The key knowledge and skills documented in the study design was provided and clarified for the students.

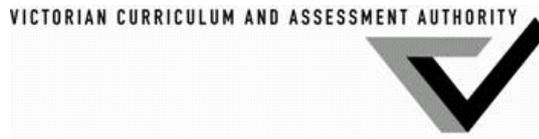
Outcome 1 in the revised study is assessed quite differently from the previous course and requires the development of an ongoing assessment strategy. Teachers have generally adapted very well to this new approach of assessment.

Key knowledge and skills covered well

The four stages of production process have been covered very well. Each stage has been defined clearly and specific dates set for each stage of production.

Development of an imaginative interpretation of the playscript at each stage of production was also defined very well by teachers. Ideas were brainstormed and a design brief

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established. Thorough documentation of all research, decision making, collaboration and design work was stressed in view of creating an imaginative investigation of performance options.

Understanding of ways stagecraft can be applied was also taught well. The Stagecraft Specifications formed the basis of the tasks specified in each Stagecraft area. A program of ongoing assessment was set up so that teachers *could monitor that* students were fulfilling the functions expected of them in each stagecraft area.

Application of two areas of stagecraft in the development and presentation of a production was also covered comprehensively. Students were asked to document the application of both stagecraft areas in each stage of production. All schools audited presented a playscript for performance to an audience and the students kept a thorough record of the application of their stagecraft areas for the production.

Effective contribution to two areas of stagecraft in collaboration with the production team. Students were asked to document their specific contributions in each area of stagecraft to the production.

A glossary of theatre terms were given out to students so that correct theatre language and expressions could be used in discussing stagecraft and the production process generally. This key skill was also presented as an assessment item to the students.

Assessment

Some teachers presented the performance descriptors published by VCAA to their students as an indication of a high, medium and low response. However, not all teachers appeared to make these descriptors available to the students.

Teachers often developed their own weighting system rather than follow the one proposed by VCAA. The weighting was made known to the students at the outset of the task. Most schools seemed to give less weight to the key skill – Appropriate use of theatrical language, terminology and expressions.

The weightings did reflect the depth and complexity of the task. The focus of the marks was on the application, imaginative interpretation and effective contribution in the two areas of stagecraft, which in fact dominated most of the students' time.

Understanding of the four areas of production and the theatrical terminology were not given as much weighting.

Outcome 2

Analyse the use of stagecraft in the development of a playscript for production, incorporating the specifications appropriate for each stage of the production process.

Task type options

A production folio that presents evidence and analysis of the application of two areas of stagecraft in all four stages of the production process.

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Teachers provided students with a list of the appropriate key knowledge and skills for Outcome 2. Each key skill was described and clarified to benefit student understanding of the type of analysis required in this task.

A number of class lessons are definitely required for Outcome 2 so that students may fulfil the task adequately. New teachers to the subject must be warned that the task requires a longer period of time than other Theatre Studies outcomes.

Assessment

The weighting was quite evenly divided across the key knowledge/ key skill areas and reflected the complexity and detail required.

Teachers allocated a significant period of time to undertake this assessment task. Most teachers scheduled a week's worth of class time (if periods were of 45 minutes duration) to compile the folios.

Outcome 3

Analyse and evaluate ways in which a written playscript selected from the prescribed playlist is interpreted in its production to an audience.

Task type options

An analysis and evaluation of an interpretation of a prescribed playscript in any one or a combination of the following formats:

- a written report
- an analytical essay
- short responses
- structured questions.

Teachers all chose plays from the VCAA published list of plays for Unit 3 Theatre Studies.

Teachers provided students with a list of the appropriate key knowledge and skills for Outcome 3. Each key skill was described and clarified to benefit student understanding of approaches to analysis of a performance relevant to this assessment task.

Most teachers provided their students with the written playscript to read prior to attending the production.

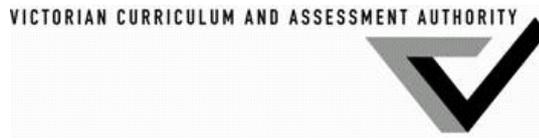
Assessment

The weighting was quite evenly divided across the key knowledge and skill areas and reflected the complexity and detail required in each area.

Most teachers used the format of structured questions, which demanded an extended analytical response from the students.

Allocated time for this assessment task ranged between 75 and 100 minutes.

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UNIT 4

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Unit 4 coursework audit revealed excellent preparation at the school level for Outcome 2 and 3. The nature of the tasks was explained clearly and clear guidelines set for the attainment of excellent results. Performance descriptors were commonly used and the key knowledge and skills made evident to all students prior to sitting the School-assessed Task. Teachers made excellent use of resources from the *VCE Theatre Studies Study Design* and other textbooks. Ninety minutes appeared to be the most commonly used time period for completion of tasks for Outcomes 2 and 3.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Unit 4 Coursework

Outcome 1

Note: Outcome 1 is not assessed via School-assessed Coursework.

Outcome 2

Develop a theatrical brief that presents an interpretation of a scene.

Assessment

A theatrical brief that outlines an interpretation of a prescribed scene. The theatrical interpretation may be in any one or a combination of the following formats:

- a written report
- an analytical essay
- short responses
- structured questions.

Most teachers opted for the structured questions as the assessment task type for Outcome 2. The questions were based on the key knowledge and skills published in the study design.

As part of teaching and learning activities, it was apparent that most teachers asked students to develop a journal compiling all their research of the prescribed scene/s of their chosen monologue for Outcome 1. Most teachers divided the task of developing a journal into achievable tasks with dates set at the conclusion of each task so that the teacher could ascertain that the students were on track with their research and analysis. This approach provided a well-structured resource for students to use during the assessment task. Research material was divided into the headings of the key knowledge and key skills for Outcome 2. The journal could be used as a resource during the School-assessed Coursework task.

Dates for both Outcome 2 and 3 School-assessed Coursework tasks were given to the students at the commencement of Semester 2.

Most teachers generated questions for the task from the key knowledge and skills in the study design.

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Teachers used descriptors from Section 2 of the *VCE Theatre Studies Assessment Handbook* and the advice on page 33 to develop marking schemes for this task.

Outcome 3

Analyse and evaluate acting in a production from the prescribed playlist.

Assessment

An analysis and evaluation of acting in a production from the prescribed playlist in any one or a combination of the following formats:

- a written report
- an analytical essay
- short responses
- structured questions.

Most teachers selected structured questions as the format for this task. Dates for this performance analysis task were set at the commencement of Semester 2. It was common practice for teachers to prepare students with a reading of the script prior to viewing the production.

Many teachers distributed questions in advance of attending the production to direct the attention of the students while watching the production. The questions were derived from the key knowledge and skills questions in the study design. The structured questions used in the assessment task were based on these questions.

Performance descriptors from the assessment handbook were given to students by most teachers. Many schools scheduled 2–3 during Unit 4 to analyse the chosen play from the prescribed playlist over a number of weeks. Most teachers generated structured questions generated from the key skills stipulated in the study design. Many teachers used material from textbooks as support material to prepare the students for Outcome 3.