Responding to physical theatre

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| Year 8 | The Arts — Drama |
| Students watch a physical theatre performance, analysing and evaluating the use of drama elements. In groups, they then create, perform, respond and reflect on their physical theatre work. | |
| **Time allocation** | 9–12 hours |
| Context for assessment  *Physical theatre* is a term used for theatre that emphasises building dramatic action and expression through the physical text (movement) rather than through the spoken text (words). Physical theatre performances are not just displays of physical skills — actors use their movement skills alongside the drama elements (such as narrative, character and conflict) to tell a story or communicate a theme to the audience. Physical theatre covers a range of circus theatre forms — clown and mask theatre, mime, commedia dell’arte and dance theatre. A unit attached to this assessment will help students develop an understanding of physical theatre as they create, present and respond to works of this dramatic style. | |

******This assessment gathers evidence of learning for the following **Essential Learnings**:

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| The Arts Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9 | |
| Ways of working **Students are able to:**   * make decisions about arts elements, languages and cultural protocols in relation to specific style, function, audience and purpose of arts works * create and shape arts works by manipulating arts elements to express meaning in different contexts * modify and refine genre-specific arts works, using interpretive and technical skills * present arts works to particular audiences for a specific purpose, style and function, using genre- specific arts techniques, skills, processes and cultural protocols * identify risks and devise and apply safe practices * respond by deconstructing arts works in relation to social, cultural, historical, spiritual, political, technological and economic contexts, using arts elements and languages * reflect on learning, apply new understandings and justify future applications. | Knowledge and understanding ***Drama***  **Drama involves manipulating dramatic elements and conventions to express ideas, considering specific audiences and specific purposes, through dramatic action based on real or imagined events.**   * Roles, characters and relationships are interpreted to define motivation and purpose, using specific vocal and physical techniques. * Drama elements are manipulated to create tension and status, and are used to express ideas. * Dramatic action and texts are created and interpreted through specific styles, including realism and non-realism. |
| Assessable elements  * Knowledge and understanding * Creating * Presenting * Responding * Reflecting | |
| Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007, The Arts Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9, QSA, Brisbane. | |

Listed here are suggested **learning experiences** for students before attempting this assessment.

* View and practise forms of physical theatre, such as mime and clowning, to gain an understanding of how they can be used to create images and represent characters, relationships, places, spaces, moods, status and tension.
* Practise using the correct terminology to write and speak about physical theatre.
* Scaffold literacy skills.
* Discuss how physical theatre actors use drama elements and performance skills to get their message across to an audience.
* Watch performances, interpreting, analysing and evaluating the way meaning is conveyed through the use of drama elements and conventions.
* Experiment with ways of developing and shaping physical theatre performances and “freeze-frames” using drama elements and conventions.
* Modify, refine and practise physical theatre performance skills.
* Discuss and give feedback to each other about to use a stage area effectively.
* Review the Guidelines for audience etiquette (Appendix A).
* Revise techniques for reflecting on drama practice.

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| Icon_Resource | Teacher resources |

* *Ontour inschools*, The Queensland Arts Council 2008, accessed 19 March 2008, <www.qac.org.au/htm/inschools.asp>.

The Queensland Arts Council brings shows to schools around Queensland. These include:

* *The stones* and *The apology,* Zeal Theatre 2006, accessed 19 March 2008, <www.zealtheatre.com.au>.
* *The clown from Snowy River*, deBASE Productions 2007, accessed 20 March 2008, <www.debaseproductions.com>.

The interactive educational DVD package includes a full-length version of the show plus resources on clowning, comic sketches and teacher notes.

* Drama Queensland is a professional association for drama educators in Queensland: <www.dramaqueensland.org.au>.
* *Physical theatre performance and pretext*, CD-ROM, Drama Queensland 2006, available from the website, accessed 19 March 2008, <www.dramaqueensland.org.au/index.php?option=com\_content&task=view&id=24&Itemid=34>.

This CD-ROM includes physical theatre performances by companies and students, interviews with directors and actors and units of work with all the required resources.

* X*L-D3: A water story*,DVD, Drama Queensland 2006, available from the website, accessed 19 March 2008, <www.dramaqueensland.org.au/index.php?option=com\_content&task=view&id=24&Itemid=34>.

This DVD includes an edited version of the show; teacher and student interviews about “co-artistry”, devising, collaborating, and the impact of real-life projects on young people; examples of collage drama, shadow theatre, movement theatre and performance poetry.

* *Romeo and Juliet*, DVD, Zen Zen Zo Physical Theatre Company 2007, available from website, accessed 20 March 2008, <www.zenzenzo.com/resources/shop/videos-and-cds.html>.
* *Cirque du Soleil exclusive box set*, Cirque du Soleil 2006, available from the website, accessed 19 March 2008, < http://shop.abc.net.au/browse/product.asp?productid=739948>.

This four-DVD box set includes the Cirque du Soleil productions *Saltimbanco* (1992), *Alegria* (1994), *Varekai* (2002) and *Quidam* (2003).

* *The Morrison Center’s study guide to theatre etiquette and terminology*, Boise State University 2008, accessed 19 March 2008, <http://mc.boisestate.edu> search for “Guide to theatre etiquette” (PDF).

## redesign headings_developPreparing

Consider the following points before implementing this assessment.

* Arrange for the class to see a live or recorded physical theatre performance.
* Obtain teacher notes for the performance, if available.
* Before the performance, discuss with the class:
* any background information
* the style of theatre and performance
* the outline of their assessment, so they know what to observe
* the need to record their observations and notes as soon as possible (outside class time)
* audience etiquette.
* After the performance, guide a class discussion for students to share their interpretations, realisations, and likes or dislikes, based on their notes on the performance.

Sample implementation plan

The following table shows one way that this assessment can be implemented. It is a guide only — you may choose to use all, part, or none of the table. You may customise the table to suit your students and their school environment.

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| **Suggested time** | **Student activity** | **Teacher role** | **Resources** |
| **Section 1. Deconstruct a physical theatre performance** | | | |
| 2 hours | Read through Sections 1 and 2 of the *Student booklet.*  View a physical theatre performance. | Discuss all aspects of the assessment, including audience etiquette. | Recording of a physical theatre performance (if not attending a live performance) |
| 1 hour | Working individually, use the chart in Section 1 of the *Student booklet* to deconstruct the performance*.*  Helpful discussions and questions about the performance between class members can take place. | Clarify questions.  Monitor student interaction so that discussions assist with examples, but students complete their own work. |  |
| **Section 2. Evaluate magic moments in the performance** | | | |
| 2 hours | Working individually, identify two “magic moments” in the performance. Recreate each moment as a “freeze-frame” with other members of the class.  Individually complete Section 2 of the *Student booklet*. | Organise students into groups.  Guide and assist analysis and evaluation. | Digital cameras |
| **Section 3. Create and present a physical theatre performance** | | | |
| 2–3 hours | Working in small groups (4–5 people), discuss and create a physical theatre performance (3–4 minutes) based around one of the given titles. | Organise groups and scaffold the discussion and planning stage. | Butcher’s paper  Markers |
| 2–3 hours | Rehearse and modify physical theatre works using teacher and peer feedback.  Present physical theatre works. | Provide feedback and opportunities for students to comment on each other’s work.  Organise an audience. | Appendix B: Teacher observation checklist  Video camera |
| **Section 4. Reflection** | | | |
| 30 minutes–1 hour | Complete Section 4 of the *Student booklet* after viewing recorded performance.  Discuss what has been learned about being a performer and about physical theatre. | Guide discussion. | Recording of performances |

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| Icon_Resource | Resources for the assessment |

Appendix A Guidelines for audience etiquette  
Discuss these guidelines with students before viewing a live performance. (You could also create or add your own.)

Appendix B Teacher observation checklist

During the learning process, you and your students should have developed a shared understanding of the curriculum expectations identified as part of the planning process.

After students have completed the assessment, identify, gather and interpret the information provided in student responses. Use only the evidence in student responses to make your judgment about the quality of the student learning. Refer to the following documents to assist you in making standards-referenced judgments:

* *Guide to making judgments*
* *Indicative A response*
* *Sample responses* (where available).

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| Icon_ForFurtherHelp | For further information, refer to *Using a Guide to making judgments*, available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website. |

Evaluate the information gathered from the assessment to guide teaching and learning strategies.

Involve students in the feedback process. Give students opportunities to ask follow-up questions and share their learning observations or experiences.

Focus feedback on the student’s personal progress. Emphasise continuous progress relative to their previous achievement and to the learning expectations — avoid comparing a student with their classmates.

Teachers should provide feedback from the *Guide to making judgments* at the completion of each section of this assessment, allowing students to monitor and adjust their performance.

### Giving feedback about this assessment

If allocating different levels of achievement for individuals within a group piece, it is essential that students receive feedback to explain the reasons. Use evidence from informal interviews and observations of class work to support discussions.

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| Icon_ForFurtherHelp | For further information, refer to *Using feedback*, available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website. |

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| Guidelines for audience etiquette   * Remain seated throughout the entire performance. * Photography and recording during the performance are not permitted. * When the lights in the theatre dim, make sure that you are settled and ready for the performance. When the lights on the stage come on, all attention should be on the performance. * Don’t talk during the show unless you are asked. Even a whisper can be disruptive. * Turn mobile phones off during the performance. Make sure watches don’t beep. * Show the performers your appreciation for their efforts. When there are parts of the production that you particularly enjoy, feel free to laugh and clap. Applaud at the end of the performance. * Do not put your feet on the seats. * Do not eat or drink in the theatre. This is distracting to audience members and actors. |

Teacher observation checklist

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| **In creating the drama, does the group:** | **Developed** | **Needs development** |
| * select and sequence dramatic action that suits the purpose, audience and space? |  |  |
| * select and use appropriate drama elements and conventions to express ideas clearly? |  |  |
| **In rehearsing and performing the drama, does the student:** |  |  |
| * rehearse independently in order to polish the presentation? |  |  |
| * “bring the character to life”, using energy levels appropriate to a physical theatre performance? |  |  |
| * clearly present the character’s status, purpose and attitude during the performance? |  |  |
| * maintain focus throughout the performance? |  |  |
| * use stance, gesture and movement to support their characterisation? |  |  |
| * memorise blocking and stage action for the performance? |  |  |