

# Dance 2019 v1.1

## Unit 2: High-level annotated sample response

September 2022

### Examination — extended response 2

This sample has been compiled by the QCAA to assist and support teachers to match evidence in student responses to the characteristics described in the assessment objectives.

### Assessment objectives

This assessment instrument is used to determine student achievement in the following objectives:

1. demonstrate an understanding of the elements of dance, structure, production elements and dance skills in a selected dance work
2. apply written literacy skills using relevant dance terminology and language conventions to communicate ideas and meaning
4. analyse and interpret elements of dance, structure, production elements and dance skills used in a selected dance work
8. evaluate the selected dance work, justifying the use of elements of dance, structure, production elements and dance skills to communicate stated meaning.

**Note:** Objectives 3, 5, 6 and 7 are not assessed in this instrument.

# Task

Choose **one** question from the following:

1. How effectively does McCullagh communicate the concept of a struggling relationship in both excerpts? Justify your position by analysing and interpreting the choreographic devices of contrast and motif used in each excerpt.
2. Analyse and interpret the manipulation of technology and the elements of dance used in both excerpts. Evaluate and justify how effectively these dance concepts have been used to communicate meaning.

## Sample response

**This is a high-level response because the student:**

Demonstrates an understanding of dance concepts making clear interconnections, using relevant examples from the work *Break*, that focus on the use of technology to manipulate the elements of dance (space, time, dynamics and relationships). Examples highlight the choreographer's interconnections between digital effects and setting to influence movement choices to communicate a failing relationship

Analyses and interprets dance by deconstructing choices made in dance concepts, in relation to the use of technology and editing effects, to communicate meaning in the given purpose and context of a relationship breakdown between a husband and wife

Evaluates effectively and shows well-reasoned justification with discerning examples that reveal the interrelationship between purpose, context and meaning of a wife's difficult decision to eventually leave her husband and son

### Question 2

**Analyse and interpret the manipulation of technology and the elements of dance used in both excerpts. Evaluate and justify how effectively these dance concepts have been used to communicate meaning.**

Shona McCullagh's dance film *Break* skilfully uses technology to manipulate the elements of dance to clearly communicate a relationship breakdown between a husband and wife. The wife's difficult decision to eventually leave her husband and son is played out in movement and clever digital effects through two distinct sections of the dance.

In the first section, the elements of space, time, dynamics and relationships and technology interconnect to evoke a mood of a failing relationship. Set in the forest, this location appears as a metaphor for a relationship not going anywhere as all camera angles show a location with no clear direction or path for the dancers to follow. The two dancers, a male and female, closely circle one another like animals ready to attack, kicking, striking out and blocking each other's moves as the camera moves between close-ups and full body shots. This aggression effectively and literally shows the tension in the relationship. At one point the female explosively leaps and holds onto the male's legs, as if clinging to him in a desperate plea to remain. However, through clever use of digital effects he disappears to leave her alone hanging in the space, suggesting an absence of support in their relationship. A crucifix motif is performed by the female at the male's feet as she slowly stretches her arms to the side and a close-up of an expressionless face reinforces a sense of disconnect in the relationship.

The use of clever digital effects continues as the male forcefully grabs the female's leg and pulls her until she is suspended above his head, literally floating in the air above him upside down. This movement reflects her world being turned upside down in this relationship. Although he is still holding onto her, trying to make it work, she continues to be pulled upwards and away as if suggesting she wants to leave. While upside down, the male pulls the female to him, putting her hands around his head in an embrace as if trying to connect to her. The female tucks into a curled position, keeping her hands encircling the male's head, and she continues to spin slowly around his head through innovative editing effects without physically touching him. This sense of connection and disconnection is repeated, symbolising a relationship that is failing. The male gently returns her 'back to earth', with slow, sustained timing clearly suggesting some lasting care and compassion.

Applies written literacy skills, through articulated ideas and controlled structure, enhances communication of meaning about the dance concepts within the given purpose, context and text. Sentence structure shows clear and logical development of ideas, with the use of appropriate spelling, punctuation and grammar throughout the extended response that enhances the communication of meaning about the dance work.

The dynamic quality of the movements quickly changes, enhanced by digital manipulation of the timing, as the motif of aggressively circling one another as if in battle is repeated. The male and female continue to spar with each other, ending in the male performing a high-level percussive barrel jump in the air, narrowly missing the female as she rolls along the ground. The close spatial proximity and strong force and attack of the movement clearly reflect the tension and their anger towards one another. Following this explosive sequence, the contrast of stillness and staring at each another is heightened through close-ups. The camera pans back to reveal the dancers backing away from each other with the female leaving the shot and symbolising her decision to leave the relationship. The male falls backwards to the ground in an outstretched position facing upwards. Creative digital effects enable him to hover and spin above the ground which effectively communicates his disbelief as his world is literally and metaphorically 'spinning' out of his control.

In the second section, the elements of dance and technology continue to interplay to clearly communicate the mother struggling to leave her son behind in the broken relationship. The setting of the dance work is an empty road, with the female dancing in the middle of the road. This setting is an obvious metaphor for her struggle to decide what path to take, stuck between leaving her husband or staying for her son. The scene begins with long shots of the female in the distance walking down the road, and then through effective use of digital technology, travelling closer to the front of the shot and further down the road, highlighting her long emotional journey to reach a decision. A cradling motif with her hands communicates her role as the mother while movements such as reaching her knee forward as if to run show her trying to leave her old life. Repeated actions such as falling, recovering, holding her head as well as constant reaching and flipping forwards and backwards are digitally enhanced to successfully communicate her internal struggle in this anguished situation. This use of technology heightens the tension and shows literally that the love of her son is a 'force' drawing her backwards as she flies through the air. She is prevented from continuing to move 'forward' with her life both emotionally and virtually. Collapsing movements are enhanced through the manipulation of technology allowing her to hover in the air as she spins in slow motion reinforcing her strained emotional state and struggle in the situation. The use of a close-up on her face reveals a young boy (presumably her son) in the distance behind her, emphasising the force that has kept 'pulling' her back from moving on. On her knees, as if exhausted, she turns to see her son. Their strained expressions reinforced through close-ups show the emotional toll of the situation. The female, slowly and with determination, stands to show a decision made and walks forward on the road out of the shot, emphasising her decision to leave move 'forward' literally and metaphorically with her life.

Through masterful selection of camera shots and other digital effects, the choreographer has created a dance work that demonstrates visual continuity and flow for the viewer. McCullagh has successfully integrated the use of technology to impact on the elements of dance. This clever shaping of movement in the space clearly communicates a struggling relationship in the innovative dance film *Break*.



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