



National Certificate of Educational Achievement
TAUMATA MĀTAURANGA Ā-MOTU KUA TAEA

Exemplar for Internal Achievement Standard

Dance Level 3

This exemplar supports assessment against:

Achievement Standard 91588

Produce a dance to realise a concept

An annotated exemplar is a sample of student evidence, with a commentary, to explain key aspects of the standard. It assists teachers to make assessment judgements at the grade.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

To support internal assessment

Grade: Achieved

For Achieved, the student needs to produce a dance to realise a concept.

This involves:

- applying choreographic processes
- applying basic choreographic principles
- reflecting on and evaluating the choreography, design decisions, use of technologies, choreographic process, and the dance presentation.

This student has produced a dance to communicate ideas about *“the emotional turmoil of indecision and the inability to choose a clear path in life”* using a fig tree analogy (see below). The intention was to communicate the concept of wanting all possible futures but becoming overwhelmed into inaction.

The dance communicates some ideas about this intention. The opening section establishes the fig tree idea through interesting overlapping body parts and clustered shapes that appear to indicate a tree. These intertwined forms suggest the many possibilities represented by the fig tree’s branches, visually reflecting the idea of multiple pathway options in life.

An overall structure is evident with a defined beginning, development, and ending. A range of movements and a variety of relationships are used, e.g. duets contrasted with solo work. There are some appealing shapes and some use of repetition. There is also simple but sound use of basic choreographic devices, e.g. canon and unison, together with motifs, which are used appropriately to organise the movement.

Some contrast is beginning to be incorporated (e.g. stillness and tempo variations), which starts to communicate the struggle between wanting to act and being unable to make a decision. However, these contrasts needed to be more impactful, effective, and emphasised.

For Merit, further use of the dance elements to create repetition with variation and exploring variations in ordering and sequencing are required. The idea of indecision is beginning to be explored but needs to be communicated more clearly, e.g. more deliberate or purposeful changes in pathways and direction and more contrast between moments of hesitation and moments of movement. The tempo of the selected music may have constrained the creation of movement in this respect and limited the ability to emphasise rising tension, which could then have contrasted and highlighted the falling tension at the end. The choreographer needed to explore more ways to clearly communicate the concept and to make the relationship of movement to music less predictable and more effective.

Additionally, further consideration of how the other design technologies supported the development of the idea is needed for Merit. The warm colours of the lighting did not clearly represent the idea, particularly at the end of the work. Instead, isolating areas of light in the performance space may have better supported the idea of indecision when attempting to choose a pathway or direction.

See video evidence and Choreographic intention (below)

Achieved
NZQA Intended for teacher use only

‘Choosing one meant losing all the rest’

“I saw myself sitting in the crotch of this fig tree, starving to death, just because I couldn't make up my mind which of the figs I would choose. I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest, and, as I sat there, unable to decide, the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and, one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet.”

Choreographic stimulus

The choreographic intention of my dance is to explore the emotional turmoil of indecision and the inability to choose a path in life, using the fig tree analogy as a metaphor to represent this struggle. I aim to explore the tension between inner desires and external pressures when facing difficult choices about the future. The dance will capture the struggle of wanting everything but being overwhelmed into inaction.

Last year, while reading Sylvia Plath's *Bell Jar*, I was hugely influenced by her fig tree analogy. Plath describes sitting beneath a fig tree, each fig representing a different life path, full and ripe but eventually withering and falling due to her indecision. I connected deeply with this metaphor, feeling the weight of endless conversations and expectations around university, careers, and life decisions. While these possibilities should be exciting, I often felt and still feel trapped and stuck in a cycle of indecision, perfectionism, and fear of making the wrong choice. This poem and metaphor opened my eyes to the impact of indecision and the way wanting every possibility can actually lead to losing them all. It captured in words, the grief of watching opportunities because of feeling unable to choose, a feeling I was getting very familiar with.

Grade: Merit

For Merit, the student needs to produce an effective dance to realise a concept.

This involves:

- applying choreographic principles, e.g. contrast, balance
- making choreographic and design decisions that support the development and communication of a concept and enhance the presentation.

This student has produced a dance that generally realises its concept effectively. The intention was to explore the nature and forms of water using connection, repetition, and contrast (all of which are seen in the final work). The idea of water drops is a central motif seen in the work.

The choreographer establishes a tenacious, intense mood that is sustained throughout the dance. There is a steady driving beat to support the idea of rhythmic water drops. The intensity of the pace and movement supports the idea of the power of persistence, which is mentioned in the choreographic concept. Rolling and rippling movements. For example, the hands and shoulders, along with the use of canon and overlapping body parts, help communicate the central idea of the fluidity and movement of water.

Key motifs are revisited in considered ways, e.g. the hand-clapping motif to communicate the idea of water drops. Effective contrasting formations are used e.g. complementary solos, close proximity partner work, unison sequences, and duets. Smooth transitions link sections effectively and have been purposefully designed to create both contrast and balance in the work.

There is some effective use of repetition and a variety of facings and levels. The repeated use of body percussion reinforces the idea of water drops. This also adds interest and depth. However, more exploration of the repetition and more imaginative variations of movement ideas could be developed to strengthen the communication of the concept.

Design decisions are justified and appropriately realised, e.g. the colour palette complements the theme to enhance the presentation. The music drives the pace and adds to the idea of the accumulating and ongoing force of water. However, more consideration could be given to varying the pace of the movement to help further communicate the ideas. The sound effect of dripping water heard at the end could have been used more intentionally and frequently in other parts of the dance as well.

To reach Excellence, the concept needs to be more comprehensively realised. Further dynamic variation is needed. The calm nature of water could be further explored and conveyed alongside the more powerful and dynamic qualities of water, which were generally seen. Greater variation in pacing, tempo, and energy and a stronger build towards a climax would help increase overall impact and move the work towards Excellence. Further refining of the chosen movement to remove

anything that doesn't support communication of ideas would also help to create a stronger sense of unity.

Choreographic Intention

‘SU ANA’

This dance is inspired by the Turkish water demon, Su Ana. It explores the many forms of water, as the dancers shift between embodying its movement and being overtaken by it. Through connection, repetition and contrast, this dance reflects the nature of water: calm, powerful and consuming .

The choreographic stimulus for my dance was a Turkish quote.

“Drop by drop, it becomes a lake.”

This quote was both the foundation and inspiration for my choreography, creating movement ideas, motifs and structures that reflect its imagery while also connecting deeply to my cultural identity.

This Turkish proverb conveys the idea that small efforts or contributions pile up over time and result in significant outcomes. It emphasizes the power of persistence, highlighting that even seemingly insignificant actions, when repeated consistently, can lead to great achievements. Just as a few drops of rain gradually fill up a pond.”

To me this quote symbolises accumulation and transformation

Grade: Excellence

For Excellence, the student needs to produce a cohesive dance to realise a concept.

This involves:

- applying complex choreographic principles, e.g. climax, unity
- choreographic and design decisions that are integral to the development and communication of a concept through a process of evaluation and refinement.

The concept for the choreography is:

“The final concept for my choreography was based around the Kafa. The Kafa is a rope made of either coconut fibres or the hair of deceased ancestors that is used to hold up the mat or the Ta’ovala that we wear around our waist. I wanted to portray the Kafa as a cultural symbol that represents how our ancestry and culture can uplift and hold up an individual. I wanted this piece to be a tribute to my ancestry and lineage, thanking those who came before me for uplifting and holding me up.”

This student has produced a dance that realises the concept cohesively. Based on the Kafa (a rope made out of yarn, coconut fibre, or hair of ancestors that is used as a belt to secure a ta’ovala in traditional Tongan dress), the choreographer’s concept was to explore this as a symbol of support from his ancestors and of being uplifted by them. The continual reference to this in the movement is the work’s major strength.

Movement is symbolic, well-crafted, and layered. This Kafa-inspired movement has been abstracted in unique and interesting ways, e.g. varying the level and body base. There is a clear sense of flow, and the structure of the entire dance adds to this fluidity and momentum. Many of the movements either originate from or emphasise the waist, which further supports the choreographic intention.

There is a complete sense of unity, and interesting movement has been arranged well. There is complexity to the movement chosen to express the key ideas of the concept and cohesive progression of key motifs. The audience sees the same movement and thematic ideas but in different ways with strong use of repetition and variation. This provides structural integrity and unity. Contrast, climax, and perceptive formations are used throughout the dance in ways that are integral to the development and communication of the concept.

The design aspects have been well considered. They enhance the concept and relate to the ideas. The sound has been developed in ways that are original and imaginative. The costuming and lighting design is appropriate and supports the ideas. For example, the solo dancer was highlighted at the start in a single, central spot, introducing her significance in the dance. After a short solo, the lighting slowly reveals a row of dancers in the background (as though they are the ancestors) in a warm glow that grows brighter. They appear simultaneously with the start of an acapella song, as though they are singing it.

All choreographic and design decisions work well together, have impact, and are purposeful. Overall, the work is sophisticated and refined.

See video evidence

Choreographic Intention

The final concept for my choreography was based around the Kafa. The Kafa is a rope made of either coconut fibres or the hair of deceased ancestors that is used to hold up the mat or the Ta'ovala that we wear around our waist. I wanted to portray the Kafa as a cultural symbol that represents how our ancestry and culture can uplift and hold up an individual. I wanted this piece to be a tribute to my ancestry and lineage, thanking those who came before me for uplifting and holding me up.

Grade: Not Achieved

There is no video for this grade boundary.

For Achieved, the student needs to produce a dance to realise a concept.

This involves:

- applying choreographic processes and basic choreographic principles, e.g. repetition and variation
- reflecting on and evaluating the choreography, design decisions, use of technologies, choreographic process, and dance presentation.

A student at the Not Achieved grade level would produce a dance in response to the stimulus. They would communicate some relevant ideas as a result of exploration into their chosen concept. They will articulate this concept, but it will not yet be seen or made real in performance.

Some design decisions match the concept, e.g. using an instrumental version of a track in which the lyrics discuss concept ideas. Costuming and lighting ideas may have been explored but are not fulfilled or don't adequately support the concept.

The movement is organised with a beginning and ending, ensuring the dance has some overall form.

To reach Achieved, the student must actually realise the concept in performance. The concept will need further clarification so the message is clear and goes beyond basic ideas. There may be too many ideas, resulting in a vague concept that is difficult to clearly convey in movement.

Production technologies should be performance-ready. The student may have basic ideas about the technical design, but no justification for the desired effects is produced.

Limited reflection during the process resulted in a lesser quality of movement, which needed to vary vocabulary and dynamics more.