Performing arts

Option 7 – agents of change

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# Introduction

This course supports the opportunity to explore a range of areas within the scope of Performing arts. This particular learning sequence is explored through the framework of circus skills. However, teachers should note that any performing art form may be used in the delivery of this option. This resource provides lesson sequences and suggested teaching strategies that could be used in your classroom to support the delivery of Performing arts – Option 7 – agents of change. There is no requirement to use all (or any) of the following activities, as they are suggestions only. The length and timing of each activity will be dependent on your class and teacher judgement. Content may be adapted, modified and supplemented to meet the individual requirements of students undertaking the Performing arts course. It is recommended that teachers refer to the [Controversial Issues in Schools](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0045) policy when selecting and reviewing examples of performance works.

It is essential that Performing arts trained teachers support the delivery of this unit and that all teachers undertake WHS training in circus skills, and safe work practices and protocols, including the creation of context specific risk assessments. High risk activities require additional circus skills qualifications and approval from the principal.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this document may contain images, voices or names of deceased persons in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material.

# Focus

This option is an opportunity for creative risk taking and innovation in a chosen form. Students will identify an issue or need in their local or global community. They will then raise awareness and address this need by developing a performance work. Students are provided with opportunities to explore artistic possibilities and test creative options making informed choices to develop and present their performance work.

Through this learning sequence, students will examine the interconnected relationship between the arts and the contexts in which they are created. They will gain an appreciation of the critical role that performing arts plays in society. Students will use research of a chosen issue or need to drive their work forward. This will allow them to consolidate their knowledge and application of the essential performing arts concepts, in particular space and presence, using performing arts protocols as the cornerstone in the creation of, and execution of meaningful work. Through a series of tasks and activities, students will create an original performance work that embodies their own understanding of their chosen issue or need in a way that provokes thought without dictating opinion.

**Note:** the performance itself should be viewed in a public space. This can happen at an event (for example, a school fair/exhibition of learning or performance evening) or this can be done using technology (for example via a school’s streaming platform). The teacher should consider extending the students’ reach by inviting or sending a package of their works to relevant community members.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **PA5-1** identifies and explains a range of safe working practices and diverse cultural protocols associated with performing arts
* **PA5-5** analyses the role of context and interpretation in realising artistic intention
* **PA5-6** researches, documents and reflects on performing arts concepts, ideas and processes
* **PA5-7** responds to provocations or stimulus to select, develop and produce performance material
* **PA5-8** demonstrates the commitment, collaboration and agency required to stage a performing arts event
* **PA5-9** experiments with relevant essential performing arts concepts in new contexts
* **PA5-10** acknowledges the significance of Country, cultural protocols and Aboriginal Peoples’ perspectives and contributions in the performing arts

[Performing arts course document](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/department-approved-courses/performing-arts) © NSW Department of Education for and on behalf of the Crown in the State of New South Wales, 2022.

## Differentiation

The activities included in this learning sequence are designed to cater for all students’ learning abilities, skills and interests, and a diversity of personal, local and/or cultural stories and perspectives. There is a focus on students’ creative agency, but there is also flexibility in the design so that teachers can modify the activities to better support the learning needs, skills and interests of all students in their class. Teachers may like to explore the Universal Resources Hub for further support regarding differentiation. Some suggested strategies may include:

* teacher-led planning of group performance/design tasks
* unpacking subject-specific and complex vocabulary and include a glossary
* small group (rather than individual) response to analytical and reflective tasks
* documenting of ideas using multi-modal options such as speech-to-text, electronic recording devices or written forms
* displaying posters, images or tablets in the learning space
* provision of further visual and aural resources to deepen understanding of the essential concepts in performance
* teacher sourcing and provision of stimulus material to widen students’ field of interest
* investigation of performance making concepts to develop circus movement that inhabits and explores new contexts and spaces
* activities to develop an understanding of personal and social capability to enhance the performance material.

# Learning sequence 1 – introduction, research and selection of topic

Students consider the power of the arts to raise awareness of issues or needs concerning communities through the exploration and analysis of at least one case study. Students will also consider the local and global issues that interest them and, through discussion, research and physical/artistic exploration, decide upon a focus for their own ensemble circus performance work.

The artistic intention developed in this learning sequence is reviewed and further refined throughout the duration of the topic, as the performance work evolves. Class activities and several play, test, review, reflect and iterate cycles will support this development. Using peer and self-assessment throughout the learning sequence can also enhance insight into the audience's perspective on their work.

**Teacher note:** refer to [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1:_Circus) to access the circus skills protocols for this learning sequence including procedures, practices and guidelines, lifting and moving equipment, apparatus based work and high risk tumbling and flying.

## Activity 1 – case study – Knitting Peace

**Teacher note: the** [digital learning selector](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/) **provides a range of teaching strategies to ensure that all students can participate in class discussion. Refer to the** [Controversial Issues in Schools](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0045) **policy when facilitating and monitoring issues-based discussions and selection.**

Access the showreel of contemporary circus group, [Cirkus Cirkör – Knitting Peace 2013 OFFICIAL TRAILER (3:25)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=EUq2t65jlr8). Engage in a discussion using the following questions as stimulus:

* As an audience member, what is your initial response to this performance?
* What social comment do you think the performance is making? Try and identify this in one sentence.
* What skills can you identify in this performance?
* How do energy, control and focus impact the presence of the performers?
* How does this presence and connection between performers engage the audience?
* How is music used to evoke atmosphere and mood? Identify the shifts in the music and the impact on the audience.
* How does the dramatic motif of knitting help communicate the message of peace to the audience?

Form small groups to create 3 linked *tableaux* that embody the experience of peace as can be found in the local community. Consider using a sequence from this case study and adapt it to your local community or create an original sequence.

Perform to the class and discuss how the 3 linked *tableaux* embody the experience of peace.

## Activity 2 – agents of change

Access the video [On Why Gen Z Shouldn’t Underestimate Their Power (5:19)](https://www.forbes.com/video/6132204595001/yara-shahidi-on-why-gen-z-shouldnt-underestimate-their-power--success-with-moira-forbes/?sh=5f9469d1221b) by Yara Shahidi and engage in class discussion about the role of individuals as members of society, and potential as an agent of change. Questions for discussion may include:

* What are some local or global issues that you are passionate about or which interest you?
* Do you feel heard on these issues? If not, why do you think that is the case?
* What do you think are the misconceptions that people have about your generation?
* How can young people speak out, push for representation and drive change effectively?
* Who are the young people affecting change in our society – locally, nationally, globally?
* What does it mean to be inclusive? How can you embody inclusivity?
* How can artists turn emotion, passion and conviction into action?

## Activity 3 – research

1. Individually, source articles, interviews, footage, images, songs, memes or podcasts on a need or issue of interest.
2. In small groups, present a one to 2-minute multi-modal overview of the issue to the group. In this group, come to an agreement on the issue that will be further explored in Activity 4.
3. Collate further source material for the chosen topic, documenting the material in the multi-modal process log.

## Activity 4 – a response in movement

**Teacher note:** where possible, ensure the performance is filmed and available for inclusion in the students’ multi-modal process log.

Identify the images or imagery that may be found in the chosen source material from the previous activity. These images may communicate both the issue and its impacts. For example, an article analysing the impact of climate change on the Pacific Island of Tuvalu [‘One day we’ll disappear’: Tuvalu’s sinking islands](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/may/16/one-day-disappear-tuvalu-sinking-islands-rising-seas-climate-change) includes the following images:

* the sea eating the sand
* the coral dying
* a woman sleeping beside the lagoon at night in the wooden shack, using a float buoy as a pillow
* the drought killing all the crops
* fish infected with toxins, consumed by humans, causing illness: vomiting and fevers
* storm surges lapping at the homes of the Tuvaluans.

Choose 2–3 related images and devise a one-minute movement routine that embodies both the issue and the emotional and psychological impact on the community.

Create a one-word title for the performance and present the work to the class.

Engage in post-performance peer-feedback which addresses the following questions:

* In what ways was the issue clear or unclear?
* How was the impact on the community made clear or how could it be clarified?
* Was the performance emotionally moving? If so, how? If not, why not?
* What elements could be further developed to strengthen the communication of the issue and engagement with audience in this context? Consider clarity of intention, presence of performers, use of space, connection with each other and audience, variety of tempo, and evocation of mood/atmosphere.

Record a response to the following question in the multi-modal process log:

* If you could change one thing about the world to improve the lives of others, what would it be?

## Activity 5 – 30-second pitch

**Teacher note:** distribute [Assessment – agents of change](#_Assessment_–_Agents) which will be completed at the end of Learning sequence 4. Further support on group work and collaborative practice can be found in [Core 2 – performing arts event learning sequence](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/department-approved-courses/performing-arts) and [Performing arts assessment advice](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/department-approved-courses/performing-arts).

Form small, well-balanced groups that will work together throughout this option to develop the ensemble circus performance for assessment.

Select 2 issues or needs that the group feels strongly about. [Brainstorm](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/542#.Y6T6WlcEVrA.link) and draft possible ensemble circus performance opportunities.

Discuss, research and physically explore both ideas, then prepare a 30-second pitch for each issue. In this pitch include the following:

* identify the issue or need to be explored in the circus performance
* define the 3 main ideas to be explored – this could be focus words, quotes, images or ideas
* identify the genre(s) of circus and/or apparatus that will be used to realise the artistic intention
* identify the location and/or performance context where the circus performance will be performed
* source an image to be projected
* source a soundscape/song/recorded voiceover
* create a statement of artistic intention written in one sentence. For example: ‘We aim to shed light on the invisible consequences of poverty on children and call for greater action in addressing the causes of child poverty.’

Present the short pitch to the class.

Engage in a class discussion about which issue has more ensemble circus performance scope for each group and select the strongest option.

Refine the previous statement of artistic intention and display this in the learning space to guide future making of the ensemble circus performance.

Document this activity and the chosen issue in the multi-modal process log.

# Learning sequence 2 – using music to structure and enrich ensemble circus performance work

Students will learn about the power of music to evoke an emotional response in an audience and convey story, ideas and issues in a symbiotic relationship with the performers. In the devising process of their work, and to enrich the impact and connection with the audience, students are encouraged to seek and use music that serves their artistic intention and context. The performance material generated during this learning sequence will be further developed and refined in the ensemble circus performance.

## Activity 1 – the power of music

Access [Erika Nguyen Aerial Hoop (4:48)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1TIc3iKU18) and engage in a discussion about the use of music to engage the audience in the character and her story. Points to consider include:

* the performer’s timing and its connection to the shifts in the music
* layering of voices
* control of energy
* technical skills
* detailed action choices
* costume and props
* clarity of structure – beginning, middle and end.

Access the TEDx presentation [Emotional responses to music | Hauke Egermann | TEDxGhent (10:59)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzFgoaZ9-VQ) making notes in the multi-modal process log regarding the power of music to evoke emotional responses.

Individually, select at least one song, track, soundscape or instrumental piece to bring to the group for consideration. Close your eyes as each piece is played. Immediately after listening, record your initial emotional response, in any form that suits the individual or group.

Explain the reasons for the musical choice presented, focusing on how it serves the artistic intention of the work. This should also be captured and documented in the multi-modal process log.

Select one of the pieces as the musical component for the performance work.

Answer the following questions in the multi-modal process log:

* Reflect on the process of selecting the music. How did your group decide on your musical accompaniment?
* How does the music help support the meaning of the circus performance? Why?
* How will you use the performance space and circus movement to effectively communicate your issue and reflect the music?
* Will you have one track for your circus performance, or will you have a different track for each section? Why?

## Activity 2 – warm-up

**Teacher note:** these student-led warm-ups allow students to apply the knowledge and protocols that they have acquired in Performing arts essentials. Students reflect on the questions provided at the end of each warm-up sequence and document their response in their multi-modal process log at the end of the lesson. Engagement in physical/vocal work requires an appropriate warm-up with all relevant safety protocols adhered to. Some students will require adjustments to the warm-ups to participate with their peers. Please refer to [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1:_Circus) for additional information on circus skills protocols.

### Sample warm-up activities

#### Sample A

**Leading and following** – play follow the leader around the space. Start with walking/running, and then the leader should include simple jumps, rolls and acrobatic elements. Be sure that leaders and directions are often changed.

**Strength circle** – select a strength based conditioning exercise for the class to complete 10 times (be sure that all major muscle groups are included and both sides of the body are conditioned equally).

**Stretch circle** – select a stretch for the class to complete on both sides of the body.

Engage in a discussion and document responses to the following questions in the multi-modal process log:

* Did you prefer leading or following? Why?
* What did you find challenging about leading or following? Why?

#### Sample B

**Moving in pairs** – pair up at the end of the tumble track. Roll, twist, and/or move to the opposite side of the tumble track without losing contact with your partner. Provide a body part that must be connected to start with; for example, right and left hands must be connected, one hand and one foot must be connected. Try a few different combinations and then choose your own connected body parts. Experiment with different pathways and ways of moving across the room in pairs. Be sure to use communication skills to keep each other safe and work within your limitations.

Engage in a discussion and document responses to the following questions in the multi-modal process log:

* What combination of body parts were easiest to maintain the connection? Why?
* What communication tools did you apply? Why?

## Activity 3 – the beginning, middle and end

**Teacher note:** outline a structure for the piece to provide to the students, for example:

* the beginning (what the issue or need looks like in the community)
* the middle (what obstacles are in the way of fixing it?)
* the end (a possible solution, or what the world looks like without the issue).

The performance material generated during this activity will be developed and refined in the ensemble circus performance.

In small groups, create, present and record 3 *tableaux* that communicate the chosen issue or need within the 3-part structure. Each *tableaux* represents a different stage in the structure as outlined below:

* the beginning
* the middle
* the end.

Accompany each section with a voiceover that clarifies the issue, the obstacles and the potential solution.

Return to the musical component and identify 3 shifts in the music that may correlate with the structure and divide the music into beginning, middle and end sections.

For each section, write a one sentence description of the desired audience response.

Choose one section to explore further by employing skills and techniques of the chosen circus genre to achieve the desired response from the audience. This should be a fast-paced experimental workshop in which creative risks are encouraged. Avoid staying with one idea for very long, and instead, move through new physical offers or ideas.

Use the multi-modal process log, to document the ideas that have the most impact on you as a performer or audience member.

Access the following examples for further inspiration:

* [Circus Cirkör – Underart 2014 (2:25)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=W69oBG8kR3c)
* ["Glitch" – Hula Hoop Act (3:31)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=J4-_92_NEVU)
* [Anthony Gatto performance in Cirque du Soleil’s Kooza (11:13)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=wP8tbLBls_M).

# Learning sequence 3 – play, test, review, reflect, iterate

Students will work through a cycle of ‘play, test, review, reflect, iterate’. This will allow them to respond to and reflect on the essential performing arts concepts (presence, space, audience and protocols) throughout the creative process without impeding it. Students continue to add to this cycle, creating a record of their learning journey in their multi-modal process log. Built into the cycle is the opportunity for feedback from peers or self-reflection. This process is ongoing and should continue for multiple lessons to allow for students to immerse themselves in the creative process. The performance material generated during this cycle will be developed and refined in the ensemble circus performance.

## Activity 1 – inspiration and development

Access [Circus Cirkör – Underart 2014 (2:25)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=W69oBG8kR3c), then discuss and document responses to the following questions in the multi-modal process log:

* List all the circus disciplines and skills shown in the clip. How do they enhance the words spoken in the dialogue?
* List the props, lighting and staging choices used in the clip. Which ones are effective? Why?
* Discuss how the use of the performance elements listed contribute to the impact of the spoken dialogue about risk.

Think about a pitch. [Brainstorm](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/542#.Y6T6WlcEVrA.link) and discuss the following points groups to further develop the performance piece. Document ideas in the multi-modal process log:

* What elements could be added to your circus performance?
* How will they enhance your presence and the performance space?
* How could these elements be incorporated into your circus movement choices and skills?
* What are the safety protocols you will need to consider? Why?

## Activity 2 – warm-up

**Teacher note:** these student-led warm-ups allow students to apply the knowledge and protocols that they have acquired in Performing arts essentials. These warm-ups promote creative thinking, trust, collaborative learning, building applied strength, co-ordination, balance, weight-bearing capacity, communication and teamwork. Students reflect on the questions provided at the end of each warm-up sequence and document their response in their multi-modal process log. Engagement in physical/vocal work requires an appropriate warm-up with all relevant safety protocols adhered to. Please refer to [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1:_Circus) for additional information on circus skills protocols.

### Sample warm-up activities

#### Sample A – balance game

Walk around the space in all directions. When the teacher claps once and calls out a number (1–3), form small groups according to the number given with those closest and create a simple balanced shape until the teacher claps twice. Increase the pace to a slow run and add parameters such as the number of body parts on the floor or without feet on the floor to gradually increase the difficulty.

Engage in a discussion and document responses to the following questions in the multi-modal process log:

* Reflect on how your balance shapes become more creative in the warm-up.
* Why do you think your shapes are becoming more creative?

#### Sample B – moving around your base

Form pairs. One person (the base) creates a stable shape, the other person (the flyer) climbs around the person and then back to where they started without touching the floor. Repeat with the other person as the base and try multiple base shapes. The bases can assist the flyers in these tasks.

Engage in a discussion and document responses to the following questions in the multi-modal process log:

* What did you find difficult about finding a pathway to climb around your base? Why?
* What did you find difficult about maintaining stability as a base in this task? Why?
* Which role did you prefer? Why?

### Additional warm-up activities

**Engage in some, or all, of the additional sample warm-ups:**

* [15-minute full body stretch (16:32)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_tea8ZNk5A)
* **Sample extension conditioning exercises**
* [Extreme abs workout (8:51)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbjq9_NER_k&t=85s).

## Activity 3 – play

**Teacher note:** students experiment with the elements of play to create the 3 sections of the performance work. The essential concepts of presence, space, audience and protocols should be explicitly integrated from the beginning of the devising process. These activities build communication, problem solving, collaboration and creative thinking skills and improve balance and weight-bearing capacity. Students should consider staging elements when devising the following play tasks. Engagement in physical/vocal work requires an appropriate warm-up with all relevant safety protocols adhered to. Please refer to [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1:_Circus) for additional information on circus skills protocols.

### Play task options

#### Option A – creating duo balances

In pairs, work together to create acrobatic balance shapes. The shapes created by 2 people, must have only 4 points of contact with the floor. Allow for spotting when required. Share the shapes each pair creates with the class.

Engage in a discussion and document responses to the following prompts and questions in the multi-modal process log:

* Document 4 shapes that you created in your pair by drawing, photographing or describing the shape.
* Which shapes work best as a flyer or a base?
* What was the best shape created? Why?
* Why was communication and creative thinking essential for this task?

#### Option B – creating acrobatic movement shapes with props

Use circus apparatus (manipulation, balance or aerial equipment) or other general handheld props (newspaper, boxes, broom handles or jackets) to create a sequence. Work in small groups, using the props/apparatus as an integral part of the circus movement, balances and transitions. Use effective communication strategies and work within individual limitations during all creative tasks. Share the group’s sequence with the class.

Engage in a discussion and document responses to the following prompts and questions in the multi-modal process log:

* Draw, photograph or describe the sequence of shapes created with the props/apparatus.
* How did the props/apparatus add to your circus movement possibilities? Why?
* How did you create another dimension or level to the possibilities?
* What did you find challenging about working with props/apparatus? Why?

#### Traversing bridges

**Teacher note:** a tumble track is a trampoline-based platform specifically designed to support acrobatic athletes to perfect skills safely, such as flips and somersaults.

Make a single line at the end of the tumble track. All students (except for one who will be traversing across the bridge) collectively create a single line bridge shape for the traverser to travel across without touching the floor. Those creating the bridge shapes cannot make the same shape twice or the same shape as someone else. When the student traversing the bridge has travelled over them the student needs to go to the end of the bridge and make another shape.

Repeat until the traverser reaches the end of the tumble track. Repeat activity until everyone has had a turn being the traverser. Define new parameters for the bridge between the traversers for further creative challenge.

Engage in a discussion and document responses to the following questions in the multi-modal process log:

* What did you find challenging about traversing over the bridge? Why?
* Was it easier to walk slower or faster? Why?
* What shapes were the easiest to bear weight or walk on? Why?
* How could you use this activity as a transition in your circus performance? Why?

#### Stitching it together

Document the circus movement sequences/shapes and ideas that have been created in the warm-up and creative development tasks on sticky notes. Then, as a group, decide which section of the performance each of the movement sequences fit into.

Order the circus movement sequences/shapes in each section. Using a different coloured sticky note, document how to transition between each of the circus movement sequences/shapes.

Embody the sequence, then discuss the success of the order in relation to flow, impact, artistic realisation and communication of the issue or need.

Make any necessary refinements or additions and decide on the length and timing of each sequence with the music.

Engage in a discussion and document responses to the following prompts and questions in the multi-modal process log:

* Draw, photograph or describe the movement sequences/shapes and transitions.
* What processes and communication tools did your group use to decide the order of the sequences/shapes?
* How did you decide on the staging design for each of the sequences/shapes?
* How did the order and staging inform your transitions?

## Activity 4 – test

Share draft performance work with the class and teacher to see if it works in the space.

Use some or all the questions in the table below to reflect on personal performance work and guide the post-performance feed-forward cycle with your peers.

Table 1 – guiding questions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Topic | Guiding questions |
| Space | * Where will we be performing this work?
* How can we transform the space to support our issue?
* Can we work in more extremes of space to strengthen the impact of our work?
* How can we activate the space from the moment the audience enters the space?
 |
| Presence | * Are our technical skills on show and do they serve the artistic intention?
* Can we further energise the performance to heighten the communication of our issue?
* Are we controlling tempo, stillness, focus and timing, particularly in relation to musical cues?
 |
| Audience | * How might we position the audience to deepen their engagement?
* Did our audience feel moved by our performance?
* Have we immersed our audience in the issue we are exploring? Have we called them to act or allowed them to passively observe?
* How can we refine our work to deepen the audience’s engagement? Is our commitment to this issue being communicated effectively to the audience?
 |
| Protocols | * Is our Acknowledgement of Country meaningful and authentic?
* Are performers and audience members physically safe in the performance?
* Is our warm-up routine effective? What tweaks should we make?
* Does the material/content seem culturally/psychologically safe for our audience?
* Is all our content appropriate for our audience?
 |

## Activity 5 – review and reflect

**Teacher note: students reflect on the feedback/forward and work collaboratively to create solutions and refine the performance work. This will involve collating and reviewing all feedback and identifying the main points of concern. Students will experiment using trial and error to find solutions to areas of the work that need to be addressed. Purposeful rehearsal and workshopping of adapted material is required to address the points of concern. Students should seek further feedback from the teacher and peers throughout this** process.

Review the feedback/forward received from the class and teacher as a group, and document it in the following review table:

Table 2 – review table

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Use of space | Presence | Audience connection | Safety protocols |
|  |  |  |  |

Review and reflect on the development of the performance work so far and complete the following activities in the multi-modal process log:

* Complete the following statement: ‘By the end of this play, test, review, reflect and iterate cycle, we will have…’
* Complete Table 3 by reflecting on the ideas and/or skills that you tried and explaining why you chose to do them.

Table 3 – review and reflect table

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Idea | In this cycle we tried: | We did this because: |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |

* Complete the following statement: ‘This reflects our topic/issue because…’
* Complete the following statement: ‘We showed our work to our peers and they thought…’
* Complete the following statement: ‘Because of this feedback we have decided to…’

## Activity 6 – iterate

**Teacher note: the** teacher should film this performance for the students’ ongoing self-assessment work in the multi-modal process log.

Perform the work again in situ, without an audience. Focus on individual technique/skills, energy, focus, timing and connection with the ensemble/group.

Film the circus performance work.

In performance groups, create a list of 3–5 specific moments/areas to address in the next rehearsal.

# Learning sequence 4 – rehearsal and peer and self-assessment

Students will now immerse themselves in sustained rehearsal of their ensemble circus performance assessment piece. Ongoing peer and self-assessment should be central to this rehearsal period and documented in the multi-modal process log.

**Teacher note:** to enrich the quality and effectiveness of this feedback, review and unpack the language of the assessment task marking criteria with the students. As the class repeats the cycle of peer and self-assessment, students should be encouraged to use the language of the marking criteria to provide insight into the ways they can further evaluate and refine their own work. Refer to the [Performing arts assessment advice](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/department-approved-courses/performing-arts) for further advice and rubric examples.

## Activity 1 – peer assessment

**Teacher note:** a peer assessment activity and suggested marking criteria to support this is provided below. Refer to the [Performing arts assessment advice](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/department-approved-courses/performing-arts) for further information and marking rubrics relating to peer assessment.

Review the work of peer groups and consider the role as audience members experiencing the work for the first time. Complete the following tasks:

* Discuss the work and how it can be aligned to the marking criteria used in the assessment task.
* Provide feedback on areas of strength and areas for improvement.
* Complete this process with each group and document the feedback.

### Peer-assessment success criteria

* Access the video of your performance work and provide peer feedback using the success criteria provided below. Remember this is about being a critical friend – be specific, kind and constructive.

My peer group can:

* Interpret research to make informed decisions about performance material and provocations. (Do you understand what it is about?)
* Demonstrate an understanding of audience response, including performer-audience relationship, artistic intention and engagement and interpretation. (Did you connect to the piece?)
* Demonstrate their ability to create and control performance presence. (Did the performers seem in control of the work?)
* Demonstrate their understanding of intentionally connecting with, engaging and/or entertaining an audience. (Did it hold your attention and was it entertaining?)

Review the peer feedback provided to the group, discuss and document the main strengths and areas that require improvement.

## Activity 2 – self-assessment

**Teacher note:** a self-assessment activity and suggested marking criteria to support this is provided below. Teachers should refer to the [Performing arts assessment advice](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/department-approved-courses/performing-arts) for further information and marking rubrics relating to self-assessment.

Review the video recording of the performance work and complete the following tasks:

* Identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.
* Discuss the work and how it can be aligned to the marking criteria used in the assessment task. Assess yourselves as individuals and/or as a group.
* Discuss the self-assessments and peer feedback and identify 3 key areas of improvement. Consider if the suggestions for improvement are achievable in the timeframe.
* Identify strategies to address the areas for improvement and use the multi-modal process log to document ideas.

### Self-assessment success criteria

Access the video of the performance work and, with the peer feedback in mind, complete a self-assessment of the group performance, using the success criteria provided below.

The group can:

* Interpret our research to make informed decisions about performance material and provocations. (Do you think others will understand what it is about?)
* Demonstrate our understanding of audience response, including performer-audience relationship, artistic intention and engagement and interpretation. (Do you think the audience will connect to the piece?)
* Demonstrate our ability to create and control performance presence. (Do you think your technical skills and control of tempo, stillness, focus and timing was accurate?)
* Demonstrate our understanding of intentionally connecting with, engaging and entertaining an audience. (Do you think it will hold the attention of your audience and was it entertaining?)

As a result of the peer and self-assessment, identify 3 key areas for improvement. Document this in the table below and identify how to address each area to improve the work. Include any specific information regarding the focus of each circus skill. For example, how it is executed (including transitions), and how it is presented through performance skills.

Table 4 – areas for improvement table

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Area for improvement | How can this be improved? |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## Activity 3 – warm-up

**Teacher note:** these student-led warm-ups allow students to apply the knowledge and protocols that they have acquired in Performing arts essentials. These activities develop trust, focus, communication, creative thinking and spatial and collaboration skills. They are also designed to build applied strength, coordination, and improve balance and weight-bearing capacity. Students reflect on the questions provided at the end of each warm-up sequence and document their response in their multi-modal process log at the end of the lesson. Engagement in physical/vocal work requires an appropriate warm-up with adherence to all relevant safety protocols. Refer to [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1:_Circus) for additional information on circus skills protocols.

### Sample warm-up activities

#### Sample A – falling

Walk around the space in all directions. One person puts their hand up and says ‘falling’ then, with arms by their sides and their legs pressed firmly together, they engage their muscles to control their body while completing a ‘trust fall’ to the mat. Peers that are close by run to the ‘falling’ person and lower them safely to the mat. Increase the pace to a slow jog and increase the number of people falling as confidence with the activity is achieved.

Engage in a discussion and document responses to the following prompts and questions in the multi-modal process log:

* Describe your experience as the ‘falling’ person and as the ‘catcher’. What did you notice?
* What did you find challenging about this warm-up activity? Why?
* Why is this an important warm-up for circus and group work?

#### Sample B – human obstacle courses

**Teacher note:** a tumble track is a trampoline-based platform specifically designed to help acrobatic athletes to perfect skills safely, such as flips and somersaults.

Make a single line at the end of the tumble track. Create an obstacle course by working in pairs or individually to create shapes for the student who is the ‘mover’ completing the obstacle course. Each shape needs to be different and stable for weight.

One by one, take turns to be the ‘mover’ completing the obstacle course created by the rest of the class by moving under, over and through the shapes created.

As soon as the ‘mover’ completing the course has travelled past, each student moves to the end to extend the obstacle course. Repeat until each student has had a turn of being the obstacle course ‘mover’. To keep thinking creatively, define new parameters for the obstacle course.

Engage in a discussion and document responses to the following questions in the multi-modal process log:

* What did you enjoy about completing or creating the obstacle courses?
* Did the ‘mover’ who was completing the course do what you expected they would do with the shapes you created?
* How could you use this warm-up movement in your performance task for a transition or sequence?

### Additional warm-up activities and conditioning exercises

**Engage in some, or all, of the additional sample warm-ups:**

* [Full Body Stretch – Flexibility Workout without equipment | 20 Minute At Home Routine (22:23)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzseqhkMweI)
* [10 Minute Everyday Pilates Workout – Pilates at Home (12:51)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UT7C_MKyaT4).

## Activity 4 – refinement and reflection

**Teacher note:** students engage in a final process of refinement. This allows them to strengthen the elements identified in the peer and self-assessment process and take responsibility for their role in the final performance.

1. **Refinement process** – choose which key area of improvement to address in the lesson and identify the role/responsibility each member of the group has in the refinement process. Identify the specific strategies each group member will be using through the lesson to achieve the goal in improving the work.
2. **Reflection process** – reflect on what is achieved in the lesson during the refinement process and acknowledge the successes or challenges throughout the process. Document all observations in the multi-modal process log.

Use Table 5 to guide and document the refinement and reflection process.

Table 5 – refinement and reflection table

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Item | Action |
| In today’s lesson we will address… |  |
| Our feedback stated… |  |
| To address this, we are going to… |  |
| Identify what each member of the group is going to do to support this. |  |

# Assessment – agents of change

**Teacher note:** relevant information should be transferred into the school’s assessment task template. Due dates and weightings are a school-based decision.

The performance itself should be viewed in a relevant community space. This can happen at an event (for example a school fair/exhibition of learning or performance evening) or this can be done through technology (for example, the school’s website, live streaming or video platform).

Skills, knowledge and understanding of the essential performing arts concepts, safety protocols and the development and realisation of an artistic intention are developed and refined throughout the learning sequence. This is consistently documented by the student in the multi-modal process log.

## Outcomes

* **PA5-5** analyses the role of context and interpretation in realising artistic intention
* **PA5-6** researches, documents and reflects on performing arts concepts, ideas and processes
* **PA5-7** responds to provocations or stimulus to select, develop and produce performance material
* **PA5-9** experiments with relevant **essential performing arts concepts** in new contexts

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## Content

This assessment task is designed to showcase knowledge, skills and understanding of circus and essential performing arts concepts. Students will draw on skills developed throughout this option to explore the capacity of the circus art form to inform and drive change. Through the presentation of an ensemble circus performance, students will communicate the selected issue/need and make informed choices to raise awareness and address this issue/need. Students will provide evidence of research-based knowledge and understanding of the essential performing arts concepts, including presence and audience, in the creation of the performance work.

## Task instructions

**Part A – research task**

Submit the following research task in your individual multi-modal process log.

1. Collate your multi-modal process log research from across the learning sequences.
2. Choose 2 pieces of research material that have most significantly informed your understanding of the selected issue or need.
3. Explain the influence of this material on the development of your ensemble circus performance.
4. Refine your group’s statement of artistic intention for the ensemble circus performance and include it in your multi-modal process log.

**Part B – ensemble circus performance**

In small groups, create an ensemble circus performance work which highlights various aspects of the selected issue or need. This may include the impact of the chosen issue on the community and ideas for addressing that need. The overall performance will:

* be 3–4 minutes in length
* include a chosen piece of music to accompany the performance
* clearly demonstrate understanding of essential performing arts concepts, including presence and audience, in the execution and delivery of the work.

## Marking criteria

**Part A – research task**

Table 6 – assessment marking criteria – Part A

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Criteria |
| **A** | * Communicates a very high level of understanding of the chosen issue or need supported by extensive research
* Interprets research findings to make insightful decisions about performance material and provocations that communicate a highly effective artistic intention
 |
| **B** | * Communicates a high level of understanding of the chosen issue or need supported by thorough research
* Interprets research findings to make informed decisions about performance material and provocations that communicate an effective artistic intention
 |
| **C** | * Communicates a sound level of knowledge of the chosen issue or need supported by adequate research
* Uses research findings to make sound decisions about performance material and provocations that communicate a clear artistic intention
 |
| **D** | * Communicates a basic level of knowledge of the chosen issue or need supported by limited research
* Uses limited research in the production of performance material to communicate basic intention
 |
| **E** | * Communicates limited knowledge of the chosen issue or need as demonstrated by minimal research
* Very limited evidence of intention and use of research
 |

**Part B – ensemble circus performance**

Table 7 – assessment marking criteria – Part B

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Criteria |
| **A** | * Contributes to an outstanding ensemble circus performance with a highly effective artistic intention
* Demonstrates highly developed performance skills to create and control exemplary performance presence
* Demonstrates extensive understanding of how to intentionally connect with, engage and/or entertain an audience
* Skilfully experiments with and adapts essential performing arts concepts to create an ensemble circus performance which informs and drives change in a highly effective way
 |
| **B** | * Contributes to a substantial ensemble circus performance with an effective artistic intention
* Demonstrates substantial performance skills to create and control effective performance presence
* Demonstrates thorough understanding of how to intentionally connect with, engage and/or entertain an audience
* Experiments with and adapts essential performing arts concepts to create an ensemble circus performance which effectively informs and drives change
 |
| **C** | * Contributes to a sound circus performance which communicates a clear intention
* Demonstrates adequate performance skills to create performance presence
* Demonstrates some understanding of how to connect with, engage or entertain an audience
* Experiments with or adapts essential performing arts concepts to create an ensemble circus performance which adequately informs or drives change
 |
| **D** | * Contributes to a basic circus performance, the intention may be unclear
* Demonstrates basic performance skills or performance presence
* Demonstrates limited understanding of audience engagement
* Demonstrates basic knowledge of essential performing arts concepts
 |
| **E** | * Makes elementary contributions to a performance
* Demonstrates limited performance skills
* Demonstrates minimal understanding of audience
* Demonstrates elementary knowledge of essential performing arts concepts
 |

# Appendix 1 – circus skills protocols

When engaging in the arts of circus it is essential that all participants, including students, staff and volunteers, embody a ‘culture of safety’. Safe circus protocols should be explicitly taught, monitored and modelled by the teacher at all times. Students are responsible for, and are part of the risk management team, and should be informed and actively engaged in the ongoing safety requirements. Engagement in physical/vocal work requires an appropriate warm-up with adherence to all relevant safety protocols.

It is essential that performing arts trained teachers support the delivery of this unit and that all teachers undertake WHS training in circus skills, and safe work practices and protocols, including the creation of context specific risk assessments. High risk activities require additional circus skills qualifications and approval from the principal.

Table 8 – circus skills protocols

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Circus skill/activity | Protocols |
| Class procedures, practices and guidelines | The following safety measures must be included as part of circus arts practice in all lessons including rehearsals and performances:* warm-ups and injury prevention techniques
* specific progressions for skills and methods for how to deconstruct skills into progressions
* discussion of different learning modalities, pedagogies and how to work with diverse student needs and capacity
* safe spotting methods for all skill progressions
* methods of evaluating a student’s body mechanics, motor skills and behaviours for safe progressions and practices
* clearly delineated levels and assessments through which any teacher/trainer/director understands what they can and cannot teach or use as part of a performance.

Performances are created as a result of this process. No student is permitted to perform any high or advanced level skills, use high or advanced level apparatus, or perform any advanced level sequence unless they have received approval from their teacher/director. Additionally, permissions and approvals can be revoked at any time. |
| Lifting and moving equipment | All class members and teachers are to use safe lifting guidelines:* bend the knees
* straight back
* lift from the legs
* feet far away from the object when lowering.

Lifting of heavy objects is to be done in small intervals and not for an extended period. Lifting is to be practiced in accordance with equipment management procedures and always under the supervision of a teacher or director. |
| Apparatus based work | All teachers and students must be adequately trained with handheld apparatus.Students are to learn equipment management procedures to ensure the longevity and safe working order of all hand-held apparatus.Students must remain at a safe working distance from one another when using apparatus. |
| High risk tumbling and flying | No high-risk performance or activity is to be undertaken by performers without express permission from their teacher or director.Performers who perform large-scale tumbling or flying can only do so under direct teacher supervision.Only students who are physically capable and have completed the appropriate level of training (for example, achievement of advanced tumbling/aerial skills) will be allowed to use, rehearse with, and learn skills using high-risk equipment.All high-risk performance must be done under the direction of the teacher/supervisor/director.High-risk skills are not suitable for general classrooms. |
| Costume colour | Using the colour green for circus costumes is seen as ‘bad luck’. This is a superstition in traditional circus history. |

# References

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