**Matt –** VCE Music is open to a wide range of music-makers, and the new music study design aims to be more flexible and inclusive for musicians who are interested in making music with digital tools, such as music software, MIDI controllers, samplers, and synthesisers. This support material is intended to assist teachers who are working with students that are using contemporary music making tools. That is, students who identify as beat makers, electronic musicians, those using digital audio workstations, and students who are broadly interested in modern music-making practises.

The study design at Unit 1 and 2 offers a much clearer pathway from the F-10 Victorian Curriculum, as it extends areas of study in performing, creating, analysis and responding. Areas of study are intended to be run simultaneously, so consider wrapping outcomes around a topic or an area of investigation. In this Unit 2 example, outcomes are clustered together in some of the tasks, and all the tasks relate to a single topic. And in this case, around analysing, creating, and performing soundtracks. So, the intention is that students have a range of musical experiences that are integrated.

Students performing with digital music-making tools should be performing in both solo and ensemble contexts and, must be able to demonstrate technical control and expression over their instrument of choice. And as such, it's important to not treat the digital tool they're using simply as a playback device. Students can create complex and nuanced musical performances using techniques, such as finger drumming, clip launching, live-looping, or other real-time interactions with samples or virtual instruments. So, it's important to explore the performance possibilities of musical tools, such as Ableton Live, MIDI controllers, and even iPad apps.

Area of Study 2, Creating, is perhaps the most natural fit for those students who are using digital music-making tools. As part of the study, students create short musical works that respond to topics being studied. Students can compose, shape, and refine form and arrangement all within a digital audio workstation. As a teacher, it's useful to get students to focus on developing and refining, not only the musical elements, but also sound design and music production skills. It's worth noting that students need to use appropriate methods to record and document their music. In the case of a musician working with and manipulating digital audio, stave notation or traditional score is not appropriate nor required.

A more appropriate way of documenting their work may be through a multimedia presentation, where students can explain their creative process and intentions through using a series of annotated screenshots of their music software's project files, or perhaps even solid audio excerpts with commentary around the specific concepts they're exploring. The ability to analyse and respond is an essential musical skill. But consider how you can represent these ideas to be inclusive to students who are not experienced in music notation traditions. Using more appropriate forms of musical representation, such as a drum pattern in a MIDI editor, audio edits upon a grid, or notes on a piano roll, will all represent the same musical concepts in a context that is relevant, authentic, and inclusive.

Keeping student engagement and authentic inclusion in mind, it may be worthwhile to use a variety of musical examples and work towards using language appropriate to the context. For example, whilst ostinato, loop, and arpeggiation are all referring to similar concepts, the naming convention that is used should be based upon the context or the genre of the musical work being studied. For further inspiration and examples of contemporary digital music-making, take a look at the linked video playlists.

[Copyright Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Footer/Pages/Copyright.aspx) 2022