**Janine McKenzie** - Hello, my name is Janine McKenzie, and I'll be taking you through this video that explains aspects of Unit 3 of the 2025 Theatre Studies Study Design. As we look at the specifics of this study design, feel free at any point to pause the recording and take a closer look at the information on each slide.

The study design may be adjusted from time to time during the next four years, and so it is worth remembering that the VCAA Bulletin will publish changes and advice as required. In this video, we will look at each of the areas of study, the names of which have not changed from the previous study design. Unit 3 is titled Producing Theatre, and the unit overview includes a few small changes. Please note the removal of the phrase creatively and imaginatively in favour of the phrase to interpret.

There are a few changes to the preamble for Unit 3 Area of Study 1, starting with the removal of the phrase creatively and imaginatively when contributing to the development of a production of a selected script. The nature of interpreting a script is intrinsically a creative and imaginative undertaking, and is implied in the word interpret. Similarly, the use of elements of theatre composition is an overarching aspect of all areas of study and is applied in this area of study during each stage of the production process.

There is a reordering of words in the final sentence, providing a stronger focus on the audience when undertaking this task. There is a stronger focus on the application of dramaturgy and its potential to inform interpretative possibilities in this key change to the study design. Dramaturgy can inform the interpretation of the script through an understanding of context, style, and intended meaning. Dramaturgy should help to shape the interpretation of the text with an understanding of audience culture. This shaping may include recontextualizing the original or conventional contexts of the script.

The 2025 study design has removed thinking creatively and imaginatively from the preamble to Area of Study 1. There is the addition of the word evaluating in the 2025 study design. Evaluation needs to be a thinking tool that is used across the three stages of the production process to improve and refine work done in the selected production roles. References to safe and ethical work practises are expanded in the 2025 study design to encourage consideration of inclusive and sustainable practises as students make theatre for contemporary and diverse audiences.

On the right of this slide, we can see two new criteria. The addition of these two new criteria provides a focus on some specific areas of staging theatre that will assist students to understand intended meanings present in the script. This can then assist students to make informed choices when considering theatre styles and recontextualization possibilities. In this slide, we continue to compare the key knowledge criteria of the 2019 and 2025 study designs for Area of Study 1. Understanding audiences and audience culture is a criterion for this area of study, as is understanding the role of theatre technologies in contributing to the interpretation of a script across the three stages of the production process. Understanding of work practises has been embellished, reading now that they should be safe, ethical, inclusive, and sustainable, wherever possible, environmentally sustainable. We look now at the key skills for Area of Study 1.

The key skills now includes the requirement of students to analyse a script for production performance. There is a slight adjustment to the placement and focus of the elements of theatre composition with the 2025 study design requiring students to apply these elements across the production process. This slide continues our comparison between the 2019 and the 2025 study designs. The first stop point has been expanded with the terms inclusive and sustainable added to the criterion regarding work practises, and the addition of identifying intended audience or audiences as a penultimate criterion. In considering how Area of Study 1 could be put into practise, here we have a teaching and learning example. Please feel free to pause the presentation at this point and read through the example.

We look now at the assessment of Area of Study 1, beginning with Unit 3, Outcome 1, Task 1. When considering scripts for Unit 3, Outcome 1, a number of factors will assist teachers and students in making a choice. The audience culture of the educational context in which the work will be presented is one factor, as is the experience of the team bringing the script to life. The Unit 3, Outcome 1 production needs to provide students with opportunities to plan, develop and present work in two different ways. There are two production roles from the list provided in the study design, acting, direction, set, props, costume, hair and makeup, lighting and sound. In choosing a script to realise for this outcome, it is important to remember that abridged scripts and script excerpts are valid options, and indeed, this option may assist schools to manage student workload in this subject.

The second task for Unit 3, Outcome 1 is usually completed at the conclusion of the production when students are required to analyse and evaluate their contributions to Unit 3, Outcome 1. Task 2 requires students to present their evidence and reflections in two or more formats. Turning now to Area of Study 2, we see a few small adjustments to the preamble. Note the inclusion of recontextualization and audience culture in the opening paragraphs. In the final paragraph of the Area of Study 2 preamble, we see the addition of inclusive and sustainable to the sentence relating to theatre work practises.

The third criterion of the key knowledge for Area of Study 2 references context, theatre styles and intended meaning of a script and how these can be informing an interpretation. The other additions to the key knowledge for this area of study concern auditing audiences and audience culture with consideration of ways in which the elements of theatre composition can be manipulated to create deliberate effects during a performance for an audience.

In the second slide, looking at the key knowledge of Area of Study 2, we see an additional criterion added for the 2025 study design, the safe, ethical, inclusive and sustainable work practises. When looking at the key skills for Area of Study 2, there are some small changes to the first criterion, including changes to the command terms or active verbs. Students are asked to identify and describe ways in which they could interpret scripts through work done in production roles. Note that some of the command terms in this list of criteria require lower and medium order thinking.

The requirement to document an interpretation of the script has been removed from the 2025 criteria. A few changes to note when comparing the key skills of the 2019 and 2025 study designs in this second area of study. Elements of theatre composition has been removed from the criterion that focused on dramaturgy and theatre technologies, and is now a separate criterion with students required to demonstrate skill in manipulating the elements to affect an audience. The expanded definition of work practises is also a change that we see in the new study design. In Unit 3, Outcome 2, students revisit their learning about the stages of the production process, their learning about dramaturgy and ways in which their work in production roles can contribute to interpretations of scripts for performance to audience.

They develop their understanding of audiences and audience culture. This outcome may also address ways in which theatre can be made in safe, ethical, inclusive and sustainable ways. Please pause the presentation if you wish to read through the teaching and learning example. This task is comparable to one of the creative tasks that usually forms part of the November exam. It is an option to set task conditions that resemble the conditions that students may encounter in the exam. See the first example in the box on the right of this slide. But it is also valid to set the task as one that builds upon and develops dramaturgical skills, such as researching and examining the structure, language and style or styles of the play, investigating contexts and playwrights intentions, along with consideration of audience culture.

There are a couple of minor changes in the Unit 3, Area of Study 3 preamble, which clarify that students need to attend a VCE playlist of production and that any recontextualization choices made when interpreting the script for a performance would form part of the analysis and evaluation of the production. We continue to consider the preamble to Unit 3, Area of Study 3, noting the inclusion of dramaturgical processes as part of the evaluation, along with the requirement that students attend a theatre production from the current VCE theatre studies playlist. The first change to the key knowledge criteria requires students to understand that there are various ways to approach the analysis and evaluation of a production.

It is possible to analyse and evaluate the production by considering the relevance of audience culture, theatre movements, the cultural significance, use of technology and application of dramaturgy. Recontextualization, if relevant, is an addition to the second criterion. The third key knowledge criterion requires students to understand the theatre style of the written script and the theatre style used in the performance. Sometimes there is no difference between the two, but it is common for contemporary theatre to introduce conventions that may not be present in the written script or not include elements of style that are present in the written script.

The fifth criterion requires students to understand how particular moments from the script have been interpreted by the creative team. Study of the script prior to and after seeing the performance is an integral part of this outcome. The sixth criterion for Unit 3, Area of Study 3, requires students to understand that theatre is created for intended audiences and to also consider the degree to which the performance connected with its audience or audiences. We see here the final criterion for Unit 3, Area of Study 3, which provides additional clarification that the terminology students should know when completing this task includes language that facilitates the description, analysis and evaluation of a theatre production.

We're looking now at the key skills that are assessed when completing Unit 3, Area of Study 3. Students are assessed on their skills in analysing the interpretation with consideration of audiences and audience culture. Skills in analysing and evaluating the intended meaning of a script, of a written script, along with analysing and evaluating the meanings conveyed in the production through work done by the creative team are also assessed. The final few key skills criteria for this area of study remain the same with a small change to the final criterion that requires students to apply relevant theatre terminology. An essential focus for this outcome is the relationship between a script and the interpretation of that script by a creative team.

Familiarity with the script prior to attending a performance of the play provides students with an opportunity to understand the language, context or contexts and style or styles of the script. Imagining interpretative possibilities prior to attending the performance is an opportunity for students to consider audience culture. It is also an opportunity for students with various learning styles to explore the script in collaborative, imaginative and kinesthetic ways. After attending the performance, students and teachers can discuss ways in which the script was interpreted by the creative team. It is not required that all members of the conversation agree on the strengths and weaknesses of aspects of the production.

Differences of opinion may provide an opportunity to discuss how an audience member's proximity to the performance space, cultural capital or aesthetic preferences can impact their perspective on the success or otherwise of aspects of the production. In preparation for formal assessment, students may complete preparatory summative assessment tasks, including verbal and written tasks.

Prior to formal assessment, students could summarise their information, including selecting quotes from script and examples from the performance in their notes. Assessment of the third area of study could include written or verbal responses to one or more questions using a range of command terms such as describe, analyse and evaluate, which can provide teachers with questions that allow for discrimination and thereby provide the capacity for teachers to rank students for this task. In consideration of the VCAA principle ensuring assessment is balanced, schools could ensure this task is not over assessed by limiting the time allowed to complete this outcome to somewhere in the range of 45 to 60 minutes.

For additional information and advice, you can contact Ryan Bowler, the Curriculum Manager for the Performing Arts.

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