OPTION 2

COMPOSITION AND PERFORMANCE
Elements of composition mind map

- **Space**
  - direction
  - level
  - dimensions
  - patterns and formations

- **Dynamics**
  - force
  - flow

- **Time and rhythm**
  - musical applications
  - duration
  - momentum
  - self-paced versus externally paced
  - timing

- **Relationships**
  - other people
  - apparatus and equipment
  - team formations

**Space**

**use variations of spatial elements in a range of movement contexts, eg**

- performance space in dance and gymnastics
- ways of creating and reducing space in games contexts situations
- simple aerobic routines by varying direction and formation

Physical space is an area set apart or available for use. It may be identified as personal space, which is the immediate area around a person, or general space, which includes shared items around the person such as a stage area, equipment or goal posts in sport.

Personal space is characterised by the area around the individual’s body, otherwise known as the kinesphere. The personal space around the performer may expand or contract.
– direction, eg sideways, diagonal, up, down, around, zig zag

A direction refers to the posture and movement of the body or body parts in relation to the space, audience and other performers. A direction that performers may use include forward, backward, right, left, down, up, diagonal and sideways. Choreographers have their dancers face a given direction to reflect their intent; for example, a position which faces a corner may indicate fear or hiding, and facing on a particular diagonal indicates a focus for the next movement.

Basic geometric forms include straight lines or rows that extend from wing to wing or from upstage to downstage. Choreographers may modify these by changing the direction the dancer faces or by adding turns. Other examples of shapes and paths performers may use include the zigzag, square, curve, circle, figure eight, serpentine and random patterns. Pathways may also be performed in clockwise or counter-clockwise direction.

Diagonal pathways are visually pleasing. However, the effect will change according to the dancer’s focus and direction and whether the dancer is moving forward or backward along that diagonal. In addition to horizontal patterns along the stage floor, performers such as those from Cirque du Soleil explore vertical space through movements like lifts and jumps. They may use platforms and scaffolds to extend the vertical range of spatial design.

– level, eg high, medium, low

A level refers to movement up and down the vertical axis. The body can be moved through high, medium and low levels. For example, in sport aerobics, competitors will create routines that use high level jumps, medium level squats and low level push-ups.

The high level occurs where the body shape is vertically long or where the body leaves the floor. These movements include vertical balances on rise, jumps and leaps. The high level may reinforce the idea of strength or power and sometimes demonstrates a lack of stability and uncertainty. It may also contrast with the low level for a desired effect. One example of a high level performance would be an Australian Rules football player leaping in the air to take a mark.

The medium level consists of non-locomotor and locomotor movement where there is contact with the floor by either the feet or hands, but not both. Locomotor movements include running, turning, galloping and sliding. Non-locomotor movement and shapes are unlimited, and mainly dependent on the performer’s skill level and creativity. The medium level is generally the most used in all forms of physical activity.

The low level involves the use of non-locomotor and locomotor movement, performed close to the floor. Movements on the low level may include crawling, rolling, sitting, kneeling and lying down on the floor. The low level may be used to represent fear, nervousness or hiding, but alternatively may be used to convey the message of stability by using a low centre of gravity.
The dimension is the size or extent of a shape or movement. It involves height, depth and width. Some words that would describe dimension are wide, tall, narrow, thin, small, rounded, long, short, tubular, conical and spherical.

**Performance space**

The performance space is the area in which the activity is performed. In dance, the performance space is usually seen as being a proscenium stage, but it can be as varied as the choreography may determine.

The performance space has strong and weak areas. For example, the centre stage is considered a powerful position and often is used as the starting point for most performances. The corners of the space are considered weak areas. The strong and weak areas will be altered by the direction, shape and focus of the performer.

There is a close link between the idea of the dance and the spatial design. Spatial design will consider body shape, the pathways created on the floor and the pathways created in the air. For example, if the concept of a dance performance is fear, the fear point will likely be located in the left corner of the performance area. Most of the performance would then focus in moving away from the left corner, thus representing the performer looking to escape their fear.

Modifying the performance space may also impact on the decisions made by the performer. For example, if a tennis court was shrunken in size to the equivalent size of a badminton court, the players would have to change their tactics because they will have lost the length and width of the court. Alternatively, if badminton players expanded their game to a tennis court, this would create more opportunities for placing their shots into open areas on the court.

Similarly, if a gymnast was well rehearsed in a floor routine that involved a range of tumbling sequences, their ability to be able to gain enough momentum to complete the tumbles may be difficult if the floor dimensions were reduced.

In team sports, offensive teams are looking to create more space for them to be able to score points, while the defensive players are looking to reduce to space available by closing in quickly on the attack.

**Floor pattern**

A floor pattern is the pathway that the dancer takes when moving through space. It is also an indicator of where the dancer has been. It can be any combination of straight, circular, curved, zigzag or spiral movement patterns. In a composition, the floor pattern will also reflect the strong and weak areas of the performance space.

A choreographer will make use of a floor pattern prior to the performers actually performing. An example of where this is essential would be when preparing for a large event, such as the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. It would be chaotic if thousands of performers did not know exactly where they should be and what they should be doing.
In sport, a range of offensive and defensive patterns and formations are used. In cricket, the type of fielding pattern used depends on the type of competition being played—test, one-day or twenty20—the types of shots the batsmen likes to play and the strengths of the bowler. A team that is behind and needing to score quick runs would be aiming to hit boundaries; therefore the fielding team would be looking to protect the boundaries by placing fielders in key outfield areas.

In hockey, attacking formations are used extensively when setting up for short corners. Most teams have a range of plays available, depending on the strengths and weaknesses of the defensive team.

- **Dynamics**

**Identify how changing dynamics can achieve specific purposes, eg communication of ideas**

Dynamics involves the variation of force and flow. The degree to which these two factors are utilised produces a range of movement qualities. Movement quality is the look or artistic view of a work and is how someone would describe the feeling of the work. To achieve effective movement quality the choreographer employs dynamics. Dynamics describe how the body moves and is the element which gives dance its expressiveness.

- **Force, eg strong, weak, explosive, jerky**

**Release of energy**

Release of energy is dependent on the amount of force used to make movement occur. Some words which describe release of energy include sudden, slow, strong, jerky, sag, forceful, sustained, collapse and swing.

If a movement is sustained, then the release of energy will be slow. Movements that are sudden and sharp require a fast release of energy. Varying the speed of energy release throughout the movement will cause the dancer to either speed up or slow down.

**Force**

Force gives movement a sense of lightness or heaviness. Force is the intensity of the release of energy factor and reflects how the dancer actively uses their body mass, on a scale from light to strong. How force is used creates particular dynamics and therefore achieves the required quality.

A light action, such as a classical ballet performance, involves the body moving, giving an impression to the audience of almost weightlessness. A strong action, such as a sports aerobics performance, has the performer’s full body mass behind the movement. In this case, the body gives into heaviness and a feeling of sinking into the floor.

Table 1.1 shows how Rudolph Laban combines the three elements of weight (force), space and time to produce eight basic effort actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effort</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>As if...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>punch</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>direct</td>
<td>sudden</td>
<td>‘striking like a boxer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>press</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>direct</td>
<td>sustained</td>
<td>‘moving a piano’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dab</td>
<td>light</td>
<td>direct</td>
<td>sudden</td>
<td>‘catching a butterfly’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glide</td>
<td>light</td>
<td>direct</td>
<td>sustained</td>
<td>‘skimming along ice’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slash</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>indirect</td>
<td>sudden</td>
<td>‘slicing tall grass with a sickle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wring</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>indirect</td>
<td>sustained</td>
<td>‘squeezing water from a towel’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flick</td>
<td>light</td>
<td>indirect</td>
<td>sudden</td>
<td>‘shooing away a mosquito’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>float</td>
<td>light</td>
<td>indirect</td>
<td>sustained</td>
<td>‘wafting among the clouds’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1.1* Effort actions

**Source:** www.artsalive.ca
The flow of movement also lies on a scale, in this instance the range exists from free to bound. A free movement proceeds unopposed and unrestrained. An example of this is in a rhythmic gymnastic ribbon routine. The ribbon must always be moving and the gymnast uses a range of graceful movements to provide the audience with a feeling of freedom.

A bound movement is one of careful precision that is highly controlled and can be stopped at any moment. For example, when the rhythmic gymnast is practising to use the clubs, they would require a lot of stoppages in learning control.

Time can be defined as a limited period during which an action or process exists or takes place. Rhythm is a difficult concept to define because it is open to a variety of interpretations. Our understanding of rhythm is that it is an identifiable flow of movement and/or sound. The word rhythm originates from an ancient Greek word rhio, which means ‘to flow’.

Beat

The beat in a piece of music can be regular or irregular. Regular beats give the feeling of steadiness and strength. They are like a clock ticking by itself and are used in marches and standard dance music, such as a waltz. Irregular beats provide an opportunity for unpredictability due to its lack of continuity, suggesting uncertainty and doubt.

In classical music the beat is flexible and is an expressive element; hence the need for a conductor to direct the beat by the up and down movements of their baton. The conductor helps the musicians stay together on the beat. In contrast, popular dance and rock music usually has a steady never-ending beat, such as that played by a drummer in a band.

A measure is a grouping of beats. If a piece of music has four beats to a measure, the first beat is considered strong. The second beat is usually heard as being weaker than the first, the third beat strong and the fourth beat weak.

Tempo

Tempo is the speed of the beat and it generally has three main classifications—fast, medium and slow.

Fast tempo can give movement the feeling of hurrying, nervousness, or a build up in excitement or power. One example of fast tempo would be dramatically falling to the floor. Medium tempo can suggest a feeling of steadiness or variability. An example would be when a performer moves around the floor in a gallop. Slow tempo could be associated with fear, comfort, pain or fatigue, such as when a person crawls slowly across the floor and into a foetal position, creating a feeling of comfort or pain.
Accent

An accent highlights or emphasises a piece of music. Most accents occur at the beginning of the bar. A bar is referred to as a unit of time in music. An accent in music is created whenever a music tone sounds. If a tone is played or sung loudly or with a unique quality, the tone is said to have a strong accent.

A performer creates an accent whenever they take a step. They can create a strong accent by making a step larger than usual, by delaying the step slightly and then stepping quickly to arrive on the beat. For example, a dancer may accent a step by stomping their foot or by making unusual moves with their upper body.

- duration

Duration is the length of time it takes to complete a movement, a dance or ‘work’. Some movements may take several beats to complete, such as a sustained balance or extension, while others will be completed within a single beat, such as a jump. Choosing the duration of a movement will often be linked to the intent of the performance and may be linked to the use of variety and contrast.

When an accent occurs at regular intervals, metre is produced. Metre is the grouping of beats around an accent. This establishes regularity in timing, and provides a predictable structure that supports and propels the movement.

- momentum

Momentum is linked to increasing or decreasing speed. Increasing speed gives the feeling of building intensity or climax, while decreasing speed provides contrast to a climax, weakening, depression or winding down.

Sporting individuals and teams aim to gain momentum throughout their season to peaking for the finals. A gymnast, dancer or aerobic athlete will vary the momentum throughout their performance to create a contrast in feelings for the audience. One example of this would be in a gymnastic floor routine where the audience appreciate the finesse and graceful movements of holding a position or demonstration of flexibility, then get excited by a tumbling routine.

- self-paced versus externally paced

Self-paced activities allow the performer to complete an activity at their own speed and according to their own skill level. In gymnastics, performers are able to participate and compete in their sport based on self-paced practices. Other examples include a golf swing, tennis serve or hitting a softball off a tee.

Activities that are externally paced are influenced by a range of factors. In dance and aerobics, the performers are influenced by the music they hear and feel. In activities such as batting in cricket, the performance will be externally paced by unpredictable factors such as the bowler, the pitch and possible environmental conditions like wind and rain.

- timing

Timing is very important when performing. It may be related to the timing required to work together in a team or group performance, or it may be timing related to a piece of music. If a performer is out of time with the remainder of the group, it is quite evident and this will impact on the audience appreciation and possible scoring from the judges.
In sport, timing the ball is essential in being able to complete an activity effectively. Poor timing in baseball will result in a foul ball, outfield catch or easy out for the fielding team. In golf, poor timing could result in the ball landing in the bunker, trees or water.

- **relationships**
- **perform selected movement skills in unison and in contrast to others**
- **analyse the purpose of various group formations, eg games formations, transitions in a dance sequence**

A relationship is the communication or link between things, be they performers to each other, performers to objects, or parts of a performer’s body to each other. An awareness of how relationships work is through learning about the concepts of connecting, leading, following, meeting, parting, near, far, passing by and surrounding.

- other people, eg audience, performers, opponents, team members, partners

The audience plays a large role in any performance. If they are receptive to what they are watching, then this will encourage the performer to continue or even improve their efforts. If a match is being played by two teams such as Australia versus England, one where a traditional rivalry exists for players and spectators, home ground advantage adds a distinct advantage for the home team. Many athletes when interviewed refer to the audience ‘pumping’ them up and giving them the motivation to succeed.

Other performers can also encourage the individual or team to raise their level of performance. Whenever Australia plays against New Zealand both teams ‘step up’ and perform their best in which ever sport is being played. The Queensland rugby league team are renowned for their ability to grow in confidence and ability when they proudly wear the maroon jersey.

In contact dance the connection between the dancers is made by direct body contact, such as with the thighs, hips, chest, cheek and back, depending on the style of dance, the link required for a particular move or to suit the vibe of the music. Contact dance uses all three levels (low, medium and high), from moving on the floor to riding high up on someone’s shoulder. The degree to which a performer trusts their own body will determine how much a dancer will trust their partner.

- apparatus and equipment

The type of apparatus or equipment a performer uses is a very important relationship for a performer. A softball player’s mitt must fit correctly, as well as feel comfortable when wearing it so it can be used effectively. The mitt is an extension of the arm and hand, and therefore crucial in contributing to the athlete’s performance.

Snow skiers and snow boarders are required to adjust their styles and intensity according to the density of the snow surface they are performing on. The rope and ribbon in rhythmic gymnastics are both extensions of the body, as are the tennis racquet, cricket bat and baseball bat for each respective sport. If the piece of equipment does not feel right, such as being too heavy or difficult to manoeuvre, then the performer is likely to deliver a poor performance.
An effective group routine performance in aerobics and dance relies heavily on all members maintaining synchronised routines and organised team formations. If a performer forgets a part, it is obvious to the judges and they are penalised accordingly. Therefore, constant communication and feedback during practise time is essential, which is why the choreographer plays such an important role in the overall team performance.

Formations in sport are the way a team lines up its defence, midfield and forward line at the beginning of the match. The relationships between the players’ positions may change according to the situation. For example, a midfielder may move back for a period of time to assist their team mates in defence and then return to their original position in offence.

The most effective sport coaches are not necessarily the ones who devise the best formations, but rather those who devise the best formation for their team to take advantage of its strengths and to hide its weaknesses. Following are a few examples of how defensive and offensive formations are used in sport.

**Defensive formations: football (soccer)**

When discussing formations in football, defenders are listed first, then midfielders and forwards. For example, a 4-4-2 formation has four defenders, four midfielders and two forwards. Goalkeepers are not counted because this position does not change.

- **4-4-2 formation**—This is one of the preferred formations of today’s game. A forward is moved into the midfield, putting a lot more pressure on the two players up front to score goals. The theory in using another player in the midfield is that it bottles up the opposition in the midfield before they can get to the attacking third.

- **3-5-2 formation**—Most games are won or lost in the midfield, which is why the 3-5-2 formation is popular. A team that doesn’t have its midfield operating at peak efficiency suffers in ball possession and scoring chances. So, many coaches like to use as many as five midfielders to try and control the ball and the game.

A coach would not change a team’s formation drastically during a match, particularly for young or inexperienced teams who may get confused. For example, if a team is trailing and trying to tie up the match, taking out a midfielder for a forward may work. If a team is leading, replacing a midfielder with a defender and/or a forward with a midfielder may also be an effective tactical move.

**Offensive formation: basketball**

Basketball requires a range of offensive formations throughout a game. Figure 1.10 shows how a team may create a ‘strong side’ formation, which allows the attacking team to create more scoring opportunities.

1. Start position is a 1-3-1 with a point guard (1), two wing players (2 and 3), a high post (4) and a low post (5)
2. The play should start on the weak side, where there are fewer players. Player (1) passes the ball to player (2)
3. The player on the high post (4) makes a cut down the key then moves to the low post. The low post (5) cuts to the basket and moves to the high post position
4. With both post players ‘ball side’ they create a ‘strong side’, where 4 players create an offensive threat
Activities

Activity 1 (Page 170)
Participate in a game of tennis using the dimensions of a badminton court. Comment on how this changed your strategies and techniques required to participate effectively.

Activity 2 (Page 170)
Examine photographs and images of dances and gymnastic routines that:
- use circular and straight line floor patterns
- use low and high levels in space
- take up a small amount and large amount of space.
Discuss what these dances might be about and why they use space in this way.

Activity 3 (Page 170)
Watch a basketball, football, or baseball game. Explain how the elements of space apply to these games?
Turn the sound off and play a variety of styles of music while watching or imagine there is no ball in play and observe the movement as pure movement. Could this be a form of dance?

Activity 4 (Page 170)
Using an existing video footage for an aerobics routine, design and demonstrate in small groups how the routine could be enhanced by varying direction and formation.

Activity 5 (Page 170)
Analyse the photo below and give an outline of each of the following elements:
- direction
- level
- shape
- dimension
- personal space
- possible interpretations.

Activity 6 (Page 173)
View 10 minutes of a game of tennis and football. Describe where force and flow are used throughout the match and identify how changing dynamics can achieve the communication ideas.

Activity 7 (Page 174)
Analyse video footage of a golf swing, a runner, dancer, gymnast and sports aerobics competitor. Observe how the elements of composition are used. Compare the use of time and rhythm for each activity.
Imagine the dances using the elements differently. Propose what impact this may have on the activity?
Activities cont.

Activity 8 (Page 174)
Use the following list of action words to design a self-paced dance routine. Once completed, add two forms of music and attempt to perform the same routine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>run</th>
<th>skip</th>
<th>slide</th>
<th>leap</th>
<th>gallop</th>
<th>roll</th>
<th>bend</th>
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<td>float</td>
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<td>skin</td>
<td>spring</td>
<td>vault</td>
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<td>flick</td>
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<td>swell</td>
<td>stamp</td>
<td>inflate</td>
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<td>melt</td>
<td>drip</td>
<td>job</td>
<td>creep</td>
<td>bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balance</td>
<td>listen</td>
<td>vibrate</td>
<td>explode</td>
<td>sink</td>
<td>freeze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity 9 (Page 176)
1. Sit at your desk, move your arms very fast and freeze when you think a minute is up. Keep track of the time of the first and last person to stop.
2. Then perform the same activity again, but with slow moving arms. Check the difference in time of freezes.
3. Lastly, move your arms for five seconds at a time. Each time, use energy in different ways, such as heavy/light; smooth/sharp; and tense/loose.

Discuss as a class how this activity relates to time and force.

Activity 10 (Page 176)
Participate in the following activity to investigate how time is used.
1. Stand up and sit down at your desk, taking a set amount of time: 8 counts, 4 counts, 2 counts, etc.
2. Change places in the room within a set amount of counts.
3. Vary the number of counts to do either of these.
4. Try combining the two ideas. Stand up, change places, and then sit down. Use a specific amount of counts for each movement or a total amount of counts to complete all three movements.
5. Experiment with music.

Activity 11 (Page 176)
In groups of 5 or 6, design a 30-second routine that demonstrates unison and contrast among all group members.

Activity 12 (Page 176)
Work in pairs and mirror your partner’s movements. Begin with slow, smooth movement. Change leaders and begin with slow, smooth movement again, then progress to sharp movements.

Determine which movements are easier to follow: smooth/slow movements, or fast/sharp movements?

Activity 13 (Page 176)
Using a sport of your choice, analyse the purpose of various group formations.
Review Questions

1. **Name** the four elements of composition and list the components associated with each element.

2. **Outline** the difference between symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes. Give specific examples.

3. **Describe** how the use of space and direction may be used in a performance.

4. **Compare** the use of locomotor and non-locomotor movement.

5. **Design** a floor pattern for a gymnast performing a floor routine.

6. **Discuss** how force and flow may be applied to a sporting performance.

7. **Evaluate** the effectiveness of applying a beat, tempo and accent to an aerobics performance.

8. **Identify** how a performer’s body alignment plays an important role in the coordination of movement.

9. **Select** a sport of your choice and analyse its association with duration, momentum and timing.

10. **Explain** how body planes may be applied when performing a dance sequence.

11. **Assess** how a range of points of contact may be used to enhance a performance.

12. **Examine** the relationship that exists between other people during a performance.

13. **Justify** reasons for the use of apparatus or equipment within a performance.

14. **Investigate** the use of team formations from an offensive and defensive perspective.