

2026 aMuse VCE Music Teachers Conference

Room Allocation — Sunday 15 March 2026 · Trinity Grammar School, Kew

Room	Plenary (8:45am)	Session 1 (9:30am)	Morning Tea (10:30am)	Session 2 (11:00am)	Session 3 (12:00pm)	Lunch (1:00pm)	Session 4 (1:45pm)	Session 5 (2:45pm)
South Room	Plenary Address Roland Yeung (South Room)	Peter Lee & Tim Wilson AI Tools for VCE Performance Practice: Moises and PracticeFirst	Morning Tea (East Room)	Peter Lee & Tim Wilson Developing VCE music literacy & aural skills through pop, film and video game music	Peter Lee & Tim Wilson New VCE resources – 2025 exam & preparation materials	Lunch (East Room)	Sue Arney Building stronger connections between VCE Instrumental and Classroom Music teachers	Susie Heggie Tips and Tricks for creating quality VCE classroom resources
CY1		Marten Visser & Paul Dooley Unpacking the Statement of Expressive Intention and the Performance Assessment Criteria – Contemporary		Lynne Morton VET Music: A Practical Approach towards Inclusivity, Diversity and Pathways	Lynne Morton Multi-Level Teaching: A Practical Approach Towards Using Assessment and Rubrics		Sue Lyons Aural Analysis: Preparing students for the Music Composition and Music Inquiry exams	Peter Lee & Tim Wilson Unpacking ear training for VCE – Strategies, tips and tricks
CY3		Roland Yeung Q&A; & Mentoring Session		Katie Wighton SongMakers: Connection, collaboration & co-writing	Al Parkinson SongMakers: Songwriting and VCE Unit 1 curriculum resources		Tim Nikolsky Embodied Knowledge in Contemporary Music	Cultural Infusion: Stephanie Chen Ancient Chinese Music and Culture
CY4		Mark McSherry Music Inquiry: Connecting students to their chosen music		Katie Argyle Musical Connections with AI: Practical Uses For Teachers and Students	David Gardner Utilising the new VCE Music aural resource – Progressive Aural Exercises		Peter Lee & Tim Wilson Auralia & Musician Bootcamp! Curriculum, student engagement, workflow	David Ashfield Unpacking the Repertoire Performance criteria
CY5		Djulz Chambers Therapeutic Group Drumming: Power to Connect, Communicate and Create		Djulz Chambers Exploring Learning Styles through Group Drumming	Matt Ridgway Ableton: Exploring Organisation of Music through Digital Tools		—	Matt Ridgway Connecting Sound, Intention & Musical Effect through sound design and digital musicianship



**Title “Making it work: Building Connections ...
words to explain music beyond words”**

**Roland Yeung
15 March 2026
Trinity Grammar School**

“Making it work: Building Connections ...
words to explain music beyond words

Words to describe music beyond words: how to demonstrate ways to lift evidence of thinking in student performance, compositional or written responses across wide ranges of works and performances?

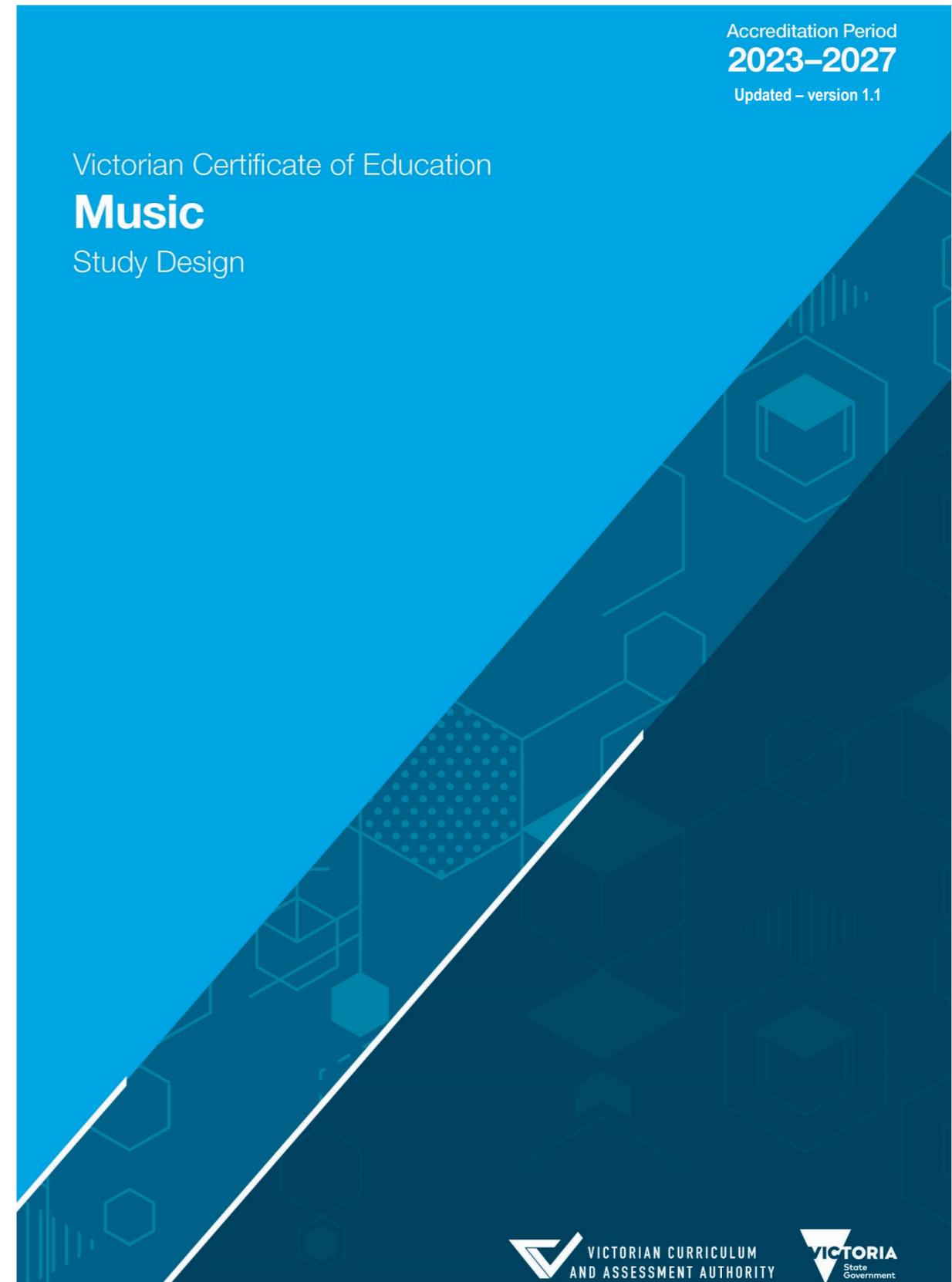
- The Music Study has so much variety and choice that it is hard to know what is the best choice to study
- To enable your students to achieve the highest ratings, how do you ask questions of your students so they can find deeper meaning?
- Is there a set of questions that teachers can use across all areas of studies that can lift their thinking?

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What are expressive techniques? in VCE Music U3&4

“Expressive” is used in the Music Study Design on only 15 pages!

- Introduction 8,
- Cross-study specifications 13, 15
- U3&4 Inquiry - no reference
- U3&4 Contemporary 40, 46,
- U3&4 Repertoire 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 66
- *If “Expressive” is a key quality in achieving high standards, it is sadly lacking in the Study.*



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What are expressive techniques?

VCE U3&4 Music Contemporary and VCE U3&4 Music Repertoire

“Expressive” is used in the *Assessment specifications* on these pages

- Not in U3&4 Inquiry
- U3&4 Contemporary p.4 “Statement of Expressive Intent”
- U3&4 Repertoire p.2 Format “...contrasting works that represent a diverse range of techniques and expressive qualities...”
- U3&4 Contemporary p.6 Criterion 4 “Skill in expressive communication through dynamics, articulation and phrase shaping: the performer uses dynamics, phrasing and articulation to communicate the character, mood or intention of the music” May 2025
- U3&4 Repertoire p.6 Criterion 4 “Skill in expressive communication through dynamics, articulation and phrase shaping - The performer uses dynamics, phrasing and articulation to communicate the character, mood or intention of the music” May 2025.

Accreditation Period
2023–2027
Updated – version 1.1

Victorian Certificate of Education

Music

Study Design

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Expression

U3&4 Music Repertoire

- In School Assessed Coursework
- The descriptors do not illustrate levels of “expression” - What is it? How does it look at each level of performance?

VCE Music Repertoire performance

VCE MUSIC REPERTOIRE PERFORMANCE	
SCHOOL-ASSESSED COURSEWORK	
Performance descriptors	

	DESCRIPTOR: typical performance in each range				
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Unit 4 Outcome 2 <i>Demonstrate and discuss techniques (technical and expressive) relevant to the performance and development of a personal interpretation of works selected for performance.</i>	Demonstrates a strategy to overcome a specific challenge.	Demonstrates some strategies specifically linked to particular challenges in the music being prepared for performance.	Demonstrates planning and implementation of approaches to develop strategies relating to the program being prepared.	Demonstrates of a range of planned and implemented strategies, developing specific techniques, including evidence of approaches to developing interpretation.	Discusses and demonstrates a wide range of planned and implemented strategies for developing a range of specific instrumental, rehearsal, presentation and interpretation techniques relating specifically to the works selected for performance.
	Displays a limited application of techniques to achieve expressive intention in the program of work.	Shows that some ways of demonstrating expression have been used in some aspects of the performance program.	Demonstrates some expressive intentions, and how they relate to the performance program.	Demonstrates an understanding of the application of interpretation techniques required to develop a personal approach to performing the recital program.	Demonstrates how a personal approach to expressive intentions is evident across the recital program.

KEY to marking scale based on the outcome contribution 20 marks

Task: Demonstration and discussion.

Very Low 1–3	Low 4–7	Medium 8–12	High 13–17	Very High 18–20
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Where to find out more about “Expressive Techniques”?

Interdisciplinary sources

- **Music Therapy - assessing improvements in well-being through perception moods Kate Hevner**
- **Philosophy and Music Theodore Gracyk Ed.**
- **Psychology - thinking Benjamin Bloom et al**
- **Information technology - social tagging in Music Information Retrieval MIR**
- **Music terminology used in the VCE Music Study Design**

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Fundamentals

**some givens, goals and priorities
when shaping a VCE study**

- Access and success - from Ministerial Paper No. 6 1986
- VCE is the culmination of secondary & post-compulsory schooling - there are many stakeholders
- VCE must be focussed on students with the maturity of a 17 year old - attract their curiosity so they will select the study
- A VCE music performance and study in traditional notation based as well as recognise aural based traditions, though notated music allows more reflection and analysis - respect both ways, because they are often mixed in the same classroom
- What ever study of music styles or instrument selected, the expectations should be common and referenced to what Year 12 students would historically be able to achieve - students grow out of our school programs
- No teacher or student can reasonably expected to know all musics, play all instruments, and compose in all styles - work in professional teams and share materials - implications for teach training and teaching in teams

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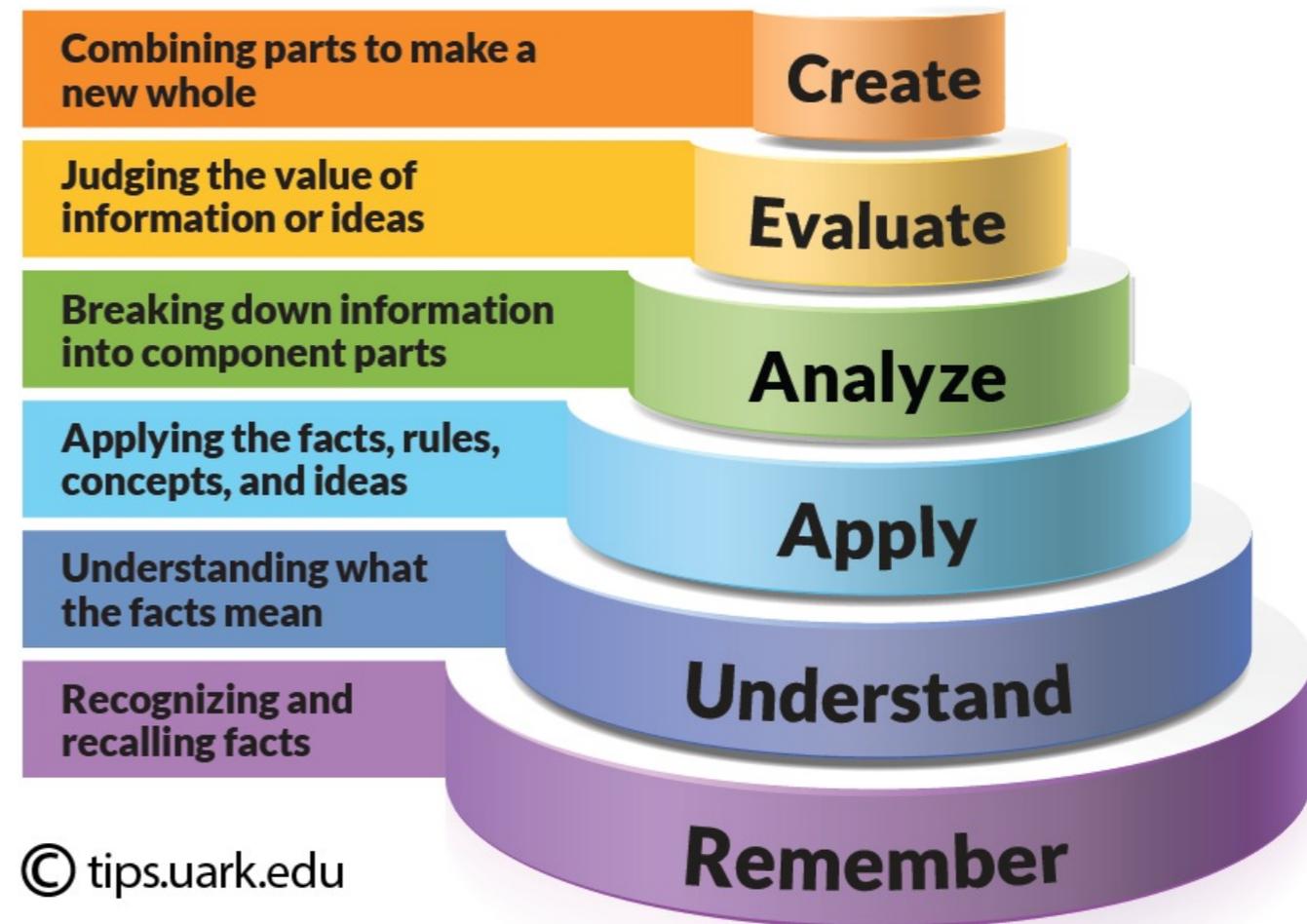
Bloom’s Taxonomy

Order of thinking skills

- A hierarchical framework (original 1956) created by Benjamin Bloom to help us describe and classify observable knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours and abilities.
- From 2001 revisions by others, it encompasses three primary domains:
 - **Cognitive** (intellectual processes)
 - **Affective** (emotional responses and attitudes)
 - **Psychomotor** (physical skills and abilities)
- Revised version (2001) uses **actionable verbs**
- Used to structure course content logically, with a clear progression

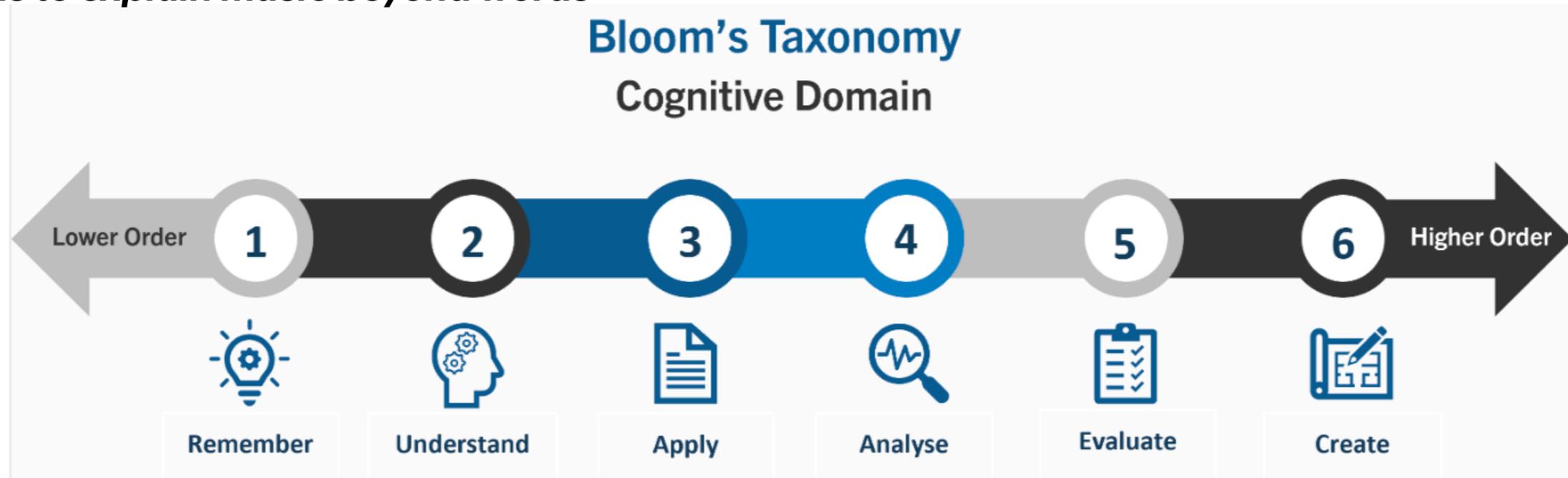
These skills help learners:

- Apply knowledge creatively and critically in novel situations
- Move beyond rote memorisation to deep, meaningful understanding
- Become independent, adaptive learners capable of problem-solving and innovation.



<https://www.simplypsychology.org/blooms-taxonomy.html>

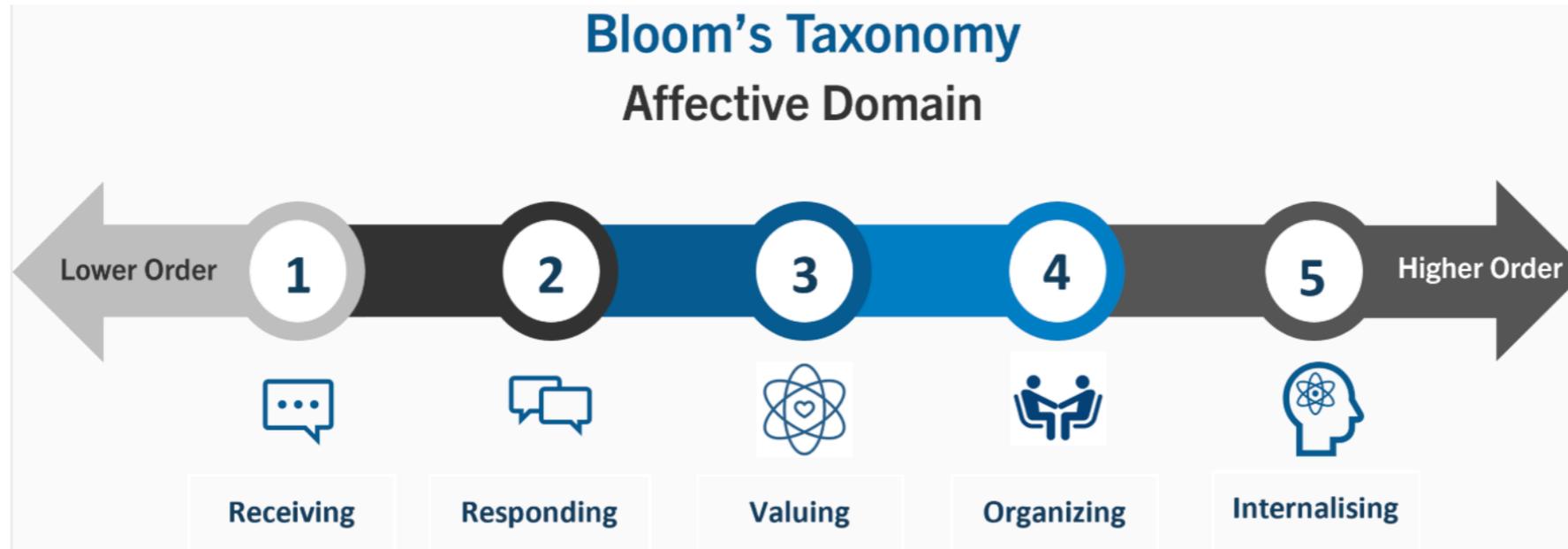
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In the cognitive domain, student learning progresses from basic recall of information through to being able to use information critically in new situations or for innovative purposes. From low to high, the levels of the cognitive domain are:

Remember	Recall information, concepts, facts, formulas, or processes.
Understand	Explain what information or concepts mean and their relevance.
Apply	Use information and knowledge in new contexts or situations.
Analyze	Break apart and make connections between information, concepts, or approaches.
Evaluate	Judge information, approaches, or processes.
Create	Use knowledge to develop something new.

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Students working with affective skills will be able to take in information about their context and should eventually be able to develop, internalize and demonstrate behaviours that align with that value system. From low to high, the levels of the affective domain are:

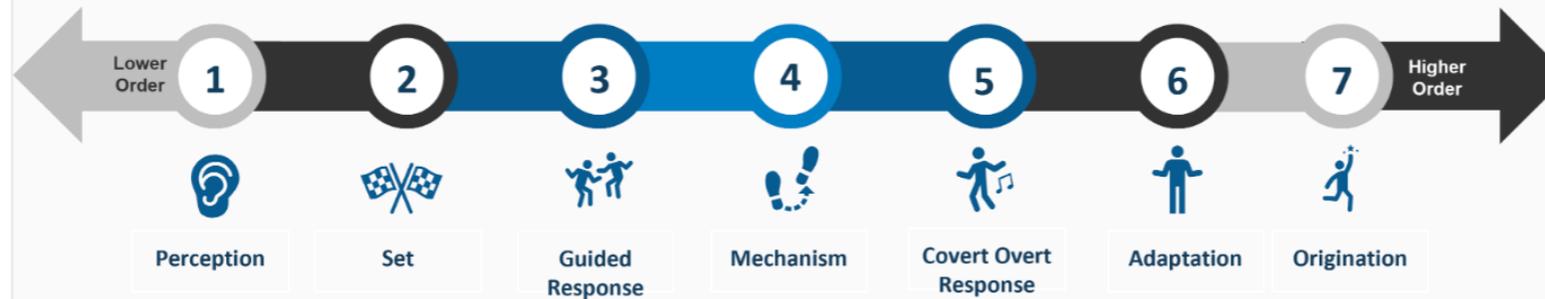
Receiving	Aware of the environment or context and open to new ideas and learning.
Responding	Active participation and demonstration of new behaviour.
Valuing	Express values and opinions and share perspectives; demonstrate commitment.
Organizing	Bring together different opinions, perspectives, and values.
Characterizing	Develop a belief system or philosophy and act in a way that is consistent with it.

Beware:
Affective
Mood
Emotion
Feelings
Feelingful

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**Bloom’s Taxonomy
Psychomotor Domain**

Psychomotor skills are movement tasks that rely on both cognitive and motor skills, and abilities that learners will use as part of their field or profession.



There are three different versions of the psychomotor domain developed by; Dave (1970), Harrow (1972), and Simpson (1972). Although there are similarities and differences between models for skill acquisition, the models share a common focus as the learner moves from a state of awareness of the environment with basic movements through to a mastery of a task with the ability to apply that knowledge in different contexts. In both models, students move from imitating a movement or task through to being able to adapt their skills to new and different situations. From low to high, the levels of the psychomotor domain (Simpson, 1972) are:

Perception	Awareness of the environment; sensory cues used to inform the task.
Set	Physical, mental, and emotional preparedness to act.
Guided response	Beginner level; complex tasks completed through imitation or trial and error.
Mechanism	Intermediate level; actions become more habitual and proficient.
Complex overt response	Expert level; complex tasks are completed with proficiency and accuracy.
Adaptation	Skills can be applied in different contexts and situations.
Origination	Development of new ways of completing tasks for new situations or increased efficiency.

Susanne Langer and “Feelingful”

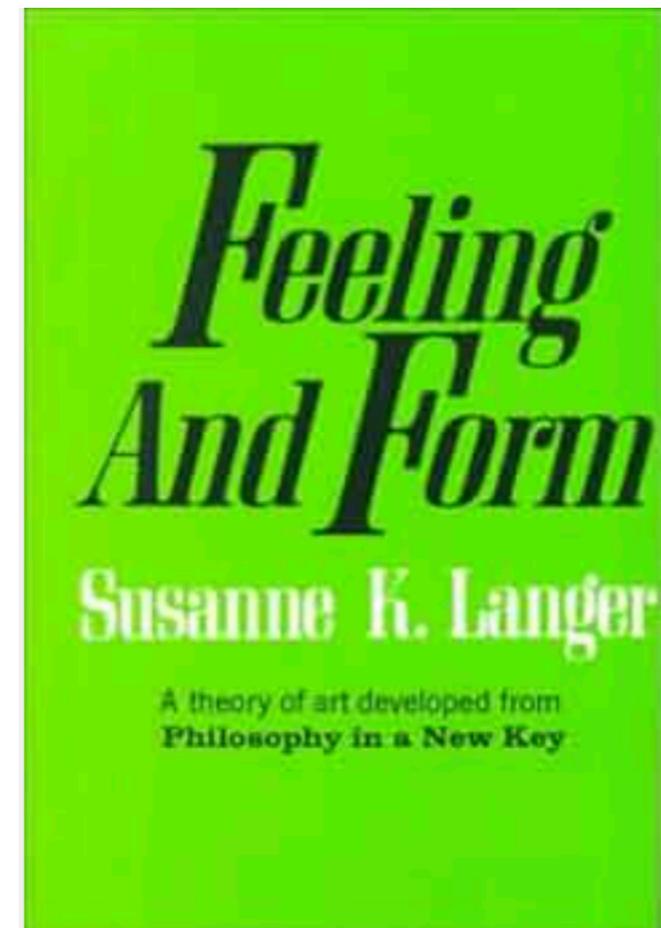
The concept of feeling

The philosopher **Susanne Langer** did not come up with the term “feelingful.” The earliest known use of the adjective “feelingful” dates back to the **1840s**, which is nearly a century before Langer published her major works in the 1940s and 1950s.

Langer made extensive use of the term and concept of “feeling” in her aesthetic theory, making it central to her philosophy.

- **Langer’s Conception of Feeling:** Langer, a pioneering 20th-century American philosopher, defined “feeling” in a very broad sense to include all human experiences, including physical sensations, emotions, tensions, and intuitive insights.
- **“Feelingful” in Context:** While she did not invent the word, the term “feelingful” is frequently used by scholars when discussing or analyzing Langer’s philosophy, particularly her work on art as the “symbolic expression of human feeling”.
- **Aesthetic Theory:** Langer argued that art allows us to feel, understand, and objectify the complex dynamics of our “feelingful” lives. She focused on the structure of feeling rather than just emotional outbursts.

In summary, Langer did not coin the term “feelingful,” but she is a major figure in the philosophical study of the concept.



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Bloom’s Taxonomy

Measurable action verbs

Bloom's Taxonomy Measurable action verbs - cognition

1

Comprehension	
Useful Verbs	Sample Question Stems
explain interpret outline discuss distinguish predict restate translate compare describe	Can you write in your own words...? Can you write a brief outline...? What do you think could of happened next...? What do you think...? Can you distinguish between...? What differences exist between...? Can you provide an example of what you mean...? Can you provide a definition for...?

2

Application	
Useful Verbs	Sample Question Stems
Solve Show Use Illustrate Construct Complete Examine Classify	Do you know another instance where...? Could this have happened in...? Can you group by characteristics such as...? What factors would you change if...? Can you apply the method used to some experience of your own...? What questions would you ask of...? From the information given, can you develop a set of instructions about...? Would this information be useful if you had a ...?

Bloom's Taxonomy Measurable action verbs - cognition

5

Synthesis	
Useful Verbs	Sample Question Stems
Create Invent Compose Predict Plan Construct Design Propose Devise Formulate	Can you design a ... to ...? Can you see a possible solution to...? If you had access to all resources how would you deal with...? What would happen if...? How many ways can you...? Can you create new and unusual uses for...? Can you develop a proposal which would...?

6

Evaluation	
Useful Verbs	Sample Question Stems
Judge Select Choose Decide Justify Debate Verify Argue Recommend Assess Discuss Rate Prioritize Determine	Is there a better solution to... ? Judge the value of... ? Can you defend your position about...? Do you think ... is a good or a bad thing? How would you have handled...? What changes to ... would you recommend? Do you believe....? How effective are...? What do you think about...?

Bloom's Taxonomy

Not measurable action verbs

Watch Out for Verbs that are not Measurable

In order for an objective to give maximum structure to instruction, it should be free of vague or ambiguous words or phrases. The following lists notoriously ambiguous words or phrases which should be avoided so that the intended outcome is concise and explicit.

WORDS TO AVOID

- *Believe*
- *Hear*
- *Realize*
- *Capacity*
- *Intelligence*
- *Recognize*
- *Comprehend*
- *Know*
- *See*
- *Conceptualize*
- *Listen*
- *Self-Actualize*
- *Memorize*
- *Think*
- *Experience*
- *Perceive*
- *Understand*
- *Feel*

PHRASES TO AVOID

Evidence a (n): To Become: To Reduce:

- *Appreciation for*
- *Acquainted with*
- *Adjusted to*
- *Awareness of*
- *Capable of*
- *Comprehension of* .
- *Cognizant of*
- *Enjoyment of*
- *Conscious of*
- *Familiar with*
- *Interest in*
- *Interested in* .
- *Knowledge of*
- *Knowledgeable about* .
- *Understanding of*

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Bloom's Taxonomy

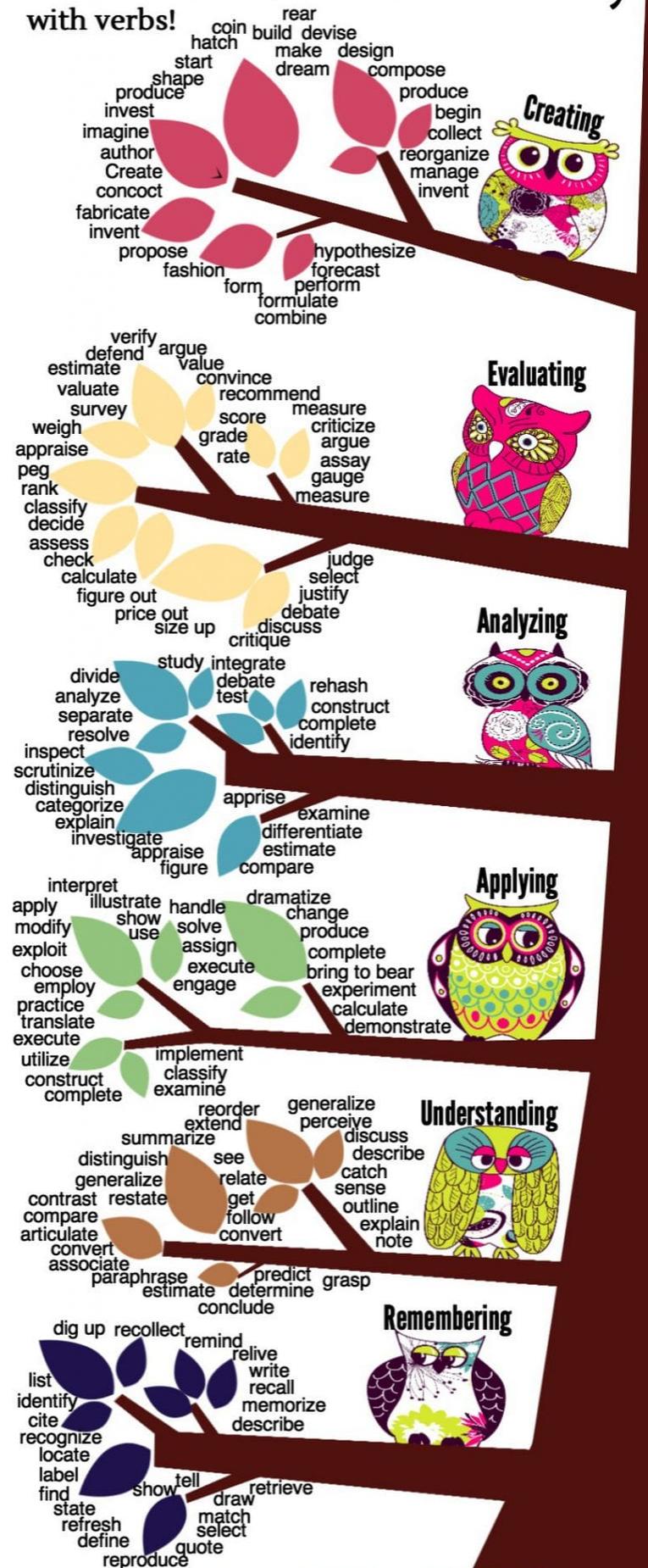
Summary

- Using stems and verbs, choose a higher level of thinking to help your students understand, remember, connect, extend and learn
- Develop your skills in scaffolding and mixing different levels of thinking in a question that lifts thinking levels and achieves deeper meaning
- Apply to be a writer for the next VCE Music Study Design and give future students ways to lift their thinking and learning.

By Mia Mac Meekin

<https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking-posts/taxonomy-tree/>

Bloom's Taxonomy



By: Mia Mac Meekin
of Epigogy, Inc and
anethicalisland

Mood Wheel by Kate Hevner

Categories of adjectives for recording the mood effect of music

- Developed by American psychologist in 1936, still used
- One of the earliest systematic approaches to mapping musical effect
- Each category allows for smooth gradual transitions in mood, while diaphanous opposites represented opposite emotions
- Used to evaluate patient’s recovery from strokes and alcoholics
- Criticised because used terms that had gone out of fashion and more suited to Classical music (EG. Category 1, 5, 8)
- Influenced more widely known models EG. **Bonny & Savary** (1973) “Guided Imagery and Music” (GIM)
- Recent revised versions: **Bonde** 1997; **Wigram, Pedersen & Bonde** 2002
- Used by Music Information Retrieval (MIR) researchers to categorise social tabs.

REVISED VERSION

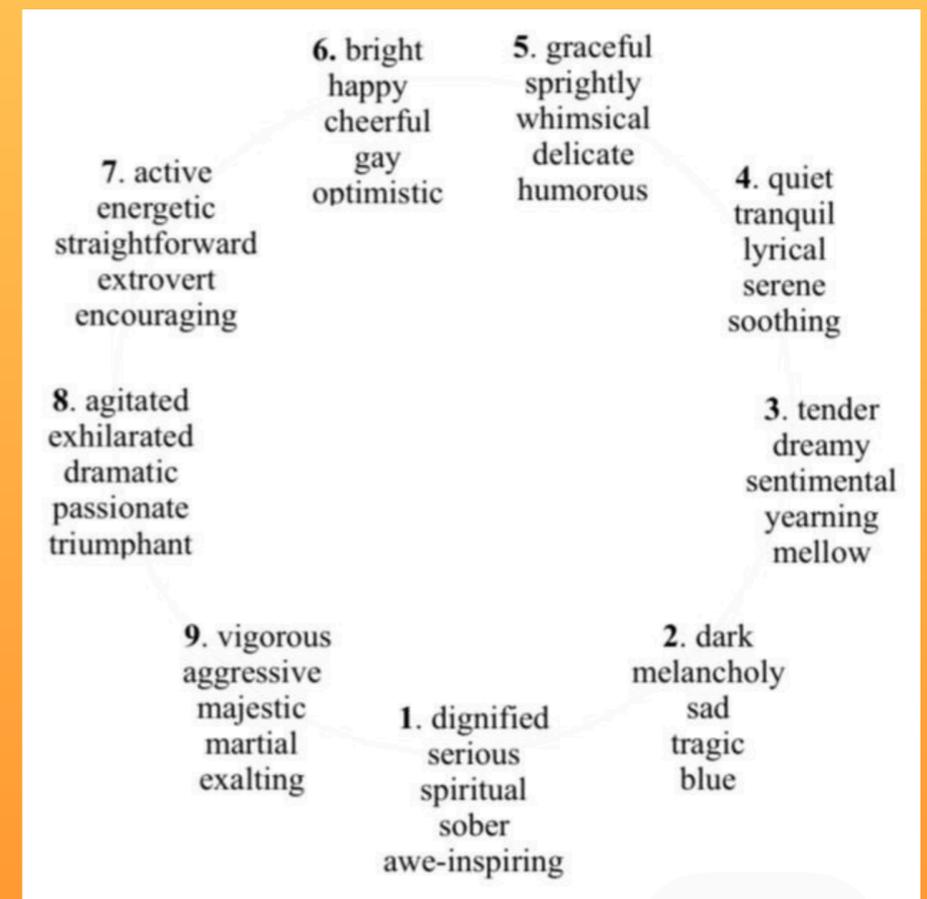
8 vigorous robust emphatic martial ponderous majestic exalting energetic mighty potent imposing	7 exhilarated soaring triumphant dramatic passionate sensational agitated exciting impetuous restless tumultuous	6 merry joyous gay happy cheerful bright sunny gleeful vivacious entrancing fun	5 humorous playful whimsical fanciful quaint sprightly delicate light graceful jovial sparkling	4 lyrical leisurely satisfying serene tranquil quiet soothing peaceful comforting easygoing gentle
	1 spiritual lofty awe-inspiring dignified sacred solemn sober serious noble pious sublime	2 pathetic doleful sad mournful tragic melancholy frustrated depressing gloomy	3 dreamy yielding tender sentimental longing yearning pleading plaintive nostalgic wistful touching	

Using Hevner’s Mood Wheel for VCE Music

Categories of adjectives for recording the mood effect of music

Beware:

- When you play an excerpt, different listeners can have quite divergent choice of Mood word. Accept, do not judge their opinion
- Selecting a Mood word is more about *attributed* meaning rather than *absolute* meaning. Everyone has had a different experience in listening, culture upbringing and life that they bring to their listening responses. They are not for teachers to grade or judge
- From their response to the Mood of the music identify the way the **elements of music** were used by themselves and in combination to create that mood and their reaction. Develop the vocabulary within the Elements of Music world to explain, relate, codify and create
- Using the previous discussion, play the next change in mood of the same excerpt and discuss using comparison to delve deeper into the meaning.
- The *Feelings Wheel* Dr Wilcox and Robert Putchik’s work does not correlate very well with what can be illustrated with music as the responses are inward and not suitable for academic answers.



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Music Information Retrieval (MIR) and Musical Digital Libraries (MDL) technologies

Last.FM user generated tags

- **Folksonomy** - a system of user-generated keywords that anyone can apply to artists, albums, tracks to categorise music in personal and communal ways
- EG. Moods & Occasions: Contextual labels such as "Chillout," "Mellow," "Energetic," "Jogging," or "Catchy".
- Successful groups receive 20,000 tags
- Beware: What criteria do people use to decide tags: style, culture, mood, emotion?

<https://www.last.fm/>

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Figure 3: Words in Hevner’s circle that match tags in the categories derived from last.fm tags

Note:

Hevner’s Categories 8, 5 and 1 are not represented in Last.FM social tags

Music and Mood: Where Theory and Reality Meet
Xiao Hu

Graduate School of Library and Information Science
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Last.FM user generated tags

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2. Translating Common Last.fm Tags into Elements of Music

Below are examples of frequently used tags and how they map onto the Elements of Music.

Last.fm Tag	Typical Musical Meaning	Relevant Elements of Music	Example VCE wording
Ambient	Atmospheric, sustained soundscape	Texture, timbre, harmony	“Sustained synth timbres create a layered but sparse texture with slow harmonic change.”
Minimal / Minimalist	Repetition, gradual change	Rhythm, structure, texture	“Short rhythmic motifs repeat with slight variation, creating a process-based texture.”
Aggressive	Strong articulation, loud dynamics	Dynamics, articulation, timbre	“Accented attacks and distorted timbres produce an aggressive character.”
Groove / Funky	Repeating rhythmic patterns	Rhythm, metre	“Syncopated bass and drum patterns establish a strong groove.”
Melancholic / Sad	Dark emotional tone	Mode, harmony, tempo	“Minor harmony and descending melodic contours create a melancholic character.”
Epic / Cinematic	Large, dramatic sonority	Dynamics, orchestration, texture	“Dense orchestration and a crescendo in dynamics create a cinematic climax.”
Ethereal	Light, floating sound	Timbre, texture, register	“High register voices and reverberant timbres create an ethereal texture.”
Driving	Strong forward motion	Rhythm, tempo	“A steady quaver ostinato propels the music forward.”

ChatGPT 5.0
March 2026

My prompt
“Using Last.FM social tags, how do these link to the elements of music when discussing a 1 minute excerpt in a VCE Music written examination?”

The responses could be models for your students to develop their own style.

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Music Information Retrieval (MIR) and Musical Digital Libraries (MDL) technologies

Summary

- Though focussed on contemporary popular music, **Folksonomy** shows how your students may be reacting to the music they choose to listen to. The social tags is the language they have been drawn into. These are the words they use to describe the music they like and tag.
- Noting the relationship between the Hevner’s Mood Wheel and Last.FM tags, you have a some taxonomies and categories to help students explain the music they listen to, study, perform and write about in VCE Music
- Beware: remember to avoid judging student responses - instead, broaden their thinking and help them think more deeply.

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Obstacles

Built into the VCE Music Study

- Set works vs flexibility of having only few sets works
- Challenge moved to teachers to find suitable works that are resourced well and at the right standard
- Each student has their own personality and preference - how to judge what will work in October
- Could have a class where everyone is playing a different instrument and performing different repertoire - managing diverse student programs setting workable timelines
- Around half are classical traditions against contemporary popular attitudes and practices in the same study and assessments
- Music Theory that is basic and not describing the music they play - when will this catch up to the 21st century?! Theory should match the music they perform not be a separate trick test question
- Methodology that has high levels creating and evaluating that is beyond just knowledge, recognition and remembering levels.
- The obstacles should be the focus of your team discussions.

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Recommendations

For you into the future

- Become a curriculum writer. Lookout for invitations from VCAA
 - Using *Bloom’s Taxonomy action verbs*, ensure students are thinking at the highest levels in performing, composition, research, analysis, theory and listening that connect with all the music at the deepest level of meaning
 - Using *Kate Hevner’s Mood Wheel*, ensure students are broadening their vocabulary to help them think more deeply about the musical world we are surround by
 - Get beyond the *Music Elements*
 - Interaction of concepts, salient characteristics and treatment of musical elements in combination, compositional devices rather than isolating elements or components of music
 - Deepening meaning and expressive effect in music
 - Listen for how patterns unfold, moods grow and emotions aroused as a work unfolds in time, developing their memory of the musical landscape
 - Consider how your students can manipulate musical elements to affect musical expression in performance and listening responses
 - Use the same set of question stems across all Areas of Study using *Blooms Taxonomy*
 - Seek ***words that explain music beyond words***
- **Tell me what you think - see you in Session 1 Chat in CY3**
 - **Email: roland@rolandyeung.net**
 - **Website: rolandyeung.net**

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