

Examiners' Report Summer 2009

GCE

GCE Drama & Theatre Studies (8DR01)

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Contents

1.	Unit 6DR01 - Exploration of Drama & Theatre	5
2.	Unit 6DR02 - Theatre Text in Performance	13
3.	Statistics - Grade Boundaries	27

6DR01 Exploration of Drama and Theatre

Introduction

This Unit asks candidates to practically explore two substantial play texts. The results of this practical exploration in the drama studio are recorded through a set of Exploration Notes that are a maximum of 3,000 words, for both texts.

Practical exploration should be related to the development of understanding of the two texts through work related to a series of exploration elements, plus the work and ideas of at least one recognised theatre practitioner. These exploration elements are:

- Language
- non-verbal communication
- vocal awareness
- characterisation
- the social, cultural, historical and political contexts
- visual, aural and spatial elements of a production
- interpretation

All of these should all be used in the exploration of both texts. The work and ideas of the theatre practitioner need only be used to explore one of the plays, but can be used for both.

Candidates should record the results of practical exploration over the course of the unit, then these notes must be refined and summarised to encapsulate the candidate's understanding of the two texts. All ideas should be closely linked to practical exploration from which personal examples should be embedded in the notes. It is important that the candidate is able to demonstrate very clearly how their understanding of the two texts explored is rooted in their practical drama work. The Exploration Notes may refer to the exploration elements separately, for each play; they may be written as continuous prose or include sketches, diagrams and designs. It is not necessary to compare the two texts in any way, although candidates may do so if they wish. Assessment of these notes is carried out holistically, across both texts and notes must be balanced so that each text receives adequate attention.

Candidates are also asked to record an evaluation of one live theatre production. This piece of writing must record how the production elements came together in this performance to create the theatrical experience for the candidate as a member of the audience. The evaluation is a demonstration of an understanding of the play in performance, it is not an evaluation of the play itself. The Evaluation of Live Theatre should be no longer than 1,000 words.

Practical exploration of the two texts themselves forms the third and most heavily-weighted assessment area for unit 1. This assessment is carried out in a series of structured workshops by the teacher and requires the application of the assessment criteria against the candidate's response to the practical exercises within the scheme of work. This is not about performance, rather the marks should reflect the

application and imagination shown in the workshops as the candidate practically explores each text. A DVD/video recording of one sample practical workshop session is requested so that the level of work and the teacher-assessor's application of the assessment criteria can be gauged in each centre. Again, this should not be a performance, or preparation for a performance; rather it is an exemplification of the type of practical drama exploration that is applied to each text, and carried out in each centre.

Marks for this unit are awarded as follows:

- Exploration Notes 20
- Evaluation of Live Theatre 15
- Practical Exploration 25

There is essential guidance for centres in the Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination (I.C.E.) document. This document is updated each year and includes the requisite forms and instructions for Unit 1. It is required for all units as it includes information about procedures for unit 2 and will be updated with forms and deadlines for the A2 year. Centres should download it from the website as soon as it is available in November.

The web address is: www.edexcel.com.

There now follows some specific observations from the moderation team based on centre responses in this first year of this specification.

Exploration Notes

Generally, centres have approached this new unit pragmatically; they have chosen texts that they know well and have had previous experience of. For example, many centres chose classic plays, such as *Metamorphosis*, *A Doll's House*, *Blood Wedding*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Two* and *Road*. Some centres, however, chose new and infrequently seen plays. It was good to see centres making choices that reflected, on the whole, the needs of their students and the requirements of this unit. Most centres adhered to the guidelines concerning breadth and depth of chosen texts. Occasionally centres explored two texts by the same writer, a choice that does not fulfil the needs of the unit in terms of the variety of challenges for candidates. The recommendation is that there should be at least 10 years between the two texts and the vast majority of centres recognised the need to offer a clear historical grounding at the start of the course and chose texts from distinct time periods of theatrical development.

The range of theatre practitioners, whose ideas informed explorations, was relatively small. Most candidates used the theories of Stanislavski and Brecht, with Artaud, Berkoff and *Kneehigh* also being popular choices.

Overall, candidates' notes fulfilled the needs of the unit and many produced work that was highly informative, giving a real sense of what they had genuinely come to understand about their texts, through fully applied practical drama exploration. Several centres, however, did not fully appreciate the requirements of the specification that have occurred for this series in 2008 - 2009. Several candidates still produced work related to exploration elements that are no longer part of unit 1, for example, perhaps influenced by the legacy specification. A few centres produced

written evidence for only half of the elements, for each text, instead of using the explorative elements for both texts. This led to an imbalance in the written results. Candidates occasionally missed out work that related to several of the explorative elements; this was not always picked up in teachers' marking of the work. The written Exploration Notes, which should be a summary of the knowledge and understanding of two texts, developed through extensive practical drama explorations, were sometimes overly descriptive of practical activities, did not relate to practical activities, or were the result of research carried out in libraries or on the internet.

Centres should consider that Exploration Notes are the final chapter in a long process of practical exploration, workshop experimentation, recording and note taking and discussion. These are not verbatim reports of what went on in the studio or what someone else thinks about the text in question. The more the candidate can reflect upon a personal experience of exploring and demonstrate an understanding of the work of the playwrights through this exploration, the more likely it is that he or she will be able to access the higher level of marks in this unit.

The level of practical activities carried out in the drama studio was generally sufficiently challenging for the unit. Some candidates, for example, showed that they had not sufficiently branched away from the notion that all stage directions from the playwright are sacrosanct, and cannot be challenged in the workshop. Occasionally, candidates lacked experience of the trying out of their own ideas, often shown by comments such as 'I would direct this scene' etc, rather than 'I did direct this scene in such a way, because' etc. Lower attaining candidates frequently gave little or no idea as to how they had come by their understanding, while those higher attaining individuals frequently showed how they had tried out ideas, sometimes failed to achieve what they had set out to, but they did record the ways their understanding had grown, through personal experience. Weaker candidates sometimes spent too much time writing about the plot of the plays, not asked for in this unit, and sometimes produced long sections about the social, historical, cultural and political contexts, unrelated to practical explorations.

Where centres lacked appreciation of the requirements of the Exploration Notes this frequently led to them being much too long. Centres are reminded that work that exceeds the word limit should not receive any marks and it is the responsibility of the teacher-assessor to reflect this in the marks awarded and indicate it to the moderator. Candidates need to be fully aware of the word limit for this and other units within the specification. There are no exceptions to this.

The best quality Exploration Notes were, in the main, produced as prose written in an A4 format, rather than over very large sheets of art paper. The approach that requires the accumulation of numerous small pieces of paper, sometimes extracts from the text, short sections of candidate comment, pasted onto the one large sheet, has not been seen to be particularly effective. It has not allowed for detailed discussion at an accepted level. There has been, however, some imaginative use of annotated script extracts and creatively designed tables for recording ideas as they grew, but sometimes these were not fully exploited and appeared to be the means of regurgitating the teachers' ideas.

Language

In general, this section was rarely used to show how the language of a play can be explored in action. Most candidates wrote about the nature and style of the

language, with limited reference made to how they had come to this understanding. Some moderators likened such work to that of English literature coursework. The most successful examples of this element showed how a candidate had explored a section of the play using several approaches and coming to conclusions genuinely rooted in their practical drama.

Non-verbal communication

Some candidates wrote particularly effectively about practical work they had carried out in the studio on how actors and directors make more of a text than just speaking it and how meaning is developed through a range of strategies. Others limited their work to writing about how they might deliver lines.

Characterisation

Overall, candidates showed good understanding of how characters can be portrayed in performance, but there was less success in showing how they got to their conclusions.

The social, historical, cultural and political context

This was the weakest section. Many candidates failed to relate this element to any of their practical exploration. It was rare to find an example where a candidate gave clear examples of how they had used their understanding of how what they knew about the play's context had helped them understand how it might be explored or interpreted.

The visual, aural, spatial elements of a production

There was good use made of sketches and designs for this section. However, several candidates failed to annotate their work sufficiently. Centres are reminded that sketches and designs themselves are worth few marks; it is what is said about them that attracts marks.

Some candidates showed how they had explored how meaning could be enhanced by how and where scenes were enacted. These explorations were then clearly deployed to get to the meaning within a text. Other, less successful candidates, simply explained how they would like to see and hear a scene.

Interpretation

The most successful responses to this element were those that showed how ideas had developed in the studio through experimentation, what had worked, and what had not. Weaker responses wrote lengthily about aspirational ideas for whole productions, many of which had little to do with the candidate's experience of exploring towards making theatre.

The response to a practitioner

Candidates appeared to be more successful with this element, because they wrote about genuinely experimented with practitioner ideas whilst exploring one of their texts. However, a considerable minority limited their responses to the ideas themselves, without referring to how they had used them during their drama explorations, or more worryingly, simply gave a biography of the practitioner.

The Evaluation Of Live Theatre

The theatre productions experienced by candidates have been varied; students have generally fared well in this section of the unit. Many centres have used common templates, however, and this has led to whole cohorts producing very similar work. In general though, candidates understood the requirements of this section and many wrote eloquently about their experiences, weaving together their thoughts about both the theatre piece itself and its production. There was often a clear sense of excitement at what had been experienced, clearly communicated to the reader. Many candidates enjoyed productions such as War Horse at the National Theatre.

Records of work

Most centres complied with the requirement to send a single record of work for both texts. These helped moderators determine the level of work delivered to candidates. It is not necessary for centres to send highly detailed accounts of what went on over the course of the unit; these should be general accounts of the workshops delivered on both texts.

The Practical Exploration of Texts

This section of the work is assessed by teachers in centres. It was felt that most centres delivered a good range of practical activities in workshops and that candidates had been given opportunities to access the full range of marks available for this unit.

Sample Practical Session

The practical activities carried out for the Sample Session ranged from the highly imaginative and directly applied to the exploration of the text in question, to the extensive pursuit of warming up. Whilst it was not asked of centres to edit these recordings, the inclusion of long register taking, chatting and playing drama games unrelated to any texts was not helpful to moderators. Sessions were frequently over-directed by teachers or did not clearly show candidates working together on a text. Many candidates were very difficult to make out or identify. The most effective sessions were those where candidates were clearly identified at the start, their names were frequently used throughout and the camera focused on areas where candidate work was going on apace. The presentation of rehearsed work was also commonly shown and this, again, is not helpful to moderators since it is not the purpose of this session.

Teachers' assessments, comments and annotations

Centres' marking of the Evaluations Of Live Theatre section of the unit was generally felt to have been more accurate than for the Exploration Notes. There was a more realistic view taken of work here and most candidates' work was more accurately assessed against the published criteria. The assessment of the Exploration Notes was more problematic, however, with moderators applying the standard of this unit and adjusting candidates' marks accordingly. On occasion, centre rank orders had to be modified, since centres had incorrectly rewarded work that did not fulfil the criteria of the unit. Teachers' comments did not always reflect the marks awarded; for example, where teachers had used 'good' as a descriptor, they sometimes gave outstanding marks. This is not helpful for moderation.

Some centres, particularly where candidates' work greatly exceeded the word limit, felt that they should highlight the work they thought the moderator should read. Some teachers flagged this for the moderator, asking them to ignore the rest of the non-highlighted material. This is not allowed, since all work must be that of the candidate alone and teachers must not have a hand in it.

In this first series of this specification it was felt that marks given for the Sample Session were generally too high. The assessment of the practical element of the unit overall appears to have been over estimated as well. In many cases, centres have awarded almost full marks for practical work to candidates where their writing does not allude, or rarely does, to this practical work that was considered so successful. Whilst there may be an imbalance in the marks awarded for each of the areas of assessment, it is expected that candidates' practical marks should bear some correlation to that given for the written elements.

Many teachers annotated their candidates' coursework with a clear view of the purpose of the undertaking, so that the moderator's task was eased considerably. It is a requirement that work from candidates is annotated. On occasion, where more than one teacher had been involved in the delivery of the course, there was evidence of genuine department standardisation and cross moderation of work. In some cases, however, there was evidence that teachers did not standardise their marking across the centre, something which is essential for the security of marks awarded to candidates.

Administration

Centres ensured their work arrived on time and in good order, for the most part. However, there were some very common mistakes made by a considerable number. Centres omitted to include all of the necessary pieces of evidence requested, and often that they had checked off on the reminder list. Several centres forgot to include their Sample Session recordings or did not include all of the asterisked candidates from their OPTEMS sheets. It was also common for centres to omit their highest and lowest attaining candidates.

Occasionally teachers did not complete the candidate comment boxes on the Student Record Cards, or did not write in sufficient detail; some did not separate the marks for the three elements of the unit. A small number of centres lost some of their candidates' coursework, making moderation of that part impossible. Several centres did not fill out the requisite Student Record Cards, or used versions not included in the I.C.E. document. Centres are reminded to use the forms published within the I.C.E. document.

Centres occasionally felt they could request that their moderator take a relaxed attitude to moderation where there had been circumstances they felt warranted particular leniency; this is not an appropriate course of action since formal requests for special consideration would be more advisable.

Centres did not always check that their Sample Session recordings were visible, could be heard, or had been copied on to regular, standard size discs, playable on any domestic player. Many were not formatted correctly for this purpose. The presentation of centre sample packs was very mixed. Some did not package up materials safely and many DVDs were damaged in transit. Centres that used very large numbers of plastic envelopes for work and papers or cardboard folders did so unnecessarily and wasted much time for their moderator. Centres are reminded that

work should be presented stapled together for each candidate and DVD/videos packed in protective envelopes. It is not necessary to include heavy sheets of packing material to protect paperwork that is delivered in this way.

Candidates' authentication sheets were generally signed and dated and teachers had clearly taken this part of the process very seriously. There were occasional examples where teachers had not done this, however, and a few had clearly signed as authentic work that they then went to report might have been copied or occasionally plagiarised from an external source. The authentication of work should be seen as a formal declaration that all work is that of the individual candidate.

High scoring work was felt to show some of these features:

- Candidates had been well taught and given the opportunity to practically explore two substantial plays that had been well chosen
- Candidates had used their practical explorations to highlight their writing about their plays, across all of the elements
- Candidates' written Exploration Notes were the end product of a process of summarising and honing ideas gleaned from practical exploration. They were not their class work notes.
- Exploration Notes were balanced across both texts
- Candidates referred to their own work, not just that of their group
- Exploration notes were concise and made full use of the available number of words but did not exceed them
- Diagrams and sketches were annotated
- Key lessons were delivered that allowed the candidates to focus on each of the elements
- The Sample Session was well focused and showed a range of practical workshop activities with the emphasis on the candidates working on the text, rather than the teacher
- The Evaluation Of Live Theatre made clear distinctions between the play and the production and provided evidence of considered objective analysis of the production
- Teacher comments were detailed and specific, allowing the moderator to see examples of how and why marks had been awarded

Middle scoring work was felt to show some of these features:

- Texts did not fully meet the needs of the candidates
- Practical activities were not sufficiently explorative
- Exploration Notes were imbalanced across the two texts
- Notes were too long
- Writing for some of the elements of exploration was not rooted in practical work
- Evaluations of Live Theatre were descriptive, rather than evaluative and analytical
- Teacher comments were brief and did not help the moderator see why marks had been awarded

Low scoring work was felt to show some of these features:

- Texts were poorly chosen, were not clearly understood by candidates, or were too simplistic

- Practical activities were teacher dominated
- Exploration Notes exceeded the word limit and failed to meet the criteria in terms of being concise and rooted in practical exploration
- Practical insights were not used to inform the Exploration Notes
- Elements of the notes were reproduced from other sources and were not related to candidate work, or were missing
- Evaluations of Live Theatre were muddled, too descriptive and lacked analysis and evaluation, or were missing
- Centres were poorly organized, had lost coursework, had not carried out centre standardization or did not have sufficient specialist drama staff to deliver the unit

It is inevitable in the first series of a new specification to highlight areas of concern, often at the expense of areas of excellence. There were centres where a clear understanding of the purpose of this unit was evident in all of the material presented for moderation and where candidates had been particularly effectively served by teachers who were clearly well-prepared and focused on the demands of the unit.

6DR02 Theatre Text in Performance

Introduction

This is the first year of examination of the new 2 unit specification. In the rewriting of the specification it was decided to continue with a performance examination in the AS year as this had proved to be both popular with centres and candidates and produce successful outcomes. However there were considerable challenges in making this adjustment to 2 AS units. The weighting of the unit increased from being 40% of the AS year to 60%. This was because it was a requirement from QCA that all examined units in the new specifications were weighted at least 60% of the total marks.

As with all of the new specifications both AS units were required to encompass the demands of the previous 3 unit examination. As there would no longer be an external written paper both the new AS units had to encompass the demands of Unit 3. It was felt that there needed to be increased challenge in the tasks set in Unit 2. The group performance had proved to be successful but to merit 60% of the marks candidates needed to complete more work in the final examination so the unit was divided into 2 sections.

Section B retained the challenge and requirements of the legacy Unit 2. It was decided not to make an adjustment to the group sizes or time limits of the group performance as many teachers had considerable experience in preparing candidates to meet these requirements and they had proved to work well in practice over the life of the 8113 specification.

However centres are reminded that Section B is now worth 30% of the AS marks. There was a change in the mark scheme and assessment grids to provide a much clearer focus for both performance and design students on the individual skills that they would be examined on in the group performance. In response to feedback from both centres and examiners reference to the director's interpretive concept are no longer in the criteria but there is a clearer focus on roles/characterisation within the context of the play.

Section A was a new unit for Edexcel and was equally weighted at 30% of the AS marks. This section was formulated in consultation with both centres and examiners as meeting the needs of the new Unit 2 demands. Candidates could be examined as a single performer in a monologue, with one other performance candidate in a duologue or as a designer working on the same text as performance candidates. For all candidates independent research into the complete text was a requirement. All candidates are required to complete, under supervised conditions, a written concept to support their practical work. This must be sent to the examiner to arrive least 7 working days in advance of the Section A examination. Maximum time limits of 2 minutes for monologues and 5 minutes for duologues were also set in line with the time limits set by most tertiary institutions which require a demonstration of practical ability as part of the interview process.

The descriptors in the new assessment grids were substantially revised in order to give greater clarity to centres, candidates and examiners. The top band descriptor was amended to be 'outstanding' to allow for better differentiation of marks at the top of the mark scheme, and to recognise outstanding performance. The majority of the documentation and administration procedures for Unit 2 were carried forward

from the legacy Unit 2 as centres were familiar with them and past experience showed that they worked well.

6DR02 remains an externally examined unit but one in which the assessment objectives and criteria do not change from those printed in the specification and the work presented for examination is selected by the centre so this report does not need to reflect the individual demands of the questions in a written examination. In preparing candidates for this unit it was clear that the majority of centres were more confident and knowledgeable about the requirements for Section B but many centres did not fully meet the requirements of the new Section A. Each centre chooses the playtexts, options taken by candidates and audience. This remains a unique externally examined unit that has elements of both an examined and coursework unit.

Section A

This was a new experience for centres and candidates. Marks were awarded in all mark bands. The majority of candidates performed monologues this year. There were very few design candidates. There was no evidence that candidates did better in any of the 3 options. The centres which enabled the candidates to do well in this section clearly followed the requirements of this section. This section is worth 30% of the AS marks equal to Section B and centres are advised to take account of this in their preparation time.

Performance Candidates

Preparation and choice of text

This should build on the work done in Unit 1 in exploring practically the 2 texts.

Some candidates chose texts that did not support their skill level. It was felt that centres had often not given enough guidance to candidates in choosing material. There was evidence that some candidates did not understand the text. It is clear in the specification that all candidates must read and research the complete text. There was a great deal of evidence this year that candidates had made their choice by reference to one of the many monologue/duologue anthologies available both published and on the internet.

Some candidates merely presented the examiner with a photocopy of the pages from the anthology and their rationale was in the main a straight copy of the introduction to the extract from the same book. There were instances this year where candidates presented work from film scripts, speeches given by leaders to audiences, poems and songs. Edexcel agreed to accept them for 2009 only as often examiners only had this information shortly in advance of the examination. **From 2010 onwards only work taken from a complete and substantial play text will be accepted for this examination.**

Although this unit requires individual reading and research, candidates do require teacher guidance and support **From 2010 onwards centres will be required to have available on the day of the examination a copy of the text studied for every candidate.** Centres are reminded that for both sections of this unit Edexcel has no issues with either accent or gender in performance.

Timings

The maximum time is stated in the specification. Examiners report that far too many centres did not meet this requirement particularly in monologues. There were examples of almost 2 minutes having been used for introductory mime/movement work so only a few words of the text were spoken in the time limit. There were examples of monologues lasting in excess of 10 minutes.

It is part of the demands of this unit that candidates ensure the work presented for examination meets the time requirements. Many candidates chose monologues and performed them as written without adapting them for the examination. Candidates can perform work taken from different parts of the text however examiners felt that this needed a great deal of skill in order to produce a coherent performance. There was also considerable concern that centres used music and/or projection to set the scene, this could be very effective but it must be included in the allowed for examination.

All examiners are instructed to only mark work seen within the time limits for this section.

Examiners report that there were instances where the strongest work was outside the time allowed so could not be awarded any marks. Examiners will start marking as soon as the candidate(s) performance begins and candidates are allowed one attempt only.. If the candidate pauses or needs a prompt this will be included in the timings.

Duologues

There was concern that some centres had duologues with non examination candidates or candidates who were being examined in another duologue or monologue. Edexcel will accept that in a centre there may be 1 candidate who wishes to perform a duologue but due to the numbers in the group has no one to work with in this case another student can be used, otherwise all duologues must be 2 examination candidates. Centres must ensure that in duologues both candidates have equal opportunity within the time limit.

Written Performance Concept

This year this was the area where candidates were least successful. Examiners again report that many centres did not adhere to the 500 word limit. From 2010 all candidates will be required to confirm the word limit on the examiner mark sheet. Examiners only marked the first 500 words. All 3 areas need to be covered equally in the rationale and overlong work meant that within the 500 words this was not achieved.

Centres should advise candidates not to include too much factual information in putting the play into the social, historical, cultural and political context but to capture how their knowledge and understanding of these factors has impacted on their performance. The preparation process needs to have a focus on what each candidate actually did rather than general statements such as 'I used emotional memory based on Stanislavski'. Choosing significant moments was successful in showing the preparation process. It was felt that where candidates had annotated the text to be performed this was an effective way of indicating intentions for performance rather than including it in the rationale. This is detailed in the specification.

Centres are reminded that this final work submitted to the examiner must be completed under supervised conditions in line with Unit 1. Duologue candidates must ensure that their rationale is individual with the focus on their character in the performance. The challenge of the rationale is for candidates to capture all the above within the word limit but again this needs to build on the work done in Unit 1 in selecting the most relevant material. From 2010 any rationales not sent to be received 7 working days in advance of the examination will not be marked.

Audiences

Centres are reminded that this is an examination worth 30% of the AS marks. It must take place under examination conditions. It has a different focus and demand on candidates from Section B the group performance.

In some centres just the examiner and teacher plus a technician making the recording were present. The majority of centres had the other Section A candidates present. Some had also other students, friends and family. In one case there was an audience estimated at well over 100.

It will always remain centre choice for the size and composition of the audience but examiners report that in this first year there were difficulties in ensuring the examination process ran smoothly.

Examiners must mark and make notes after each performance. Some examiners felt pressured to have as little time as possible between candidates. Centres are advised to allow approximately 5 minutes per monologue and 10 minutes per duologue when planning the next examination session. The majority of examiners will need to have a longer break after about 8 candidates.

There were a few centres that had a continuous performance evening with a theme such as Shakespeare's Lovers or An Evening with Steven Berkoff. Some even included non examination work such as musical interludes. This must not happen in future for the examined performances. The examiner is the most important member of the audience for all performance exams and must be the one person who is in charge of the timings of the performances during the examination.

Design Candidates

There were very few design candidates this year. All skills were seen. It was felt that for section A both lighting and sound were the most challenging for candidates however some inventive and effective work was seen. There was in general a positive response to the 500 word design concept, examiners felt this may be due to the requirement to also have the documentation. It was clear that design candidates had engaged with the complete play text.

Examiners report that they felt that some candidates found the 10 minute presentation a challenge. Centres are reminded this is a maximum and some candidates will cover all that is needed in less time. It was clear that choosing this option had been a positive choice for the majority of candidates.

Section B

Overall the examining team reported that the choice of material used in previous series had been transferred to the group performances. It is clear that the majority of centres entering candidates have teacher/directors who have prepared candidates for the group performance in previous series. Examiners report there was good level of understanding of the new requirements of this unit and the majority of candidates were very well prepared to both achieve in the examination and enjoy the experience of creating live theatre performance for an audience.

Overall examiners felt that the vast majority of candidates are being well prepared by centres for this unit and producing work that meets AS standards. However as in previous series there were candidates who produced work that not only met the requirements of the unit but exceeded the AS standard for performance. These candidates were awarded full marks in line with marking in the legacy specification.

Group Size and Performance Time

This is now clearly stated in the specification, I.C.E. document and on the group performance front sheets that must be signed by the teacher. Many examiners report that this was signed by the teacher but the estimated performance time given well exceeded this. If centres did not comply with this requirement it disadvantaged candidates. Examiners are clearly instructed to only award marks within the set time limits. This is also true for any monitoring of performances and marks by the senior team before marks are entered and for any remarking in the EARs procedures. Some centres commented on examiners stopping making notes after the maximum time for performance. Centres are reminded that examiners are not required to remain in the examination room after the maximum time for each performance. Some centres when reminded of time limits by the examiner maintained that in the legacy specification this had not applied. This was incorrect.

The main concern was when performances were clearly overlong strong performances could not be awarded marks for the final scenes. Centres are reminded once again that this is an examination and that very short and overlong performances do not meet the requirements of this section B of Unit 2.

However it is good to report the vast majority of centres ensured that the performance the examiner attends meets examination requirements. Examiners report few non examination candidates taking part in examination performances. Where this happens, the examiner must always be able to focus on the examination candidates.

It is also a requirement to provide a copy of the text as performed. Examiners report that there were many centres not including the text because they felt the examiner would know it or sending the complete uncut text. It is perfectly acceptable to send the published text with cuts clearly indicated. Some centres sent the text within a collection and this is also acceptable. A few centres requested the return of the text from the examiner. This is not possible as the texts must be enclosed with all other material for this section to be sent to Edexcel to support any subsequent senior examiner who may need to view the work. In addition with the wide range of texts being offered for this section is important that examiners are well prepared by checking the text as performed in advance.

Audiences

Centres must ensure that an audience that will support the group performance is present as all candidates are awarded 25% of the marks on communication with other cast and audience members. There were some examples of audience members using mobile phones, calling out inappropriate remarks or heckling candidates, moving about the performance space or not understanding the nature of the performance. Some audience members were sat too close to examiners and when this occurred it was usually because the audience numbers were greater than expected. However the majority of audiences engaged with the performances and their positive and focused response clearly enhanced the whole experience.

Choice of Texts

It is good to report that many examiners report very positively about the variety and suitability of texts seen this year. The choice of text to enable candidates to meet the requirements of the examination and their skills and interests is the foundation for achievement in this unit. Many centres have now been preparing candidates for this exam in the legacy specification and it is clear there are a number of texts that work very well and centres are using them again but giving them a new and unique interpretations. Examiners also report that much new and exciting contemporary work both written in English and in translation was seen.

Plays that have the episodic form worked particularly well giving the teacher director the flexibility to choose episodes that supported all candidates. Examiners report that stylised, physical and ensemble approach to performance work was felt to advantage candidates at this level. More naturalistic performances often started well but could lack pace and dynamism. This may be due to candidates not rising to the challenge of this style of performance within a live theatre context.

Centres are reminded that the choice of text is their responsibility. Centres must consider very carefully the suitability of the content or the language of the text and ensure that the skill level or understanding of ideas or emotions is not beyond most 17 year olds.

A major concern that was also true in the legacy specification is that centres chose a full length play and cast each act or group of scenes with a different performance group. There is no doubt that this disadvantaged candidates as they are unable to show an understanding of their role(s) within the complete text. It could also be a rather confusing and unsatisfactory experience for the audience.

A few centres had candidates performing a full-length play but designate in which section candidates must be awarded marks. This does not meet the requirements of the specification. It presented an enormous challenge for examiners to have the correct focus on the examined candidates. Most of these performances greatly exceeded the time limit for the number of candidates. It also makes too great a demand on candidates to be involved in performance work for which they cannot be awarded marks. These performances often included non examination candidates. In future examiners will mark only in the time limits as set by the number of examination candidates from the start of the performance.

The Teacher Director's Interpretation Notes

Most examiners report that the majority of centres understand that along with the choice of text this is an important aspect of success in this unit. However it was felt that many centres had not understood that in the group piece performance candidates are no longer marked on their understanding of the director's concept but on their individual characterisation in performance. Examiners found the most supportive notes had a focus on the individual roles. Successful performances demonstrated that candidates had been engaged in the overall directors interpretation and their roles within it. Less successful performances often seemed not to go much beyond cutting the text and candidates learning the lines and delivering them.

The most useful notes were written by the candidates and director. In contrast there were some notes that are far too long and give information that has only limited relevance to the actual interpretation of the text. Often these suggest performance work and skills that are too demanding for candidates at AS level. Centres should consider that the notes are used by the examiner to look for the key elements in each performance.

Performance Candidates

This was the option taken by the majority of candidates. Work was seen across the complete mark range. There are, as in the legacy specification, candidates who work with such skill, enthusiasm and commitment that performances were seen that fully deserved marks in the top bands. In this first year of Section B examiners commented on the great pleasure they have experienced examining the majority of group performances this year. It was clear centres have given the majority of candidates a well-structured preparation period and a final examination that had a real sense of both occasion and theatre.

The main concern of examiners was that there was felt to be a lack of understanding of the new criteria and so at times not enough teaching of performance skills in preparation for the exam. This year it was felt that some candidates had poor or underdeveloped vocal skills. There was often a sense of them talking to each other rather than understanding the importance of projection in live theatre.

There was concern that some candidates were not given enough opportunity to demonstrate movement skills in performance. This must be considered carefully by centres as these are awarded discrete marks. There was evidence that some centres had not fully understood the new criteria and the group performances had too strong an ensemble approach which made it difficult to award individual candidates marks for characterisation. Centres are reminded that examiners can only award marks for the criteria printed in the specification. Performances that enabled examiners to concentrate on these were most suitable for examination success. The use of costume, make up and effects whether there were design candidates or not often enhanced the group performances. In other centres it was felt there was too high a reliance on these and it detracted from the candidates focus on their performance.

Design Candidates

There were very few design candidates this year. The majority of centres had none. In some centres there was only one. In larger centres often with Performing Arts status and/or the input of theatre technicians there were more candidates with the opportunity to work creatively with individual groups.

The most significant change was that examiners reported that it had clearly been a positive choice for these candidates. There was some excellent work which clearly demonstrated that the candidates had been given opportunities to have a real creative input working with the director on realising the production ideas. Many took on more than one skill and showed an understanding of the whole production values of the performance. Many were positive examples of how to achieve much on a limited budget.

There were some candidates who had not understood the requirements of this option and produced poorly considered and executed work that failed to add anything to the overall performance. There was again some evidence that a very small number of candidates attempted to pass off as their own, work that had been produced by others in the performance group. This was often seen in both the written concept and presentation to the examiner. Centres are reminded it is their responsibility to ensure that all design work presented for examination is their own.

The performance groups that had one design candidate in general took on one or more design elements. Some design candidates concentrated on just one. It was felt that there was no advantage in either approach. Those performance groups with more than one design candidate usually demonstrated they had worked creatively together and with the director and performers. There were a few instances where examiners felt the candidates were the director's technicians rather than having the opportunity to design the work for their chosen skill[s].

The presentations to the examiner varied in quality. Some candidates gave poor presentations but their work was effective in performance. Some gave confident presentations but the ideas were not seen in performance. Centres had the option of pre-recording the presentations which the examiner must view prior to the performance. It must be noted that the vast majority of performance groups have no design candidates but worked with the teacher director to ensure that the performance values enhance the work.

All options are fairly equally represented with the exception of masks/makeup. Many candidates used technology to provide often very impressive projection and sound work. There were a few centres that fail to understand this is most importantly an examination, and by over elaborate staging, inappropriate ideas and or poor execution actually disadvantage performance candidates.

Administration of 6DR02

Requirements

Centres must ensure they put in place the requirements for this unit as detailed in the Instructions for Conduct for the Examination I.C.E. This essential document is only available on the Edexcel website for this specification. No hard copies will be sent. The I.C.E. is revised each year in the light of both examiners and teachers

suggestions to ensure that the administration of the unit is clear to all centres. It also includes all the documentation needed for this unit.

Timing of the Examination

The majority of examiners received their allocations and contacted centres at the beginning of the spring term. With the new requirements there was a definite increase in the number of sessions needed by the majority of centres. Most dates and times were swiftly and efficiently arranged. Some centres failed to respond to examiners contacting them and this often led to the first choice of date or time for the centre not being possible. There was some difficulty this year when centres did not fix all dates at the same time as this could result in either different examiners being present on the dates or no examiner being available so performance work was examined in the recorded format. Centres must have some flexibility in arranging the examination date and time.

The examination could take place between 1st February to end of May 2009. This year many of the Section B performances took place in May with Section A being the first to be examined. This was felt to be because candidates no longer had to prepare for the legacy Unit 3 written examination. Edexcel wishes centres to have the same examiner for both sections of this unit so in future the final date for Unit 2 examinations will be the last Friday before the summer half term break. The vast majority of performances took place in the evenings giving a sense of occasion and enabling an appropriate audience to attend. Some examiners report concerns regarding the audience as was reported in regard to the legacy specification. This is an examination that happens to be a performance but it is the examination requirements that must be the focus. When arrangements are made with the examiner the timings of performances and time to identify candidates and consider marks must be agreed in advance and adhered to on the visit. Examiners report being kept waiting due to late arrival of audience members or being rushed by centres between performances. This must be addressed by centres. The vast majority of centres ensured that both the examination was well run and performers and audience had a very positive experience.

Centre Administration

It is somewhat disappointing to report that in some centres the standard of administration of this paper before, during and after the examination visit was not good. The centres which completed the documentation were often exemplary and understood this cannot be done in a rush at the last minute. Examiners are required to come well prepared for the examination and cannot do so without this vital information.

Every Section A performance candidate must have completed the following, an examiner mark sheet completed with all the details required, the written rationale, a copy of the text as performed with any annotations. Some examiners were concerned that candidates had chosen texts unknown to them. In most cases it the context was clear from the rationale. Examiners were instructed to either ask that the complete text be available prior to the performances in the centre or for them to be sent to the examiner who would return them at the examination. This caused a great deal of extra work for centres. From 2010 all centres will be required to have copies of the complete texts available for the examination sessions. Examiners are instructed to arrive 30 minutes prior to the first performance/presentation so texts can be looked at during this time. Additionally, it would be very helpful to examiners

if a map of the site could be provided to enable them to find the correct examining location at the centre.

There was also concern that the time management of the examination by the centres was poor at times. Examiners expect to examine at least 11 candidates in a 3-hour session. Some examiners arrived at the centre at the agreed time and were waiting for a considerable time before meeting the candidates. Overlong performances and late running again meant that some examiners and candidates were completing an examination around midnight. There was equal concern that some examiners were given very little time to consider their marking between performances. A private place to mark was often not provided. This was particularly true this year for Section A.

Having agreed timings with the examiner prior to the visit these must be adhered to by both the centre and the examiner. It is acknowledged that at times examiners are unable to do this by arriving late or taking longer than agreed between performances. Should centres have concerns in this respect they should inform Edexcel as soon as possible after the examination and their concerns will be addressed. Examiners should be provided with a contact number for the examination visit should they be unavoidably delayed. In this case the examination should not be delayed but the examiner will review the work in the recorded format.

The majority of centres completed all administration very well and the examination was run with professionalism throughout. Again this year thanks must be given to the centres, which had an accompanied visit from members of the senior team. This is an important part of the ongoing monitoring of examiners for the practical performance units. At all times this extra requirement was dealt with by most centres with understanding.

The Importance of the Recording of the Performances/Presentations

It is felt that some centres still do not understand the importance of the very best possible recording being made of all performances and presentations. In order to maintain the standards of the examination and that examiners work is monitored throughout the process a great deal of centre's work is viewed by the senior team alongside examiner's notes. Centres should be aware that the senior team may randomly check centre's work and if examiners have any concerns they must seek another opinion. This year the quality of some the recorded work was in many cases poor. It was important this year that particularly for the new section A as much work as possible was seen by the senior team.

Section A work was overall the best recorded. However some centres tended to use too many close up shots of candidates faces. Centres are reminded that the recording should capture as far as possible the experience of the examiner viewing the live performance. For Section B all too often the camera was not placed close to the examiner. Another common mistake was the examiner and audience heads taking up most of the frame. If there is a large performance space and scenes are performed in different areas the camera can pan to record the work. If the person operating the camera knows the piece some judicious use of close ups can be useful in capturing individual performances. Design presentations must be made to the camera and the examiner will sit next to it. Some examiners felt that candidates expected them to ask them questions as they looked at the documentation. Examiners will look at this evidence after the presentation but will not question candidates. Design

presentations can be pre recorded and will be viewed by the examiner prior to the performance along with the documentation.

Centres must also keep a copy of the recorded examination work. The recording sent to Edexcel via the examiner is the basis of any Enquiries after Results procedures.

Most centres completed the time sheet well. This is most important for the ease of finding performances or presentations when looking for candidate's work. Also it is important that centres comment on the quality of the recording. Examiners are not required to check the quality of the recording. Centres must check all performances/presentations in their entirety for the correct timings and the quality of the recording. This was clearly not done by many centres.

Many more centres sent work on DVD. Examiners and centres welcomed this as when it is correctly presented the quality of the recordings can be excellent and is easily accessible but there were considerable problems again this year. Centres must ensure that the DVD can be played on a **standard domestic player** (as detailed in the I.C.E. document Summer 2009). Examiners will not use computers to view the work. Also each presentation/performance must be given a chapter. However the time sheet must also be completed. It was noticeable that many of the overlong Section A performances did not have the time entered by the centre.

Good practice was when centres sent each group performance on a separate DVD. The main problem again this year was that many centres failed to send the recording to the visiting examiner within seven working days. Examiners spent much time contacting centres trying to get the recording and many were never sent at all. Written documentation had to be sent to Edexcel without the recording.

Many centres sent excellent recordings and these often were produced either by professional companies or highly skilled operators within centres, both staff and students. So much of the work is of such an interest that centres should consider the value of having a permanent record of this work and ensure that the best quality recording is made.

Identification of Candidates on the Recordings

Section A

This was the first time individual candidates had to complete this task. The majority of centres understood that it was the equivalent of completing the front sheet of an examination paper.

Immediately before each monologue/duologue the candidate(s) must give their name, candidate number, role, title of play text and author.

Design candidates must give their name, number, design skill, text and author.

A colour full length photograph in costume of each candidate is particularly helpful. Both together for duologues.

Some centres did all introductions in a line up before the first candidate. This was not helpful in identifying individuals in the recordings particularly when they were not recorded in what they wore in performance. This must not be done in future.

Section B

Despite concerns in other aspects of administration this was one area that many centres had ensured was completed well. Without exception examiners commented on how less stressful it was for all involved if candidate identification was swift to complete. It also greatly aided the viewing of work later in the process when in the recorded format. Some candidates introduced themselves and posed in character.

Centres must ensure that all candidates introduce themselves immediately before their performance or presentation, as it will appear on the recording. This can be pre-recorded and edited in by the centre ensuring candidates appear as they will in performance and seen from top to toe not head and shoulders.

Design candidates must state clearly and slowly the centre name and number followed by their name, candidate number, chosen skill(s), and the performance title and group number. It can be helpful if they have the centre name and number, their name and candidate number written clearly on paper and held up to camera.

Performance candidates must line up in their performance group. It can be helpful if this is done in order of appearance. The first candidate must state clearly and slowly the centre name and number, the date of the performance followed by the performance title and group number.

All candidates must then state clearly and slowly their name and candidate number, role(s) played and give verbal description of all costumes worn in the performance. It is helpful if there are costume changes if any costumes worn later are shown to the camera. It can be helpful if their name and candidate number and role(s) played are written clearly on paper and held up to the camera.

The camera must then record them as a group in long shot. It can be helpful if they repeat their name and roles played. The group shot must be held for enough time for someone watching the recording to clearly identify them all. This is the equivalent completing the front sheet of a written paper.

Centres are strongly encouraged to provide the visiting examiner with a group colour photograph for each performance on arrival prior to the examination. On the examiner candidate mark sheets candidates should give detailed written descriptions of how they will appear in the performance, both physical appearance and costume. Small head and shoulder shots must not be attached to the form as they have proved to be of limited use in aiding identification and can be time consuming and expensive for centres.

Consortium Centres

This year there were some difficulties with centres, which had not completed the Consortium Information Forms available in the I.C.E. document. The completed forms must be sent to Edexcel as early as possible in the academic year. For all candidates being examined not in their registered centre the examiner must be informed beforehand and 2 copies of separate register must be provided giving full details of 'home' centre name, number, candidate name and number.

This information must also be detailed on the DVD or videotape.

Conclusion

Centres which entered candidates for the legacy specification will recognise much of this report in relation to administration issues. Centres are reminded of the importance of following the specification.

Following feedback from centres and examiners the Instructions for Conduct of the Examination 2010 and the forms needed by centres will be revised for this unit. It will be on the website in the Autumn term.

All day Inset courses will be provided for all 4 units of this specification and details are on the Edexcel website. Edexcel can also provide individual support by the Senior Examining Team in centres and again details are on the Edexcel website.

The Ask the Expert service has proved to be very busy and popular with queries regarding the new AS units. Many for unit 2 asked for suggestions or approval for texts for both sections. It is Edexcel policy to neither recommend or approve texts as although the choice of text is important so many other factors are involved in successful performance work.

This has been a challenging year for candidates, centres and examiners in making the adjustments needed for this new unit 2. It is hoped that the report has indicated to centres the importance of ensuring equal time is spent on both sections of the unit and that the requirements of Section A are met by candidates.

Overall it seems that the highly successful group performance standard has continued. Examiners felt it still achieved a great deal beyond its requirements as the AS Text in Performance. Examiners and audiences have in this first year been amused, moved, made to think and even reconsider their views of plays and the messages they bring to us in the 21st century. Much of the credit for this work that is due to the continuing commitment, knowledge, understanding and passion of the teacher/directors who work with great dedication to enable their candidates have a rich and creative experience preparing for and completing the group performances.

Examiners certainly enjoyed engaging with the vast range of work seen in both sections this year. Unit 2 continues to have the variety, enjoyment and real sense of achievement communicated by candidates to examiners and audiences alike.

Statistics - Grade Boundaries

6DR01 Exploration of Drama & Theatre

	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	60	49	43	37	31	25	0
UMS Boundary Mark	80	64	56	48	40	32	0

6DR02 Theatre Text in Performance

	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	80	59	51	43	36	29	0
UMS Boundary Mark	120	96	84	72	60	48	0

Advanced Subsidiary UMS Grade Boundaries

Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E
200	160	140	120	100	80

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