

Pearson BTEC Performing Arts



Lead Internal Verifier
Newsletter

Issue 1

In this edition:

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to this first edition of the Lead Internal Verifier Newsletter for BTEC Performing Arts.

We aim to produce this newsletter twice each term, created especially for assessors and internal verifiers on BTEC Performing Arts programmes. Please share the newsletter with your BTEC Performing Arts programme teams.

The newsletter will feature

- updates and guidance from our Senior Standards Verifiers, Lead Verifiers and Lead Examiners
- discussing and sharing best practice in the delivery and assessment of BTEC Performing Arts
- dealing with 'hot topics', and responding to frequently asked questions and concerns.

We will also share information from our centres, including details of interesting projects and strategies to enhance the vocational experience and achievement of our learners.

Helpful Links

Examination timetables for NQF BTEC Performing Arts Level 2 Set Task and Onscreen

Assessments / NQF BTEC Level 3 Performing Arts Set Tasks can be found at:

[NQF BTEC Level 2 Performing Arts](#)

[NQF BTEC Level 3 Performing Arts](#)

NQF Level 2 Lead Examiner Reports, Previous Papers etc can be found [here](#).

Approaches to evidence for NQF BTEC Level 2

Unit 3 Acting Skills: Criteria 2A.2

Sally Jewers – Senior Standards Verifier BTEC Performing Arts

Learning Aim A of Unit 3 Acting Skills requires learners to explore and develop their acting skills and to review their own practice.

Learners should take ownership of this process by setting and reviewing personal targets as part of the evidence they produce for criteria 2A.2.

Baseline Skills Audit

To set considered targets, learners need to first identify their strengths and areas for development. This should be done through an initial skills audit, which may involve learners undertaking practical exercises and tasks and watching footage of their work to then rate themselves in terms of their vocal, physical and interpretive skills. The skills audit should be evidenced and presented as part of the portfolio. A good way of doing this is by using the unit content to generate a 'skills checklist'.

Here is an extract from a skills audit. The learner was asked to highlight the most appropriate phrases and then explain their choices in the comments box.

Audit of Acting Skills Name: <i>Daisy Goodwin</i> Date: 10th Oct 2016				
Skill Area	Which phrase matches your skill level?			Comments
Articulation and Projection	I tend to mumble my words and it is difficult to hear me when I speak	I speak some words clearly and I can sometimes be heard at the back of the studio	I speak all words very clearly and I can always be heard	<i>My articulation is good but I find it difficult to speak loudly enough on stage. I think this is partly because I am a bit shy. This is something I need to work on.</i>
Learning lines	I find it difficult to learn lines	I usually remember my lines	I always remember my lines	<i>I have a good memory so remembering lines is quite easy for me.</i>

Setting long term targets

Once the skills audit is complete, learners should use this information to set some long term targets. The number of targets will depend on the weaknesses highlighted by the audit, however at least three should be set. A template document can be used to ensure learners provide full explanations of their targets. The following extract encourages the learner to use SMART principles when setting long term targets.

Long Term Target 1

Skill area	Vocal Skills - Projection
What is your specific target?	I want to improve my projection so I can always be heard by the audience.
Date set	12th Oct 2016
How are you going to achieve your target, what exercises and techniques will you use?	I am going to practice the following vocal exercises regularly: • A to Z – speaking the alphabet starting very softly and getting gradually louder. • Ordering a meal in a very noisy restaurant. • Having a conversation with a partner while gradually moving further and further apart. I will also practice my breathing exercises so my voice is supported.
How will you measure your success in achieving your target?	We are doing duologues next term. I will watch myself back to make sure I can be heard. I will also ask others in my class to comment on my vocal work.
Why is your target relevant to the development of your acting skills?	Good projection is really important. If the audience cannot hear the dialogue they will not be able to follow the plot of the play.
When will you review your progress?	I will review my progress on 13th Dec and on 19th Jan. My final review will be on 7th Feb.

Having set long term targets the learner should review their progress on at least two occasions. They should comment on improvements made and note any issues that are preventing progress. A final evaluation is also required.

Setting short term targets

Learners should also set and review short term targets. These can be presented more informally in lesson logs.

Targets could be related to the work to be undertaken in a specific lesson e.g. "My target for this lesson is to remain focussed at all times".

Targets could also be related to activities to be undertaken between lessons e.g. "My target is to learn the lines for scene 1 by next lesson".

NQF Level 3 Unit 2 Update

NQF BTEC Level 3 Performing Arts: Mandatory Unit 2 *Developing Skills and Techniques for Performance*

Please note the Authorised Assignment Briefs and Delivery Guides for this unit have recently been updated to align with the Unit Content.

Delivery of this unit requires learners to explore, develop and apply skills during workshops, classes and rehearsals for performance material in two styles. This can either be two styles within a chosen medium (for example, Naturalism and Epic Theatre in acting): or two different disciplines such as Dance and Physical Theatre.

For assessment purposes however, learners will be assessed on process/log-based evidence for LA-B and LA-C and LA-D in respect of one of the two chosen styles. The assessed rehearsed performance will be of one work in one style.

NQF BTEC Level 3 Dance*

How do you solve a problem like Learning Aim A?

*whilst this article is written with reference to delivery and assessment of Learning Aim A for NQF Level 3 BTEC Nationals Dance units, the guidance can be applied to any internally assessed NQF Level 3 Performing Arts unit

Heidi McEntee – Senior Standards Verifier BTEC Dance

For many of us in the dance sector, the prospect of Learning Aim A in the new NQF Level 3 Nationals could be a daunting one. Learning Aim A is driven by the word ‘understand’ and learners are asked to demonstrate their understanding of a dance style or a theatrical approach. This content would normally be delivered as part of induction or embedded through practical delivery, but is now a unit assessment requirement for all internally assessed units. Preparation is key, as although the content is different across the units, the skills needed to fulfil the requirements of this learning aim are the same: research skills, analysis and the presentation of information coherently.

Research Skills

It is good practice to introduce and develop research skills at the start of the course. Developing these skills within the context of dance is important and learners can then apply these skills independently during assessment. Introductory activities such as researching a topic in small groups (for example, dance practitioners and styles, history and key features) and presenting their findings in an informal discussion can be effective. For ideas and approaches to exploring the dance styles please access the [Pearson Delivery Guides](#). The dance specialist units are numbers 8 – 14.

Recommended Assessment Approach

The recommended assessment approach for Learning Aim A is a report or presentation. Alternative approaches to meet the needs of learners are acceptable, so long as the assessment evidence allows learners to explain, analyse and evaluate (a leaflet or ‘programme note’ for example might restrict learners’ articulation of understanding if the material needs editing to fit on a small page).

Planning and Delivery

Planning the delivery and assessment of Learning Aim A will be determined by many factors. Good practice is to integrate practical work and theory (see diagram).

Basic Two-Hour Lesson Plan			
20 minutes	40 minutes	40 minutes	20 minutes
Investigating practitioners (LA-A)	Technique Class (LA-A & LA-B)	Rehearsals performance work (LA-A & LA-B)	Writing up evaluative notes (LA-A & LA-D)

The choice of dance techniques and performance pieces for Learning Aim B will allow for practical exploration and reinforce understanding of the work of different practitioners within a dance style, investigated at the beginning of the session.

Alternatively, the delivery of LA-A can be combined through lectures and seminars for all your specialist units with separate assessment points for each unit (see example 1 diagram).

EXAMPLE (1) DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT FOR 1ST YEAR OF EXTENDED DIPLOMA					
TERM 1 (6 weeks)	TERM 2 (6 weeks)	TERM 3 (6 weeks)	TERM 4 (6 weeks)	TERM 5 (6 weeks)	TERM 6 (6 weeks)
Development of research skills and exploration of the history and key features of three dance styles Unit 9: Tap Dance Technique Unit 10: Jazz Dance Techniques Unit 11: Street Dance Technique		Assessment (LA-A) Unit 9: Tap Dance Technique	Assessment (LA-A) Unit 10: Jazz Dance Techniques	Assessment (LA-A) Unit 11: Street Dance Technique	Opportunity for Retakes (new task / Pass only)

Another approach would be to separate delivery and assessment of each dance style to one a term: Term 1&2 Tap Dance; Term 3&4 Jazz Dance; and Term 5&6 Street Dance. This would require the development of research skills and any retakes to occur separately. (See example 2 diagram)

EXAMPLE (2) DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT FOR 1ST YEAR OF EXTENDED DIPLOMA					
TERM 1 (6 weeks)	TERM 2 (6 weeks)	TERM 3 (6 weeks)	TERM 4 (6 weeks)	TERM 5 (6 weeks)	TERM 6 (6 weeks)
Delivery of LA-A Content Unit 9: Tap Dance Technique	Assessment (LA-A) Unit 9: Tap Dance Technique	Delivery of LA-A Content Unit 10: Jazz Dance Techniques	Assessment (LA-A) Unit 10: Jazz Dance Techniques	Delivery of LA-A Content Unit 11: Street Dance Technique	Assessment (LA-A) Unit 11: Street Dance Technique

There is the possibility of combining the work into one large report or presentation that covers all three dance styles. Although this reduces the number of assessments, beware of potentially limiting achievement, for example, uneven or reduced levels of detail where learners are covering multiple styles in one assessment.

Try to spread assessment opportunities and avoid end-loading assessments toward the end of the year: whilst learners will seemingly have more time to prepare for assessment, there is a danger of assessments being 'bunched' and including performances, evaluations and external assessments this could make the end of the year stressful for learners and assessors!

Finally, it's worth noting the guidance that is available through Pearson to help you in planning, delivering and assessing your BTEC units:

- You can access the Authorised Assignment Briefs (to be used 'off the shelf' or adapted to suit local factors) and the Delivery Guides from the Pearson website.
- The [Assignment Checking Service](#) will provide expert guidance to help ensure your assignments are fit for purpose.
- [myBTEC](#) provides valuable support in planning delivery and assessment.
- The Ask The Expert service can be used for any subject specific queries. [Ask the Expert](#)

Email: TeachingPerformingArts@pearson.com
Telephone UK: [020 7010 2189](tel:02070102189)

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The Use of Observation Records (Record of Practical Activity)

FAQs

Observation records are a useful means of capturing a learner's work where assessment activities are 'ephemeral', such as presentations, group discussions and contributions to rehearsals and choreographing.

The record should be used to enhance and support learner-generated evidence and should not be used in place of this. Observation Records can also be valuable in providing specific detail of a learner's practical performance where for example, video capture of rehearsals might not fully reflect what the learner did, as the learner is out of shot or at a distance from the camera for some of the recording.

There are however FAQs and occasional misconceptions about the use of Observation Records and Witness Statements.



Q. Do we need to complete Observation Records for assessed performances?

No. As it is a requirement that performances are recorded on video/DVD for assessment purposes, it is not necessary to produce an Observation Record as additional evidence.



Q. Is there a minimum number of observation records which need to be used?

No. Pearson do not prescribe that a minimum number need to be used.



Q. What should we write in the section of the Record: "Description of activity undertaken (what the learner did) and the evidence provided/questions asked and answers given"?

Here you should provide a commentary with sufficient detail to capture what the learner did in relation to the criteria targeted by the assessment. The targeted criteria should be stated on the Record. The comments should describe the quality of the work, for example: "Louis drove the development of the play forward, having planned an imaginative piece of physical group action to represent the state of mind of the family during the final scenes. He explained his creative ideas clearly, whilst being open to suggestions from others for alternative approaches." The detailed comment should not however confirm achievement of any criteria, as this decision is made when all the evidence has been assembled and summative assessment takes place.



Q. Is it acceptable to tell learners in the Observation Record how they can improve?

No. Observation Records are used to provide supporting testimonial evidence of what the learner did, and must not be used to provide actions for improvement.



Q. Can we highlight the criteria on the Record to show which criteria are achieved?

No. Observation Records and Witness Statements do not confirm achievement. Therefore, it is not appropriate to highlight any criteria, or annotate any comments with criteria numbers/grades in order to confer an assessment decision.

Q. Can we use checklists for Observation Records?

Yes. For some units, it can be effective to list relevant elements from the unit content section of the specification as a checklist to confirm the skills, techniques, management skills, discipline, etc the learner demonstrated when observed.

Q. We have completed assessment for a unit but the only evidence for one of the target criteria is the Observation Record. Is this acceptable?

No. Observation Records are supporting forms of evidence only and cannot be the sole evidence of achievement of assessment criteria. The record must be accompanied by learner generated evidence such as logs, videos, photographic evidence, presentation notes, etc.

Q. What is the difference between an Observation Record and a Witness Statement?

The Observation Record is completed by the assessor(s) responsible for assessing the unit. A witness is someone authorised by the assessor to provide written testimony to reflect the practical work of the learner. Normally this will be someone who can make a professional comment about the learner's performance. Examples could include school/college technicians supporting an assessed production, guest practitioners, commissioning agents (for example teachers at a school visited as part of a TIE tour), teachers from other departments, etc.

Q. Can learners produce Observations Records and Witness Statements?

Observation Records and Witness Statements should be produced by assessors and colleagues able to make a professional judgement and will be signed accordingly, including their official role / job title. Whilst peer observations and peer assessments can a valuable exercise, it is best if these are treated separately and produced on different templates as 'peer observation records'.

Observation Record / Witness Statement templates can be downloaded from the [Form and Documents](#) section of the Pearson BTEC website.

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News from two of our BTEC International centres

Peony Pavilion

Learners at St Paul's Convent School in Hong Kong had a unique and challenging experience, achieving the QCF BTEC Level 3 Certificate in Performing Arts (Musical Theatre) through a programme tailored from appropriate unit combinations to develop and assess skills and performances in the highly sophisticated classical form of Cantonese Opera.



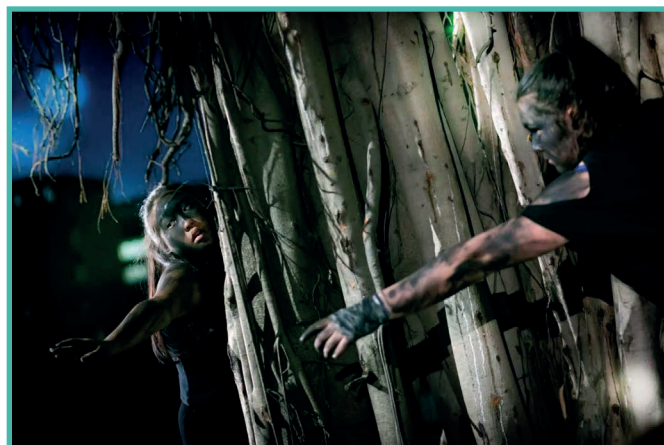
The vocal and physical demands placed on the learners were very high, requiring considerable talent, training and interpretive skills to realise the traditional opera roles and stylistic features of this classical form (including the need for one female learner to master singing in a male role which required training in chest resonant singing).

The assessed performances of classical repertoire including *The Peony Pavilion* and *Ode to the Magnificent Tang*, were supported with authentic traditional opera costume, staging and a professional opera make-up artist. BTEC Dance learners from the centre also took part in public performances, contributing to the authentic and beautiful visual spectacle of the traditional opera form.

Under the Banyan Tree

Meanwhile, across the harbour from Hong Kong Island, learners at King George V School in Kowloon had been engaging in innovative site-specific projects as part of the school's bi-annual Theatre Festival.

One devised work drew inspiration from the 18 metre tall Banyan Tree adjacent to the school's Performing Arts studios, with learners physicalizing music from the album *Years* by Bartholomaus Traubeck which comprises music created by placing tree rings on a modified record player.



Another project was a staging of Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*, eschewing the

attractions of the school's purpose-built performance spaces in favour of the charms of a dusty storage space beneath the school's proscenium stage. The natural framing of the cellar storage doors allowed spectators a voyeuristic experience, peering in to observe a confined, claustrophobic and intimate interpretation of the play.



For all the latest performances, projects and ongoing Drama work at the school, please check out the King George V Drama Instagram account:

<https://www.instagram.com/kgvdrama/>

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Next edition:

- Online Process Blogs:
use of online and multimedia
- NQF Level 2 Unit 2 Learning
Aim A – *Evidencing research*