

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator
Feedback



Summer 2016

GCSE Drama (5DR01) Unit 1: Drama
Exploration

Introduction

This is the sixth year of examination of the three unit GCSE specification 2DR01 and as such, the Controlled Assessment Unit 5DR01 is well-established, and well-supported by a myriad of online resources. Extensive Reports from the Principal Moderator are available online for the previous three years; this report is therefore a summative one, designed to support centres by highlighting key issues for the 2016 series only.

Content of 5DR01

The 5DR01 unit is made up of two components, each with a separate assessment objective. The focus of the unit is the exploration of a centre-chosen theme/ topic/ issue over 6 hours of practical drama, taught and assessed by the teacher for Paper 01 Exploration. This exploration is then evaluated in a written Documentary Response which comprises Paper 02 Evaluation.

Key elements of content:

- Both papers are assessed in Controlled Conditions (level of control - medium), with the drama teacher supervising, assessing and facilitating the work
- 6 hours of Practical Exploration must be made available to all students
- The theme/ topic/ issue is selected by the centre to meet the needs of each group of students
- At least two different types of stimuli must be chosen through which the theme/ topic/ issue will be explored
- Skills used throughout the unit must include the use of at least four strategies, two uses of the drama medium and the use of Drama elements for Paper 01, and the evaluation of students' own work and the work of others for Paper 02.

There is essential guidance for all centres about all GCSE units in the Administrative Support Guide (ASG) document, which is updated for each series and was re-formatted for ease of reference in 2016. Centres must download this from the website as soon as it is available each Autumn. The Assessment forms for all three units are available as both PDF and editable Word documents.

All centres, including those entirely new to Edexcel GCSE Drama, are advised to re-visit the Specification document (updated for GCSE 2012) for further details of the requirements of the unit. There are also other useful support documents available to download via the GCSE Drama home page including the Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book (updated for GCSE Drama 2012) and the standardisation materials.

The main link to the Drama home page is:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/drama-2009.html>

And the quick link is:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/drama>

Records of Work

A detailed Record of the Work undertaken by each group of students when exploring the chosen theme, topic or issue, is a requirement of 5DR01; detailed guidance about this was once again provided in the 2016 ASG document in addition to the **optional** Record of Work pro-forma D1e. Popular themes for 5DR01 Exploration included, but were not limited to:

- War/ Conflict
- Tomorrow's World/ The Future
- Madness/ Mental Health
- Persecution/ Stand up for your rights
- Marriage/ Love/ Relationships
- Crime and Punishment/ The Death Penalty
- Identity/ Fame/ Power

The overwhelming majority of centres chose a concrete theme/ issue rather than a topic although there were some successful narrative units seen for example, work focused on the 'story' of a specific individual or on a specific historical event, for example Craig and Bentley, Ruth Ellis, Tiananmen Square and the Columbine shooting. There were also a number of centres who took inspiration from current events such as the Syrian immigration crisis.

Stimuli chosen tended to be largely literary with a significant proportion of centres using music and/ or images to supplement written stimuli. Most centres met the requirements here although there were some centres where students explored the theme generally in one or two sessions before moving onto make use of chosen stimuli. Such choices did not tend to support students fully; similarly, where chosen themes were either too abstract, or too broad in scope, understanding often proved elusive for students. The choice and development of theme by the teacher-assessor was significant in how candidates achieved in the 2016 series and best practice was seen where this development was clearly demonstrated through the Record of Work.

Once again in 2016 the optional form D1e was made available to centres, aiding in the presentation of Records of Work, supporting the submission of records of practical work actually completed, rather than a scheme of planned possible lessons. For the majority of centres this pro-forma helped centres to produce a detailed and helpful working document which aided the moderation process. Equally, there were many clearly annotated schemes of work which recorded with clarity the exploration completed by students across the six hours. The best practice seen included timings and clear records of the actual strategies, medium and elements of Drama used in each session by each teaching group. A copy of the stimulus material, the Documentary Response notes tasks and/ or guidance sheets were helpfully presented by many centres and centres presented their records of work both in the future tense ("students will complete...") the present tense ("students complete...") and the past ("students completed...") Any/ all of these options are acceptable provided that the activities listed are those actually completed by each group of students.

The most successful ROWs offered students the opportunity to experiment with form and were based on challenging issues/topics/themes which caught the imagination and interest of the students. Successful units clearly addressed the need for a range of strategies/medium in each session of the 6 hours, while less effective ROWs often tended to focus on breadth rather than depth, for example through the use of one strategy and/ or one stimulus per session, without for example, offering students the opportunity to develop their exploration of the chosen stimulus by using an additional strategy.

Paper 01 Practical Exploration

Paper 01 marks are based on the entire six-hour exploration and the marks awarded must reflect the application and imagination shown across all the workshops. A recording of one sample practical session with five students identified for moderation purposes, is a requirement of the unit, and teacher-assessors must provide marks **for that session only** for the five identified students, based on their achievement in the recorded session. As in 2015, teacher-assessors were required to make a summative comment on every students' achievement over the 6-hour exploration on the D1a Controlled Assessment Record card and a detailed comment on the D1c Sample Session for the sample students only. Many centres made effective use of the D1c to record marks and comments regarding the achievement of the selected students during the sample session, avoiding repetition of the assessment criteria, and offering clear examples in support.

In 2016, the practical activities carried out for the Sample Session ranged from the highly imaginative and clearly focused on the immediate exploration of the chosen theme, topic or issue, to the recording of activities which must take place outside of the 6-hour exploration such as note-taking, gaining knowledge of the stimulus material and warm up activities un-related to the theme, topic or issue in question. Teacher-assessors are free to choose the most suitable tasks for their students within each session of exploration, considering, in addition to theme and stimulus, the pace of each session, the nature of each task, the length of time allowed for development and opportunities for creative exploration and progression of student understanding of theme, topic or issue.

The role of the teacher in this filmed session is therefore of vital importance and the most successful recordings showed the teacher facilitating exploration while providing the freedom for creative collaboration to take place. The overwhelming majority of centres supported their students appropriately, demonstrating one of the strengths of the specification which is the freedom of teacher-assessors to provide the level of support required by their individual students.

The structure and pace of the session is also key; where strategies were used at an appropriate pace and then developed into further exploration, generally students were more creative, had greater opportunities for collaboration, and their work was of a higher quality in all respects. Where the pace of activities lacked challenge, for example the completion of one still image as the main task for the session, students tended to drift into repetition and/ or lose focus and of necessity, this limited the outcome for all students. Sharing of work, where centres had made the distinction between 'work in progress' and 'performance', was helpful to the moderation of the session.

There were centres in 2016 where this distinction had not been fully realised and students clearly understood themselves to be engaged in the production of performance work. While the sharing of work in process will be part of the six hours, the work shared will not have been polished or prepared to a performance standard as what is being assessed here is the process rather than the product of the practical exploration.

Verbal evaluation took place in many recorded sessions and this was often evidently both helpful and supportive to students where the evaluation of the work shared linked clearly to the exploration of the theme, topic or issue rather than to performance skills. However, candidates were disadvantaged where centres had tried to justify understanding through long periods of discussion or verbal evaluation to camera, rather than evidencing the actual practical exploration. It must be noted that Evaluation itself is only assessed through the written Documentary Response (Paper 02). It may also be useful to both teacher-assessor and moderator in determining students' engagement with and understanding of the practical drama taking place in the session but no marks for Paper 01 may be awarded based on verbal evaluation.

The Sample Session

The requirement of the unit is for a single unedited teaching session, ideally of approximately one hour and of no longer than two hours in length. This must be recorded from a fixed camera position onto a clearly labelled disc enclosed in a hard, protective case and formatted so as to be playable on a domestic DVD player.

The quality of the recording is of paramount importance; centres must ensure that they are able to produce a clear, good quality recording for the moderator. Further details about the importance of the recording are available in the ASG document.

The majority of centres provided their recorded evidence on DVD with very few centres submitting VHS tapes. In the vast majority of cases, DVDs were clearly chaptered and clearly labelled, both on the disc and on the case. Equally the majority of recordings were of good to reasonable quality, with some examples of excellent practice. As in previous series', the best practice was often seen where teacher assessors had seemingly viewed the recording although this is not a requirement of the specification.

Students must identify themselves on the recording with clear statement of name and student number. Teachers must also clearly identify students on the D1c Sample Session Record card. In 2016, while many centres had ensured that students were easily identifiable, moderators reported that identification was still a problem in some sample sessions.

As in 2015, there were some examples of practices such as the use of small labels and ribbons to identify students (which tended not to be visible to the camera) and where a fixed camera recorded the entire session without any use of pan or zoom functions. In some cases, there were students selected for moderation whose work was not sufficiently visible to camera to support the moderation process. There were also centres that made use of a 'roaming' camera and/ or who asked students to explain their ideas to camera; this practice did not support students in their exploration as the camera/ teacher-assessor became an intrusion/ interruption and as marks awarded for this paper are for practical exploration only.

Best practice for the recording included:

- Clear, well-paced, introductions with students stating both name and candidate number in full length shot
- Use of A4 sheets with name and number held up for the camera
- Students dressed in the same way for the introduction as in the session itself
- Clear written descriptions of students by the teacher-assessor on form D1c including comments about where the students were or what they did in the session (for example, "Dark hair tied up, working in group left hand side nearest camera for task one").
- Identification on D1b of specific moments on the DVD where the sample students could be seen
- The wearing of coloured bibs or t-shirts to aid identification in large groups
- The use of student names throughout the session, for example when sharing 'work in progress'
- The provision of photographs of the sample students, often "print screen" shots from the session
- The rotation of groups/ careful use of zoom and pan while students were exploring in groups
- Selection of mid-range students who were easy to identify and with lots of evidence on the recording.

Based on the work seen for Paper 01 in the 2016 series,

Students should:

- Ensure clear focus on the exploration process rather than on the product
- Engage fully with the practical tasks
- Work collaboratively and contribute to the exploration process, leading as appropriate
- Shape and develop ideas practically rather than repeating and polishing without progression
- Share their work in progress with the class
- Focus any evaluative comments on exploration
- Make clear notes, including examples, throughout the exploration process

Teacher-assessors should:

- Devote 30% of teaching time to the skills and content of 5DR01
- Select a theme/ topic/ issue, stimuli and exploration activities appropriate to the needs and abilities of each individual group of students
- Structure each session to both challenge and support the ability of that group of students, ensuring sufficient time for development of ideas
- Use verbal evaluation and discussion activities to support students' understanding rather than as a basis for practical assessment
- Adopt best-practice strategies for the sample session as appropriate
- Select sample students based on their achievement in the sample session only
- Record the activities completed in each exploration session to form the record of Work
- Provide precise teacher-assessor comments on the D1c

Paper 02 Documentary Response

The Practical Exploration process is evaluated in the Documentary Response to Unit One, an on-paper evaluation, with a maximum of 2,000 words to be submitted for assessment/moderation. This piece of work must be completed in Controlled Conditions. Students must be given the opportunity to record the exploration process over the course of the unit. These notes may be used to support the completion of the final documentary response in the Controlled Conditions Assessment sessions and may be refined to encapsulate the students' evaluative response to the exploration process and the way in which they explored the theme, topic or issue throughout this exploration. All reflection, analysis and evaluation within the Documentary Response must relate to the six-hour practical exploration.

In most centres, students recorded accurate word counts for the documentary evidence but there were others where this was approximate, where the word count was not completed and/or where students had clearly exceeded the maximum number of words. In cases where the word limit was exceeded, some of the best work came after the 2,000 words, although this was not always the case. Documentary Responses were moderated only up to the point where the word count was exceeded.

The majority of Documentary Responses were this year presented on A4 paper, word processed and in a continuous prose format. Writing frames were once again used by many centres which was supportive to many less able students although this could be somewhat limiting for some of the more able students. As with Paper 1, it was noted that where candidates had been allowed a degree of freedom there was scope for greater depth of understanding. Some centres had encouraged candidates to reflect upon practitioner theory which is not a specific focus for GCSE; while in some instances this was supportive to students, in many instances this demonstrated a lack of holistic understanding of the practical drama exploration that had taken place.

The vast majority of responses made good use of the allowable word maximum of 2,000 words for this paper. Where candidates had exceeded this word maximum, or had failed to make full use of it, this was acknowledged by the majority of teacher-assessors in both their D1a comments and the marks awarded. It was also very pleasing to note that many centres this year had supported students in providing clear, specific examples of both their own work and the work of others, and the best practice showed students evaluating these very specific examples clearly and in balance.

This paper does not require students to write about all six hours of exploration; a number of student responses demonstrated an episodic accounts of what candidates had said and done in each of the practical sessions and this approach tended to lack depth of evaluation and understanding. More successful this year was the approach where teacher-assessors had prepared students in considering their journey over the unit, with a sense of cross-reference between sessions, and of a development of ideas as a result of completing the six-hour assessment. This enabled students' work to evidence both depth and breadth of understanding and to meet the assessment criteria at the highest levels.

General summative advice for centres, based on the 2016 series:

Students should:

- Ensure clear focus on the evaluation of the exploration process rather than on the product
- Avoid analysis of the stimuli and/ or general discussion of the theme
- Provide clear, detailed examples from students' own work and the work of others
- Focus on what they learned across the whole six hours coherently rather than using an episodic, disconnected structure

Teacher-assessors should:

- Offer opportunities for students to record clear examples for their notes
- Offer appropriate support materials such as writing frames, ensuring that these support without restricting
- Check notes carefully to guard against plagiarism and to ensure that sources have been acknowledged
- Provide precise teacher-assessor comments on the D1a, supported by examples
- Highlight key examples within student responses to support their comments

Edexcel Feedback and Support to Centres

Enquiries about Results

These are completed by members of the senior team using the original Documentary Responses, and/ or Recordings as well as the Assessment Forms which have this year been returned to centres. An Enquiry can be requested on either Paper 01 or Paper 02 or on both aspects of the unit. EARs for this unit are for the whole centre as the original moderation process will be repeated by the EAR moderator and centres will be charged for re-moderation unless centre marks are re-instated. A detailed report will be produced for each centre, providing feedback for the centre, and explaining the findings of the re-moderation process.

Drama Subject Advisory Team

Paul Webster, a full time member of Pearson's/ Edexcel staff, has been available again throughout the 2016 series to respond to centre queries and to support centres via telephone and email contact as well as through social networking sites. This has proved a successful innovation for the specification.

He and his team are available to respond to centre queries on TeachingPerformingArts@Pearson.com

Student queries can be addressed to students@pearson.com.

It must be noted that the Subject Advisor has no access to centre data, and cannot comment on the moderation process in terms of mark regression or on the content of E9 reports to centres. Where centres require more detailed information, an EAR must be requested for that paper.

Approval of material to be used or any administrative issues is beyond the remit of the subject advisory team.

Training from Edexcel

Edexcel has a programme of national, face to face, free standardisation meetings, as well as online training. All details are available on the Edexcel website via the training home page.

Conclusion

In year six of the specification, it is pleasing to note that centres this year demonstrated continuing assurance in with the 5DR01 unit, with students almost universally demonstrating engagement, enjoyment and understanding as the result of their Unit 1 Exploration.

Centre marking in the vast majority of centres remains accurate in terms of the rank order of marks for students sampled on both papers; however, many teacher-assessors have continued to struggle to accurately judge the level at which their students are working. There was evidence of harsh marking by centres at the lower end of the ability range, sometimes for example where candidates' verbal input within the practical exploration was limited but practical engagement or collaborative work had not been recognised or acknowledged. Equally at the top of the ability range, teacher-assessors did not always accurately assess the levels of creativity and imaginative exploration evidenced in that session, assuming that their highest achieving candidate was worthy of full marks.

Free standardisation courses and materials provided by Edexcel will continue to be available to support all centres in making these judgements, enabling the committed work of all teachers to be applied most effectively to all aspects of assessment and learning within 5DR01.

Students of Edexcel GCSE Drama represent a wide and varied range of ability, culture and background. Their individual responses to Unit 1 are the essential components to this unit, developing and demonstrating their learning about drama, and about life. Students' work on this unit allows them further to develop the skills needed for creating devised work for performance, as well as furthering their grasp of each individually selected theme, topic or issue. While for 5DR01, the focus is on process rather than product, working on this unit for the final series in 2017 will also help to support teacher-assessors in preparing for the demands of the new Drama GCSE specifications where all students will be required both to create and participate in devised performance work and to evaluate the devising process.

Moderators in 2016 once more commented that, in the vast majority of case, GCSE Drama students were exceptionally focused and committed to their work in Drama; for the entire team, there was a sense that it had been a highly positive experience to share the journey of drama exploration with all our students.

Based on the 2016 series, centres should:

- Read/ review both the Specification document for GCSE 2012, the Administrative Support Guide and the Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book for GCSE Drama (2012) in preparation for delivering 5DR01
- Make the most positive choice for each group of students, reviewing/ refreshing/ replacing materials from previous series' as appropriate
- Ensure that the very best possible recordings are made of as many exploration sessions as possible and select the most appropriate for moderation
- Use this report as a reminder of best practice when making the recordings
- Use the standardisation materials to refresh and refine teacher-assessors' grasp of the national standard
- Refer closely to the Administrative Support Guide when preparing materials for submission to the moderator