

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE Drama (5DR02)
Paper 01 and 02 Exploring Play Texts

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5DR02 Exploring Play Texts

Introduction

This is the second year of examination of the new three unit GCSE specification 2DR01.

As the significant changes to the legacy specification 1699 have therefore been in place for two examination years, centres new to 2DR01 but familiar with 1699 are advised to refer to the 2011 report for a summary of changes as a result of unitisation.

Content of 5DR02

This Unit asks students to practically explore a complete and substantial play-text over a series of teacher-led and teacher-assessed practical sessions. These sessions must total six hours of exploration for each teaching group, during which the students must be given opportunities to enhance their understanding of the text by working on selected extracts from the text, making use of at least four Drama Strategies, and at least two uses of the Drama medium. Students should also be given opportunities to make use of the elements of drama within their work, developing an understanding of how these can assist and clarify dramatic form. The centre has absolute free choice as to this text and of the chosen approach to exploration.

Marks awarded should reflect the application and imagination shown in the workshops as students' practically explore the play text. A DVD/video recording of one sample practical session, with five students identified for moderation purposes, is a requirement of the unit, and for this reason 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.

The results of this Practical Exploration are recorded in the Documentary Response to Unit Two, an on-paper evaluation, with a word maximum of 1,000 words. 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.

There are no marks awarded for the production of any performance within the 6 hour Exploration or for the evaluation of any performance within the Documentary Response to the exploration process.

Students must also complete a 2,000 word Response to Live Performance, a second on-paper evaluation, with a word maximum of 2,000 words, which records the student's individual response to and evaluation of a live production

of the teacher-assessor's choosing. Students must be given the opportunity to record their initial responses and reactions to the production and these notes may be used to support the completion of the final response in the Controlled Conditions Assessment sessions and may be refined to encapsulate the students' evaluative response. All reflection, analysis and evaluation within the final response must relate to the live production seen. This production may be of the text explored in the bulk of unit 2 or of an entirely unconnected text; choice of text/ production is entirely a centre decision.

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. Similarly the evaluation of the work shared will link clearly to the exploration of the text rather than to a specific performance or to performance skills.

Verbal evaluation as part of the six hour Exploration may be useful to the moderator in determining students' engagement with and understanding of the practical drama taking place in the session; however it must be noted that Evaluation itself is only assessed through the written Documentary Response

In preparing candidates for this unit it was clear that the majority of centres were more confident and knowledgeable about the requirements for the practical element of the unit, Paper 01, while many centres did not fully meet the requirements of the written element, the Paper 02 Evaluation. Similarly many centres did not fully grasp the standard of work needed to achieve level 1 - the 'Outstanding' level of assessment.

There is essential guidance for centres in the Administrative Support Guide (A.S.G.) document. This document is updated each year and includes the assessment forms and instructions for Unit 2. It is required for all units as it includes information about procedures for Units 1 and 3; Centres should download it from the website as soon as it is available at the end of October.

In addition, all the Assessment forms for all three units will once again be available as a Word document which can be downloaded and edited for those centres that prefer to word process the teacher-examiner comments.

Forms and deadlines for the new series will be published in the new versions of these documents. However, for centres where students have completed Unit 1 prior to this publication date, the 2012 Assessment forms may be used.

The main link to the Drama home page is:

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/drama/Pages/default.aspx>

And the quick link is:

<http://www.edexcel.com/gscedrama>

Records of Work (ROW)

The majority of 5DR02 ROWs centred around an established text with "Blood Brothers" still being the most popular choice of text; "Woman in Black", "Blue

Remembered Hills", "Metamorphosis", "The Crucible" and "Blood Wedding" were also popular options, as were the works of John Godber, Mark Wheeler and Shakespeare. There were ROWs which focussed on lesser known texts such as "Mogadishu" or texts used less frequently at GCSE level such as "The Trial" and in these cases, students were often supported by having seen a live production of this text, whether or not they chose to write about in their Response to Live Performance. Choices for the Response to Live Performance task once again showed a significant number of students writing about "Blood Brothers", "War Horse" or "Woman in Black", with "Metamorphosis", productions of Shakespeare plays and a number of popular musicals also being choices for this evaluation. For this part of unit 2 it was clear that there was a range of experiences in place, with students having visited theatres, having seen touring versions of productions in their own schools and having evaluated the performance work of students within their own centre where professional productions were not an option.

Generally, it seems centres have approached this unit pragmatically; they have chosen texts and productions of which they have had previous experience of delivering in either 2011 or in the legacy specification 1699, and which meet the needs of their students and the practicalities of offering young people a chance to see live performance work.

While this use of existing knowledge and expertise was successful for some centres, it also meant that, in some cases, the demands of the single practical Assessment Objective of Exploration were not fully met. This was most clearly seen where Records of Work clearly referred to the legacy specification AOs: Response, Development and Evaluation. Where Records of Works showed that centres had reviewed and updated the unit, students were most able to meet the Assessment Criteria at an effective level.

The presentation of Records of Work this year varied widely and included annotated schemes of work, detailed lesson plans and brief lists of planned tasks. The use of published schemes of work which are appropriate for the Programme of Study but may not meet the requirements of the unit was seen from a number centres. The majority of centres did submit a separate ROW for each teaching group within the cohort although many did not clearly differentiate what each teaching group had done over the 6 hours. It is essential to note that the Records of Work must clearly outline all the exploration activities that students actually completed over the 6 hours rather than speculative activities that may be done over the course of the Drama Exploration. It is not necessary to submit lesson plans for each session; however, once again the practice seen did include 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 selected extracts, the Documentary Response notes tasks and/ or guidance sheets were helpfully presented by many centres and where this was the case, such additions aided the moderation process. It must be noted that a copy of the full text is not a requirement of the specification and does not aid moderation. Centres presented their records of work both in the future tense ("students will complete...") the present tense ("students complete...") and the past ("students completed...") and any of these options are acceptable provided that the activities listed are those actually completed rather than a planned scheme of possible tasks.

There were this year many centres where the distinction between the sharing of 'work in progress' and the performing of polished work was clearly understood; equally there were many examples of off-text strategies used helpfully and appropriately as part of the unit 2 exploration. It was pleasing to see that the guidance offered by Edexcel to centres in 2011 had been of benefit in the vast majority of cases. Similarly it was noted that appropriate use of 'sharing' of unit 2 exploration was helpful to both teacher-assessor and moderator. The use of the text as stimulus and the production of polished performance work however are not appropriate exploration activities. Some centres however still focused their 6 hours of practical on these activities, limiting students' opportunities to gain a deeper knowledge of the chosen text through practical drama exploration.

The best ROWs gave students the opportunity to explore and experiment with form and had appropriately challenging texts to explore. Higher achieving centres clearly addressed the need for a range of strategies/medium in each session of the 6 hours – less effective ROWs tended to show the use of one strategy per session or to make use of more basic strategies [e.g. freeze frame] without the opportunity to develop these.

Practical Evidence

The practical activities carried out for the Sample Session ranged from the highly imaginative and clearly focused on the immediate exploration of the chosen extract, to the recording of activities which can and should take place outside of the 6 hour exploration such as note-taking, reading the extract and warm up activities un-related to the extract being explored. Small teaching groups in particular were often seen being over-directed by teachers, while with some larger teaching groups, there was very little teacher involvement. The best sample session recordings showed the teacher making a committed attempt to act as both teacher-assessor and facilitator, supporting student exploration rather than directing students too closely.

The majority of centres enabled students to access both strategies and the use of the Drama medium in the recorded session. Where students were given too little to do, for example the completion of one still image as the main task for the session, this tended to limit the outcome for all students. 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.

Student Identification

As in 2011, centres were asked to identify five students for moderation purposes and this was generally done more clearly. However, moderators reported that there were still centres who still had not fully understood the presentation of the DVD evidence for moderation purposes. It must be noted that many centres completed one unit in year 10 of the course, which may explain this lack of clear video evidence from some centres.

Many students were very difficult to make out or identify from the evidence provided. Often students were not identified at the start of the recording and/ or not made visually easy to distinguish. The positioning of the camera was often a

problem this year as looking more closely at individuals requires a different viewing experience. In many cases, students were missing from sections of the DVD and this made it difficult to moderate their work. There were also times where teachers blocked the camera and/ or made poor choices about the positioning of students within the studio or drama space.

Filmed sessions which supported the moderation process in terms of identification and tracking of the sample students were those where students were clearly identified at the start, their names were frequently used throughout and the camera focused on areas where exploration work was going on. Some examples of excellent practice included the use of coloured bibs or t-shirts to differentiate the students; this was especially helpful in larger teaching groups. Some students held up an A4 sheet printed with their student name and number as they identified themselves to camera at the start of the session; there were also centres which supplied supplementary photographs and teachers who repeated student names at moments where these students were sharing work. All of these practices were extremely helpful to moderators. Similarly centres where the judicious use of panning and zooming in the filming of the session and/ or the groups were encouraged to rotate around the space so that all students could be seen working, made the process of moderation effective and efficient.

By contrast, the use of small coloured ribbons and sticky labels on student uniforms was not helpful as these were not easy to distinguish on the recording.

The Importance of the Recording

The requirement of the unit is for a single unedited teaching session, ideally of one hour and of no longer than two hours in length. This must be recorded onto a clearly labelled disc enclosed in a hard, protective case and playable on a domestic DVD player. The quality of the DVD/ VHS recording is of paramount importance; centres must ensure that they are able to produce a clear, good quality recording for the moderator.

The majority of centres provided their recorded evidence on DVD with very few centres submitting VHS tapes. There were many examples where DVDs were not formatted for a domestic DVD player, were unclearly chapterised or unlabelled, all of which were problematic for moderators. There were also a number of DVDs of generally poor quality, as well as some centres with edited material and/ or who had supplied more than two hours of evidence. There were also centres who supplied more than one DVD of evidence per unit.

While many centres had taken on board advice from 2011, there were also centres this year where this was not the case. For example audibility was sometimes an issue; it was felt in these cases that it would have benefited the moderator to hear the comments made by students as they worked in smaller groups as the level of understanding and depth of thought could not always be ascertained just by 'body language'. Equally, there were students identified on the sample session whose work was not sufficiently visible to camera to support the moderation process. While it is not a requirement of the specification that teacher-assessors watch the recording, the best practice was seen where this had taken place. Centres reported that this task had also served as an effective standardisation exercise within departments.

Further details about the importance of the recording are available in the ASG document on the Edexcel GCSE Drama website.

Marking of the Sample Session

Moderators reported that there were still centres who pre-selected the five sample students. Teacher-assessors are however required to select the five sample students retrospectively, based on their achievement in this session only. Where teachers had identified their highest middle achieving and lowest students based on their overall mark for the 6 hour assessment or their predicted grades for the unit, regardless of the quality of these students' achievement in the single session submitted, it was difficult or impossible for moderators to agree centre rank order for the individual session.

While many centres made effective use of the D2c (Sampled Students' Record Card) to record marks and comments regarding the achievement of the selected students during the sample session, there were still teacher-assessors who offered only repetition of the assessment criteria, which did not support moderation.

While the majority of centres had evidently selected their students as required, there were those who misunderstood the purpose of the sample session and entered marks and comments for the whole 6 hour assessment rather than the sample session. The sample students should be marked, for moderation purposes, for the recorded session only. It is to be expected that marks may vary to some degree between this session and the whole 6 hour exploration. However, where a centre wishes to award full marks for one or more students for the 6 hour exploration on the Paper 01 OPTEMS, student(s) working at full marks **must** be seen on the recorded session. Equally the sample session should provide evidence which supports the levels of achievement of that specific teaching group and this year centres were required to sign an authentication to this effect.

Administration of the Sample Session

Detailed identification comments on the D2c, where they were provided, were very helpful to moderators. Where teacher assessors had described students' appearance (for example "long brown hair"), this was often less helpful than where such description was combined with 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"). The best practice this year was seen where centres used the D1c comment sheet to alert the moderator to specific moments on the DVD where the sample students could be observed clearly.

Similarly the completion of a detailed D2b DVD/ VHS Time Record Sheet was of immense help to moderators as was the excellent practice in some centres of identifying the specific activities that related to the sample students in the box at the top of the D1c. However there were centres where teacher-assessors completed neither in any depth and this did not support the moderation process.

This year, the D2a Controlled Assessment Record card was amended requiring only a summative comment from teacher-assessors on the 6 hour exploration.

This change was intended to reduce teacher-assessor's workload as was the change on the D2c Sample Student Record Card where the timings of activities were no longer required to be copied over from the D2b Video/ DVD time record sheet. Equally, the mark record grid on the D2a was amended to include a total for paper 02 of the unit. Completed examples of all these adapted forms were produced by the senior team and have been available on the website as a support to centres since October 2011. The moderation process in 2012 was also adapted to enable centre completed assessment forms to be returned to centres with moderated materials, as in 2011, it was widely reported that the removal and retention of these had not been helpful to centres.

Documentary Response

The majority of Documentary Responses were this year presented on A4 paper, word processed and in a continuous prose format. Where stills/diagram inclusions were annotated well, this could demonstrate understanding, but too often such tasks were reported or descriptive and did not aid student evaluations. Writing frames were used in lots of centres which was often limiting to more able students, particularly where the structure/ question asked did not support evaluation and so responses were weak, rarely developing beyond description.

There was often much analysis of the text in terms of plot, character and background rather than evaluation of the students' own practical work on the text. There was a dearth of evaluative language within many pieces though there was often clear understanding of form and why it was used. A lack of clear, justified evaluation resulted in a downwards adjustment for centre marks even when the analysis and use of language was strong. Often evaluation was simplistic, for example students commenting that a task was 'effective' without explanation of why or how, and/ or with a lack of connection to how the task enhanced their understanding of the text. However it was 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.

It was also gratifying that more centres this year 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. It is not a requirement that students write about all sessions; however, the highest achieving students will manage to communicate a sense of the whole six hours by clearly evaluating their learning about the text throughout the exploration process. It must also be noted that although students should consider how the use of drama strategies enhanced their understanding of the text, the focus of their evaluation of the exploration need not be on the use of drama strategies. This very different focus to the task in comparison with Unit 1 was where some centres were able to support students in producing both succinct and concise evaluations which remained within the word maximum of 1,000 words.

Response to Live Performance

The majority of Responses to Live performance were this year presented on A4 paper, word processed and in a continuous prose format. Where stills/diagram inclusions were annotated well, this could demonstrate understanding, but too often such tasks were reported or descriptive and did not aid student evaluations. Writing frames were used in lots of centres which was often limiting to more able students, particularly where the structure/ question asked did not support evaluation and so responses were weak, rarely developing beyond description.

There was often much analysis of the text in terms of plot, character and background rather than evaluation of the students' own response to the performance. There was a dearth of evaluative language within many pieces though there was often clear understanding of form and why it was used. A lack of clear, justified evaluation resulted in a downwards adjustment for centre marks even when the analysis and use of language was strong. Often evaluation was simplistic, for example students commenting that a moment was 'effective' without explanation of why or how, and/ or with a lack of connection to how the task enhanced their understanding of the production. However it was very pleasing to note that many centres this year had supported students in using clear, technical vocabulary, communicating an understanding of theatre and performance in their responses. The majority of responses remained within the word maximum of 2,000 words and made use of a consistent Quality of Written Communication throughout.

It was noted that there had been an increase in plagiarism seen in this part of the unit. Students were found to have made use of unacknowledged published material based on the performance seen such as professional and personal reviews. It must be noted that teacher-assessors should be aware of the potential for plagiarism in this unit when providing resources and reviewing notes based on the performance. The regulations for Controlled Assessment Conditions must be observed during the completion of this task and teacher-assessors and candidates must complete an authentication statement, verifying that all the work submitted is the candidate's own. Where this statement cannot be completed in good faith, the work of the affected candidate must not be submitted by the centre. Where any example of plagiarism was noted as part of the moderation process, the entire centre's materials was reviewed by a member of the senior team and then forwarded to Compliance and Quality at Edexcel for investigation.

Paper 02 Summary

In most centres, students recorded accurate word counts for each task within the documentary evidence (Paper 02) 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 word limit, especially in the case of the Documentary Response word maximum. Each task that comprised the Documentary Evidence was moderated only up to the point where the word count was exceeded.

Some very good practice was seen this year by centres where teacher-assessors drew the moderator's attention to specific example aspects of the response, without repeating the assessment criteria. Instead, these teacher-assessors justified clearly the mark awarded or simply highlighted helpful examples. Some noted the point at which they had stopped marking in overlong responses which was helpful to moderators.

However, there were many centres where comments were brief and the marks awarded were justified only by quotations from the Assessment grid, unsupported by examples.

OPTEMS Deadlines and Administration

Centres were this year supported by in the vast majority of cases being allocated a single moderator for both 5DR01 and 5DR02; this supported the moderation process and the administration for centres considerably and was widely praised. The communications to centres detailing the completion of the two sets of OPTEMS for Paper 01 (Exploration A01) and Paper 02 (Evaluation A03) was once again of immense support to many centres although there were centres who completed an overall unit total on one or both of these OPTEMS or when entering marks electronically. Centres are reminded that the two papers which make up Unit 2 are both assessed and moderated discretely. A unit total is therefore not required on either OPTEMS. Further guidance regarding this can be found in this year's ASG document.

The majority of teacher-assessors ensured that OPTEMS sheets and the Assessment forms were signed by the student and/ or the standardising teacher, as appropriate. It must be emphasised that this is a requirement of the unit. The majority of centres met the deadline for the submission of Internally Assessed Units, which is a standard date for all subjects at all levels. Those who did not often included a letter of explanation to their moderator. Please note that although there are no extensions to the deadline, where there are genuine extenuating circumstances for a late submission, details of these circumstances must go direct to Edexcel via Examinations Officers. Similarly, in the rare instances where materials are submitted late, it is very helpful to moderators if centres notify Edexcel of this immediately.

Where there was confusion over administrative matters, centres generally responded quickly to the E6 forms from moderators and worked effectively with the Closure and Completion team at Edexcel to rectify these errors.

The Quality of Work Submitted for 5DR02: Paper 01 and Paper 02

High scoring work had some of these characteristics:

- Both papers reflected 30% of the teaching of a five term GCSE course with clear evidence that students were making use of strategies introduced as part of an earlier Programme of Study
- Students had been well taught and given the opportunity to practically explore a well-chosen and substantial text through a number of appropriately challenging extracts

- Key lessons were detailed in the Record of Work that allowed students to focus on the use of strategies, the Drama medium, and the elements of Drama in terms of exploring the chosen extract
- The Sample Session was well focused and showed a range of strategies and uses of the Drama medium, with the emphasis on the students exploring the text, facilitated by the teacher rather than on the teacher directing the students
- Students' Documentary Responses were the end product of a process of recording and reflecting on their exploration of the chosen text
- These were concise and made full use of the available number of words but did not exceed them; they evaluated with clarity and communicated a sense of what they had learned through the exploration
- Students had clearly evaluated their own exploration work, and that of others within their teaching group, supporting their evaluation with clear, specific and well justified examples from the 6 hour practical exploration
- Responses to Live Performance were concise and made full use of the available number of words but did not exceed them; they evaluated with clarity and communicated a sense of what the performance had meant to them, using an assured and accurate technical vocabulary
- Students were able to support their evaluations with clear, specific and well justified examples from the production seen; QWC was consistent and accurate throughout the Response to Live Performance
- Teacher-assessor comments on the D2a for Paper 02 and the D2c for Paper 01 were detailed and specific, allowing the moderator to see examples of how and why marks had been awarded; D2a Paper 01 comments were a helpful summary of the student's overall achievement

Middle scoring work had some of these characteristics:

- In at least one paper, less than 30% of the teaching of a five term GCSE course had been spent on the on the preparation for and delivery of the unit and/ or evidence that some of the strategies used had not been introduced as part of an earlier Programme of Study
- Texts and/ or the chosen extracts from the text did not fully meet the needs of the students
- Practical activities were not sufficiently explorative and/ or there was lack of balance between teacher facilitation and student exploration
- The sample session showed a lack of depth, breadth and understanding to students' practical work and/ or a focus on performance in aspects of the session

- Students' practical work in the sample session lacked a consistently sharp focus on the exploration of the chosen extract, or lacked consistent commitment or engagement on the part of the students.
- Documentary Responses were too long or occasionally did not make full use of the allowable word maximum; evaluation was not rooted in practical exploration or did not offer specific examples of students own work and/or the work of others
- Responses to Live Performance were too long or did not make full use of the allowable word maximum; evaluation was not rooted in clear examples from the performance seen and QWC lacked consistency
- Teacher-assessor comments were brief or repeated the Assessment Criteria and did not help the moderator see why marks had been awarded

Low scoring work had some of these characteristics:

- Evidence that far less than 30% of the teaching of a five term GCSE course had been spent on the preparation for and delivery of the unit, and/ or that strategies used were unfamiliar to many of the students
- Texts were poorly chosen, and/ or were not clearly understood and/ or explored by students
- Practical activities were teacher dominated in the recorded session and/ or the ROW
- The sample session activities showed a lack of depth and or breadth to students' practical exploration and/ or a focus on performance throughout the session
- Students' practical work in the sample session lacked focus on the exploration of the text itself, or lacked consistent commitment and engagement on the part of the students
- Documentary Responses exceeded the word limit or occasionally failed to make use of the allowable word maximum; these pieces of work were overly dependent on descriptive and/ or reported comment rather than evaluation
- Responses to Live Performance were too long or did not make full use of the allowable word maximum; these pieces of work were overly dependent on descriptive and/ or reported comment rather than evaluation and QWC was erratic and/ or impeded meaning
- Tasks with little opportunity for evaluation were included such as factual information about the text/ playwright, plot summaries or 'in role' writing tasks unrelated to the exploration process (DR) or production seen (RLP)

Edexcel Feedback and Support to Centres

Results Plus

The breakdown for the moderated marks for both Paper 01 and 02 will be available to all centres as part of the free Results Plus service. Please note that individual marks for the two tasks that comprise Paper 02 will not be available as part of this service as moderation is by paper rather than by task. This information will be available online on results day. Centres are advised to ensure they have the information they need from their examinations officer to access this.

Enquiries about Results

These are completed by members of the senior team using the original Documentary Responses, Responses to Live Performance 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.

Ask the Expert

This has been a very popular service over the last year as centres had many queries regarding the new specification. There were seasonal surges in queries regarding the administration of the unit, for example many queries were submitted in the post-results period of the early autumn term. It must be noted that the Ask the Expert team have 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; there will be specific information regarding the procedure for this on the GCSE Drama home page.

As in 2011, the senior team will once again this year use these trends to formulate and update the FAQs document on the website and to enable Edexcel to support centres with direct contact regarding specific issues.

All queries are answered from home by the members of the senior examining team. All 'experts' are required to respond within 2 working days of receiving the query from Edexcel. Centres are advised to ensure that the correct email address is used, and that "GCSE Drama" and the appropriate Unit number are clearly indicated in the subject header of the email. This will aid centres in gaining a swift response as queries will be assigned to the correct 'Expert' in the first instance.

Centres are reminded that this is an email service only and that the purpose of the service is to give answers to brief queries regarding the specification. Approval of material to be used or any administrative issues are beyond the remit of the service.

Drama Subject Advisor

Early in 2012, Paul Webster, a full time member of Pearson/ Edexcel staff was appointed to respond to centre queries and support centres via telephone and email contact and this has been a successful innovation for the specification. The subject advisor contact details are available on the Drama home page.

Training from Edexcel

Edexcel has both a programme of national face to face INSET meetings, online training and can arrange for members of the senior team to give customised training to individual or groups of centres. All details are available on the Edexcel website.

Conclusion

Moderators reported that this year there was significantly clearer understanding of the Assessment Objectives for the specification evidenced both in how centres delivered the unit and in the way that students demonstrated a clearer focus within their exploration and evaluation work. This was pleasing given that this is the second year of the specification. It was especially noteworthy that the confident and creative use of appropriate off-text tasks was in evidence in the vast majority of centres.

The Example materials available on the Edexcel Drama GCSE website also supported all in demonstrating how this unit might be delivered, and in providing a clear example of the standard for both A01 and A03, and the addition of Level 1 and 2 OSCA materials early in 2012 was reported as being immensely beneficial.

While centres were generally accurate in terms of the rank order of marks for students sampled on both papers, many centres have continued to struggle to accurately judge the level at which their students are working. Having said this, downwards adjustments were generally of fewer marks than seen in 2011, while there were also centres in 2012 where work was adjusted upwards, showing that there was overall, a clearer grasp of the standard in centres across the country.

There will be a clear focus in providing a "standardisation" pack consisting of examples of work at a range of levels for all centres and these standards will be closely examined in the new National Training programme events, both face to face and online. These materials and events will this year further support centres in making correct judgements about their students' achievement in relation to the national standard. It is confidently felt that the majority of centres will have a clearer and more secure ability to apply the standard next year.

Similarly, many of the administrative errors made by centres were as a result of Unit 2 having been completed prior to the publication of last year's ASG document, and of centres therefore being a little slow to get up to speed with the changes to the administration of the unit.

While it is necessary in the early years of a new specification to highlight areas of concern, it must be made clear that there were many centres in 2012 where a clear understanding of the purpose of this unit was evident in all of the material

presented for moderation; in these centres, students had been particularly effectively served by teachers who were clearly well-prepared and focused on the demands of the unit. In many centres where downwards adjustment was made, it was still clear that all other aspects of the unit were in place but that teacher-assessors were still adjusting to the demands of the 'Outstanding' level.

The 2DR01 specification offers the widest possible range of students the opportunity to achieve at GCSE level. In Unit 2, students have the opportunity to explore texts which bring them closer to understanding issues that both relate to their own lives, as well as expanding their imaginations. The degree of commitment and challenge in place from teachers delivering this unit was commented on by the moderating team, who also noted moments of tangible understanding by students working with text at all levels. The way that the students were seen making new discoveries about texts familiar to the team was also commented on as an immensely positive aspect of unit 2 in 2011, as was the growth in practitioner work more commonly used at GCE level. Like 5DR01, this is a unit which combines development in drama curriculum terms with a growth in maturity, empathy and understanding; it was clear that centres had worked especially hard this year to deliver this understanding through both the explorative and evaluative processes in place for their students.

Grade Boundaries

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