

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE Drama (5DR03)
Paper 01 Drama Performance

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5DR03 Drama Performance

Introduction

This is the second year of the examination of Unit 3 Drama Performance. The Performance examination is worth 40% of the total GCSE qualification.

It was clear from the reports from examiners this year that the high level of understanding of the requirements of the performance examination paper by many centres had been maintained from the 2011 series. It is again this year very positive to report that experienced teams of both examiners and teachers contributed to the success of this performance exam.

For many centres much of this report will cover information that was detailed in the 2011 report, however examiners report that this year both the achievements and concerns remain very much in line with those of 2011. The statistical evidence also supports that overall student achievement was very much in line with that of 2011.

This is an externally examined unit and the assessment objectives and criteria do not change from those printed in the specification. In preparing candidates for this unit the specification must be read with close reference to the Administrative Support Guide (ASG) for the current examination series. Each centre chooses the options taken by candidates, the texts or content for devised work and the audience present for the examination performances. All work presented for examination must meet the requirements of the Assignment Brief (AB) for that year.

This paper uniquely has elements of both an examined and coursework unit.

The Assignment Brief

It was a requirement by Ofqual in giving accreditation to the GCSE that as this is an externally examined unit, in line with units examined on paper, a different focus must be set by the awarding body each year.

The format of the Assignment Brief was decided after consultation with other subjects which have similar briefs.

The Assignment Brief for 2012 was available only on the website from the last Monday in October.

Centres are reminded that the texts or ideas in the brief are suggestions only and it remains Edexcel policy not to approve or recommend any texts or material for Unit 3.

The Assignment Brief for 2012 was 'Everybody has a story that needs to be told'.

Student Achievement in 2012

Overall the examining team reported that the standard from the 2011 examination series had been maintained. In most centres there is evidence of

good understanding of the requirements of this unit and the majority of students were well prepared to both achieve in the examination and enjoy the experience of live performance both as performers and enthusiastic and supportive audience members.

Examiners reported that again this year there were a number of students who were poorly prepared for this unit. Where work was seen that could only be awarded marks in levels 4 and 5 it was often felt to be due to lack of commitment by candidates often reflecting inconsistent attendance. Again this year examiners reported that there were teachers who had not prepared students for any drama performance examination before, including some who had acquired a Year 11 group that year. Many examiners commented on the commitment and dedication of these teachers in this challenging situation. It was reported that some centres asked examiners for informal feedback this included both students and members of staff. Centres are reminded that visiting examiners cannot give advice or comment on the work seen before, during or after the visit.

Where work was seen in the top 2 levels examiners believed that this was due to the number of highly skilled, experienced, committed and enthusiastic teachers whose understanding of the requirements of this paper and the needs and skills of their pupils produced work of high quality.

Administration Issues

Examiners and teachers report that many of these issues were the same as in 2011 but the concerns are reported again for all centres.

This is a unique examination in having a visiting examiner. The majority of examiners reported on the vital importance of centres understanding the requirements of the documentation and organisation needed for successful examination sessions.

Centres must ensure they put in place the requirements for this paper as detailed in the Administrative Support Guide. This is revised each year in the light of both examiners' and teachers' suggestions to ensure that the administration of the paper is clear to all centres. This essential document is only available on the Edexcel website. **NO HARD COPIES WILL BE SENT.** The 2013 Administrative Support Guide will be on the website in the Autumn Term of 2012. The specification is also available from the Edexcel website. Other Edexcel publications are available from Edexcel publications.

Examination Conditions

There were concerns from many examiners that attention to detail in ensuring that exam conditions were put in place by centres was less well done than in 2011.

Centres must ensure that an organised and supportive environment is provided to enable students to achieve and for examiners to mark the work professionally.

Centres are reminded of the need for this paper to have examination conditions to support the candidates and ensure security of the examination. These are clearly stated in the ASG document. Examiners report that an increased number of centres ensured that 2 or more centre staff were available throughout the examination sessions to ensure the performances ran under exam conditions. Centre staff must ensure that all candidates and audiences understand that this is an examination that happens to be a performance. Providing candidates with the best possible conditions is of paramount importance. However this also applies to examiners.

From 2012 examiners were required to arrive approximately 30 minutes before the first performance/presentation. Centres must understand that many examiners have lengthy journeys and that travel conditions on the day of the exam can vary greatly. The provision of clear directions by centres proved to be very helpful although some centres expected examiners to find all details from the internet. Information on available parking, particularly in urban areas and the provision of a parking space should be done in centres where this may be an issue.

Centres are required to provide the conditions where examiners can mark professionally and with security. This was detailed in 3.10 on page 18 of the 2012 ASG.

This was not put in place by many centres this year. The provision of a private place to mark was often some distance from the examination room but centres had not factored this into the examination time table and this caused extra pressure on the examination days in some cases.

Many examiners are willing to work undisturbed at the back of the examination room between performances but this must be discussed and clarified with each individual examiner well in advance of the examination dates.

The requirement that at least 20 students can be marked in a 3 hour session was not always understood by some centres. The timing of each session is dependent on many factors for example if there are Performance Support students. The size of each performance group is also a factor as all examiners will need more time to consider the marks of large groups.

Many examiners felt under pressure this year to move onto the next group too swiftly. However Edexcel also appreciates that a few examiners took too long between performances and did not maintain the timetable as agreed with the centre. Edexcel apologises to the centres where this occurred.

Centre Documentation

Examiners report again this year a lack of the attention to detail by some centres in completing the necessary paperwork for this paper and meeting the deadlines for administration both before and after the examination sessions. However the majority of centres are to be commended for completing the documentation well.

On the front page of the Assignment Brief all the options are given a letter A-G. This needs to be completed in the Performance Option box on the Group Performance Sheet (D3a). This was not done by many centres in 2012.

Attached to this sheet must be the only written evidence that students need to provide for this examination.

This is a student task with support from the teacher. Only one is needed per performance group.

There must be a paragraph that details how the performance has met the Assignment Brief for that year and in addition a paragraph (or more) to put the performance in context.

There is no prescribed format for this. However examiners report that there was in the majority of cases a correlation between the detail with which this was completed and the standard of the performances seen.

Devised work often had a complete or outline script, breakdown of the scenes and could include details of what forms/style were being used. Some were even more detailed including stage directions, cues and even 'sub text' notes regarding the motivations or unspoken thoughts of the characters.

All centres are strongly advised to ensure in future the completion of this task is built into the preparation of the Unit 3 performances.

The major concern again this year is the failure to complete Section A on form D3b. This again is an individual student task and is to enable all examiners to be well prepared in advance of the exam. The decision of how the students will appear in the performance must be finalised before the documentation is sent to the examiner.

The Importance of the despatch of the DVD recordings

The deadline for sending the DVD copies of the examination performances is 10 working days.

The late Half Term due to the Jubilee meant that exams that took place in the final week of the exam period did not arrive with examiners until mid June.

As in 2011 many centres did not meet the deadline and a number of centres did not send any recordings at all.

It was also clear that many centres do not check the recordings. Again this year members of the senior team on receiving recordings as part of the monitoring of examiners report a catalogue of problems. The vast majority of centres now send DVDs and many of these were of excellent quality. There were again in 2012 far too many that could not be played in a standard DVD player despite the detailed information being given in the ASG.

A major concern is that DVDs are not sent in hard protective cases and become damaged in the post so cannot be used as part of the extensive monitoring

process. Many arrived with examiners either with no protective covering or just a paper envelope or plastic cover in a paper envelope.

Examiners are not required to check the recordings or inform centres where the DVD is damaged.

All centres are reminded that Enquiries after Results will be undertaken on the recordings sent by the centre and further copies will not be requested. This may result in any Enquiries after Results having to be cancelled as they cannot be completed.

Timing of the Examination

The examination can take place between the beginning of February to the last Friday before the summer half term. Most centres were contacted in early January and the vast majority of visits were arranged and confirmed swiftly. There were centres who having arranged a date requested a change of date and/or time near to the exam. All centres are reminded that examiners cannot be expected to rearrange visits and centres may have to have their performances marked on a recording.

Examiners felt there was again an increase in twilight or evening sessions from 2011. Centres reported that the examination as a performance had a greater sense of occasion and appropriate audiences could attend. But examiners report again in 2012 concerns that inappropriate audiences disadvantaged some candidates. It was felt that some audience members only wished to see certain performances and that the constant changing of audience numbers did not create a supportive atmosphere.

Some centres reported that it was easier to put examination conditions in place, particularly regarding external noise and giving examiners a private place to consider their marks between performances outside normal school hours. But some examiners report that there was pressure on them not to leave the desk provided and be given enough time between each group. There were concerns that some audience members did not appreciate the role of the examiner and attempted to engage them in conversation between and after the performances.

When exam performances took place during the school day this required careful organisation by the centre to ensure that at least 20 students could be examined in a 3 hour session.

Concerns regarding this have been detailed earlier in this report but overall examiners reported that this was well managed by centres with break and lunchtimes being used for examiners to consider the marking of students.

There were fewer reports of examiners arriving at the centre at the agreed time and being kept waiting for a considerable time before meeting the candidates or having extended breaks between performances.

Centres wishing to have an extended time period or day outside the regulations of this examination will be required to record the work for external assessment.

Despite the details given above most centres completed all administration very well and the examination was run with professionalism throughout.

Identification of Students

This was highlighted by many examiners this year as being less well done by centres than in previous series. Centres must ensure that clear and detailed descriptions are sent to the examiner in advance (Form D3b).

Centres must ensure that candidates can be clearly identified throughout the performances. There seemed to be an increase in groups wearing almost identical costumes. These were frequently 'theatre blacks'. I have written in every report in the legacy specification and in 2011 that centres are strongly advised not to do this. There has been a plea from many examiners that Edexcel should ban this but this cannot be done as it is not in the specification.

The addition of ribbons on students' wrists or labels/badges is also not at all helpful as these most often cannot be seen in performance and certainly not in the recordings.

Also there was an increase in students wearing several costumes and hats during the performance. Again this was frequently confusing for examiners who were then unable to concentrate fully on the performance in order to be able to award secure marks.

The best practice remains having students in different coloured costumes/outfits that are worn throughout the performance. If appropriate the addition of some simple item for example an apron or waistcoat can be used to show different roles.

The practice of providing the examiner with large group colour photographs clearly labelled with student names, numbers and roles played was again very helpful for identification by the visiting examiner and invaluable to any senior examiner monitoring the work on the recording.

Most centres ensured candidates introduced themselves clearly on the recording and that this was seen in full head to toe shot not just head and shoulders. This was detailed in the ASG 2012 page 18 paragraph 3.7. Small head shots taken from centre data bases are of no use and centres should not waste their time and money in providing these.

Accompanied Visits

As in 2011, as part of the extensive monitoring process required by Edexcel, all examiners had an accompanied visit from their Team Leader. This is an important part of the ongoing monitoring of examiners for the practical performance units. This extra requirement was dealt with by centres with understanding. Some centres requested not to have a visit but then understood that the choice of centre visits is wholly driven by the available dates that the senior team have to make these visits.

All Team Leaders are instructed that a visit by them must not affect the agreed timetable of the performances but that discussion must take place at a suitable break. Edexcel understands that in a very few cases this did not happen this year and apologises that the correct procedure was not followed.

All Team Leaders were monitored once by their line manager who is an Assistant Principal Examiner. All Assistant Principal Examiners were monitored by either the Principal Examiner or Chair of Examiners. These visits do tend to take a little longer between each performance but all centres should be informed well in advance by their examiner.

The Principal Examiner would like to thank all the centres that she visited this year for the professionalism and positive approach they maintained in the light of having a quartet of examiners present. It is the most rewarding part of the role to see live in centres from all over the country the diversity of the performances presented for the examination.

The Importance of the Recording of the Performances/Presentations

It is felt that most centres do 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 ensure that examiners work is monitored throughout the process a great deal of centres' work is viewed by the senior team. Centres should be aware that the senior team may randomly check centres' work and if examiners have any concerns they must seek another opinion.

Centres are required to make a recording of the performance with an unobstructed view. The major concern remains that many of these recordings were dominated by the view of the back of the examiner(s) head(s) or recorded from a position that did not capture the complete performance on the DVD.

The following errors were made in 2011 but were repeated again in 2012.

1. Too often the camera was not placed close to the examiner and was frequently so far distant from the performance that the candidates could not be identified.
2. The examiner and audience heads took up most of the frame.
3. If there is a large performance space and scenes are performed in different areas the camera did not pan to record the complete performance
4. There was too much use of close ups but these did not always focus on the students speaking at that time but if the person operating the camera knows the piece some judicious use of close ups can be useful in capturing individual performances.
5. The camera operators were noisy and conversations or laughter drowned out the sound of the performance
6. Nobody monitored the camera so if it moved during the performance only the floor or ceiling was recorded
7. New DVDs were not used so the quality was poor and other work was seen between performances or as 'shadows'
8. DVDs were sent that were not of the GCSE Performances but of other student work or even films or television programmes.

Performance Support Candidates' presentations must be made to the camera and the examiner will sit next to it. In 2012 very few students expected examiners to ask them questions as they looked at the documentation. This was a definite improvement on 2011.

Examiners will look at this evidence after the presentation but it must also be clearly recorded after the presentation and edited into the recording. This was done very well by the majority of centres

Performance Support 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.

Many centres completed the time sheet well. This is most important for the ease of finding performances or presentations when looking for specific groups or individual candidate's work for monitoring purposes. Also it is important that centres comment on the quality of the recording. Many centres realise that the recording did not capture the performance well or had incomplete recordings. Some centres did not complete this form at all. Centres must check all performances and presentations in their entirety for the correct timings on the DVDs and the quality of the recording. Again this year this was clearly not done by some centres.

Missing or poor quality recordings of performances mean that work cannot be checked or reviewed.

Performances

The Assignment Brief details the options available for performance students and all the options were seen in 2012.

Feedback from both examiners and centres indicate that the brief 'Everybody has a story that needs to be told' gave students a clear focus but also allowed for flexibility in approaching the content and in meeting the assessment criteria.

A very few centres used the 2011 or SAMs briefs so all centres are reminded that they must download the 2013 brief from the last Monday in October.

Devised Performance

As in the legacy specification this is the option taken by the majority of students. Work was seen by examiners that covered the full mark range. A few candidates did turn up for the performance but did so little that no marks could be awarded. Full marks were also awarded. This is in line with student achievement in 2011. Where work was awarded marks in the higher levels it was clear that a well-structured preparation and rehearsal period had taken place. In many centres examiners noted a 'house style' that could support the candidate's approach and final performance. However there was concern that although this was sometimes seen to support less confident candidates it could be limiting for the more able.

Examiners commented on the more detailed information they had prior to the exam the better as it enabled them to be well prepared for the wide range of performance styles and subject matter chosen by students and also showed an understanding of the importance of thorough preparation for this performance paper.

Many examiners comment on both the thoughtful and often witty titles given to performances.

The content of devised performances was diverse as in 2011. The most effective work was when candidates had something they really wanted to communicate to their audience and had done research into their material. It was noticeable that many referred to work done in Unit 1 or earlier in the Programme of Study. There were 2 main approaches to the Assignment Brief (AB) for devised work. The most popular was to focus on one character and tell their story.

Examiners commented on these being positive examples of work seen in 2012 to meet the AB:

Choosing a well known personality such as Winston Churchill or Lady Gaga.

Taking several people such as the Pankhurst sisters and look at their influence on the suffragette movement.

Creating an imaginary character that also represented the lives of many also worked well as in the life of a child soldier in Sierra Leone.

Exploring contemporary issues by looking at those involved in the Summer Riots of 2011.

A very popular structure seen was to start with a funeral and then tell the story in flashback

The second approach was overall less successful. These were performances where all the students attempted to tell their story. This was felt to not allow enough time within the limits of the performance time to allow any in depth exploration of each individual role.

It was of particular note that much of the work this year was supported by considerable research into the life and times of the characters chosen and some centres included it or references to it in the information provided to the examiner.

As in 2011 successful work used a range of strategies for example monologue, freeze frame, flashback, abstract movement or physical theatre. Some centres used a range of performance skills such as dance, music, costuming and settings. In the majority of cases this enhanced the performances but there was some concern that it could detract from the individual student's performances.

Overwhelmingly examiners report that 'less is more' in supporting student achievement in devised performances.

However much of this work was felt to be innovative, challenging and thought provoking theatre as well as a GCSE examination.

Less effective work often tended to have a more naturalistic approach and linear narrative structure. There were examples of less coherent performances often because students were attempting too much. Reality television such as Big Brother or the many popular talent shows were used a starting point but these tended to produce less successful performances as they all too frequently became a copy or parody of the actual television programmes

As in 2011 there was concern that some groups had chosen roles to explore challenging and demanding subject matter but in the performance it was shown without enough understanding or respect and elicited an inappropriate response from the audience. Some examples given were domestic violence, addiction, terrorism and religious belief. Equally all the above examples were also seen to be the basis of mature, moving and excellent work.

All centres are reminded that the work seen is a GCSE examination. It is disappointing to report that some examiners had to report to the Business Assurance team in Edexcel work that they felt was inappropriate for GCSE students and audiences.

As in 2011 the majority of centres had ensured that group size and performance length requirements were met. Most groups were between 4 and 6 students producing a performance of around 20 minutes.

There was felt to be an increase in overlong performances. These in the main were groups of 3 or 4. The ASG gave clear guidance that groups should aim towards lower time limit Page 17 paragraph 3.5.

Centres are reminded that all examiners will stop marking at the maximum time limit.

Again in 2012 there were a number of very short performances that are self penalising. Some gave estimated performance times that matched the requirements while some listed the number of students for example between 4 and 6 and said the time would be in single figures. This can severely limit students' ability to meet the criteria. It was of note that some performances when seen in the recordings were even shorter than examiners had thought in the live work. Centres must address this time requirement.

There remains the concern that for some tight ensemble pieces using much group movement and choral vocal work it was a challenge for examiners to securely identify and mark each individual.

Examiners report that there were instances of very overlong performances and often these were seen in centres where there were only one or two performance groups. All centres are reminded that examiners stopped marking at the times given in the ASG page 17 Para 3.5.

Scripted Performance

There was a mixed response from examiners regarding the numbers of centres choosing this option with some areas reporting a real increase and some reporting 'none seen'.

Centres can chose to present complete short plays, extracts or adaptations. There were still a number of centres who did not appear to understand the demands of this option and the students were under prepared, in some cases sitting and attempting to read an extract from a play.

Examiners commented on the following being positive examples seen in 2012 to meet the AB:

Find Me with a focus on Verity

History Boys with a focus on selecting one or two of the boys

Frankenstein with a focus on Frankenstein and the Creature

Hard to Swallow with a focus on Catherine

Good Person with a focus on Shen Tei

Metamorphosis with a focus on Gregor or the family

The Crucible with a focus on Abigail, Elizabeth, John Proctor or any of the other girls

Shakers with a focus on either all four or taking one or two of the characters

As can be seen by the above there was evidence of challenging texts being performed with high levels of understanding and often considerable style. Other examples include Shakespeare both in extracts or using some excellent published adaptations to contemporary writers working with theatres such as The Royal Court or National Theatre Connections programme.

Centres which chose comedy texts were in a minority. As in the devised option centres whose students choose comedy sketches in the main written for film and television were less successful as this was all too often a poor and immature imitation. Texts such as Little Britain and Fawlty Towers were given as examples.

Scripted work that was overlong often meant that students lost focus and pace. Centres are reminded that marks can only be awarded within the time limits of this paper. See ASG page 17 Para 3.5

Examiners felt that some of this work was being used in another context and did not meet the requirements of this unit. Again this year there were some performances that had one or more non examination candidates these were usually extracts from a fully mounted production previously performed in another context. These tended to be very unsuccessful and centres should not

do this in future as all examiners seeing this work felt it disadvantaged students in the examination context. It is expected that the performances are prepared for the examination only.

As this was highlighted in the 2011 report it is disappointing that this happened again this year.

Again this year there were instances of students not turning up for the performance. Examiners felt that this most disadvantaged students offering scripted work as other students or teachers had to read in and this had an impact on the whole performance and students' achievements.

Combination of Devised and Scripted Performances

This remains a very popular option. Work was seen that covered the complete mark range. Play texts, and poetry were the most popular choices of stimulus and the final performance included both devised and original text. Examiners continue to report that this approach was supportive to all students giving them a clear basis that led to the final performances using the characters and lines from the original texts as well as devised scenes.

Examiners comment on these being positive examples of work seen in 2012 to meet the AB:

Blood Brothers with devised scenes after the deaths of Mickey and Edward.

Anne Frank with devised scenes involving the roles in the text after the war ended

Huis Clos/God's Waiting Room involving the lives of those waiting there

Blue Remembered Hills with scenes involving the parents that are not seen in the play

Dulce et Decorum Est with devised scenes of the soldiers at the front and the families left in England.

Contemporary accounts from the Titanic and extracts from the film script to explore the lives of those involved

The comments regarding scripted and devised performances also apply. Again it was felt this approach supported all students as it could give them a clear structure in relation to content style and form, defined roles and well crafted language to build their performances on.

Performance Support

This remains the least chosen option. Most examiners reported seeing no students again in 2012. It was felt that it was most often seen in centres with Performing Arts status where there were the facilities and resources needed to support this option.

The main concern was that centres were offering this as an option where the centres did not have the resources or the teachers the skills to teach this up to GCSE level. Because of the above there was some very poor work seen. These students frequently had no supporting evidence and sometimes refused to do a presentation. Some did not attend at all or left the exam before their group performance.

Many centres contacted Edexcel asking for support in preparing Performance Support students but it is the centres' responsibility to only allow students to make this choice if they can give them the support they need.

Centres are reminded that the presentation can be pre recorded and shown to the examiner before the performance. This worked well in several centres as it took the pressure off those students who were either anxious or also working with the group e.g. operating the lighting/sound.

It was felt that there was clear evidence of how well students achieving in the higher levels had been prepared for the presentations and supporting documentation. There was evidence of in depth research, a sense of working with the performers and available resources in order to produce in performance a contribution that reflects 40% of a GCSE course.

Lighting and Costume remain the most popular choices. Some candidates had good knowledge of and skills in using new technologies. There was an increase in the use of projection either to give information in a true Brechtian style or create atmosphere or environments. Much of this work was very impressive both technically and creatively.

The majority of performance groups work without a Performance Support candidate but can use sound, set, lighting and costume to enhance their performance. However there was some concern that some centres placed too great an emphasis on these elements and there was not enough focus on the actual individual performance work of the candidates.

Blackouts and Black Clothing. A New and an Old Concern.

This year many examiners commented on the increase of centres having numerous blackouts in the performances. Some examiners actually counted them and reported up to 16 being used in performances of around 20 minutes.

The concern was that in the vast majority of cases this was felt to disadvantage the performance students as they tended to lose focus. Often the timing was also far from accurate and either caused the performers to call out for lights or be caught unprepared when the lights came up.

Examiners were also concerned that in some cases the audience behaviour was affected and it resulted in inappropriate laughter and calling out comments that did not enhance the examination conditions

It can also be very difficult for examiners to maintain focus being plunged into darkness when they do not expect it.

As Principal Examiner I am requesting that all centres avoid in future series both blackouts and black clothing in order to support all students and examiners in having successful examination sessions.

This information is repeated from the 2011 Examiner Report as many centres found it helpful.

The Performance of Candidates in this Paper

High scoring work had of these characteristics:

- Well taught with close reference to the specification and Instructions for Conduct document.
- Reflected standard of 40% of a 5 term GCSE course
- Met all discrete criteria in relation to the descriptors
- Demonstrated in performance a considerable level of imagination
- Wide range of both movement and vocal skills seen in performance
- Roles were imaginative and highly convincing
- Performed with a sense of occasion to a suitable audience
- Understood that the performance was an examination
- Communicated with enthusiasm, passion and commitment
- Very well prepared and presented
- Clear ownership of the performance
- Devised work had a challenging and imaginative initial stimulus and was researched in depth
- Ensured work had a high level of correlation between the content and style/form
- Scripted work well edited and structured
- Complete security with lines/cues in scripted work
- Performances met the requirements of the Assignment Brief with thought and imagination

Middle scoring work had all or some of these characteristics:

- Often well taught but candidates had not put in enough individual effort
- Erratic attendance by some students had hampered group achievement
- Inappropriate stimulus material given
- Research into the content lacked depth
- Performances did not enable a range of vocal/movement skills to be demonstrated
- Roles were underdeveloped and lacked imagination
- The content was somewhat lacking
- Little consideration of style/form
- Too little teacher input during preparation
- Too little preparation time
- Too long preparation time
- Poor choice of text for student's ability
- Brief or overlong performances
- Scripted work had unimaginative adaptations dividing a longer script into meaningless sections
- Lacked focus in addressing the Assignment Brief

Low scoring work had some of these characteristics:

- Under prepared, some improvised on the day
- Very little evidence of use of vocal/movement skills
- Static
- Difficult to hear
- Lack of commitment to group performance
- Lack of focus
- Pedestrian
- Poor attendance by group members
- Under or over confident performers
- Unsuitable material for the skills of the students
- Little understanding of creating live performance
- Little evidence of any style/form
- Little content
- Repetitive or unstructured dialogue
- Lack of pace
- Often very brief
- Did not meet all criteria
- Inappropriate communication with some audience members
- Lack of group communication or connection with the audience
- Little evidence of considering and addressing the Assignment Brief

Consortium Centres

Again this year there were some difficulties with centres that had not completed the Consortium Information Forms available in the ASG 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 3 copies of separate register must be provided giving full details of 'home' centre name, number, candidate name and number.

A second DVD must be provided and this information must also be detailed on the DVD.

Small Centres

If centres have only 1 or 2 students for Unit 3 they will be required to record the performances and send the DVD and all other supporting documentation to Edexcel where it will be despatched and sent to a senior examiner for marking. This needs to be done ASAP after the performance and not by the final deadline date. Full details of the procedures can be found on the GCSE drama homepage with the Instructions to Overseas Centres as most of these centres also have to record.

Edexcel Feedback and Support to Centres

Results Plus

The breakdown for the marks in each of the criteria will be available to all centres as part of the free Results Plus service. This information will be available

on line on results day. Centres are advised to ensure they have the information they need from their examinations officer to access this.

Access to Scripts Service

As there are no scripts for this unit photocopies of only the individual examiner comment sheets are available. There is a charge for these and examinations officers will have the details of the procedures and deadline for this service.

Enquiries about Results

These are completed by members of the senior team using the written documentation and recordings provided by the centres and the examiner. They are requested and charged on an individual basis. Marks can be reduced as well as increased so student permission is needed before requesting this service.

Ask the Expert

This has been a very popular service in the last year as centres had many queries following the first examination of the specification. All queries are answered from home by The Principal Examiner and Moderator. Edexcel hopes to respond within 4 working days of receiving the query. Centres are advised to ensure that the correct email address is used GCSE Drama and the Unit is clearly indicated. This will help a swift response as it will not have to be reassigned to the correct expert.

Centres are reminded that this is an email service only and 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.

Training from Edexcel

Edexcel will have in 2012/13 both a programme of national face to face inset meetings, on line 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.

Subject Advisor

Drama now has a subject advisor, Paul Webster and most centres will already have heard from him, mainly through the on line newsletter. Paul is also available to answer queries regarding Drama GCSE.

Conclusion

It is positive to report that the standard of achievement by students in 2012 has remained in line with that in 2011 and there has been no change in the grade boundaries for this unit.

Students achieving in the 2 higher levels produced performances that reflected they had clearly been taught the specific skills required throughout the course. It was felt that marks in the lower levels were often symptomatic of pupil lack of

commitment or even disaffection rather than centre's not teaching the skills needed. However it was often mentioned by centres that this was the only GCSE taken by some students.

The range and diversity of centres and students involved in this specification indicates that this is a specification that has the flexibility for the widest range of candidates to achieve and for all teachers to bring their own skills and enthusiasms to the delivery of Unit 3.

It is a unique examination that enables candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of drama by demonstrating it in a performance. Examiners report again this year on the great pleasure it gives them to work with all those involved in this examination. Work seen was described as creative, challenging, thoughtful, engaging and wonderful.

Beyond the requirements of this unit the work done by centres to encourage creativity, confidence, leadership, working as a member of a group, meeting deadlines, making decisions, and working cooperatively will prove to be of great value to these drama students in their future lives.

It is both to the credit of the 2012 cohort of students but even more so to the numbers of creative and committed teachers who have worked with them that this examination has been again a success in 2012.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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