

# Examiner Report June 2007

GCE

## Drama and Theatre Studies 8113/9113

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## Unit 1 (6341)

### Exploration

#### Introduction

Candidates are required to complete a detailed study of two play texts chosen by the centre that allows them ample opportunity to consider the roles of performers, designers and directors. Candidates demonstrate their interpretation and understanding of the texts by exploring them in practical workshops and submitting a set of exploration notes.

All aspects of this unit have remained stable, from the demands it makes on the candidates right through to the grade boundaries. Almost all centres are confident in the delivery and the marking of this coursework unit. Each centre chooses the two texts to be explored and while many of the same texts are used, centres are realising that by choosing texts appropriate to their own knowledge of each particular cohort, they are able to provide a suitable and challenging start to the course that is unique to them.

Moderators observed that much of the written work was thorough and clearly met the specification requirements, although they did feel that approaches to this unit had become 'safe' rather than adventurous, which may relate to pressures on time. A significant number of candidates are still not referring to the practical work undertaken and yet it is clear that they have done it from the Records of Work provided by the teachers.

#### Requirements

The marks available in this coursework unit are given in equal measure for the candidate's practical work and their written exploration notes. The notes need to relate to elements 1 to 5 and provide the teacher with appropriate practical evidence to assess elements 6 to 10. Students are required to use appropriate material from their notes, sketches, diagrams made during the exploration process to complete the exploration notes. Teachers must ensure that it is the student's own unaided work.

Both texts studied are considered together when the teacher examiner gives the marks. The written elements 1 to 5 are given a maximum mark of 30, that is 30 marks across **both** texts. The practical elements 6 to 10 are given a maximum mark of 30, that is 30 marks across **both** texts. Therefore, the total mark for this unit is out of 60.

There is detailed guidance given to centres in the document referred to as the ICE (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination). This document is updated every year with all the essential forms and instructions. It is needed for all the units and centres should download it from the website as soon as it is available in November. The web address is:

<http://www.edexcel.org.uk/VirtualContent/69194.pdf>

Unfortunately, moderators did report that in general, the administration of this unit was not good, and it was felt that some centres were no longer referring to the ICE.

## Exploration Notes

Exploration notes are generally detailed and represent a thorough exploration of both texts. There are many different approaches to producing the notes, although in the main they are word processed. The exception to this is when candidates include drawings, sketches and diagrams and very often in element 4, visual aural and spatial, A3 paper with much of the work done by hand. Centres are reminded that this is a Drama and Theatre Studies specification not English Literature, and this should be reflected in candidates' notes.

There is a balance to be struck between how much input the teacher should have on any coursework unit. Clearly, this is a taught unit and it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that candidate's notes are well structured, relevant and of course, marked.

The use of writing frames can be useful but only if they are totally open-ended. There was a feeling that in some cases, candidates had been confined to a set format for their exploration notes resulting in work that was formulaic and very similar.

For moderation purposes work that is well annotated/marked, collated in element order rather than play order, **not** in plastic wallets/folders but clearly marked with the candidate's name and stapled firmly together is ideal.

## Plot and Sub-Plot

This is usually the most complete element, and most candidates are able to give a detailed account of the plot. However, the more interesting and higher scoring work comes from those candidates who are able to comment on the plot with an awareness of significant moments. The term sub-plot does not always suit every play chosen but centres adapt to this by encouraging students to write about the consequences of the plot, particularly in the light of practical work they may have completed.

## Language

This should **not** be a character study. This section requires analysis of the language of the play overall. This is often demonstrated by then focussing on a pertinent extract. Many candidates successfully use an annotated extract although care should be taken that the printed material does not take up too much of the available space. Quite often different approaches and a range of language exercises that arise from practical work give a successful and personal response to this element. This is one of the most obvious places for candidates to refer to their own practical work.

## Form and Structure

This tends to be done exceptionally well with an excellent understanding of how the plays are structured, or very basically with little or no connection to the task. One method used is to encourage candidates to discuss the structure of the play by referring to dramatic models e.g. Epic Theatre or Aristotle's Poetics. This can be very successful, although it does depend on the text chosen. The choice of text can aid understanding of form and structure and some centres choose texts that allow them to teach this as a foundation to build on later.

## Visual, Aural and Spatial

This section elicited some beautiful, engaging and creative responses both with and without sketches and diagrams. This section is about the candidate's vision for staging the play and many centres encouraged their students to let their imaginations and projected budgets run wild. As long as they can justify their decisions, candidates should be allowed to explore a wide range of possibilities in this section. Some centres seemed to discourage students from developing ideas not implicit in the stage directions and this was limiting. Unfortunately, responses were often less creative when candidates had seen a production of the play before writing this section and this usually resulted in a review rather than their own personal response. It can be very useful for candidates to research some performance history of the play but all photographs must be acknowledged. A small number of candidates (possibly design candidates in other units) did create model sets or even real sets which were included in photographic form and when annotated or justified proved successful.

## Contextualising the play

Many centres now call this **social, cultural and historical** which makes it clearer to candidates what is required of them when writing about this element. Like Form and Structure it tends to be less well done, although some centres are finding a variety of innovative ways to make it relevant to students. A list of biographical details is meaningless as it tends to be applied indiscriminately. This section caused the greatest concern with regards to plagiarism and unfortunately more candidates than ever before were reported for plagiarism. Again, the choice of text could prove a good vehicle for teaching candidates the significance of contextualising a play. When it was well done, this section was exciting, and informative.

## Records of Work

This is an essential document as it allows the moderator to understand the practical work that has been taught. Edexcel has resisted prescribing how this should be done as teachers autonomy should be respected, and in the main, documentation is good. However, there were more instances this year of centres providing a terms work as a series of scribbled bullet points which is unhelpful and does not support the students. Many teachers have substantial 'schemes of work' and these are perfectly acceptable. It is regarded as good, if not normal practice, when the teacher makes a note on some planned activities stating that the lesson did not go according to plan. This shows that the practical work is flexible and that the students have been allowed to explore beyond the teacher's plans.

## Teacher Examiner Comments

Centres must make sure that the teacher-examiner has adequate training to administer this unit and mark it according to the national standard. It is a requirement in the code of practice that teacher-examiners attend a standardisation meeting when they are either new to the specification or feel in need of retraining. The marks for the unit are recorded on the DTS1a, known as the teacher comment sheet. Marks and comments are best completed in pen or permanent ink and comments need to support the marks awarded. Comments were occasionally too brief and did not support the candidates. Specific and detailed comments that allow the moderator to 'see' some of the things the candidate has done are most helpful.

## Recorded evidence.

This is now the second year that the ICE has stated that DVDs are acceptable for submission. The split between VHS and DVD was almost equal this year and will increase towards DVDs as the technology progresses in its favour. However, DVDs are only useful if they are playable. There are two main issues with the evidence that is submitted. The first is that the camera must be well placed to capture the essence of the lesson, the light must be good for visibility and the tape/disc used must be new. Centres must not identify candidates for the Unit 1 recording which is why it is fine to have a fixed tripod sympathetically placed that shows students are well focussed on a range of tasks and engaged with the texts. Both texts should be transferred on to one tape/DVD, checked by the teacher and have an accompanying time sheet. The second issue is with the format of DVDs. They must be playable in a standard DVD player (not a computer). No other format is acceptable.

Centres must have the right equipment to make recordings, be they VHS or DVD if they are to enter this specification. Filmed evidence is required for 4 out of the 6 units and centres who fail to do this are not supporting their candidates.

## Administration

It is very disappointing to report that overall the standard of administration from centres was considerably worse than in previous series. On many occasions, moderators had to contact centres for missing work, incomplete forms, missing recordings, the work of the highest and lowest candidate and incorrect options. There was also an increase in work arriving late and centres are reminded that work that arrives after the deadline could be refused. Similarly, a considerable amount of work arrived without adequate postage being paid or even no postage. The result of all of this was that a lot of extra time was spent by moderators, examinations officers and teachers chasing up these things.

Fortunately, there were still many centres who had followed all the directions in the ICE document and submitted the work of their candidates in perfect order.

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

- Candidates were well taught throughout the entire unit and supported by the teacher(s)
- The texts chosen were suitable to the centres own candidates and offered suitable stretch and challenge at AS level
- There was evidence that much practical exploration had taken place and candidates had been encouraged to be creative and imaginative in their approaches to the texts
- Top band exploration notes were a mix of the candidate's own practical experiences backed up by research from a good range of sources including the teacher
- Candidates had been taught how to effectively use source material, particularly the internet. Candidates were then able to make their notes uniquely their own
- Exploration notes made full use of the available number of pages but did not exceed the page limit as candidates were encouraged to be concise
- Diagrams and sketches were carefully annotated/labelled and added a great deal to all aspects of the candidate's notes
- Key lessons were delivered that allowed the candidates to focus on each of the ten assessment elements
- Recorded sessions were well focussed and showed a range of purposeful workshop activities with the emphasis on the candidates working, rather than the teacher
- Teacher Examiner comments were detailed and specific and allowed the moderator to see examples of how and why marks had been awarded

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

- Candidates had not spent enough time working practically on the texts which was often borne out by brief records of work
- The texts chosen were pitched at the wrong level i.e. better suited to study at GCSE level or too avant garde for particular students to fully understand

- The texts chosen were too similar, possibly by the same author, and did not offer sufficient variation to maintain candidates' interest
- Candidates rarely referred to their own practical work in their notes
- Notes were either too short or too long, often with incomplete sections
- Writing frames had resulted in work that was very similar and often lacking in understanding

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

- Inappropriate choice of texts
- Incomplete notes
- Lack of suitable practical activities
- No reference to practical exploration within the notes
- Little or no evidence of teacher annotation/support for the candidate
- Poorly organised centres or a lack of specialist staff that resulted in candidates being left to their own devices

## Unit 2 (6342) Text in Performance I

### Introduction

Much of this report will reiterate comments made in previous years. In preparing candidates for this unit, the specification must be read with close reference to the Instructions for Conduct for the current examination series (ICE). Each centre chooses the play texts, options taken by candidates and audience. This is a unique externally examined unit that has elements of both an examination and coursework as the criteria remains the same each year

Overall, the examining team reported that the standards of previous series had been maintained. It is clear that the majority of centres entering candidates for this exam have teacher/directors who have prepared candidates for this unit in previous exam series. Indeed, it is noted that a significant number have done so since the first year of the examination. There is certainly a high level of understanding of the requirements of this unit and the majority of candidates are well prepared to both achieve in the examination and enjoy the experience of live theatre performance.

Some examiners felt that there was a decrease in candidates being poorly prepared by centres for this unit and producing work that did not meet AS standard. However, there was evidence of candidates not making the individual effort needed to achieve at a higher level. In larger centres the tendency seemed to be that the marks within a performance group often fell into one or two mark ranges.

However, as in previous series there were many candidates who produced work that not only met the requirements of the unit but exceeded the AS standard for performance. These candidates were awarded full marks and often examiners noted that in fact they exceeded full marks.

### Requirements

Despite these being reported in considerable detail in previous examiners' reports, the same issues of concern were reported by the majority of the examining team. Centres must ensure they put in place the requirements for this unit as detailed in the ICE. This essential document was only available on the Edexcel website for 2007 and will be so for the remainder of this examination. A number of centres used the 2006 booklet, or even earlier. The ICE is revised each year in the light of both examiners' and teachers' suggestions to ensure that the administration of the exam is clear to all centres. It also includes all the documentation needed for this exam. Centres must download copies of 2008 ICE. The specification is also available from the Edexcel website and Edexcel Publications.

## Group Size and Performance Time

These are now clearly stated in both the ICE and on the DTS2b form that must be signed by the teacher. Many examiners report that this was signed by the teacher but that the estimated performance time given was considerably exceeded. If centres do not comply with this requirement it may disadvantage candidates. Examiners are clearly instructed to only award marks within the set time limits. Centres are reminded that examiners are not required to remain in the examination after the maximum time for each performance. When reminded of time limits by the examiner, some centres maintained that in previous series this had not applied. This is incorrect.

The main concern was when performances were clearly overlong and some candidates had not appeared at all until some time after the maximum time limit, or when strong performances could not be awarded marks for the final scenes. Centres are reminded once again that this is an examination and that very short or overlong performances do not meet the requirements of this unit.

There was increased concern in 2006 that Unit 2 performances were being used in other contexts, for example NT Connections or larger music and drama evenings. It is good to report that this was less so in 2007 and the vast majority of centres were ensuring that the performance the examiner attends meets examination requirements.

However, examiners report an increase in non-examination candidates taking part in examination performances. This clearly disadvantages candidates as these students take up time and examiner focus that must be for examination candidates. Although most were supportive there were instances where their work did not advantage AS candidates.

It is also a requirement to provide a copy of the text as performed. Examiners report that there was an increase in centres not including the text often because they felt the examiner would know it, or sending the complete uncut text. It is perfectly acceptable to send the published text with cuts clearly indicated. Some centres sent the text within a collection and this is also acceptable. A few centres requested the return of the text from the examiner. This is not possible as the texts must be enclosed with all other material for this unit. With such a wide range of texts being offered for this exam, it is important that examiners are well prepared and check the text as performed in advance.

## Timing of the Examination

A major improvement that centres have requested for several years was achieved this year. The majority of examiners received their allocations earlier than before and were instructed to contact centres as near the beginning of the spring term as possible. Many examiners report that some centres did not contact them for some time despite several repeat phone calls or emails. Some centres' reaction was that it was far too early for them to agree a date. This often led to the first choice of date or time for the centre not being possible.

Centres must have some flexibility in arranging the examination date and time. Edexcel cannot find alternative examiners for centres who insist on rigid times and dates and centres must not contact Edexcel direct as it results in unnecessary work for the examiners and the Edexcel Deployment Team.

This year the majority of Unit 2 exams took place before the middle of May. As Unit 2 is the basis for 50% of the marks in Unit 3, examiners felt that previous comments regarding candidates having too little time to prepare thoroughly for Unit 3 had been addressed by centres.

The vast majority of performances took place in the evenings, giving a sense of occasion and enabling an appropriate audience to attend. Some examiners were concerned about the audience again in 2007. This is an examination that happens to be a performance but it is the examination requirements that must be the focus. When arrangements are made with the examiner, the timings of performances, identification of candidates and consideration of marks must be agreed. These arrangements must be made in advance and adhered to on the visit. Examiners report being kept waiting due to late arrival of audience members and being rushed by centres between performances and this needs to be addressed by centres.

### **Audiences**

Centres must ensure that an audience that will support the performance is present. Examiners report this year that there were instances of those attending not doing so. Examples include using mobile phones, calling out inappropriate remarks or heckling candidates, moving about the performance space or not understanding the nature of the performance. Many audience members were sat too close to examiners and had not been told that the examiner could not engage in any dialogue with them. However, the majority of audiences engaged with the performances.

### **Choice of Texts**

It is gratifying to report that many examiners report positively about the variety and suitability of texts seen this year. The choice of text to enable candidates to meet the requirements of the examination and their skills and interests is the foundation for achievement in this unit. Many centres have now been preparing candidates for this exam since 2001 and it is clear there are a number of texts that work very well. Centres are returning to them but giving them a new and unique interpretation. Examiners report again this year that much new and exciting contemporary work, both written in English and in translation, was seen. Teachers are to be commended for introducing candidates and examiners to new texts.

Plays that have the episodic form worked particularly well giving the teacher director the flexibility to choose episodes that supported all candidates. However, it was equally true that there were many examples of more formally structured texts, for example Greek tragedy or the three act well made play given exciting and innovative interpretations that engaged audiences and candidates. There was very little musical theatre seen this year but examiners

report on excellent performances of 'Oh What a Lovely War' and 'Blood Brothers', which were also performed without the music.

As in previous reports, stylised, physical and ensemble approaches to performance work was felt to advantage candidates at this level. More naturalistic performances often started well but could lack pace and dynamism. This may be due to candidates not rising to the challenge of this style of performance within a live theatre context.

Centres are reminded that the choice of text is their responsibility. Again this year some examiners overheard comments or were questioned by audience members regarding the suitability of the content or the language of the text. It was felt that there remains a concern with centres choosing texts that present too great a challenge in subject matter and/or style and were beyond the skill level or understanding of ideas or emotions of most AS level candidates. Texts that some centres may consider less challenging at AS level could produce work not of AS standard but equally could be high achieving due to imaginative direction and staging.

A major concern remains with centres that choose a full length play and cast each act or group of scenes with a different performance group. There is no doubt that this disadvantages candidates in both Unit 2 and Unit 3, as they are unable to show an understanding of the complete text. It is also felt that taking a role that limits their achievement disadvantages some candidates. It was also a rather confusing and unsatisfactory experience for the audience.

Despite last year's report, there are still a few centres that have candidates involved throughout a full-length play but designate which section candidates must be awarded marks. This is not good practice as it is a challenge for examiners to have the correct focus on the examined candidates. Most of these performances greatly exceeded the time limit for the number of candidates. It also makes too great a demand on candidates to be involved in performance work for which they cannot be awarded marks. These performances often included non-examination candidates.

### **The Teacher Director's Interpretation**

Most examiners report that the majority of centres understand that along with the choice of text, this is a key aspect of success in this unit. Successful performances demonstrated that candidates had been engaged in the overall concept and ongoing directorial decisions. Less successful performances often seemed not to go much beyond cutting the text, candidates learning the lines and delivering them.

Again this year, it is very disappointing to report a number of centres that do not provide written notes, or provide notes that do not make clear their intentions. The most useful notes are written by the candidates and director and provide a foundation for the notes written by the candidates for their Unit 5 work in the A2 year. In contrast, there are some notes that are far too long and give information that has only limited relevance to the actual interpretation of the text. Often, these suggest performance work and skills that are not of AS standard and may seek to make far too great a demand on candidates.

Centres should consider that the notes are used by the examiner to look for the key elements in each performance. Notes may refer to understanding of style, the work of practitioners or influences from performances seen. Many refer to the effect they hope to have on the audience and give reasons for the choices made in the staging. There was an increase in centres giving details of how roles are to be shown in performance. Examiners found this helpful.

### **Performance Candidates**

Again in 2007, this was the option taken by the majority of candidates. Work seen was across the mark range. Many candidates work with such skill, enthusiasm and commitment that many performances were seen that fully deserve marks in the top bands.

It is good to report again this year that all examiners commented on the great pleasure they have experienced examining the majority of performances. Teachers and centres have given the majority of candidates a well-structured preparation period and a final examination that had a real sense of both occasion and theatre.

The main concern of examiners is that there seems to be insufficient teaching of performance skills in preparation for the exam. This year it was felt that many candidates had poor or underdeveloped vocal skills. There was too often a sense of them talking to each other rather than understanding the importance of projection in live theatre. In contrast, physical theatre skills were felt to often be of a very high standard.

There was an increase in candidates showing good understanding of ensemble work and giving their all throughout the performance. Centres are reminded that examiners can only award marks for the criteria printed in the specification. Performances that enabled examiners to concentrate on these were most suitable for examination success. There was felt to be some increase in the use of costume, make up and effects which was often felt to have taken candidate's focus away from their individual performance.

There were again instances where candidates were not present at the examination performance. Other candidates, students from other year groups, ex students and teachers all stood in to support candidates. Their support and the ability of the 2007 candidates to maintain focus was commented on positively by examiners present in these circumstances. Centres should contact the examiner as soon as possible in advance to give details should this situation arise in future.

### **Design Candidates**

The number of design candidates was felt to be very much in line with last year but marks were less polarised. There was some excellent work however, some candidates had not understood the requirements of this option and produced poorly considered and executed work that failed to add anything to the overall performance. There was again some evidence that a very small number of

candidates attempted to pass off (as their own), work that had been produced by others in the performance group. Centres are reminded it is their responsibility to ensure that all design work presented for examination is the candidate's own.

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

The presentations to the examiner varied greatly, ranging from some candidates who failed to attend the performance and others who were unprepared and either refused to make a presentation or improvised one. These candidates often had poor documentation. Some candidates gave poor presentations but their work was effective in performance. Centres have the option of pre-recording the presentations which the examiner must view prior to the performance. This may also advantage candidates who are actively involved with the performance e.g. lighting or costume.

It must be noted that the vast majority of performance groups have no design candidates but work with the teacher director to ensure that the performance values enhance the work.

All design options are fairly equally represented. There was a clear increase in candidates using available technology to provide often very impressive projection and sound work.

There remain a few centres that fail to understand this is most importantly an examination, and by over elaborate staging, inappropriate ideas and/or poor execution actually disadvantage performance candidates.

## **Administration**

It is very disappointing to report that overall the standard of administration of this paper before, during and after the examination visit was considerably worse than last year. Centres must ensure that this is completed as detailed in the ICE 2008. The centres that completed the administration were often exemplary and understood that it needs to be well prepared.

Again, a great deal of the required paperwork was incomplete, inaccurate, late or non-existent until the examiner's arrival in the centre. Examiners are required to come well prepared for the examination and cannot do so without this vital information.

Examiners are instructed to arrive 30 minutes prior to the first performance/presentation so any changes can be considered at that time. Many centres did not send maps, expecting examiners to find the centre directions on the Internet. This was unhelpful as, particularly in the evening, examiners could not easily locate the actual venue of the examination on the site. More than one centre held the exam at another venue but had not informed the examiner.

Examiners report wandering around sites attempting to find some one who can direct them to the examination venue within the centre.

There was also concern that the time management of the examination by the centres was poor at times. Examiners expect to examine at least 18 candidates in a 3-hour session. Some examiners arrived at the centre at the agreed time and were waiting for a considerable time before meeting the candidates. Overlong performances and late running meant that some examiners and candidates were completing an examination around midnight. There was equal concern that some examiners were given very little time to consider their marking between performances. A private place to mark was often not provided.

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

It would be unfair to give the impression that this lack of thought applied to the majority of centres. Most completed all administration very well and the examination was run with professionalism throughout.

Again this year thanks must be given to centres, where the examiner was accompanied by members of the senior team. This is an important part of the ongoing monitoring of examiner. At all times, this extra requirement was dealt with by most centres with understanding. Although these visits should not have effected the running time of the examination in some cases it did occur and Edexcel apologises for this.

### **The Importance of the Recording of the Performances/Presentations**

It is felt that some centres still do not understand the importance of the very best possible recording being made of all performances and presentations. In order to maintain the standards of the examination, examiners work is monitored throughout the marking period and a great deal of centres' work is viewed by the senior team on video/dvd alongside examiner's notes. Centres should be aware that senior examiners may need to view the recorded performances after the exam.

Unfortunately again this year, the quality of the recorded work was worse than in previous exam series. Too often the camera was not placed close to the examiner and was frequently so far back from the performance that the candidates could not be identified. Another common mistake was when the examiner and audience heads took up most of the frame. If there is a large performance space and scenes are performed in different areas the camera can pan to record the work. If the person operating the camera knows the piece some judicious use of close ups can be useful in capturing individual performances.

Design presentations must be made to the camera and the examiner will sit next to it. Some examiners felt that candidates expected them to ask them questions as they looked at the documentation. Examiners will look at this evidence after the presentation but will not question candidates. Design presentations can be pre-recorded and will be viewed by the examiner prior to the performance along with the documentation.

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

Fewer centres completed the time sheet well. This is most important for the ease of finding performances or presentations when looking for candidate's work. It is also important that centres comment on the quality of the recording. Many centres realised that the recording did not capture the performance well or had incomplete recordings. Some centres did not complete this at all.

Centres must check all performances/presentations in their entirety for the correct timings and the quality of the recording. This was clearly not done by many centres. Missing or poor quality recordings of performances mean that work cannot be checked or re-marked.

Centres may submit work on DVD. Examiners and centres welcomed this as, when correctly presented, the quality of the recordings can be excellent and is easily accessible but there were considerable problems again this year. Centres must ensure that the DVD can be played on a standard domestic player. Examiners will not use computers to view the work. Also each presentation/performance must be given a chapter.

The main problem again this year was that many centres failed to send the recording to the visiting examiner within seven working days. Examiners spent much time contacting centres trying to obtain the recording and many were not sent at all. Written documentation had to be sent to Edexcel without the recording and Enquiries About Results will not be possible.

Many centres sent excellent recordings and there seemed to be an increase in those produced either by professional companies or highly skilled operators within centres. Centres should consider the value of having a permanent record of this work and ensure that the best quality recording is made.

### **Identification of Candidates on the Recordings**

Despite concerns with other aspects of administration this was one area that many centres had ensured they completed well. Without exception, examiners commented on how less stressful it was for all involved if candidate identification was swift to complete. It also assisted the monitoring of work throughout the process.

Centres must ensure that all candidates introduce themselves immediately before their performance or presentation, as it will appear on the recording. This can be pre-recorded and edited by the centre ensuring candidates appear as they will in performance. Design candidates must state clearly and slowly the centre name and number followed by their name, candidate number, chosen

skill(s), and the performance title and group number. It can be helpful if they have the centre name and number, their name and candidate number written clearly on paper and held up to the camera.

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

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

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

Centres are strongly encouraged to provide the visiting examiner with a group colour photograph for each performance on arrival prior to the examination.

On the examiner candidate mark sheets candidates should give detailed written descriptions of how they will appear in the performance, both physical appearance and costume. Small head and shoulder shots must not be attached to the form as they have proved to be of limited use in aiding identification and can be time consuming and expensive for centres.

### **Issues of Concern Feedback 2006**

For the first time in response to examiners' concerns that many centres did not complete the administration well examiners completed these forms which were all reviewed by Edexcel and sent direct to Examination Officers. The comments referred only to administrative concerns and not the performance of candidates. In some cases it is good to report that some centres responded positively, in other centres the same or different errors were repeated in 2007. This feedback will be repeated again in 2007. Centres will be monitored to check the concerns over the 2 years.

### **The Performance of Candidates in this Unit**

**High scoring work showed some of these features:**

- Candidates had been well taught with close reference to the specification and ICE 2007
- Candidates had been taught performance skills
- The teacher understood the importance of the director's role
- There was a clear and detailed overall concept, often a collaboration between candidates and teacher/director
- Candidates had been well directed
- Candidates made reference to their understanding of how theatre works from Unit 1 and sometimes GCSE drama performance work

- Candidates had gained knowledge from seeing a range of theatre performances as a member of the audience
- The text was appropriate for AS standards, challenging and engaged their interest
- An appropriate and supportive audience engaged with the performance
- Candidates produced work that met the assessment objectives and criteria for this unit
- Candidates were given enough but not too much to achieve in performance
- The examination had a sense of occasion
- Performances met the time requirements
- Candidates were very well prepared and had experienced a well structured rehearsal process
- Candidates demonstrated commitment, enthusiasm and passion
- The performance reflected 40% of their AS year in terms of preparation time

**Middle scoring work showed some of these features:**

- Well taught but candidates had not given enough individual commitment
- Erratic attendance hampered group achievement
- Texts were too simplistic or too challenging for candidate s' ability
- Preparation and rehearsal time was not used effectively possibly, too little or too much
- Performances were too long or too short
- Candidates had less secure performance skills
- Candidates' understanding of how live theatre works was somewhat limited
- Performance space did not support the live performance
- Audience was not fully supportive or aware of the examination element

**Low scoring work showed some of these features:**

- Work was under prepared
- Little understanding of the demands of creating live performance work
- Performances very brief
- Lack of security with lines, cues and moves. Some candidates read from scripts
- Candidates had not been given clear direction
- Candidates were over or under confident
- Inappropriate texts were chosen for candidate and AS skill level
- Performances did not meet the objectives or criteria of this unit
- Inappropriate or small audience (only examiner and teacher) present

### **Consortium Centres**

Again this year there were some difficulties with centres that had not completed the Consortium Information Forms available in the ICE document. The completed forms must be sent to Edexcel as early as possible in the academic year. If a candidate is being examined at a different centre to that registered at the examiner must be informed beforehand and 2 copies of a separate register must

be provided giving full details of 'home' centre name, number, candidate name and number. This information must also be detailed on the DVD or videotape.

## Conclusion

As in previous reports the concerns detailed in this report could be addressed if all centres referred closely to the Specification and ICE documentation.

Centres are reminded that Edexcel offers a national programme of Inset courses led by members of the Senior Examining Team. Edexcel can also provide individual support by the Senior Examining Team through Customised Inset. Details are on the Edexcel website.

This remains a highly successful unit that achieves a great deal beyond its requirements as the AS Text in Performance I. Examiners continue to comment on the excellence, excitement, power and professionalism of much of the work presented by candidates. Examiners and audiences have again this year been amused, moved, made to think and even reconsider their views of plays and the messages they bring to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Much of the credit for this work, that will long be remembered after the AS results are published, is due to the commitment, knowledge, understanding and passion of the teacher directors who work with dedication to enable a still growing number of candidates have a rich and creative experience preparing for and completing this unit.

Much of this report reflects comments in previous series however it is much to the credit of both the stable and experienced examining team and those working in centres that the work presented for this unit retains the standard of previous series. 2008 will be the final Unit 2 examination in this format and the examining team greatly look forward to the variety, excitement of and sharing in the candidate's achievements in creating 21<sup>st</sup> century theatre performances.

## Unit 3 (6343) Text in Context I

### Introduction

Candidates are required to respond to 3 questions in Section A and 3 questions in Section B. Section A requires the evaluation of the Unit 2 Performance with candidates supporting responses with Context Summary Notes. Section B requires the evaluation of a live performance, with candidates supporting responses with Performance Analysis Notes.

Each question is divided into an a) or b) choice. In total candidates answer 6 questions, with each answer gaining up to 10 marks. This Unit requires candidates to answer 'critically and analytically about drama'.

Centres entering candidates for retakes of Unit 3 are reminded that Section A must be written in relation to the Unit 2 performance. Whilst Unit 4 or Unit 5, may be immediate for those candidates, they do not give the same experience as Unit 2. Responses to Section B may be based on any performance seen during the duration of the course.

### Electronic Marking

This is the first series for Drama and Theatre Studies for our scripts to be marked online by examiners.

Centres are reminded of the following to assist in the process for next year:

- Answers should be completed in black ink - including diagrams. This will assist in the scanning process.
- Notes must not be included with the scripts, these must be retained in centres
- Candidates should be advised to write within the given spaces only, and not to write outside the borders.
- Should additional paper be required then that should be secured within the pages of the booklet to avoid it becoming separated.
- The page allocation indicates the general length of responses we might expect for this unit in order for the marks to be accessed.
- Each Question is marked as an item and probably marked by a different examiner. It is possible in this unit for each complete script to be marked by 6 different examiners. There is an implication here in preparing students for responding to the questions.

### General

Section B responses were generally felt to be better than Section A this year, although there were some notable exceptions to this but candidates were clearly inspired by outstanding and/or stimulating performances of, amongst others, 'Equus', 'King Lear', 'Macbeth', 'The Tempest', Tim Supple's 'Dream', 'The Glass Menagerie', 'The Woman in Black', 'The Seafarer', 'Cymbeline', 'Hysteria' and 'A Matter of Life and Death'.

There was evidence again this year of a sense of distancing and objectivity from candidates in Section A, which reflected the experience from previous years where candidates removed themselves from the sense of being part of the company creating Unit 2.

There were exceptions to this with candidates putting themselves into the centre of their responses and reflecting upon their experiences with their groups. The more successful answers from candidates balanced personal and group, putting the 'I' within the 'we' of the experience. There were some well-defined responses from design students notable in this series and, overall, a supportive use of diagrams was very much in evidence across a range of centres. This was pleasing to see.

Critical/analytical skills were once again clearly not in place for a large number of candidates, A large number of responses were well presented but descriptive and did not always focus upon the demands of the question or, offer any evidence that the Context Summary Notes and Performance Analysis Notes at the disposal of the candidates had been utilised.

Responses in Section A often lacked a sense (or, indeed, an understanding of) of a Director's Concept/Interpretation at times, even, in some cases, with candidates apparently operating in isolation in the creation of Unit 2 and writing about 'self-directing' and about how they 'did not have a director for this unit'. There was unfortunately clear evidence of this again and once more centres are reminded that Section A is written in response to the candidate's Unit 2 experience within a Director's Interpretation of a text in performance.

There was welcome evidence, however, of centres where candidates have been clearly involved with the director in the process of creating Unit 2 within a Director's Concept/Interpretation, enabling them to offer constructive responses to Section A. Where the process of Unit 2 was positively used as a preparation for this Section in Unit 3 candidates appreciably performed better and were able to reflect upon the process as well as the performance.

There were clear examples of exciting and interesting work on a range of texts that included 'The Trial', 'Find Me', 'West', 'Grimm Tales', 'Top Girls', 'Blood Wedding', 'Two', 'Our Country's Good', 'Woyzeck', 'Road', 'The House of Bernarda Alba' and 'The Sea' among many others.

The attention of centres is drawn once again this year to two specific sections of the specification with reference in particular to Section A of Unit 3.

Page 26 states that:

*"Unit 3 is linked with the play performed in Unit 2 and teaching for the unit needs to happen before, during and after the practical performance."*

Page 43/44 details the Unit and its focus and states, in part:

*“Section A on the paper will require students to be aware of how the characters were presented in the play performed in Unit 2 and be able to discuss other ways in which they might be portrayed and to what effect. Similarly, students will be able to discuss the ideas that appeared to be central to the play and show an awareness that different interpretations of these ideas may be made in the process of moving from text to performance.”*

There was evidence of candidates being able to respond to these two points. It is often the first word of the question that shapes the awarding of marks: *discuss*, *evaluate*, *analyse*, and it is often this word that candidates do not pick up on in their responses which immediately has an effect on their ability to earn marks at the higher level.

Section B responses often did not offer enough of an overview of the performance under discussion, with little evidence again this year of the notes being fully utilised to answer the questions.

Candidates in general still seem to be struggling with the idea that this Unit requires more than for them to use their Context Summary Notes and Performance Analysis Notes to *report* on the drama experience.

Worryingly, very few candidates appear to have been encouraged to reflect upon the Unit 2 experience after the event to enable them to have a sense of understanding of how the performance actually worked in relation to their audience. There were some clear examples of talkback and survey use by candidates and this, coupled with a personal reflection often provided opportunities to access the marks.

Section A, in part, asks for this reflection on the process and performance of Unit 2 in relation to the audience, in the same way as Section B asks for a reflection of the performance seen as a member of the audience.

It is always a difficult balance for centres to make appropriate judgements for Unit 2 performance dates. The evidence for this series is that a significant number of centres performed Unit 2 towards the end of the examination period which did not appear to leave sufficient time for preparation for Unit 3. Ideally, within the holistic structure of the specification Unit 3 should be a feature of work across the whole of the AS year.

The short burst of answers requires a particular skill from candidates if responses are to be creative and uninhibited within the overall structure of the Unit. Some overlap of ideas across the responses in each section is inevitable, which is why those candidates who were able to focus upon the demands of the particular questions were more successful than those who tried to write at length about everything.

Candidates who did write at length on each question were not always focussed and therefore did not necessarily gain the most marks for their responses. It is difficult

to decide how long an answer needs to be within the context of the time allowed for each question within the paper. It is a skill that candidates will need to develop as they go through the course to enable them to meet the demands of this Unit. The new booklet format of the exam paper gives some indication of the general length of responses - but this is an indication, not a requirement.

There is a clear place for preparation for this Unit, with candidates tackling similar questions on a regular basis, perhaps in 20 minute bursts of time to help develop analytical, evaluative and discussion skills.

Candidates were generally able to describe effectively the contribution they made to the Unit Two performance and to offer observations on the live performance seen. Where there were major deficits within the Unit they appeared to come from the inability of candidates to write 'critically and analytically about drama' or to 'discuss' in relation to the questions asked, particularly in Section A, leading to responses which were unable to gain the higher marks.

Where candidates were unable to achieve marks it tended to be where they did not appear to understand the demands of the question and simply presented information from the support material. Some candidates did not appear to pick up on the specific demands of the question in terms of 'one' example of... or 'two' examples of.... At times there was a sense of candidates answering the question that they wished they had been asked, rather than the question that was actually set. The use of the phrase 'the medium of drama' appeared to deter candidates from tackling that particular question which, at this level of study, is surprising.

Once again this year the vast majority of candidates wrote in continuous prose and only a tiny proportion of candidates did not finish the paper. Some candidates completed the booklet and used additional sheets, others struggled with 2 sides per answer. The vast majority were somewhere between these two extremes with the booklet nearly full being around the norm. However, there is no easy way to quantify this. An answer which addresses the question does not have to be lengthy but it does have to expand from the notes to allow the examiner to see that the candidate has understood the experience in relation to the question.

The choice of questions made by candidates appeared to be centre based again this year, reflecting perhaps approaches to this Unit from centres that were more group than individual based. There is nothing wrong with this and there were exceptions to this approach but there is nothing to preclude centres from preparing candidates in this way. There is clear evidence that the choice of play for each section does have an impact on the questions the candidates choose to answer. There were some who struggled with 'Woman In Black' in relation to the questions, for example, where others really grasped the theatrical conventions of the piece. It is clearly the approach to the material that enables candidates to be able to access the marks.

Centres are reminded once again that Context Summary Notes and Performance Analysis Notes should **not** be sent to the examiner but retained in a secure place by the centre. A few each year are still being sent with the scripts. And they cannot be returned.

The most popular questions in 2007 were: 1a, 2a and 5b, with the other questions receiving a fair balance of responses.

## Section A

It was easier to identify performances in this examinations series as the majority of centres had reminded candidates to include details of performance at the start of the Section. The space given in the question and answer booklet encouraged this too. Some candidates, however, did not name either performance or their role within it throughout the response to Section A, making it more difficult for examiners to draw conclusions about their responses.

There was in a large number of responses little or no sense of a Director's Interpretation within which the candidate was working for Unit 2. In some cases, as already mentioned, candidates stated that they did not have a director for Unit 2. This appeared to have a major impact at times upon the ability of the candidate to offer a response to Section A to meet the assessment objectives. The evidence is that candidates still appeared to struggle with the process aspects of the questions and with the social, cultural and historical angle. Where centres had clearly 'taught' Unit 2 there was evidence of candidates being able to respond better to the questions of this section.

Design candidates were less evident this year than in previous years, but more candidates seemed to be more confident about aspects of design in both Section A and Section B.

In some cases, there was little sense of working with a director to create a performance for Unit 2 and, for others, the impact upon the audience was not evaluated to show understanding. There is a lot of reporting in this section, with candidates not always able to achieve top marks because of this.

Candidates who gained the higher marks in this section had clearly been part of the overall process and had been directed and taught within the performance and during the creation of it. Context Summary Notes had formed part of the whole Unit 2 ethos and these appear to have been prepared with Unit 3 in mind, as well as a useful record of the process of creating Unit 2. Once again, these candidates were not in the majority but there was more welcome evidence of centres preparing Unit 2 with Unit 3 in mind.

As mentioned in previous years, Unit 2 must be about preparing candidates for Section A of Unit 3 and must take them through the rehearsal processes to offer them an opportunity to consider alternative approaches to the process and the performance. For example what might have happened if the play had been performed in a different style? How might the play have been viewed differently with no lighting changes or some incidental music? Would an end-on performance space have made any difference to the impact on the audience? What about approaches to characters at specific moments in the performance? Exploring these kinds of questions during the rehearsal process does not have to mean holding up the process, it should form an integrated part of the preparation for Unit 2. The AS year is teacher led, and this includes the preparation for Unit 2 with Unit 3 in mind.

The most successful answers had a sense of ownership and a sense of belonging, with Context Summary Notes clearly guiding responses that focussed on the demands of the question. Candidates were comfortable in their sharing of understanding of their part in the creation of the Unit 2 performance and they were aware of the basis for the work within a wider drama context, informed by Unit 1 and practitioners explored to enhance Unit 2. The answers from these candidates were confidently focused on the demands of the questions and gave clear and supported examples from their experience to support their responses. Their understanding was clear and evident.

## The Questions

### Q1a

Examiners commented that generally the question was answered well, though noted that in some cases candidates had problems identifying the techniques involved in the rehearsal process. Some showed no real understanding of how these helped them to realise the director's concept. In some cases, the answer was reduced to a diary account of the rehearsals with no idea of how the concept was realised or indeed what the concept was. Candidates could often write 3 sides without actually saying anything. For example, 'I was able to develop my skills in understanding my director's concept and this helped me in the actual performance'. The concept of going into detail and giving supported examples was often missed by the weaker candidates, although very few responses focussed on the performance/product as opposed to the process.

Stronger responses clearly communicated a sense of growth and progression during the rehearsal process, and there was a sense of engagement with the piece. Some candidates showed a clear grasp of the director's concept. Overall, examiners reported the responses were better to this question than to many others on the paper, perhaps because of the personal nature of the question.

In this response as in many others, a large number of candidates were unable to spell very basic subject specific terminology, such as scene, character and rehearsal.

In Summary:

- Weaker candidates opted for description and focussed more on rehearsal details than director's concept.
- 1a was more popular than 1b - possibly due to the wording of 1b.
- More seemed to grasp the idea of rehearsal but interpreted 'involvement' to refer to the whole group
- Candidates who had not experienced full direction were disadvantaged when answering the question and, in a number of cases, there was clearly a lack of understanding of what the director's concept actually was.

## Q1b

Many examiners noted that this was a much less popular question, giving a more limited sense of candidates' responses overall, but noted that where candidates had understood the question correctly, they tended to write intelligent and considered responses. It seemed that candidates who chose this question seemed to understand the terminology in the question and were able to connect with it on a more sophisticated level.

Many candidates were able to provide at least two examples of 'medium of drama' used in the rehearsal period and could evaluate how they 'created theatre' and their effect on the audience. Several focused on rehearsal techniques and were able to consider how these had helped them with an understanding of the director's aims. There were also those who struggled to do more than report on the process without giving clear examples in support, and once more, a few who mistakenly commented on the performance rather than the process.

The clarity of the way both 1a and 1b were worded aided candidates in approaching both these questions. However, there was a sense that many candidates struggled with 'evaluating' beyond the most basic level.

In Summary:

- Quite a number of performance based answers for this question rather than rehearsal
- A number of responses were descriptive, rather than evaluative, keeping the answer out of the top band marks
- Some confusion over the phrase, 'medium of drama', probably resulting in the vast majority of answers being for 1a rather than this question. Worryingly, a number of students wrote about not having a director for Unit 2 and therefore making group decisions about the process and the performance. Design candidates however answered this question much more comprehensively and clearly indicated their involvement/contribution during the rehearsal process and how this helped to communicate the director's concept. It was apparent that these candidates had had one to one discussions with the director in order to gain a detailed understanding of the concept to enable them to apply their design skills appropriately.

## Q2a

It was noted by examiners that a large number of candidates who chose this question fully understood why they had staged their piece as they did and tended to be fully aware of the importance of staging as well as what staging was and was not. The majority of answers covered set and lighting. The better answers added audience relationship and acting style, blending the response to a cohesive, well rounded 'discussion' though not always as focussed as required for the top band. However, very few candidates offered any alternatives, or any sense of discussion in terms of weighing up/ making judgements about their staging.

Examiners reported too that these were the most disappointing responses and there was certainly a tendency to offer too much description and reported

information at the lower end. Some candidates saw this as a question relating just to set design, and in a number of cases, there was no or little acknowledgement of either performance or audience. The weakest responses drifted away from staging and described or reported on the use of costume, props, or sound, with little connection to the demands of these elements in relation to the question.

In Summary:

- Where well answered, candidates used lots of examples to discuss. Most candidates appear to have a fairly good idea of why certain staging was used.
- Still some candidates are failing to realise that discussion requires them to suggest alternatives. Candidates need reminding what the term 'discussion' means as it prevented many of them accessing top mark band marks.
- There was some evidence of notes being presented by weaker students who provided a list of the performance elements rather than focusing on the demands of the question that had 'staging' at the heart of it.

Q2b

Many of the candidates were able to identify their contributions to the performance and to give relevant and meaningful analysis. They used the correct terminology and showed a clear focus on the question. The key word in 2b appeared to be **specific**. Candidates who were able to pinpoint two very specific moments were also, for the most part, able to analyse their own contribution with confidence and clarity. Although there were those whose responses lacked balance, and offered one detailed response and then a brief or heavily descriptive second example.

At the lower end of the mark range, the contributions became less relevant and gave the impression that the candidate did not understand the question in its technical form and focussed on practical rather than dramatic contribution. As such 'I helped ... to choose their costume and I turned up regularly for rehearsals' became the highlight of their contribution. This type of responses not only drifted into writing about the process (something done far less frequently in more focussed responses) but failed to show any understanding of their contribution in drama terms.

In Summary:

- A few struggled to grasp the meaning of 'contribution' and gave examples such as helping a friend with a change of costume.
- Good answers covered a range of performance techniques at particular times during the piece and how these impacted upon the overall unit 2 piece.
- Weaker candidates tended to talk about rehearsal time/relationships within the group etc

### Q3a

On the whole, examiners felt that this question was well answered. Many candidates recognised the distinction between 'play' and 'performance'. Candidates were able to give many reasons for the relevance of the performance to the audience and many of these were discussed in some depth in relation to the performance.

Many had given a lot of consideration to their audience, many mentioned questionnaires which were given out at dress rehearsals which they had later adhered to. However, very few candidates focussed on the word **discuss** sufficiently, therefore many responses lacked a sense of judgement and/or to offer alternative suggestions/ideas, which kept the majority of the answers, even those which were very strong, in the middle band.

As usual, there were quite a few responses where there was just too much description not linked into supporting examples and where relevance as a concept was not addressed or understood. These responses tended to be very general and showed little understanding of why a play in performance might have relevance for an audience. The other pitfall for some candidates was too heavy an emphasis on the play rather than the performance; some well-written responses were more like literary criticism essays than a response to the question.

In Summary:

- The majority of candidates wrote about the play or audience's reactions, without relating it to what they actually did. A few were able to link elements of the question together, but fewer offered examples in support.
- Still many candidates are responding to this question in literal terms rather than dramatic terms.
- Some candidates wrote little and interpreted 3a as 'relevance of the play' rather than concentrating on performance
- Questions that asked for analysis did not have sufficient detail for AS but in a small number of answers, more able candidates were able to link theory and practice and refer to practitioners to support their ideas.
- Mostly text based answers from a significant number of students.

### Q3b

Most candidates were able to show clear understanding of the play in performance and were able to refer to the audience reaction at least. However, not so many were able to relate this back to work in rehearsal or offer suitably analytical comments. There was little in the way of real analysis, with responses tending to be more descriptive and lacking in focus. This showed a basic understanding of the task but without real evidence to support their understanding of how the audience received their work. Some candidates analysed the play to the exclusion of the performance, though examiners reported less so than in the previous question.

In some cases, 'feelings' was interpreted at a very personal level, with candidates finding it difficult to make the connection between their feelings and the reaction of the audience. Comments were often general and simplistic for example 'the audience laughed when we wanted them to'. Candidates who gained higher marks were analytical and evaluative, demonstrating a clear understanding of intention and impact. There were some helpful diagrams in some of the stronger responses.

A vast number of examiners commented that candidates needed reminding that questions beginning 'Discuss' in Section A demand a consideration of other possibilities in order to access the full range of marks. It appears that this is much more of an issue than examiners have seen in previous exam series and that very few discuss responses offered alternatives. There were some candidates who offered alternatives response to other questions.

In Summary:

- More performance based than 3a. Many candidates relying on/quoting audience's responses from questionnaire rather than live reaction during the show.
- Few examples given in support and often the 'your feelings' part of the question was either missed or brushed over. This was an opportunity for them to tell us what they felt about it. There were one or two who were very honest about the choice of play and why it should not have been chosen.

## Section B

The elements of performance covered in this section demands that the candidates are aware of the input of the director, designer(s) and performer(s) within the piece in order to be able to access the questions.

There is certainly evidence in responses this year of candidates who have been well prepared for this section.

The questions are about performance, not play and the responses in general recognise this, indicating that candidates are able to access them in an appropriate way. Within the range of responses there was a degree of honesty from candidates, which, although not always critical nor evaluative was certainly to the point. One experience of 'Look Back In Anger', for example, clearly put the piece in its place within the late twentieth century canon.

The range of productions seen enabled some really clear responses to this section - and there is no requirement for candidates to see top notch and/or West End standard productions to be able to access the marks. A lot of regional theatre features in this section, from Ipswich to Norwich and from Dublin to Newcastle, the

range has been extensive this year and candidates have responded honestly and, generally, with understanding.

There was a disappointing lack of names in responses at times, with candidates struggling to recall particular moments to focus the response on.

## The Questions

### Q4a

Candidates at the top end of the mark range were able to identify some excellent performances and gave a detailed and complete evaluation, analysing how the actors used the space in relation to each other. The better answers took this evaluation from a personal viewpoint, which gave a complete picture of the actor's performance within the full production. Some demonstrated an ability to move well beyond a description of the two moments selected, and to evaluate very precisely the effectiveness of how space, and not simply movement, was used.

The lower marks gave a description but offered no evaluation as to the effectiveness of the performance or its' contribution to the production as a whole. Many answers were vague, repetitive, and generally descriptive. In some cases, candidates had not chosen moments, or perhaps even a performance, which allowed for an appropriate response. Some responses lacked balance seeming that candidates had one favourite and one was dredged up at the end, perhaps because of timing. This was disappointing where candidates were sound on the use of space in the first moment. There were also those candidates who focussed on movement rather than space.

Many candidates mentioned the actors by name and the name of the production though there were also a substantial number who referred to characters.

In Summary:

- Candidates responded well with a majority writing about use of space rather than the set.
- With weaker candidates, description dominated, lack of evaluation and evidence of things learnt on the course.
- Some confusion with the re-telling of plot and storyline
- Most were able to evaluate two performers but struggled with their use of space with a number of candidates drifting into a movement response.

### Q4b

A wide range of possibilities were offered as non-verbal communication. Since analysis of only one specific moment was required, a candidate's ability to select an example which allowed the opportunity to fully explain and evaluate was essential. There were many instances where this was not the case, and candidates struggled to offer enough detail and depth. Some of the lower end candidates took non-verbal communication in a general sense; and they focused on

movement/space or facial expressions. Many lacked focus and direction and tended to be reporting/describing rather than analysing.

However, this question was answered well by many candidates recognising NVC and focussing on a coherent, specific moment; those that did well were able to explore the term 'non-verbal communication' in its true sense. These answers showed depth in knowledge and perception. Almost all of the candidates when asked to consider this moment found it particularly relevant to their experience. Stronger candidates were able to give a full and detailed analysis of the way that NVC impacted on themselves as a member of the audience. It seemed particularly helpful to many candidates to be given the opportunity to explore one moment in some depth.

In Summary:

- Examiners reported shorter responses for this question as candidates were at times unable to write at length when restricted to one moment.
- Candidates were not so confident on non-verbal communication, perhaps the term itself or recognising it in performance.
- Detail lacking from analysis question which prevented many students scoring in the top band.

Q5a

The answers to this question provided a wide and varied range of performances seen and venues attended. Most candidates described the staging and could identify its relevance to the performance seen. Stronger responses evaluated the use of staging for the benefit of the performers and the audience watching and showed clear understanding. General responses were very descriptive with some attempts to include textual references/examples but again lacking in real focus and direction. Some candidates could not distinguish between 'staging' and effects such as 'sound and lights' - the 5b question. Some candidates appeared to have lifted responses from notes and this resulted in an approach where everything was put in for good measure. This of course weakened the responses, suggesting an essential inability to understand the concept of staging.

The best responses had a clear sense of purpose and understanding, both of theatre in general and of the performance seen. There was a sense of engagement with the production concept and identification of clear and helpful examples as evidence, often with useful diagrams.

In Summary:

- A few candidates wrote text based answers about the content of the performance and did not write about the staging
- Both popular questions and responses were generally good. Some students used detailed and technical language to support their ideas and in some cases were able to compare to practitioners and directorial style.
- Most answers made clear points, gave evidence from the performance and explained/evaluated the effects with some success.

## Q5b

Responses to 5b differed hugely, largely dependent on the ability of the candidate to select appropriate examples from the performance, and also the individual's technical knowledge and understanding. Where this was in place, there were some impressive responses.

There were lots of good, sound, well articulated and informed responses this may be due to a good use of notes. This was generally a well-answered question showing the candidates' understanding of the place of sound and lighting in the production process. Many clear examples were given to illustrate their points and many used technical language appropriately. Almost all candidates showed an awareness of how the devices were used to inform and entertain the audience.

In answering this question, candidates were able to consider how lighting and sound had an impact on the performance. Some began to explore the use of light/sound but ran out of time. Others wrote about both lighting and sound, which rendered their responses self-limiting. Many candidates did not have sufficient knowledge of the correct terminology to convey their meaning well. There were frequent references to dark lighting and moving light, for example. This disadvantaged candidates who simply did not have the tools to approach this question. Once again, a lack of alternatives or a sense of discussion/judgement also affected the outcome for some candidates.

In Summary:

- Quite a few candidates missed the 'or' in the question.
- Only a few seemed confident in these elements
- Technical terms in support of observations were not always applied to show understanding
- The use of voice as 'sound' limited candidates in the response

## Q6a

This question required a very personal response based on the knowledge and understanding already in place, and how this was developed as a result of seeing a particular performance. Confident candidates responded to this in an assured and enthusiastic manner. Those less ably equipped struggled to go beyond description, often in the most general terms. Perhaps it is the personal response nature of the question that creates this difficulty. Some of the responses focused on the historical/ social/ cultural context to the play instead of focussing on their understanding of theatre, often making little reference to the performance seen in their response. There were the inevitable few who answered the question philosophically, debating the value of theatre over the cinema for example, without, once again, referring to, or supporting their ideas with examples from, the specific play seen in performance

In Summary:

- Candidates often discussed the play and not the performance, not really explaining how it aided their understanding
- A lot of very general answers which forgot specific details possibly due to the lack of time at the end of the exam?
- Lack of analysis of how things were done.
- Students who had seen epic, total, non naturalist productions were able to respond to the question more closely.

Q6b

Most of the answers were positive and showed an excitement of seeing 'live' theatre. There was a wide and varied range of answers to this question. Most candidates understood the concept of 'performance' and were able to relate what they had seen to their own experiences of studying the course. Negative responses showed little understanding of what was expected and gave no relevance to the subject being studied or why. Often these were a description of the performance with little attempt at evaluation.

As with 6a, there was evidence of misunderstanding the task by some candidates who produced historical/ literary criticism style essays. Others were able to consider but not really analyse the performance seen. Some used relevant examples to support their responses. Most candidates answered appropriately, used appropriate language and terminology and were positive about the performance seen. Many could evaluate how the performance was perceived and why this appealed to the audience, specifically themselves.

Responses to 6b demonstrated most clearly that where candidates had prepared their notes thoroughly, they could produce strong, engaging, analytical responses that fulfilled all the requirements of the question. A lack of preparation resulted in mistakes and brief, disorganised answers.

Sometimes there was a sense that both 6a and 6b had been left to the end with insufficient time remaining and were thus very brief and generalised.

In Summary:

- A number of text based responses, rather than performance based - but not as many as 3a
- Most students seemed to struggle with this question
- It was worrying to see that some students had written about plays they had seen a considerable time ago but obviously this is usually beyond a teacher's control

### **Additional Comment from Examiners**

The point is made about the standard of English used in the examination. With few exceptions it was particularly poor. Examiners realise that the teaching of English is nothing to do with the Drama and Theatre Studies team, but it was felt very strongly that spelling, particularly that of drama terminology, should be correct. Words such as rehearsal, protagonist and theatre are paramount to the subject and to misspell these words was felt to be disrespectful to the staff teaching the subject and to the subject itself.

Attention is drawn to the information on the front of the examination paper concerning the use of spelling, grammar and punctuation and the organisation of answers.

## Unit 4 (6344) Devising

Much of this report repeats statements from previous reports as well as other sections of this year's report. This is particularly true when reminding centres to follow the specification, and the most recent ICE document. However, as many centres find it good practice to read each section of the examiners report prior to teaching it, it seems prudent to repeat them again.

For this internally assessed, externally moderated unit, candidates are required to devise a piece of theatre for an audience from a stimulus given by the centre. They must also submit a Structured Record to a set format as outlined in the ICE document, which will support their knowledge and understanding throughout the devising process.

This unit draws on all what candidates have learnt in the AS year and while it is teacher led, candidates are encouraged to become more independent and work collaboratively with their group. Moderators did feel that there was increasing evidence that this was a taught unit rather than candidates tending to work on their own, and attribute the excellent work seen to this fact. Clearly, candidates are well supported when they are led through a series of workshops on exploring and developing the stimulus material alongside a series of workshops on how to create a devised performance.

Moderators take great delight in seeing the work of this unit and administrative problems aside, once again they have reported on the wonderful quality of some of the work they have seen. The sheer diversity, standard and quality of the practical work can be superb. In some instances, the quality of performance exceeds specification requirements and approaches a professional standard. This is testimony to the talent and efforts of candidates and centres. In successful centres, the students approached the work with a real sense of professionalism and focus. They made clear distinctions about the issue they wanted to explore, who their target audience would be and what techniques and forms would best communicate their intended meaning.

Centres that adopted an approach influenced by the more expressionistic practitioners fared extremely well. Ensemble work adopting stylised physicality was very effective in communicating meaning and generating theatrical impact. Physicality was also used well in centres where multi-role playing was an integral part of the performance, quickly defining character. This type of work, developed from the ideas of Grotowski, Berkoff, Brecht, Artaud and theatre companies such as Complicite, is challenging for both candidates and audiences.

There was a greater tendency towards naturalism this year than in previous years. Centres have shied away from naturalism in the past fearing that it can produce work that is pedestrian and dull, often based on soap operas and the like. However, when it is well structured and has a strong narrative line with well developed characters, it can be every bit as successful as other genres.

## Stimulus

Thankfully, it would seem that the days when teachers gave pupils a one word stimulus, or a table with random objects on are almost gone. Teachers (and candidates through their Structured Records) are often submitting a series of notes outlining how the stimulus material was introduced and developed. Many pupils struggled to engage with abstract stimuli or stimuli that they perceived to be unrelated to their life or the world around them. This had a subsequent impact upon the quality of their work both practically and in their structured notes. The strongest work was developed by a genuine interest on the part of the candidates, which encouraged them to undertake research and take a sense of pride in the work, leading to real ownership. Many centres gave a huge number of stimuli to their students, which was often detrimental. Where the stimulus was engaging the candidates were pushed to explore beyond their experience in terms of SCH contexts and theatre forms.

Some examples of stimuli that worked well for those particular students were:

- A day trip to the seaside
- An outing to a children's playground with focus on a large scale climbing frame
- Sylvia Plath poems
- Dylan Thomas and Aberfan
- Poetry from Margaret Atwood and Carol Ann Duffy
- Issue based work particularly on Iraq, the Holocaust and witchcraft

The strongest work seems now to arise from candidates being given different materials/media all of which relate to a theme or issue.

## Structured Records

Structured Records reflected the candidates' involvement and ranged from the very thorough and detailed, genuinely exploring theatre and contexts to the brief and superficial. Many structured records were of a high quality and it was clear that the majority of candidates wrote with real enthusiasm, insight and understanding about the importance of each stage of the devising process. However, there were a larger number of centres this year with brief and/or incomplete work.

It is pleasing to see how the work is being documented via the Structured Records; a variety of styles and frameworks are being used to help candidates fully explore the creative process. The A4 essay writing style is most popular, often supported by images, diagrams or photos. These analytical and evaluative documents very clearly trace the development of the piece and the impact the finished product has upon the audience. One of the weaker sections can be the response on theatre practitioners, as well as what candidates have seen that has influenced their work. This often ends up being a lengthy list of names that do not connect to the piece in question.

Many Structured Records appear to have been written retrospectively. There was one instance of 'diary style' notes being included and these gave the reflections immediacy, particularly as the candidate then annotated their notes with retrospective comments. This was an exciting way to use the Structured Record. Teacher annotation on the Structured records was always useful in supporting the marks awarded and is to be encouraged.

## **Performance**

The majority of candidates choose to be examined on performance work for this unit, although there are some designers. Some design candidates state that they do feel more comfortable about performing in this unit given that the performance alone is only worth a quarter of the available marks. There was a lot more site specific work seen this year. For example, primary schools, a nature reserve, a car, as well as promenade performances through schools.

We see an extraordinary range of drama spaces while watching the recordings, across several continents. However moderators pointed out that purpose built theatres do not magically create stunning quality work. There were superb examples seen of candidates not facilities, making theatre.

## **Video/DVD**

The recorded performance evidence for this unit is essential. A considerable number of centres are not taking the recording of their students work seriously enough. An identity parade, in costume, is essential at the start of each piece. Some large centres expected moderators to go back to the beginning of the tape/DVD for each new piece to identify candidates and this is an inappropriate use of time. A clear identification of candidates should be afforded the same importance as writing your name on an examination paper.

The positioning of the camera is vital (the best seat in the house) though it was helpful that more use was made this year of the close up. The effective capturing of performances on film was usually very good. Moderators were able to get a real feel for the piece whether it was ensemble work or individual moments of performance. However, some work was poorly lit and centres are urged to check the recording immediately after the performance in the event that it needs to be re-recorded again for examination evidence.

## **Administration**

It is very disappointing to report that overall the standard of administration from centres was considerably worse than in previous series. On many occasions, moderators had to contact centres for missing work, incomplete forms, missing or incomplete recordings, the work of the highest and lowest candidate and incorrect options. There was also an increase in work arriving late and centres are reminded that work that arrives after the deadline could be refused. Similarly, a considerable amount of work arrived without adequate postage being paid or even no postage. The result of all of this was that a lot of extra time was spent by moderators, examinations officers and teachers chasing up missing items.

Fortunately, there were still many centres who had followed all the directions in the ICE document and submitted the work of their candidates in perfect order.

### Teacher Examiner Comments

Centres must make sure that the teacher examiner has adequate training to administer this unit and mark it according to the national standard. It is a requirement in the code of practice that teacher examiners attend a standardisation meeting when they are either new to the specification or feel in need of retraining. The marks for the unit are recorded on the DTS4a, known as the teacher comment sheets. Marks and comments are best completed in pen or permanent ink and comments need to support the marks awarded. Comments were occasionally too brief. Specific, detailed comments that allow the moderator to access what the candidate has done are most helpful. This is particularly true with Assessment Objective 2 which is worth half the available marks for the unit and is evidenced primarily through the teacher's comments on this form.

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

- A stimulus that was initially introduced by the teacher and supported by them until the students felt it was their own
- A series of workshops supporting the chosen performance style
- A group size that was manageable and appropriate to the centre, usually not too big and rarely containing 12 candidates
- Structured records that had been completed throughout the process rather than in retrospect
- A carefully chosen audience that was able to appreciate the theatrical content and style of the final performance
- Candidates tended to have seen a wide and varied range of good professional theatre

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

- Wasted time in the early weeks of the process while a stimulus was chosen
- Arguments between group members that detracted from the creative process
- Structured records that are completed retrospectively
- Structured records that are too brief or do not make the most of the available space given to them
- Lists of practitioners that do not actually relate to the devised piece
- Performances that are too short or too long

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

- Students were left to choose their own stimulus:
- There was a lack of teacher support throughout the devising process
- An inappropriate and often unsupportive audience to watch the performance
- Incomplete or very brief structured records
- Structured records that do not follow the requisite format
- References were often from TV or film rather than theatre

## Unit 5 (6345) Text in Performance II

### Introduction

Much of this report will reiterate comments made in previous years as this is an externally examined unit but 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 Instructions for Conduct for the current examination series. Each centre chooses the playtexts, options taken by candidates and audience. This unit uniquely has elements of both an examined and coursework unit. The focus of this unit is that all candidates must work in small groups to create a performance with teacher guidance but not direction.

Overall, the examining team reported that the standards of previous series had been maintained. There is still concern that some centres did not fully understand the requirements of this unit and spend inappropriate amounts of time on unnecessary activities that may disadvantage candidates. The main concern as in previous years is that centres do not understand the focus on the students working independently on their performances. However, the majority of candidates are well prepared to both achieve in the examination and enjoy their final experience of live theatre performance for this examination.

Some examiners felt that there was a decrease in candidates being poorly prepared for the specific requirements of this unit. But that the actual skill level of candidates did not show the progression to A2 level. Candidates need to build on the work completed for Unit 4. However, as in previous series there were many candidates who produced work that exceeded the requirements of the unit and A2 standard. These candidates were awarded full marks and often examiners noted that in fact they exceeded full marks.

### Requirements

The same issues of concern were reported by the majority of the examining team. These have been reported on in previous examiner's reports. Centres must ensure they put in place the requirements for this unit as detailed in the Instructions for Conduct of the Examination (ICE). This essential document was only available on the Edexcel website for 2007 and will be so for the remainder of this specification. No hard copies will be sent. A number of centres used 2006 or even earlier series. The ICE is revised each year in the light of both examiners and teachers suggestions to ensure that the administration of the unit is clear to all centres. It also includes all of the documentation needed for this exam. Centres must download copies of the 2008 ICE. The specification is also available from the Edexcel website and Edexcel Publications.

In the 2006 report the requirements of this unit were clarified in response to concerns from examiners and centres that the Specification was lacking in clarity. These are repeated below as where centres had understood the requirements, work that was appropriate for Unit 5 was seen.

- Unit 5 is not a second, shorter Unit 2 with less teacher input.
- For Unit 2 the performance must be directed by the teacher, show knowledge of the complete text and reflect the original structure of the text. The form of the original text must remain in place although lines, scenes and roles can be edited.
- For Unit 5 candidates must have knowledge of the complete text before they begin practical work on creating Unit 5.
- The candidates should choose one element/ theme/idea to be the focus of their interpretation.
- Only the words of the original text can be vocalised but they can be reordered and reassigned.
- The narrative structure and designated roles of the original do not have to remain in place
- Centres must ensure that no additional or improvised dialogue is included.

### Group Size and Performance Time

These are clearly stated in both the ICE and on the form DTS5b that must be signed by the teacher. If centres do not comply with this requirement it may disadvantage candidates. Examiners are clearly instructed to only award marks within the set time limits. Examiners report that many centres left the estimated time of performance blank or filled in the maximum time allowed. There seemed to be an increase in overlong performances. Often, the final moments of Unit 5 performances had some of the strongest work and it was often 'stunning/amazing/had a real wow factor' but was so beyond the time limit it could not be awarded marks. Some student interpretation notes actually began 'we have tried to make our performance only 60 minutes long'.

Centres must ensure that all candidates understand the time limits of the Unit 5 performance. Examiners are not required to remain in the examination after the maximum time for each performance. Examiners report instances where centres with small numbers of candidates and groups were presenting work that far exceeded the 3 hour session time limit.

The main concern was where some candidates had been seen only briefly or not appeared at all until some time after the maximum time limit. This was most often when smaller groups were performing for over 30 minutes. Very few performances were too short.

Centres are reminded that this is an examination and that very short and overlong performances do not meet the requirements of this unit. Centres must ensure that the performance the examiner attends meets examination requirements.

Again this year many examiners were concerned that they were not provided with a private place to consider their marking or enough time between performances. These short, frequently ensemble and often intense performances need adequate time for first consideration of the marks.

## The Text

Examiners report that the choice of text is crucial (even more so than in Unit 2) . It is the centre's responsibility to ensure all candidates have the opportunity to work on texts that have the quality, content and opportunities to engage the candidates to produce performance work at A2 level. Again this year there was an increase in texts which examiners felt did not have opportunities for in depth exploration or enough depth and resonance for A2 achievement. These tend to be where the structure and content of the text makes it difficult to explore and adapt. It is disappointing to report that there were examples of short one act plays or 'sketches' being performed almost complete, an extract with no adaptation being performed with no context for the audience, or longer plays merely cut so the original linear structure of the original remained. These often had two disadvantages for candidates; they remained overlong and did not give opportunities to meet all criteria and often the vocal and movement skills of the candidates were not seen at A2 level.

It is a requirement to provide a copy of the text as performed.

Many examiners report that successful centres understand this and provide a well-prepared and word-processed text alongside detailed interpretation notes. There was much evidence of excellent practice with different colours or fonts clearly indicating individual's contribution. These often include annotation to indicate moves and effects including any sound to be used. The preparation of the text is a candidate task.

There was a decrease in centres that sent nothing in advance because they felt the examiner would know the original or sent the complete uncut text. This is unacceptable for this unit as each Unit 5 performance is a unique and new text based on the original. If the centre feels candidates have chosen a new or less well known text it is good practice to send a copy of the complete text. It is of vital importance in this unit that examiners are well prepared.

Copied and edited texts by crossing out sections were often very difficult to follow. Centres must ensure it is clear which candidate is saying which lines. There is no doubt this is best done by using highlighter pens if the published text is being sent. The preparation of the text is a candidate task.

This year again the titles given to the Unit 5 performances were often commented on for their originality and clear indication of the interpretation. Wit, intelligence and knowledge were in evidence. When no original title was given it was often an indication the centre did not understand the requirements of the unit.

## Timing of the Examination

A major improvement that centres have requested for several years was achieved this year. The majority of examiners received their allocations earlier than before and were instructed to contact centres as near the beginning of the spring term as possible. Many examiners report that some centres did not contact them for some time despite several repeat phone calls or emails. Some centres' reaction was that it was far too early for them to agree a date. This often led to the first choice of date or time for the centre not being possible. Centres must have some flexibility in arranging the examination date and time. Edexcel cannot find alternative examiners for centres who insist on rigid times and dates and centres must not contact Edexcel direct as it results in unnecessary work for the examiners and the Edexcel Deployment Team.

The vast majority of performances took place in the evenings giving a sense of occasion and enabling an appropriate audience to attend.

Again this year Unit 5 exams took place right up to late May. Many centres completing Unit 5 before Easter and this was felt to be good practice allowing ample time for final preparation for Unit 6. Edexcel realises that for centres with an AS and A2 cohort of 18 or fewer candidates it is a constraint to perform both units in one session. However many examiners made positive comments on the good use of two performance spaces or the thought with which one space was swiftly adapted.

## Audiences

As stated above centres with 18 or fewer candidates have to complete both performance units in one session and so may have the same audience for both. Centres are strongly advised to consider carefully the importance of an appropriate and supportive audience for Unit 5. Many audience members will not have the depth of knowledge of the original texts that the candidates and examiners have. These performances are short and often intense. It can be good practice for the centre or a student director or performer prior to the examination to put the performance in context. Examiners report this year with concerns for candidates performing to unsuitable audiences.

## Performance Candidates

Again this year as in Unit 2 the vast majority of candidates offered performance. In most centres they worked throughout the process as an ensemble taking shared responsibility for all aspects of the final performance.

The overall opinion of these candidates by the examining team was that the range of work seen this year was broadly in line with that of previous series. It was felt that in some centres work was seen that exceeded the requirements and standard of this A2 unit and examiners had no doubt that full marks were appropriately awarded to these candidates. These candidates were often commented on in the examiner individual comment sheets and overall performance sheets. They were felt often to have used their experience particularly in Unit 4 Devising. However, there were also candidates whose work fully deserved full or top band one marks. The work seen demonstrated the depth of knowledge gained throughout the course

Where less effective work was seen it was usually because candidates either performed on pieces that did not meet the requirements of the Unit as detailed in the comments on choice of text or their vocal and movement skills had not been developed to A2 standard.

In all previous series it has been difficult to find candidates producing work at the bottom of the mark range. Where this was seen, in general all candidates in a centre were of a similar standard. There were often clear reasons for this and centres were realistic about the candidates' achievements. Overall however, the level of achievement in this unit is felt to be due to the focus, in both this and Unit 4, on group performance.

### **Design Candidates**

The number of design candidates was similar to last year and they are a minority. This may be due to centres sometimes feeling they could not provide the resources or expertise to support candidates at A2 level. The majority of candidates took responsibility for all or most of the design elements. Some focussed on a single one. Although neither choice was felt to advantage candidates some examiners felt they did not see the depth of response required to achieve at A2 if only one element was offered. There was some concern that in centres that have a theatre technician, it was difficult for examiners to be clear regarding the candidate's contribution. For example, if the candidate had designed the lighting but then had not been involved in any of the set up or operation during the examination performance. There was less concern with sound, costume and makeup.

As in 2006 there was also concern that some student directors or performers had such a clear vision of their piece that the design candidate almost became a technician with little evidence of their individual input. Some performances had clearly undergone considerable changes towards the end of the rehearsal process, which may not have disadvantaged performers but it could mean that much of the work of the design candidates could not be seen in performance.

Presentations and supporting evidence were much stronger at this level and it was clear that some of this work was being used for interviews for college places. There was certainly an increase again in new technologies being used, particularly with sound and projection. Examiners felt that some design candidates were disadvantaged as they had too little time in the context of the performance to show their contribution. The centre should ensure there is a fair balance for all candidates. Much of this work was described as exciting and innovative. It was clear that this had been a positive choice for the majority of candidates. It is of interest that there are more design candidates at A2 level, some often stating in their presentations that they welcomed the opportunity to try something new.

## Directing Candidates

The number of directing candidates is similar to last year. In some centres it was felt that if the potential student director lacked the complex theatrical and personal skills to work effectively with their peers it could have considerable impact on their level of achievement and final result.

Most directing candidates produced some very creditable performances and there was an increase in those that examiners felt were outstanding. Many had taken responsibility for all aspects of the performance, including costume, set, effects, lighting and programmes. Several also appeared in an acting role in the performance.

The standard of the presentations and supporting documentation was in general of good quality. One frequent concern from examiners was that candidates were so enthusiastic and passionate about their work that the presentations far exceeded the 10 minutes and had an effect on the running time of the performances.

## Administration

It is very disappointing to report that overall the standard of administration of this paper before, during and after the examination visit was considerably worse than in 2006. Centres must ensure that this is completed as detailed in the ICE. The centres which completed the administration were often exemplary and understood this cannot be done in a rush at the last minute. Again a great deal of the required paperwork was incomplete, inaccurate, late or non-existent until the examiner's arrival in the centre. Examiners are required to arrive well prepared for the examination and cannot do so without this vital information.

Examiners are instructed to arrive 30 minutes prior to the first performance/presentation so that any changes can be considered at that time. Many centres did not send maps and expected examiners to find the centre directions on the Internet. This was unhelpful as particularly in the evening examiners could not easily locate the actual venue of the examination on the site. More than one centre held the exam at another venue but had not informed the examiner. Examiners report wandering around sites attempting to find some one who can direct them to the examination venue within the centre.

There was also concern that the time management of the examination by centres was poor at times. Examiners expect to examine at least 18 candidates in a 3 hour session. Some examiners arrived at the centre at the agreed time and were waiting for a considerable time before meeting the candidates. Overlong performances and late running meant that some examiners and candidates were finishing an examination around midnight. There was equal concern that some examiners were given very little time to consider their marking between performances. A private place to mark was often not provided.

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

It would be unfair to give the impression that this lack of thought applied to the majority of centres. Most centres completed all administration very well and the examination was run with professionalism throughout.

Again this year, thanks must be given to the centres, that had an accompanied visit from members of the senior team. This is an important part of the ongoing monitoring of examiners for the practical performance units. This extra requirement was dealt with by most centres with understanding. Although these visits should not have effected the running time of the examination in some cases it did occur and Edexcel apologises for this.

### **The Importance of the Recording of the Performances/Presentations**

It is felt that some centres still do not understand the importance of the very best possible recording being made of all performances and presentations. In order to maintain the standards of the examination and that examiners work is monitored throughout the process a great deal of centres' work is viewed by the senior team alongside examiners' notes. Centres should be aware that the senior team may randomly check a centre's work and if examiners have any concerns they must seek another opinion.

Unfortunately again this year, it was felt that the quality of the recorded work was even worse than in previous series. Too often the camera was not placed close to the examiner and was frequently so far back from the performance that the candidates could not be identified. Another common mistake was the examiner and audience heads taking up most of the frame. If there is a large performance space and scenes are performed in different areas the camera may pan to record the work. If the person operating the camera knows the piece some judicious use of close ups can be useful in capturing individual performances.

Design presentations must be made to the camera and the examiner will sit next to it. Some examiners felt that candidates expected them to ask them questions as they looked at the documentation. Examiners will look at this evidence after the presentation but will not question candidates. Design presentations can be pre recorded and will be viewed by the examiner prior to the performance along with the documentation.

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

Fewer centres completed the time sheet well. This is most important for the ease of finding performances or presentations when looking for candidate's work. Also it is important that centres comment on the quality of the recording. Many centres realise that the recording did not capture the performance well or had incomplete recordings. Some centres did not complete this at all.

Centres must check all performances/presentations in their entirety for the correct timings and the quality of the recording. This was clearly not done by far too many centres. Missing or poor quality recordings of performances mean that work cannot be checked or remarked.

Centres can submit work on DVD. Examiners and centres welcomed this as when it is correctly presented the quality of the recordings can be excellent and is easily accessible. However there were considerable problems again this year. Centres must ensure that the DVD can be played on a standard domestic player. Examiners will not use computers to view the work. Also, each presentation/performance must be given a chapter.

The main problem again this year was that many centres failed to send the recording to the visiting examiner within seven working days. Examiners spent much time contacting centres trying to get the recording and many were never sent at all. Written documentation had to be sent to Edexcel without the recording and Enquiries About Results will not be possible.

Many centres sent excellent recordings and there seemed to be an increase in those produced either by professional companies or highly skilled operators within centres both staff and students. Centres should consider the value of having a permanent record of this work and ensure that the best quality recording is made.

### **Identification of Candidates on the Recordings**

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

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

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

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

All candidates must then state clearly and slowly their name and candidate number, role(s) played and give a verbal description of all costumes worn in the performance. It is helpful if any costumes worn later are shown to the camera. It can be helpful if their name, candidate number and role(s) played are written clearly on paper and held up to the camera. The camera must then record them as a group in long shot. It can be helpful if they repeat their name and roles played. The group shot must be held for enough time for someone watching the recording to clearly identify all candidates. This is the equivalent of completing the front sheet of a written paper.

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

### **Issues of Concern Feedback 2006**

For the first time in response to examiner's concerns that many centres did not complete the administration well, examiners completed these forms which were all reviewed by Edexcel and sent direct to centres. The comments referred only to administration concerns and not the performance of candidates. It is good to report that some centres responded positively. However, in other centres the same or different errors were repeated in 2007. This feedback will be repeated again in 2007. Centres will be monitored to check the concerns over the 2 years.

### **The Performance of Candidates in this Unit**

High scoring work showed some of these features:

- Candidates had been well taught with close reference to the specification, ICE 2007 and Examiners' Report 2006
- Candidates' performance skills had been developed to A2 standard
- Texts had been chosen that had the challenge and opportunities for exploration at A2 level
- The teacher understood the importance of the candidates having knowledge and understanding of the complete text chosen
- There was a clear and detailed overall concept, which was a collaboration between all candidates whatever option they had chosen
- Candidates had undergone a well structured preparation process
- Candidates made use of their understanding of how theatre works from all previous learning, particularly Unit 4
- Candidates had gained in depth knowledge from seeing a range of theatre performances as a member of the audience
- The chosen text was appropriate for A2 standards, challenging and engaging their interest

- An appropriate and supportive audience engaged with the performance. This was felt to be of greater importance than at AS due to the demands of this unit
- Candidates produced work that met the assessment objectives and criteria for this unit
- Only the words of the text were spoken
- Candidates were given enough but not too much to achieve in performance
- The examination had a sense of occasion
- Performances met the time requirements
- Candidates were very well prepared and had experienced a well structured rehearsal process
- Candidates demonstrated commitment, enthusiasm and passion
- The performance reflected 30% of their A2 year in terms of preparation time

**Middle scoring work showed some of these features:**

- Candidates had not given enough individual commitment
- Erratic attendance hampered group achievement
- Texts were too simplistic or too challenging for candidates' ability and demands of the Unit
- Preparation and rehearsal time was possibly not used effectively, too little or too much
- Performances were too long or occasionally too short
- Candidates' performance skills were not fully developed to A2 standards
- Candidates' understanding of how live theatre works was somewhat limited
- Performance space did not support the live performance
- Audience was not fully supportive or aware of the examination element
- Candidates were unable to meet all 4 assessment requirements
- The work had too many elements of a brief Unit 2 rather than Unit 5 focus
- There was an imbalance of performance time or design elements between candidates
- Candidates and their contribution could not be clearly identified for examination purposes

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

- Work was under prepared
- Little understanding of the demands of creating a unique performance based on an existing text
- Performances very brief or far too long
- Lack of security with lines, cues and moves.
- Candidates did not demonstrate knowledge of the complete text
- Candidates were over or under confident
- Inappropriate texts were chosen for candidates and A2 skill level
- Performances did not meet the objectives or criteria of this unit
- Inappropriate or small audience (only examiner and teacher) present
- Candidates performed extracts or heavily cut versions following the narrative of the complete text
- The performance was incoherent and failed to communicate to the audience

## Consortium Centres

Again this year there were some difficulties with centres that had not completed the Consortium Information Form available in the ICE document. The completed forms must be sent to Edexcel as early as possible in the academic year. For all candidates being examined not in their registered centre the examiner must be informed beforehand and 2 copies of separate register must be provided giving full details of 'home' centre name, number, candidate name and number. This information must also be detailed on the DVD or videotape.

## Conclusion

As in previous reports the concerns detailed in this report could be addressed if all centres referred closely to the Specification and ICE document.

Centres are reminded that Edexcel offers a national programme of Inset courses led by members of the Senior Examining Team. Details have been sent to centres and are available with booking details on the Edexcel website.

This remains a highly successful unit that achieves a great deal beyond its requirements as the A2 Text in Performance II. Again examiners comment on the excellence, excitement, power and professionalism of much of the work presented by candidates. Examiners and audiences have again this year been amused, moved, made to think and even reconsider their views of plays and the messages they bring to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Much of the work seen is exceptional, bold, challenging, full of ideas, brimming over with energy and passion. This unit can and often does give candidates, examiners and audiences an exciting evening at the theatre as well as being an examination.

Many centres will appreciate that much of this report is similar to that of 2006. However, it is to the credit of the stability and experience of both the examining team and those working in centres that the overall outcomes of this unit are so stable. With only 2 more series of this Unit it is to be hoped that the overall excellence of much of the work will be maintained.

## Unit 6 (6346) Text in Context II

Candidates are required to respond to three questions, two from Section A and one from Section B. Section A requires the evaluation of the chosen text: either 'The Beggar's Opera' or 'The Trojan Women', with candidates in the position of director, supporting responses from annotated copies of the appropriate script. Section B requires the evaluation of a live performance of a play written between 1575 and 1720, with candidates supporting responses from Research Notes, connecting the performance seen with one from a choice of three previous time periods. Only the 20<sup>th</sup> Century notes must refer specifically to the same play with notes for the original performance conditions and the 18/19 century being more general in their background information on performance conditions.

The evidence shows, however, that a large number of candidates are connecting the same play with the chosen earlier time period, generally to good effect. There is no requirement, however, for candidates to refer to a performance of the same play specifically except, when connecting with the 20<sup>th</sup> Century conditions and, in this case it has to be 'a production of the play' and not a collection of 20<sup>th</sup> century production information.

In Section A, question one is divided into three parts, with the mark for each part indicated alongside the question. This question refers to an extract from the text which is published below the question and candidates are instructed that they are 'planning a rehearsal'. There is no choice for candidates in question one but intention is a stepped response leading candidates into the demands of the paper.

Question two concerns the play as a whole and therefore with an overall understanding of the way it works as theatre within a director's concept/interpretation. Responses to this question may or may not develop ideas outlined in question one but there needs to be an overall concept/interpretation evident in the question two response, based upon a detailed study of the text as a performance vehicle. This is usually in a series of workshops, and upon an understanding of how a director might make it work in performance. There is a choice of question for candidates.

In Section B, question three requires candidates to connect the live performance seen with one previous time period in the play's history. The starting point for responses is the play seen by the candidates in performance (the Primary Source). It is not the historical context of the play (the Secondary Source). The differences/similarities identified by the candidate based upon their experience as a 'critical' member of an audience and in relation to the question asked should be clear in the response.

Although the A2 year is student-centred it was clear again this year, from across the range of responses, those centres where sufficient time had been spent preparing candidates for this unit and where meaningful, well-structured practical lessons/workshops had informed discussions and decisions made by candidates about their overall understanding of the play for Section A and assisted a relevant approach to the play seen in performance and its' historical context for Section B.

In these cases, background research was evident and candidates who offered meaningful and focussed responses to the paper were able to do so from a position of strength gained from a well-structured course that started in the AS year and guided them through the demands of the A2 year. Preparation for writing about drama is something that needs to be signposted throughout the course for candidates, with the language of drama explored regularly in vocal and written form. This was emphasised in previous series of examinations and successful candidates in 2007 have also clearly been prepared for this Unit with the questions and the demands of the paper in mind.

Where the focus was lacking it tended to be where candidates were not able to effectively discriminate in their responses and offered information which was not relevant to the question, although it was clearly part of an overall research programme. Or information was simply a regurgitation of a prepared concept without due referral to the demands of the question. This Unit is a reflection on performance, not play, and the candidate is in the role of director in Section A.

Less secure responses were unable to move successfully away from the prepared notes and to offer clear analysis to support decisions and/or observations. The language of drama was often lacking from candidates but where it was used appropriately there was clear understanding and excitement shown within the responses.

Centres are reminded once again that all questions refer to the Edexcel edition of the Section A texts and not to other editions.

There were again far more centres offering 'Trojan Women' than 'The Beggar's Opera', with at least one centre again this year offering both texts - presumably different teaching groups - with its' students.

## Electronic Marking

This is the first series for Drama and Theatre Studies for our scripts to be marked online by examiners.

Centres are reminded of the following to assist in the process for next year:

- Answers should be completed in black ink - including diagrams. This will assist in the scanning process.
- Notes/texts must **not** be included with the scripts, these must be retained in centres
- Candidates should be advised to write within the given spaces only, and not to write outside the borders on the page
- Should additional paper be required then it should be secured within the pages of the booklet to avoid it becoming separated.
- The page allocation indicates the general length of responses we might expect for this unit in order for the marks to be accessed. We will give more space in 2008 for question one parts i and ii.

- Each question is marked as an item and probably marked by a different examiner. It is possible in this unit for each complete script to be marked by 3 different examiners. There is an implication here in preparing students for responding to the questions.

## GENERAL

It was clear that candidates in general had been well prepared for the overall demands of the Unit and the evidence is that, where this was the case those candidates were able to respond positively and creatively to the questions. The overall impression from examiners was that candidates in general had performed at a similar level this year to last year, with preparation in centres again much in evidence.

There is evidence from the marks awarded of candidates having explored the Section A text in much more detail and in a series of more practical workshops and of them being able to respond much more effectively using a range of (mainly) performances of Shakespeare as the Primary Source at the heart of the Section B response. There was clear evidence of much more informed preparation for Section B this year than in previous years, with performance much more in evidence in the responses.

There were no candidates this year who presented an integrated answer to question one and did not divide the response to take into account the mark allocation for each aspect of the question. There were candidates again this year who did not take into account the opening statement for the question which instructed them that they were '*planning a rehearsal*' and they therefore presented ideas in answer to the question which did not fully explore the elements of the processes involved in working with actors as a director. In these cases, there were little or no references to rehearsal and how to work with a company in creating the rehearsal experience in relation to the extract and the question. There were, however, far fewer candidates doing this than last year, which was pleasing to see.

Some candidates did not take into account the mark allocation for each section of question one and wrote a disproportionate amount for i) for up to 4 marks, in some cases writing much more than they wrote for iii) for 10 marks. There was less evidence of this in 2007 than in previous years, but where it was evident there were examples of candidates writing at least two sides for question i) and less than half a side for question iii). However detailed the response to i) may have been, there were still only 4 marks available.

There was more use of drawings and diagrams this year and, where these were referred to and supportive of the body of the text they enhanced marks for candidates, enabling the examiner to be drawn more into the process by the visual impressions of set, costume and staging elements. This was pleasing to report as it was a disappointing aspect of last year's series.

The notion of director appeared to be clear to the majority of the candidates. What was not so clear at times was the work of the director in the rehearsal process, with supportive examples of rehearsal techniques where appropriate and the decisions the director had to make in working with others to create performances. This was evidenced in question one.

There was a sense at times that some candidates did not have enough detailed knowledge of the play as a whole to help them make informed decisions about aspects of the extract and, in connection, rehearsal techniques were often vague and did not always connect with either the question or the extract. It is not enough for candidates at this level to simply describe the rehearsal techniques, without connecting their purpose to the question and the extract. Where the connections were made there was a clear and strong sense of ownership of the ideas around, for example creating the relationship between Hecuba and Talthybius within the rehearsal. There was, however, often a sense of prepared notes to these responses, rather than an attempt at answering the question.

Some candidates had ideas that, although imaginative, would not necessarily be practical as rehearsal techniques in relation to the given extract and had clearly not been attempted during preparing for this Unit. It is important to stress that question one is about preparing for a rehearsal of the extract and candidates need to inform the examiner in the response that they are looking at ideas for rehearsal not performance. This does have a major impact on the mark the examiner is able to award, with rehearsal being explicit in the response a key factor for earning marks. There were some candidates who referred the examiner to their script for example 'see page 109'. Clearly the examiner does not have access to this information.

In Section A there was a tendency to want to update the plays - particularly 'The Trojan Women' and this was not always helpful as the ideas were not always supported by sound theatrical reasoning and, more importantly background knowledge. There were a few examples again this year of little or no regard for Health and Safety issues where candidates wrote about, for example, setting fire to the city at the end of the play and it 'would have to be real flames in order to portray the real effect for the audience' or having Astyanax thrown off the city walls rather than it happening off stage with no indication of how this might happen. A startling response to question one had Talthybius entering with the soldiers throwing firebombs to the ground to create a feeling of panic.

Responses to 'The Beggar's Opera' were generally much more aware of what is and is not possible within a staged performance. A particular example of a response that was conveyed effectively staged the production in a disused theatre with a sense of decay and dust as well as the theatrical feel of the play to bring out the feeling of corruption on every level.

Whilst the examination encourages creativity, and there was evidence in Section A question two of candidates being highly imaginative in their approach to the chosen text, ideas must be realistic and practical and in keeping with the spirit of the original. For example, candidates struggled more with the hairdresser concept for 'Trojan Women' than they did with the newspaper office concept for 'The Beggar's Opera'.

In the majority of cases this year, however, the evidence was that candidates were able to explore the chosen play in relation to the question, with a clear understanding of how their concept might work in performance. Some candidates again this year were not able to develop their interpretation in relation to the question and presented answers that did not connect sufficiently to earn a higher mark. In these cases there was often a sense of presented notes which did not always engage with the question.

Candidates who earned the higher marks for question one were those who were able to connect with the process and give clear supported examples. A number of candidates were not able to relate their answers to the director working with a cast and crew in preparing the play for performance. This is fundamental for candidates being able to respond meaningfully to this paper and this experience for candidates comes from a meaningful preparation period in which workshop activities are used to explore the text and, where possible, they are given the opportunity to be director within workshops.

For question two, candidates who were able to develop their concepts in relation to the question were able to achieve the higher marks. As already stated there were a minority of cases where candidates were not able to present ideas that were practical in terms of staging or concept. Fewer candidates presented interpretations that were not in keeping with the performance values or historical heritage of the chosen text this year, but there were some.

The majority of candidates, however, were able to explore the texts in a way that reflected how we live now but remain faithful to themes, issues, style and theatrical heritage. In response to the question on themes, candidates who started with the audience in mind in relation to the way their chosen theme might be presented to them tended to earn more marks than those who simply presented their concept and then stated that it would be relevant because it was in 'modern dress' or because the audience would understand those themes because they are relevant.

For The Trojan Women Iraq/Afghanistan again featured heavily in the responses. It was sometimes difficult for candidates to connect a specific conflict with the text in its entirety and concepts did not always logically carry through the text. There were some interesting ideas from Eastern European and Far Eastern history that showed imagination. Some potentially harrowing pieces in performances based around the Holocaust were particularly noted by examiners again this year. A number of candidates returned to Ancient Greece in their concepts and were able to do so with some success.

It appeared that the most successful candidates again this year were those who chose to be much less specific about the conflict or the location and presented a timeless vision of the aftermath of conflict.

For The 'Beggar's Opera' the time periods and concepts appeared to be much more open, with the present day featuring heavily but many candidates choosing to leave it in its time period. The majority of candidates were able to retain the spirit of the original in the concept. There appeared to be far fewer television influences on concepts this year. However there were some, including an 'X

Factor' theme again that did not entirely convince and a number of centres looked at physical theatre or Moulin Rouge in their approach. There were some interesting examples of site specific work with old buildings of various types featuring in the responses. A sense of the 'faded spectacle' of a disused theatre provided the key to one proposed production's success.

A disappointing aspect of responses to this play again this year was the number of candidates who wrote about updating music and lyrics to help make their production appeal to a modern audience but did not then offer examples in support.

There were candidates, for example, citing the use of songs by popular singers/musicians but then not giving examples of how these would work. The music aspects of the play are still leaving a lot to be desired in candidates' responses, with little evidence at times of them having formed part of the preparation process for this text. Very few candidates actually refer to the music or the songs where this is not specifically demanded by the question but, when they do, their response tends to come to life much more for the examiner.

There was evidence of a 'centre concept' for both plays and this tended to lead to less creative responses to the questions in some instances. Some centres had clearly set out to avoid this, with every concept different from the others. Whilst this approach is also interesting for the candidates, not all of the concepts actually developed to suit the demands of the play and candidates struggled to develop their ideas, particularly in question two.

Across the paper as a whole this year there was clear evidence of candidates understanding the chosen play but often this understanding was still not always appropriately applied to the question and there was still a general lack of analysis across the board. Candidates who were able to address the demands of the questions and offer an individual response as a director based upon knowledge gained throughout the course, connected to the workshop activities were often able to gain more marks than those who relied too heavily upon prepared notes and annotated scripts.

As in Unit 3, the notes are the thinking for the candidate and it is the way that the thinking is applied to the questions that gains the marks. It was clear that the preparation for this paper had been so thorough in some cases that candidates were unable to be flexible in their approach to the questions and therefore responses, although detailed and interesting, lacked focus in terms of what was demanded from the candidates. A very few candidates again this year were not able to look at the Section A text in relation to its performance, having been guided towards its structure as a text rather than as a play to be performed, leading to a literary rather than theatrical response. This was sometimes true of Section B as well, but there was less evidence of this than in previous years.

Examiners noted again this year the number of candidates who were misspelling the drama vocabulary at this level (i.e. rehearsal and theatre). Drama terms were not always used appropriately and there was a general sense of some practitioners being used in ways that did not clearly indicate ownership or understanding. Influences from Brecht, Stanislavski, Berkoff, Artaud and Bollywood were in evidence again this year, generally to good effect but not always. The overall

evidence, however was that there was much less unfocussed work from candidates this year than last with some clear and defined concepts that candidates were able to take ownership of and explore within the written paper. There was confidence evident in the work of a large number of candidates and there were some very refreshing and interesting responses that engaged examiners so much that they were reluctant to move on and wanted to know more.

In Section B, examiners again reported a mixed profile of responses from candidates who had seen performances close to the original performance conditions i.e. at The Globe. Some examiners felt that this had inhibited responses to the questions, whilst others felt that candidates had benefited from the experience. As with all experiences, the teaching and learning in relation to the kind of questions that are likely to be set is the key to candidates' achievement. There was again evidence from a very small minority of candidates of a play or in one case, plays from outside the stipulated time period for Section B being studied. The dates 1575 to 1720 are very clear and are published in a number of Edexcel sources.

The vast majority of candidates related their response to the play's original performance conditions, with Shakespeare featuring heavily again in the responses. Very few candidates this year chose to connect with the 20<sup>th</sup> Century experience and those that did were heavily video orientated, with the McKellen/Dench 'Macbeth' featuring heavily. The Peter Brook 'Midsummer Night's Dream' was also much in evidence this year mainly in relation to the Tim Supple Production and there were generally some valid connections made by candidates. There were some engaging responses to productions of plays by other than Shakespeare with, for example, Doctor Faustus featuring from a number of candidates.

The 18/19<sup>th</sup> century question tended to be answered well, with a few candidates struggling with the developments across the time period. Candidates who earned the higher marks in Section B tended to be those who rooted their answers in the Primary Source and supported this with appropriate examples from the chosen time period. Those who presented a history lesson however accurate it was were not always able to meet the demands of the question in the same way and tended to wander more often away from the point of the question than those who started with their primary source.

There were some excellent responses based upon a whole range of performances from around the world, with candidates clearly having been inspired by the theatrical experience. Notable responses came from 'King Lear' 'Macbeth', 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Twelfth Night'. It is still surprising, however, that some candidates are not able to name key figures connected to the performance they have seen. There is still a lot of 'the actor who played.....' or 'the director of this production...' without naming names, or, worse, presenting 'the character who played...' rather than the actor.

## SECTION A

### Question 1a/b

i) Some candidates were able to offer precise and impressive examples of 'rehearsal' understanding, indicating a learning process that had been punctuated by reflection and discussion that enabled the candidates to develop a fluid response across the i, ii, iii sections of their responses. However, 'Two possible ways' often related to performance. Very few candidates were able to cope with 'rehearsal' and 'entrance'. Many candidates ignored 'rehearsing' in the question, which altered the whole concept of what it asked. A number of final concepts were presented, some of which were clearly unworkable.

ii) The rehearsal was often detailed, but with little relation to the extract. Hot seating a favourite. In 'The Beggar's Opera' the 'singing' was often ignored. Many candidates gave general rehearsal techniques but did not relate them to the extract in any detail.

Some candidates relied on ideas from their casts with no overall concept of their own, often referring to 'the director would...' rather than 'I would...'. Less successful responses veered too heavily to description which focused on performance or indicated an understanding of rehearsal limited to hot seating, emotion memory or 'game' playing, which were again described rather than offering reasons for their choice as a rehearsal process. This would seem to indicate that some teachers are not fully engaging candidates in learning about rehearsal techniques that goes beyond superficial understanding or a blocking/line running approach. Most successful candidates were able to specifically connect the process and the extract in relation to the question.

iii) A clear understanding of relationships in both 'The Beggar's Opera' and Trojan Women, less clear on how this may be rehearsed, in relation to the extract. Hot seating figured strongly as did 'animals'. Both questions often found the candidates writing about the textual relationship between the three characters. Some very successful candidates were able to site the rehearsal process in a wider understanding of practitioner methods (this is when emotion memory could work as a quoted technique) or their own directorial concept which were often interesting responses to read.

### Question 2a

2ai) An interesting and good range of responses were in place here although it seemed difficult for many candidates to achieve top band marks in spite of some fluid and well evidenced responses being in place. Top band marks were possible when the discussion had a balance between elements of theatre and clear examples were well balanced in the discussion. Some candidates let the concept dominate which led to rather descriptive or under developed responses. When impact on audience was considered this often allowed the concept to move from description into well informed and relevant writing. Often this is where practitioner method supported the candidate and noticeably Brecht was most often successfully used here.

A less popular choice than 2aii, this question allowed for candidates to focus on several key areas to support their success and when there was a balance of these elements. This is when the candidates were at their most successful.

**2aii)** This was a more popular choice and candidates did not seem to achieve as well here as in the 2ai choice. Mainly this was due to a muddling of staging to include excessive amounts of writing on costume. Other aspects of writing in this response often veered to the descriptive, with diagrams lacking discussion or a verbose account of choice of staging lacking analysis of intent. Some responses did focus in on intent but rarely explored this from a director considering performers, instead focusing solely on audience reaction. Overall, marking this response felt like a 'missed opportunity' for many candidates.

**2bi)** Some strong responses here. Clear directorial concept and how elements of theatre would support this. Candidates (on the whole) were slightly more successful than those completing 2ai. Candidates had a full range of elements at their disposal and discussed them in a passionate and often well informed manner. Several candidates were happy to let the genre's elements govern their discussion and this was on occasion linked to practitioner method. Artaud seemed to work well here (when had been avoided for the majority of 'Beggars Opera') but Brecht also functioned successfully for many candidates. Those candidates who had used Stanislavski to inform their responses did sometimes veer into process to the detriment of the performance element of the question and this invariably meant that communication to audience was rather implicitly discussed. Other candidates did update or modernise the production with World War II being a popular concept. It was pleasing to see much less of the 9/11 style response but it might well be worth for this text centres considering the process of updating as many candidates get into trouble as their wish to stick to the era of WW2, Korea, Vietnam etc often works against the needs of some of the scenes, leading to obscure as opposed to clear examples.

Those who did less well had forgotten the performance itself, and created abstract ideas with little substance. There is still a sense of prepared answers from previous exam series.

**ii)** Strong answers had a clear idea of staging and intentions. Weaker responses covered just about everything, and many of these responses had the sense of a prepared answer. There were some very exciting answers. Some were quite original and imaginative but had not been thought through in practical detail. More than one candidate wanted to set their 'Trojan Women' in the Minack Theatre but unfortunately had not developed this idea in sufficient detail. A more popular choice but compared to 2aii, candidates seemed more able to consider staging more fully and largely avoided the costume trap. Useful set designs with annotation were in place but as with 2aii some candidates expected their design drawings to do all of the work for them.

Annotation must be further developed into discussion and disappointingly on some occasions this was not the case. Candidates who had carefully thought through their concept did well on this question but ill chosen concepts seemed to reveal themselves before the candidates own eyes leading to on a few occasions, a change of dynamic to help cover up the short fall. Brecht and Artaud also

informed discussion here and some responses were hugely imaginative and a pleasure to read.

Unfortunately some characters had quite vague ideas. Some had focused on one scene or one character but did not seem to have much idea of the overall production. Some candidates had obviously been encouraged to come up with some different staging and interpretations.

**3a)** Some excellent, well written responses, able to connect the primary source with a previous time period (16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century mainly) and connecting into the quote. When this was done well, the scripts were a pleasure to mark, particularly when the performance that had been seen remained clearly in focus. A fraction of candidates ignored the wording and embraced several periods in their answers. There was a sense that the prepared answer occasionally disadvantaged the candidate.

Candidates seemed to love this question and wrote with passion, commitment and an equal balance of dismay at or belief in the sentiment contained within the quote. Examiners felt that this question was very revealing of the differing candidates experiences across the course and in the light of the play seen. Candidates with limited experience who acknowledged this limitation were still able to write fluid, personal responses but informed by wider understanding that led to judicious use of the previous time period.

Less successful candidates fell into the compare and contrast trap and spouted facts learnt about the previous time period as a way of furthering the discussion. Centres who continue to teach this element of the course as a dry theatre history fact list should perhaps reconsider this approach. It disappointing to read responses where the candidate has just not been prepared in the correct way. Many responses indicated that candidates had fully engaged in the 'present day' analysis process in class to support confident and well supported examples from a previous time period.

Unfortunately, the majority of responses were rather 'middling' where candidates own passionate commitment to theatre was weighed down by historical irrelevance. There were only a few comparisons with C20th performance. Examiners reported that they enjoyed marking these responses because the candidates revealed all that they had learnt from their course. Performances were mentioned and analysed, often with knowledge and confidence. Weaker candidates would spend extended time discussing the text and the impact that this would have on the audience

**3b)** Candidates were generally secure on visual elements, and the best responses made connections to the 18<sup>th</sup> /19<sup>th</sup> centuries with clarity. Many candidates answered this question wrongly. Some mistook 18/19 century for 16/17 century. Not all remained involved with the 'visual' which was disappointing as this was an attractive question and one from which the candidate could have created a sound response.

Some candidates based their answers on all four centuries with a mention of 20<sup>th</sup> century for good measure and some seemed to think 18/19 century was the original Shakespearean performance period. Those that understood the question

generally did quite well. Examiners reported that candidates did not seem to achieve as well on this question as opposed to 3a. Some candidates had been very well prepared and had a thorough understanding of the notion of visual elements, which enabled them to access bullet point 3 from the mark scheme, thus ensuring evaluation took place and higher level of mark was awarded. However, less successful responses did veer into a compare and contrast approach as was also noted in question 3a. There was less of a reliance on dry theatre facts - examples were generally more relevant but the supporting evaluation was often missing. An interesting range of responses to mark but did not seem to inspire candidates in the same manner as 3a.

Most frequent plays viewed: 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' (Roundhouse) 'The Tempest' (Northern Broadsides- Touring) 'The Tempest' (Royal Exchange) 'The Tempest' (Rupert Gould - Touring) 'Twelfth Night' (Propeller - touring) 'The Taming of the Shrew' (Propeller - touring) 'King Lear' (Stratford), 'Cymbeline' (Stratford).

## AS Statistics

### Unit 1

#### 6341 Exploration of Drama and Theatre

	Max mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw boundary mark	60	52	46	40	35	30	0
UMS boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36	0

### Unit 2

#### 6342 Text in Performance I

	Max mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw boundary mark	80	71	61	52	43	34	0
UMS boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48	0

### Unit 3

#### 6343 Text in Context I

	Max mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw boundary mark	60	39	35	31	27	24	0
UMS boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36	0

### Advanced Subsidiary UMS grade boundaries

Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E
300	240	210	180	150	120

## A2 Statistics

### Unit 4

#### 6344 Devising

	Max mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw boundary mark	80	70	60	50	40	30	0
UMS boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48	0

### Unit 5

#### 6345 Text in Performance II

	Max mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw boundary mark	60	55	49	43	37	31	0
UMS boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36	0

### Unit 6

#### 6346 Text in Context II

	Max mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw boundary mark	60	43	37	32	27	22	0
UMS boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36	0

### Advanced UMS grade boundaries

Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E
600	480	420	360	300	240



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