

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCE

GCE Drama & Theatre Studies (8113/9113)

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6341 Unit 1 Exploration of Drama and Theatre

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 supporting 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 tending to choose texts appropriate to their own knowledge and enthusiasm and that of each particular cohort. This enables them to provide a suitable and challenging start to the course that provides a foundation for the subsequent units.

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. Candidates are required to use appropriate material from their notes, sketches and diagrams made during the exploration process to complete the exploration notes. Teachers must ensure that it is the candidate'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 ICE document. This document is updated every year and includes the essential forms and instructions. It is needed for all 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>

For the second successive year, moderators did report that in too many cases, the administration of this unit was not good, and it was felt that some centres were no longer referring to the ICE. Conversely, when centres got it right, administration was superb.

Exploration Notes

Popular texts were 'The Crucible', 'Our Country's Good', 'Vinegar Tom', 'A Doll's House', 'Antigone' (various versions) and 'Metamorphosis'. Close in popularity seemed to be 'A Streetcar Named Desire', 'Arturo Ui' and 'Miss Julie'.

Exploration notes were generally detailed and represented 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, mainly in element 4, visual aural and spatial. A3 paper remains a popular option for this element with much of the work done by hand and very often beautifully presented. However, it should not exceed the required amount and fold out flaps that need lifting, pulling or accessing in some other way should be avoided. Fewer candidates are not producing any written evidence at all, though there are still instances of some of the notes not being submitted. Extraordinarily, some centres had awarded marks for notes that were missing which resulted in moderators having to make appropriate reductions to the marks. The strongest notes included excellent standards of analytical and reflective writing. We are gradually seeing more reference by candidates to their practical work and how this relates to theory.

Candidates tended to produce higher quality work when exploring contrasting texts, although not a requirement of the unit this really seemed to strengthen and secure candidates' knowledge and understanding of both texts and playwrights' intentions. Genre, form and style are such an important feature of the notes that if the two plays are too similar there is little progression in the written work.

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 candidates' 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.

Another successful presentational feature was the colour coding of sub-plot or commentary so that it was easily identifiable. Some centres had not placed enough emphasis on identification and commenting upon features. Hence detailed and

concise outlines could not be awarded top band marks. There was an increase in the use of diagrams to illustrate plot and plot features, with great success.

Language

Language notes varied greatly in style, content and quality. This section requires analysis of the language of the play overall. This is often demonstrated by then focusing on a chosen 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. If centres only submitted an annotated extract this was felt to be rather limiting.

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 yet few centres encouraged candidates to discuss practical exploration and often candidates did not illustrate points with specific examples. Many language notes became generalised or even character studies. At times, there was little sense of the impact or effect of the language on an audience. The best examples of work referred closely to practical experience of performing and working with the text. Several centres had successfully adopted a grid-approach enabling them to clearly identify example/intention/practical application/effect.

Form and Structure

Overall, moderators felt that there was an increased understanding as to what was needed for this element than in previous series. Nevertheless, this section tends to either 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. 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.

Many candidates discussed the play's structure in relation to Stanislavski's units or Aristotle's unities, which prevented simple re-telling of the narrative. However, some candidates did not discuss forms in any detail frequently confusing it with theme and thus excluding them from the top band. There seemed to be an increase in this section of the use of diagrams with poorly labelled or irrelevant diagrams being used as space fillers, particularly for weaker students.

Visual, Aural and Spatial

This section elicited some engaging 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 candidates 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. Unfortunately, responses were often less creative when candidates had seen a production of the play before writing this section and this often 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 did create model sets or even real sets which were included in photographic form and when annotated or justified proved very successful. Occasionally, it seemed that presentation had become more important than content, with excellent diagrams and drawings but no real explanation in terms of

intended effect. There was also a tendency for weaker candidates to produce basic lists of props, costumes and FX needed.

Contextualizing

Often referred to as the **social, cultural and historical aspects** of a play text. Like Form and Structure it tends to be weaker, 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 and once again, this section caused the greatest concern with regards to plagiarism.

Again, the choice of text could prove a good vehicle for teaching candidates the significance a play's context and when it was well done, this section was exciting, and informative.

Worryingly, some centres rewarded candidates with top band marks for independent research despite a failure to link the research with the play itself.

Records of Work

This is an essential document as it allows the moderator to understand the practical work that has been taught. Edexcel does not state 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 very brief bullet points which is unhelpful and does not support the students. Many teachers already have substantial schemes of work and these are perfectly acceptable. It is understandable if some planned activities change from those stated. This shows that the practical work is flexible and that the students have been allowed to explore beyond the teacher's plans. There were more instances this year of missing Records of Work and many moderators had to chase these up.

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 must be 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.

Teacher-examiners should check the addition of marks and that the marks tally with those recorded on the optems as there was an increase in arithmetical errors this year.

Recorded evidence

This is now the third year that the ICE has stated that DVDs are acceptable for submission and there were more DVDs submitted than videos. 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. It is perfectly acceptable to have a fixed tripod sympathetically placed that shows candidates are well focused 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

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, records of work and incorrect optems.

There was also an increase in work arriving late and centres are reminded that work that arrives after the deadline may be refused. 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.

Additionally, due to a lack of stapling work or adequately securing it together, Notes sometimes arrived very muddled up which made moderation extremely difficult.

Some centres did not offer any annotation on the work and this makes the moderation process more difficult. When the work is annotated the moderator is able to see where and why the teacher has given marks and this makes the process more effective.

Fortunately, there were still many centres who had followed all the directions in the current 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 appropriate 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, the internet, books and theatre experiences
- 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/labeled 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 focused 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

6342 Unit 2 Text in Performance I

Introduction

2008 was the final year of examination of Unit 2 as 1 unit of the 3 AS units and many centres will recognise elements of this report from previous years. However as it is an externally examined unit but one in which the assessment objectives and criteria do not change from those printed in the specification the work presented does not need to reflect the individual demands of the questions in a written examination. In preparing candidates for this unit it was clear that the majority of centres now are very knowledgeable about the specification and made close reference to the Instructions for Conduct 2008. Each centre chooses the playtexts, options taken by candidates and audience. This is a unique externally examined unit that has elements of both an examined and coursework unit.

Overall the examining team reported that the standards of previous series had been maintained. It is clear that the majority of centres entering candidates have teacher/directors who have prepared candidates for this unit in previous series. Indeed it is of note that a significant number have done so from the first year of the examination to the final year. This is matched by the number of highly experienced examiners in the team and the stability of the senior examining team. There is certainly a high level of understanding of the requirements of this unit and the majority of candidates were very well prepared to both achieve in the examination and enjoy the experience of creating live theatre performance.

Overall 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 standards however there was again this year evidence of candidates not making the individual effort needed to achieve at a higher level. In larger centres the tendency seemed to be that each performance groups marks often fell into one or two mark ranges.

However as in previous series there were 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 were 80 plus.

Requirements

There are continuing issues of concern that were reported in 2007. 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 2008 and this will also be true for the new specification. No hard copies will be sent. A number of centres used 2007 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 the documentation needed for this unit. The new specification is also available from the Edexcel website and from Edexcel publications.

Group Size and Performance Time

This is now clearly stated in both the ICE and on DTS2b that must be signed by the teacher. Many examiners report that this was signed by the teacher but the estimated performance time given well exceeded this. If centres did not comply

with this requirement it disadvantaged candidates. Examiners are clearly instructed to only award marks within the set time limits. Some centres commented on examiners stopping making notes after the maximum time for performance. Centres are reminded that examiners are not required to remain in the examination room after the maximum time for each performance. Some centres when reminded of time limits by the examiner maintained that in previous series this had not applied. This was 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 strong performances could not be awarded marks for the final scenes.

Centres are reminded that this is an examination and that very short and overlong performances do not meet the requirements of this unit.

There was less evidence 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 the vast majority of centres were ensuring that the performance the examiner attends meets examination requirements. Also examiners report a decrease 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 the wide range of texts being offered in this unit it is important that examiners are well prepared by checking the text as performed in advance.

Timing of the Examination

A major improvement that centres have requested for several years was achieved in 2007 and 2008. The majority of examiners received their allocations and contacted centres at the beginning of the spring term. Most dates and times were swiftly and efficiently arranged. Some centres failed to respond to examiners contacting them and 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.

This year the majority of Unit 2 exams took place before mid 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 report concerns regarding the audience. 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 and time to identify candidates and consider marks must be agreed in advance and adhered to on the visit. Examiners report being kept waiting due to late arrival of audience members or being rushed by centres between performances this must be addressed by centres. The vast majority of centres ensured that both the examination was well run and performers and audience had a very positive experience.

Audiences

Centres must ensure that an audience that will support the performance is present. Examiners report this year that there were fewer instances of those attending not doing so this year. There were still some 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. Fewer audience members were sat too close to examiners and when this occurred it was usually because the audience numbers were greater than expected. However the majority of audiences engaged with the performances and their positive and focused response clearly enhanced the whole experience.

Choice of Texts

It is gratifying to report that many examiners report very 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 well and centres are returning to them but giving them a new and unique interpretation. Examiners also report again this year that much new and exciting contemporary work both written in English and in translation was seen. Teachers from other countries 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 more musical theatre seen this year but examiners report on performances of *Oh What a Lovely War* and *Blood Brothers*, which was also done without the music. All these texts have been mentioned in previous reports which may in part account for their choice.

As in previous reports stylised, physical and ensemble approach 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. Some examiners overheard again this year comments or were questioned by audience members regarding the suitability of the content or the language of the text.

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 remained where a few centres chose a full length play and cast each act or group of scenes with a different performance group. There is no doubt that this disadvantaged candidates in both Units 2 and 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 disadvantaged some candidates. It was also a rather confusing and unsatisfactory experience for the audience.

Despite all previous years reports there are still a few centres that have candidates involved throughout a full-length play but designate in 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 and 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 for this or 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 very helpful.

Performance Candidates

This was the option taken by the majority of candidates. Work was seen across the mark range. Candidates often work with such skill, enthusiasm and commitment that many performances were seen that deserve marks in the top bands.

Examiners comment on the great pleasure they have experienced examining the majority of performances this year. Their 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 was that there is felt to be at times not enough teaching of performance skills in preparation for the exam. This year it was felt that some candidates had weak or underdeveloped vocal skills. There was 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. 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 candidates' focus away from their individual performance.

There were again a very few instances where candidates were not present at the examination performance due to ill health or personal circumstances. Other candidates, students from other year groups, ex students and teachers all stood in to support candidates. Their support and the ability of the candidates to maintain focus was commented on positively by examiners present in these circumstances. Most centres contacted the examiner as soon as possible in advance to give details and seek assurance on how to proceed.

Design Candidates

There was some excellent work but 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 their own.

The performance groups that had one design candidate in general took on one or more design elements. Some design candidates concentrated on just one. 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.

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

It is important to understand that this Unit is an examination, and by over elaborate staging, inappropriate ideas and/or poor execution actually disadvantage performance candidates.

Administration

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. The centres which completed the administration were often exemplary and understood this cannot be done in a rush at the last minute.

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 to visiting examiners. This was unhelpful as, particularly in the evening, examiners could not easily locate the actual venue of the examination on the site. Several centres held the exam at another venue but had not informed the examiner.

There was also concern about the time management of the examination by the centres. 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 work in the recorded format.

This said, 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 which 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. At all times this extra requirement was dealt with by most centres with understanding, although these visits should not have affected 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 centre's work is viewed by the senior team alongside examiner's notes. Centres should be aware that the senior team may randomly check centre's work and if examiners have any concerns they must seek another opinion.

There were concerns about the quality of recorded work. 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 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 after Results procedures.

Most 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. However 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 remarked.

Many more centres sent 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. 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.

Good practice was when centres sent each performance on a separate DVD.

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 were not 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. So much of the work is of such an interest that 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 when in the recorded format. Some candidates introduced themselves and posed in character to the pleasure of the examiners.

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 verbal description of all costumes worn in the performance. It is helpful if there are costume changes 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 2007

In 2006 and 2007 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 Examination Officers. The comments referred only to administration concerns and not the performance of candidates. In many cases it is good to report that some centres responded positively, in other centres the same or different errors were repeated in 2008.

The Performance of Candidates in this Unit

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

- Candidates had been well taught with close reference to the specification and ICE 2008
- 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 engaging 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 was felt to show 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 was felt to show 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 at AS level 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 which 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. 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 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 in centres. Details are on the Edexcel website. Details of Inset courses have been sent to centres or are available with booking details on the Edexcel website.

This has been a highly successful unit that achieves a great deal beyond its requirements as the AS Text in Performance One. Examiners commented throughout this specification's life on the excellence, excitement, power and professionalism of much of the work presented by candidates. Examiners and audiences have again this final year been amused, moved, made to think and even reconsider their views of plays and the messages they bring to us in the 21st century. Much of the credit for this work that will long be remembered after the end of this specification is due to the commitment, knowledge, understanding and passion of the teacher directors who work with great dedication to enable their 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 was the final Unit 2 examination in this format. However in the new specification Unit 2 Section B will be very similar to this Unit 2 and the 2008 examining team greatly look forward to the variety, excitement of and sharing in the candidate's achievements in creating 21st century theatre performances and addressing the challenge of the new Unit 2 Section A.

6343 Unit 3 Text in Context I

Candidates are required to respond to three questions in Section A and three 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 in each Section is divided into an a) or b) choice. In total candidates answer six questions, with each answer gaining up to 10 marks. This Unit requires candidates to answer critically and analytically about drama.

Centres entering candidates for re-sits 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.

This year sees the last full year of this specification, with 6343/01 examined for the final time. There is a re-sit facility for this unit, which will be available in June 2009.

Electronic Marking

This is the second series for our scripts to be marked online by examiners.

Centres are reminded of the following to assist in the process for next year (6346/01 and any resit candidates) and for the new specification:

- Answers should be completed in black ink - including diagrams/sketches. This will assist in the scanning process as not all ink colours scan successfully.
- 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 on each page.
- 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. It might be worth having trial examinations using the booklet to give an indication of the length of responses generally required for this unit.

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', 'Black Watch', 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Metamorphosis', 'The Birthday Party', 'Brief Encounter', 'The 39 Steps' and 'Stockholm'.

There was evidence 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, again, 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, indeed, offer any evidence that the Context Summary Notes and Performance Analysis Notes 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 centres are reminded in this final year of the examination 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 some evidence that some resit candidates were writing about Unit 5, not Unit 2 and this is, of course, a completely different experience and not suited to the demands of Unit 3.

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 'Find Me', 'West', 'Grimm Tales', 'Blood Wedding', 'Two', 'Our Country's Good', 'Woyzeck', 'Road', 'The House of Bernarda Alba', 'Vinegar Tom', 'The Crucible', and 'The Sea' amongst many others.

The attention of Centres is drawn for one final time 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 this year. 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 paper requires more than for them to use their Context Summary Notes and Performance Analysis Notes to *report* on the drama experience. The notes are an aid to answering the question, they are not the answer in themselves.

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 as a whole. It is a skill that candidates will need to develop as they progress 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 them 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 small proportion of candidates did not finish the paper. There is a lot for candidates to cover in the time allowed for this unit. Some candidates completed the booklet - and a little more, others struggled with two sides per answer. The vast majority were somewhere between these two extremes with the booklet nearly full being most common. 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 the candidate has understood the experience in relation to the question.

Choices of questions by candidates appeared to be centre based again this year, reflecting perhaps approaches to this paper 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 candidates choose to answer. For example, 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.

Section A

It was easier to identify performances in this series of examinations as the majority of centres had reminded candidates to include details of performance at the start of the Section. The space in the 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 cases 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 in evidence 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 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 creating 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 again this year 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 then though the rehearsal processes to offer them an opportunity to consider alternative approaches to the process and the performance. 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 to answer 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 responses 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 creating 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. The understanding was clear and evident.

The Questions

Q1a

Stronger candidates were able to respond to their Unit 2 performance and relate this to methods used in rehearsal to explore this. However, many candidates had difficulty in evaluating any actual progression in what they did, choosing to report or describe what they did with no connection of **why** they did it or **how** it worked.

Similar to a question from the previous year in that the 'medium' of drama now seems to be able to cover a vast range of techniques and methods. Candidates' interpretation of the phrase 'medium of drama' varied. This question proved challenging for many candidates, with a significant number losing sight of this question's focus on preparation and rehearsal.

With this in mind candidates seemed to cope well with it. A slight downfall for a proportion of candidates was that they did not refer to **rehearsal** and instead wrote about the end performance which was limiting for them. This question generated a lot of performance based answers, rather than rehearsal process. The focus of question 1 has always been rehearsal and the intention in this question was the same this year.

Those who did focus upon rehearsal generally did well in this answer although there were a lot of hot-seating exercises; slightly pedestrian at AS level, particularly when it is mentioned in a list of activities with no real understanding of its purpose or intention explored.

The stronger responses made clear points, answered the question, offered evidence from the rehearsal room and then developed the answer with a clear explanation of the effects. Some responses were well structured, used the language of the question to form their sentences and make references to practitioners' / director's aims.

Some of the lower band answers were at a disadvantage because it was clear they had not had a teacher/director and therefore some of their ideas were not as focussed as they would have been had there been one overall director. In some instances, candidates failed to offer an adequate evaluation, providing a response based more on describing what they did, possibly lifted directly from their notes.

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 evaluating outcomes.
- There was a sense of notes being presented at times.

- More seemed to grasp the idea of rehearsal but interpreted the question more in terms of performance than process.
- 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 intention was.

Q1b

This was an open question that offered a range of opportunities for candidates.

It was much more popular than 1a) and handled slightly better by most candidates. Generally, candidates could offer two rehearsal techniques and provide specific examples from their experience.

Many candidates offered hot seating and emotional memory as their two rehearsal techniques. Other popular choices were animal games to develop characteristics, research, vocal exercises and physical theatre workshops. Stronger candidates were able to make valid links between rehearsal and performance in their response but a significant number of candidates neglected to do so.

The responses were often not balanced, focusing on the final performance rather than the process. A minority of candidates found it hard to relate what they actually did in performance to any rehearsal techniques used to develop it.

Weaker candidates resorted to 'blocking' as a rehearsal technique as a means of deciding where they should stand on the stage, a very weak approach to evaluation, particularly since they did not then offer any comparisons to demonstrate the success of the technique.

In Summary:

- Quite a number of performance based answers for this one rather than rehearsal
- A number of responses were descriptive, rather than evaluative, keeping the answer out of the top band for marks
- Some good links with practitioners in rehearsal in evidence and some sense of structuring rehearsal with this unit in mind at times

Q2a

This seemed to be the preferred question for many candidates. Most responses focused on how costume was used to present character, status and to communicate meaning to an audience. There was less of a focus on the practical use of costume in performance. A number of candidates offered alternatives in their response and there is a sense that some pupils are advised to do this whilst others are unaware that this is a requirement for top band marks.

The requirement for 'alternatives' foiled many candidates who did not, therefore, 'discuss'. Some candidates seized on the word 'costume', resulting in a wholesale description that avoided any depth of discussion beyond the most basic. There were a higher proportion of simplistic answers as opposed to 2b, with a number of responses giving a list of colours and jacket types without a great deal of depth.

Many candidates did not consider how the actor used the costume.

It seems the majority of centres are now simply opting for 'Blacks' rather than full costumes as a result responses were often rather limited & struggled. Interestingly many candidates centred their answers around hair & make-up, writing more about these than they did about clothes.

In Summary:

- Where well answered, lots of examples to discuss. Most candidates appear to have a fairly good idea of why certain costumes were used.
- Still some candidates failing to realise that discussion requires them to suggest alternatives. Candidates needed reminding what the term 'discussion' means as it stopped many students getting into the top band which is a shame.
- There was some evidence of notes being presented by weaker students who provided a list of the performance elements rather than focused on the demands of the question that had 'costume' at the heart of it.

Q2b

Awareness of production was often missing. Alternatively, the production look was described but no personal contribution offered. Stronger candidates, however, managed to offer this element, or included very helpful diagrams. They were also able to offer alternatives.

Most candidates responded as an actor to this question. The question was generally well handled with most candidates being able to offer specific examples from their experience to illustrate the contribution to the production.

Some candidates misinterpreted the contributions terminology and answered a question about group skills rather than alternative ways they could have acted or designed. Some students decided to write answers about the process & their contribution as 'director', giving examples of scenes they had contributed ideas and/or feedback to. Once again, some promising candidates seem unaware of the requirements of a 'discuss' question and the need to offer alternatives.

In Summary:

- A few candidates struggled to grasp the meaning of 'contribution' and gave examples such as helping a friend with a change of costume.
- Strong responses 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 write about rehearsal time/relationships within the group.

Q3a

There was a disappointing lack of understanding of the links between play, the intention and the reality resulting from the process. Many candidates simply could not evaluate any success they experienced in getting the reaction they intended, sometimes missing out any examples or intention of reaction altogether. It was hard for some candidates to justify their answers without using quotes from the audience (which some candidates seemed unable to do). It also seemed clear that

some centres did not build into their framework a system for getting audience feedback so that is something that perhaps needs to be fed on. Many reported the impact they wished to achieve rather than what they did.

The quality of responses to this question was mixed. Stronger candidates were able to make reference to the directorial concept for the production, were able to clearly identify the intended audience impact (with reference to specific moments) and provide an evaluation based on the actual response of the audience. Perceptive candidates extended their responses by suggesting, for example, how a moment could have been staged differently. Weaker responses tended to simply state that the audience laughed, cried or gasped whilst providing no real sense of the production or its intended impact.

Candidates focused on the SCH elements of the performance in both responses, however, many responses failed to give detailed analysis (examples) of the audience response.

In Summary:

- Candidates on the whole 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 responded to this question in literal terms rather than dramatic terms.
- Some candidates wrote little and interpreted 3a as 'reaction to 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

The majority of candidates in this question responded to the 'play' and not the 'production', resorting to describing how the actual piece was relevant in its writing, rather than how they performed it. This resulted in a lack of analysis and the element of 'to what extent' did not feature greatly.

A lot of candidates focused on the plot/storyline of their performance and not on the actual production that they were involved in.

This question provided a clear indication of the extent to which candidates had studied and understood the play in which they performed. Candidates whose teachers made clear connections between units 2 and 3 were better equipped to address this question. This question highlighted those candidates who had a sound appreciation of the social, cultural and historical context of the play they had performed. Candidates who had this appreciation were able to offer insightful comments and make clear connections between how the play was relevant to the audience and how the director had attempted to make the play relevant or accessible to an audience through specific production elements.

Weaker responses simply referred to some of the themes of the text and briefly commented on the relevance of these in very general terms. Many candidates

ignored the opportunity provided to them by the 'to what extent' element of the question. In many cases, the 'analysis' required by the question was not provided. Many wrote about the social, cultural & historical context of their play, without mentioning their performance.

In Summary:

- More performance based than 3a. Many candidates relying on/quoting audience's response from questionnaire rather than live reaction during the show.
- Few examples given in support. This was an opportunity for them to tell us what they felt about it.

Section B

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

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.

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. There were a lot of regional theatre features in this section, from Darlington 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 of actors/designers/directors in responses at times, with candidates struggling to recall specific moments to focus their response.

Q4a

This question was handled well by most candidates. Stronger candidates were able to maintain the focus on and dissect the opening moments of the production in terms of performance work and production elements. Candidates were generally able to explain what it was about a production that engaged them with reference to specific examples. In some cases, candidates did lose sight of the 'first few minutes' and began to consider later moments in the production.

This question was answered mostly in the middle band range of response marks with candidates not being able to lift their answers by any depth of evaluation of audience engagement in accordance with what was taking place in the performance. Some weaker candidates did not always choose performances that engaged them, yet were incapable of evaluation because they lacked the proper vocabulary to do so. This was a good question that allowed candidates to focus on the mediums or techniques that most appealed to them and that they had prepared for the most.

Candidates who gave specific details and responded to the question in a personal way did well. Candidates that did less well gave generalised comments and did not

offer clear evaluation. This was effective because some centres had seen more innovative work such as Punch Drunk's *'Masque of the Red Death'*. In these cases the candidates had clearly been inspired, but weaker candidates found it difficult to get beyond explaining it was 'fantastic/amazing/brilliant'. Stronger able candidates had so much material to write about, they produced strong answers. This was the case for most of section B.

In Summary:

- Candidates responded well with a majority talking about the first few minutes.
- With weaker candidates, description dominated and there was a lack of evaluation and evidence of things learnt on the course.
- Some confusion with the re-telling of plot and storyline or, even, of the journey to the theatre
- Most were able to evaluate the impact and how this was achieved but a number of candidates drifting into a more general response.

Q4b

Generally this question was answered with much enthusiasm. It seemed to be a question that they could understand more readily and their responses showed more coherence, even when tilting more into description.

With two techniques required it meant that some candidates focused too much on one and only added the other as an afterthought. Imbalance was the only issue this question produced.

This question was not as popular as the other on offer in this section but was tackled well by most candidates. The majority of answers offered detailed references and examples to specific acting techniques such as voice, body language, physicality and non-verbal communication. Some candidates made the mistake of discussing personal props and costume in isolation, instead of discussing how this helped the actor with regard to body, movement or space. Some candidates wrote very generally about the performer's use of skills whilst stronger candidates were able to refer to specific examples from the actor's performance to support their comments. In the majority of instances, the performer being analysed was clearly identified by name.

Lower band answers did not offer enough detail for a question that asked for analysis.

In Summary:

- Examiners reported shorter responses for this question as candidates were at times unable to write at length when struggling with two techniques.
- Candidates not so confident on defining techniques at times, perhaps the word itself was not familiar enough or perhaps candidates did not recognise techniques in relation to performance.
- Detail lacking from analysis question which prevented many students scoring in the top band.

Q5a

Stronger candidates managed responses that evaluated the impact of two specific examples with some coherence in this question. However, weaker candidates seemed to find it difficult to understand the importance or delicacy in the use of lighting and simply brought in a discussion of fx and sfx to support a reported moment of no particular impact.

Much like the costume question earlier, there seemed to be a lot of simplistic answers for this with just a surface explanation of the reasons behind the use.

There was a range in the responses produced from this question. The range varied from candidates who wrote very simplistically about lighting to those candidates who clearly had a good technical understanding of lighting and were able to write from a critical point of view. Weaker responses tended to simply describe the lighting at two specific moments with little or no evaluation whilst stronger responses were clearly able to make connections between lighting decisions and the meaning lighting communicated to the audience.

Most answers were general and discussed the mood and atmosphere of the lighting rather than why it was effective and what was communicated through lighting to an audience. Evaluation was not always at the heart of the answers, more a general description of the visual picture.

Where it was done well, this question was done exceptionally well.

In Summary:

- A few wrote text based answers about the content of the performance and forgot to write about the use of lighting
- A popular question 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

There was extensive use of entirely inappropriate productions in this question, which offered the weaker candidates little hope for the discussion of opportunities for the use of space or even any room for discussion beyond the purely pictorial - 'Eurobeat', for example. Better candidates chose or had seen more appropriate productions and could discuss proxemics and audience/actor dynamics. Some candidates related it to the theatre space rather than the production. Because 'space' was so open ended it meant that the candidates were able to cover a wealth of points and still be within the remit of the question - it worked well for them on this basis.

In general, candidates had a good appreciation of how space was used in the production which they saw but many neglected the 'in relation to the audience' strand of the question. Some candidates were able to identify the staging configuration of the performance space but did not focus sufficiently on how space was used to engage the audience. Candidates who observed space being used in original ways (i.e. in site specific productions, or productions which did not adopt

the fourth wall), were well equipped to discuss the use of space in relation to the audience.

Candidates who had been exposed to the work of the director, perhaps having had directing experience, through their course tended to have a fuller appreciation of how space was used in a production as opposed to candidates who are familiar only with being directed

In Summary:

- Quite a few missed the 'audience' in the question.
- Only a few seemed confident in exploring the use of space in relation to the audience
- Technical terms in support of observations were not always applied to show understanding
- The use of descriptions limited candidates in the response

Q6a

This response was handled fairly well. Perhaps candidates' familiarity with the language of the question through their work in Unit 1 equipped them to respond to this question effectively. Again, stronger candidates were able to choose specific moments and examples from the production in order to analyse the visual and aural impact. In some cases, candidates may have disadvantaged themselves by focusing only on the visual or aural strand of the question. In most cases, the consideration of the 'impact' of the production was a personal one, relevant to a candidate's own theatrical experience. More perceptive candidates were able to make connections between the visual and aural elements of the production and the meaning these communicated to them as a member of the audience.

On more than a few occasions there seemed to be a lack of understanding of the relationship between the audience and what they see and hear, the performance shaping what they take from the meaning and message in a performance. This resulted in responses which simply reported what the candidate had seen with no discussion of meaning beyond the most basic. Stronger candidates did manage to convey some of the success of the performance's impact in their enthusiastic and more imaginative responses. The only difficulties with this question were in the balance between the visual and aural responses from candidates. Some candidates felt more confident in writing about one of the aspects than the other.

Some candidates did find timing an issue by this question and even some of the better quality answers were rather brief.

In Summary:

- Often analysed the play and not the visual and aural aspects of the performance.
- 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.
- Candidates who had seen epic, total, non naturalist productions were able to respond to the question more closely.

Q6b

A good selection of responses for this particular question. There was enough scope within the question for the 'impact' to cover a range of different points and therefore allow candidates to gain marks. Some candidates seemed to create lists of evidence and examples without a great deal of evaluation, but no more so than in any of the other questions.

Again the use of inappropriate productions e.g.'Eurobeat' did weaker candidates no favours as they struggled to find any artistic evaluations of the impact of the production. Stronger candidates did manage to avoid the confusion of 'play' with 'production' and found some depth of evaluation in their understanding of the performance values and the resulting personal impact.

In Summary:

- A number of text based responses - rather than performance based .
- Most candidates seemed to struggle with this question and the word 'impact'.
- It was worrying to see that some candidates had written about plays they had seen a considerable time ago but obviously this is usually beyond a teacher's control

Popularity of Particular Questions

Candidates preferred the more specific and accessible nature of question 1b), seeming to favour this to the more general response required of question 1a).

Question 2a) was more popular than question 2b).

In question 3, candidates were equally enthusiastic in their responses.

Question 4a attracted candidates, probably because of the specific nature of the only the first few minutes of a performance rather than the performance in its entirety. Question 4b, however, did seem to tap into vivid performer memory banks and so proved an enthusiastically answered question.

Light and space seemed to rank fairly equally in the responses of the candidates in questions 5a and 5b, neither of which, however, elicited great depth of understanding or analysis.

In questions 6a and 6b, It is possible that the use of the words 'aural' and 'visual' in a question makes a candidate think they have to do more than does the phrase 'impact of the production' and, possibly, for that reason, weaker candidates will not appreciate the challenges of self-specification in response.

And finally, an insistent general comment from Examiners....

The point is made about the standard of English used in the examination. With few exceptions it was particularly poor. 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 miss-spell the words it was felt is 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.

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6344 Unit 4 Devising

Devising

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 that 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 again felt 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 have reported on the wonderful quality of some of the work they have seen. 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 candidates approached the work with a real sense of professionalism and focus. They made clear distinctions about the issue or subject matter 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 stylized 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 practitioners such as Grotowski, Berkoff, Brecht, Artaud and theatre companies such as Complicité and Kneehigh, is challenging for both candidates and audiences.

Fewer centres choose to perform in a naturalistic style, yet 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.

Many pieces used a montage structure and many explored a single concept or word e.g. Addiction, mental illness, control. Fewer performances relied heavily on monologues, although there were still centres with each candidate performing a monologue during the piece, with very mixed success, this exposed weaker performance candidates who often appeared uncomfortable or insecure during their monologue performance. Pieces which had a very specific target audience were generally very successful both in terms of the playing and also where the notes were concerned. At the top end, performances had a very strong focus and objective supported by a clear influence in terms of practitioner or artist. This led to accomplished performances with a strong sense of ensemble. Less successful pieces were much less well focussed and relied too much on style over substance.

Despite reading the notes, it was sometimes hard to see where the theatrical influences had been implemented.

Stimulus

Most candidates now report a series of initial teacher led workshops that introduce the stimulus materials in a variety of thought provoking ways. 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 as candidates spent too long choosing which path to follow rather than getting on with the task in hand. 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:

- An entirely naturalistic, very funny and thought provoking comedy about Blair spin doctors / speech writers.
- An effective and engaging TIE piece on the medicinal properties of plants
- An exciting musical interpretation of the Jack the Ripper story
- Famous female killers
- Fairy story, myth and Artaudian treatment of the more mundane
- An audience in an open prison
- A visit to a prison resulting in a piece on entrapment
- Issue based work such as missing persons, war and obesity.

This year, less of the work was influenced by Television, although some candidates used quiz show formats which resulted in some rather uninspiring work that one might expect to see at GCSE level. The strongest work seems now to arise from candidates being given a range of different materials all of which relate to the same theme or issue.

The more usual stimuli can still work very well, ranging from abstract art to media articles, from poetry to photographs and from hard hitting social issues to local historical events. Two centres used excerpts from Sarah Kane plays. Some had chosen topical issues such as missing children, human rights and personal freedom. Other examples of the many challenging and serious issues tackled by groups included terrorism, the surveillance society, addiction, body image and women's status in society. By far the most popular of these was mental illness, in particular Multiple Personality Disorder.

Of particular note was an exuberant Brechtian piece on women prisoners which clearly built on the knowledge and experience gained at AS level. Other notable work was a challenging piece on personal freedom influenced by Martin Crimp's 'Attempts on her Life'. Other notable work seen included two very lively, entertaining pieces drawing on Beckett, amongst others. It was very encouraging to find students drawing inspiration from live theatre, rather than film and television.

Katie Mitchell, Sarah Kane, Kneehigh and Complicité were just some of the practitioners mentioned as direct influences.

It was generally noted that a common feature of successful stimuli was that it allowed the candidates the freedom to be original while still offering a supportive framework. However when the stimulus was vague and poorly supported the resulting work was less imaginative and students showed less engagement in the work.

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.

There were fewer 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.

Where candidates had devised a questionnaire, performed to a trial audience or planned for an active feedback session within their process, their evidence was of a more convincing, empirical quality. The most successful Structured Records are those where candidates are seen to focus on specific moments of their piece, and when they are able to explain, justify and evaluate their creative decisions.

Teacher annotation on the structured records was always useful in supporting the marks awarded and is 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, outside a school at night (complete with cars going by in the distance), a highly evocative promenade performance inside a school at night with the audience moving from room to room.

We see an extraordinary range of drama spaces while watching the recordings, across several continents. There were superb examples seen of candidates, not facilities, making theatre.

Many of the pieces involved candidates dressed identically, normally in black, playing a variety of roles, which made moderation very difficult. Centres are to be congratulated on the organisation of the performance of the devised work as a

theatrical occasion. This organisation contributed to the atmosphere and created an authentic theatrical experience.

Music, sound, and costume often added to the high standard of presentations and helped enhance the atmosphere for the performers and audience.

There was a slight increase in the use of swearing and pieces that set out to shock their audience. One centre came very close to going over the boundary of acceptability with its sexually explicit piece about celebrities and icons and their habits. It is sometimes difficult to know exactly where this boundary lies: at Inset we say that the piece must be able to be seen by the candidates' parents and the Principal or Head teacher of the centre being examined. This usually provides a good measure of what is, and isn't acceptable. Ultimately, the teacher has to take on this responsibility and ensure that swearing and explicit scenes are not gratuitous.

Video/DVD

The recorded performance evidence for this unit is essential. An identity parade, in costume, is essential at the start of each piece and this was much better this year.

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 or barely audible and centres are urged to check the quality of the recording immediately after the performance in the event that it needs to be re-recorded again for examination evidence.

Administration

The standard of administration from centres was better this year than in previous series and inexplicably better than Unit 1 which is unusual as both units are sent together. This may have been because of a change in personnel or the fact that the students themselves have more ownership of their work.

There were fewer occasions when 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.

It is always a delight to moderators when centres have followed all instructions in the ICE document and submitted the work of their candidates in perfect order. Undoubtedly the main difficulty relating to assessment for this unit is the clear identification of candidates. Many centres still fail to include candidate/character introductions at the start of each performance.

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 standardization 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 should be completed in pen or permanent ink and comments need to support the marks awarded. Teacher

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:

- Time not used effectively in the early weeks of the process while a stimulus was chosen
- Conflict 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:

- Candidates 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

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6345 Unit 5 Text in Performance II

Introduction

As 2009 will be the last year of the examination many centres will recognise elements of this report from previous years. However as it is an externally examined unit but one in which the assessment objectives and criteria do not change from those printed in the specification the work presented does not need to reflect the individual demands of the questions in a written examination. In preparing candidates for this unit the specification it was clear that the majority of centres have good understanding of the specification and made close reference to the Instructions for Conduct 2008. 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 some concern that some centres did not fully understand the requirements of this unit and spend inappropriate amounts of time on unnecessary activities 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.

Overall it was felt that there was a decrease in candidates being poorly prepared for the specific requirements of this unit. But there was concern that the 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 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 were '60 plus'.

Requirements

Despite these being reported on in considerable detail in 2006 and 2007 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. This essential document was only available on the Edexcel website for 2007 and will be so for the remainder of this examination. 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 the documentation needed for this unit. Centres must download copies of 2009 ICE. The specification is also available from the Edexcel website and Edexcel publications.

In the 2006 and 2007 reports the requirements of this unit were clarified in response to concerns from examiners and centres that the Specification was somewhat lacking in clarity. These are repeated below as examiners reported where centres had understood these requirements, work that was appropriate for Unit 5 was seen.

Unit 5 is not a second even 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

This is now clearly stated in both the ICE and on DTS5b that must be signed by the teacher. If centres do not comply with this requirement it may well 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. Again this year there were many 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 as short as possible but could not do it'. Centres must ensure all candidates understand the time limits of Unit 5 performances. Examiners are not required to remain in the examination room after the maximum time for each performance however examiners again report instances where 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 at A2 level even more so than in Unit 2 the choice of text is crucial. It is the centre 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 and narrative structure of the original remained. These often had two disadvantages for candidates, they remained overlong and did not give opportunities to meet all criteria. Often the vocal and movement skills of the candidates were not seen at A2 level.

It is also 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 also include annotation to indicate moves and effects including any sound to be used. The preparation of the text is a candidate task.

It is good to report that very few centres 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 original 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 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 in 2007 and 2008. The majority of examiners received their allocations and contacted centres at the beginning of the spring term as possible. Some centres failed to respond to examiners contact for some time despite several repeat phone calls or emails. 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. In 2009 there will be a discrete Unit 5 team of examiners so candidates for Unit 5 2009 will not need to be examined at the same time as AS Unit 2 candidates.

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 very few 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. These candidates 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. It was felt that there was an increase overall in these candidates. 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 choice of the 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 candidate's achievements. Overall however the levels of achievement in this unit is felt to be because of the focus, in both this and Unit 4, on group performance so candidates who have not done well in Unit 2 do not continue to the A2 year.

Design Candidates

The number of design candidates was felt to be fewer than with last year and they remain a minority. This was felt to be due to the fact that centres sometimes felt 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 2007 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 made considerable changes towards the end of the rehearsal process, this may not have disadvantaged performers but it could mean that much of the work done by 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. Stronger candidates often showed in their presentations and documentation that they had been closely involved with the ensemble throughout the preparation and rehearsal process.

There was certainly an increase again this year in new technologies being used, particularly with sound and projection. Some 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 again this year 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 was considerably down on last year. This has been a pattern over the last few years. It is not possible to know if this was due to no candidates wishing to take this option or if centres felt that if the potential student directors lacked the complex theatrical and personal skills to work effectively with their peers as it could have considerable impact on their level of achievement and final result.

Most directing candidates seen 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 again this year 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 somewhat disappointing to report that overall the standard of administration of this paper before, during and after the examination visit was no better than in 2007. Centres must ensure that this is completed as detailed in the ICE 2009. 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 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 someone 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 again 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 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 completed all administration very well and the examination was run with professionalism throughout.

Again this year thanks must be given to the centres, which 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. 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 and that examiners work is monitored throughout the process a great deal of centre's work is viewed by the senior team alongside examiner's notes. Centres should be aware that the senior team may randomly check 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 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 after Results procedures.

Most 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 many centres. Missing or poor quality recordings of performances mean that work cannot be checked or remarked.

Many more centres sent 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 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. Good practice was when centres sent each performance on a separate DVD.

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.

So much of the work is of such an interest that 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 when in the recorded format. Some candidates introduced themselves and posed in character to the pleasure of the examiners.

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 verbal description of all costumes worn in the performance. It is helpful if there are costume changes 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 candidates 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

In 2006 and 2007 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 Examination Officers. The comments referred only to administration 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 2008.

The Performance of Candidates in this Unit

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

- Candidates had been well taught with close reference to the specification, ICE 2007 and Examiners Report 2006
- Candidate's 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 used 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 was felt to show some of these features:

- Candidates had not given enough individual commitment
- Erratic attendance hampered group achievement
- Texts were too simplistic or too challenging for candidate's ability and demands of the Unit
- Preparation and rehearsal time was not used effectively possibly, too little or too much

- Performances were too long or occasionally too short
- Candidate's had 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 candidate and A2 skill level
- Performances did not meet at A2 level 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, which 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. 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 documentation.

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 or 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 21st century. This is often the unit that can be defined as the synoptic unit as it brings together and demonstrates by sharing with an audience all the learning that has taken place in the course.

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 an examination.

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 one more examination of this Unit it is to be hoped that the overall excellence of much of the work will be maintained.

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6346 Unit 6 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 20th 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.

Evidence is showing, 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 20th Century conditions and, in this case it has to be 'a production of the play' and not a collection of 20th century production information. question 3b this year, however, led the candidates more down the route of connecting productions of the same play in the 'now' and 'then'.

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 this question but there is an intention of 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, most 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 is concerned with connecting the live performance seen with one previous time period in the play's history. The starting point for the response 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 2008 have also clearly been prepared for this exam 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 which was simply a regurgitation of a prepared concept without due referral to the demands of the question.

The 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'.

Electronic Marking

This is the second 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.
- 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. We gave more space in 2008 for question one parts i) and ii). This did not stop a large number of candidates from writing what was considered to be excessive amounts at times - 6 sides for a response that earned 4 marks was an extreme example but there were a number of others not far away from

that. The unit is about a focused response to a series of questions that lead candidates to impart their understanding within the two and a half hour time structure. There is increasing evidence in this paper of a great deal of unfocused responses, with candidates simply writing as much as they can within the time limit and hoping to pick up marks within the 'quantity' of their answers. There is as much a skill in preparing candidates to write in a structured way for this unit as there is in preparing them for the time limits in the performance units.

General

It was clear that candidates in general had been well prepared for the overall demands of the paper 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, although the trend towards less focused work was also strongly noted by examiners particularly this year.

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 Primary Source at the heart of the Section B response. There was clear evidence of more informed preparation for Section B this year than in previous years, with performance more in evidence in the responses.

There were a few candidates this year that presented an integrated answer to question 1 and did not divide the response to take into account the mark allocation for each aspect of the question. Examiners marked the response under the three defined headings for the question as far as they were able.

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 more evidence of this in 2008 than in previous years, but where it was evident there were examples of candidates writing at least two sides for i) and less than half a side for iii). However detailed the response to i) may have been, there were still only 4 marks available. There could be a real issue here for centres with a need for a careful look at the examination paper, its structure and its mark allocation. Whilst there is no attempt to stifle creativity and to hamper candidates, the page allocation in the booklet is, we feel, an indication of the expected length of responses.

There was more evidence of 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.

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 supporting examples of rehearsal techniques where appropriate and the decisions the director had to make in working with others to create performances. A number of responses, particularly to part iii) were simply a list of rehearsal techniques with little or no regard for the extract or the purpose of the techniques in a structured rehearsal.

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 Menalaus 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 paper. 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.

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 perhaps, 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.

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 warehouse with a sense of decay and dust as well as the theatrical feel of the place 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.

In the majority of cases 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, however, were not able to develop their interpretation in relation to the question and presented answers that did not connect sufficiently to earn a higher band 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 unit 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 earn 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.

The majority of candidates, however, were able to explore the texts in a way that reflected the way we live now but remain faithful to themes, issues, style and theatrical heritage. In response to the question on a specific audience candidates who started with the audience in mind in relation to the way their chosen concept 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. The main concern with this question was that candidates were not specific about their choice of audience. It was not enough to say 'a modern audience' as this was, for the vast majority of responses, a given. Candidates who were specific chose an exciting range of audiences from politicians to Year 10 Drama students.

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.

There was an interesting number of multi-media responses this year that gave opportunities for exploring different approaches to the production, particularly in relation to the design question.

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, with a number of centres looking at physical theatre, Moulin Rouge or West End Musical in their approach. There were some interesting examples of site specific work with old buildings of various types featuring in the responses.

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 a weak part of 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.

There was evidence of the 'centre concept' for both plays and this tended to lead to a less creative response 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 2.

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. 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 for 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 Unit 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 were interested to note again the number of candidates who were misspelling the drama vocabulary at this level (e.g 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 the West End were in evidence again this year, generally to good effect but not always. The overall evidence, however was that there was less unfocussed work from candidates again this year with some clear and defined concepts that candidates were able to take ownership of and explore within the exam paper. There was confidence evident in the work of a large number of candidates and there were some really refreshing and interesting responses that engaged examiners so much 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 (eg 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 RSC production of Noughts and Crosses was used by some candidates and, whilst it may have had parallels with Romeo and Juliet it was not written between the specified dates.

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 20th Century experience and those that did were heavily video orientated, with the McKellen/Dench and the Sher 'Macbeth' featuring heavily. The Peter Brook 'Midsummer Night's Dream' was also much in evidence again this year - mainly in relation to the Tim Supple Production - and there were generally some valid connections made by candidates. The Kaos Dream appears to have divided candidates in their responses but it seems to have provided ample information for some interesting connections to be made into its historical context.

There were some engaging responses to productions of plays by other than Shakespeare with, for example, Doctor Faustus and The Country Wife featuring from a number of candidates.

The 18/19th century question tended to be answered well, with a few candidates struggling with the developments across the time period, particularly in relation to the notion of 'spectacle'.

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', 'Twelfth Night', 'Much Ado About Nothing', 'The Merchant of Venice' and 'Romeo and Juliet'.

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, presenting 'the character who played....' rather than the actor.

SECTION A

1ai)

Examiners commented that this was generally tackled from the point of view of simply *describing* how actors might leave the stage (e.g. SL/SR) with little sense of impact on audience of two alternative ideas. However, there were some candidates who did not present any alternatives at all - a case of not having read the question. Some noted that candidates approached the design aspect by referring to use of a revolve with Polly's bedroom pre-set, blackout on Peachums, use of two levels. Candidates also seemed to like the idea of Polly & Macheath as crew, bringing on items of set as Polly sings and of the use of Ff and split staging to manage the transition. Ideas were practicable and effective though it was a shame that few acknowledged the idea of a rehearsal, and where they did, it was often to cite techniques such as emotion memory, magic if, hot seating in order to establish the emotional state of characters, but without linking this to the actual transition. Examiners generally noted few very good (4/4) responses here.

1bi)

Similar issues noted as with 1ai) though there was often more of a focus on rehearsal here. The issue of including rehearsal detail lacking focus was noted more often. Largely, those candidates who addressed the idea of rehearsal failed to address the exits. When considering the rehearsal element, candidates were able to use examples of Stanislavski techniques to help establish the emotional state of the characters, commonly magic if/emotion memory (e.g. Helen's desperation/Menalaus being torn between old love & existing rage), but again, did not always successfully connect these back to the extract and a sense of *how* establishing this might help them make an exit. Some did not present any alternatives while others only considered the exits of one character. There were those candidates who were able to present several workable ideas for the exits and were able to link these into rehearsal/ impact effectively but these were in the minority.

1aii)

Many candidates adopted a list-like approach to the question with little recognition of relevance or appropriateness. Frequent techniques for rehearsal were hotseating, trust exercises, status games (e.g. pack of cards), role reversal, off-text improvisation, but without giving a context, animal improvisation, for example Macheath as fox/Polly as mouse, again without giving this a context. Too frequently, candidates failed to connect these ideas back to the *extract*. Additionally, candidates spent a good deal of time giving an explanation of how the chosen technique works for example 'Hotseating is where the actor sits on a chair in role' but then giving no specific idea of what they hoped to gain from using

the technique. Another common approach was for candidates to describe how the extract would work in *performance*, missing the sense of a rehearsal & instead making frequent reference to impact on an audience. Another common, unhelpful approach was for candidates to write, 'I would ask the actors how they felt the characters should be played and we would use their ideas'. (This approach was also commonly used for (iii) as well). Examiners reported that there was a real sense with this question of 'I would show Polly's naivete/Macheath's sly character' but very little sense of how.

1bii)

As for 1aii - similar techniques cited, similar failure to fully connect with extract though it was noted that many candidates were able to focus on a wider range of techniques. A significant number misread the question and wrote about *Helen* and Menelaus. Some wrote in very general terms suggesting a fusion of two characters and one or two were confused about who Hecuba actually was within the text (Menelaus' mother or Helen's sister were two examples offered) and this hindered their achievement in this particular question. Some candidates approached this question as an opportunity to analyse the scene in terms of character/ motive but with no focus on practical realisation or rehearsal, while others suggested some interesting ideas for staging the extract, with no sense of process. Most candidates were able to recognise this scene as an important scene in establishing Hecuba's authority/status & offering a sense of how she had been as Queen, as well as commenting on the conflict inherent in her relationship with Menelaus.

1aiii)

Many candidates failed to identify what they felt the 'essential impact' of the extract was and suggested rehearsal ideas which did not connect to either the extract or its impact, once again offering more general ideas for. Some, however, were able to state that they wanted the audience to recognise Polly's genuine love for Macheath and his double standards/stringing her along. Several candidates were able look at the entire extract linking the double standards of the relationship presented in scene 1 to the hypocrisy and deceit shown in scene 2. More often candidates focussed on scene 2 only, making answers an extension (or repetition) of ideas presented in (ii). Many, it was noted, showed a very clear sense of a well-planned rehearsal and what techniques would be used, but without making any specific reference to characters or the extract - a clear sense of dependence on notes. This was, in a sense, more productive for candidates than just listing as many rehearsal techniques as they could think of and presenting them as a structured approach to this question.

1biii)

Again, as for 1aiii), a lack of identification of the 'essential impact'; it seemed that there were more responses noted which did not connect with the extract effectively, for example solely exploring ideas for the chorus. Candidates did commonly describe a desire to encourage a dislike of Helen in the scene and referred to Menelaus' conflicting feelings/ Hecuba's bitterness and anger. Lots of candidates explored the idea of Helen as presenting a false sense of repentance and while they were clear that the audience should be aware of her hypocrisy, appeared unsure as to how this might be explored judging by the rehearsal ideas offered. There were some candidates who gave Hecuba a 'motherly' role with Helen and/or with Menelaus, whilst others wanted there to be a sexual relationship

between Menalaus and Hecuba. Examiners noted similar techniques and problems as we have already detailed in relation to 1a/iii.

Q1 overall

The difficulty of answering a question about 'rehearsal' or 'approaches to rehearsal' does not appear to have been overcome. A lengthy description of intentions or actions dominated these answers in section A noted one examiner and comments on all the examiner reports bear this out, suggesting that centres are still not fully aware of the demands of this question, or are not clearly communicating this to their candidates. The focus of this question has not changed in the lifetime of the specification and, whilst there is clear evidence that large numbers of candidates are able to rise to the challenge of planning a structured response to the question in relation to a director working with a company, there is still a significant number of candidates who struggle with this. Additional sheets did not necessarily lead to additional marks, what it often meant was that responses were much less focused on the demands of the questions and it was for question one that the vast majority of candidates used additional sheets.

2a/bi)

Many candidates identified the specific audience as 'modern/contemporary audience', thus immediately limiting their capability of achieving a mark in the higher band. This was a given - we are a 'modern/contemporary/21st century audience'. The question was to take them beyond that and to be specific in their chosen audience. Where candidates did identify a specific audience other than "modern" it was commonly teenagers, students or middle-aged adults 25-40. Frequently, once stated, candidates then failed to make any further reference to the concept's relevance to their chosen audience; references to 'audience' failed to be specific to the chosen audience and thus there was no sense of through line. There was, therefore a sense of the prepared answer being presented, no matter what the question. There were, of course, notable exceptions to this with specific audience ranging from women to politicians to the United Nations to shoppers in a street theatre version of *Beggar's Opera*.

Concept ideas were wide ranging and varied, including:

A number of candidates relocated '*Beggar's Opera*' to a school, used a black-market WW2 setting or explored gothic/ grotesque exaggerated characterisation. It was pleasing, noted some examiners, to see the sense of original performance conditions in the ideas presented for this text. As with most things, the simple ideas were often the most effective and there were very few unrealistic concepts this year that were clearly cinematic than theatrical.

Trojan Women

- Either Iraq war analogy women in burkhas
- US army uniforms for the Greeks, sand on the floor, upturned military vehicles as set.
- Hecuba & Cassandra in white/Helen in red; or WWII analogy - women as holocaust survivors/Greeks as Nazis.
- Other modern wars used as a basis for concept included the sieges of Stalingrad, Dafur, Yugoslavia and Vietnam and there were some attempts to

link these into specific audiences, commented examiners, although often the connection drifted as candidates sought refuge in their prepared notes,.

There was a real sense that a large number of candidates simply were not equipped with the directorial skills & vision to answer this question well. Often candidates had a sense of what they wanted their concept to be but no clear sense of how this was to be realised, suggesting that the preparation of this concept had lacked sufficient guidance and structure and, where appropriate, teaching.

The best responses tended to give a clear overview of their concept and then focus on a handful of specific moments to illustrate the 'how' in terms of staging. For *Beggar's Opera* this often meant looking at the opening scene, Macheath in Jail, Diana Trapes and the dance a la ronde, the jealousy duet between Polly and Lucy and the ending, though weaker candidates used ideas from the question one extract with little connection into the performance as a whole at times. Common moments in *Trojan Women* tended to be the death of Astyanax, Cassandra's entrance with torches, and the Prologue with Poseidon and Athene. Frequently, these were interpreted as suited politicians, situated high on a balcony watching the drama unfold.

One examiner noted a highly imaginative response where the prologue was shown as a news report from a digital radio, with Athene giving a weather forecast of the storm to come. The concept was for an audience of environmentalists, and set in an underground steel/concrete bunker with a distinct Big Brother feel.

2a/bii

Set/ staging and costume here tended to be the most frequently chosen elements; very few candidates chose sound or light, for example. Some highly creative responses where candidates were often able to write with understanding and use of appropriate terminology. A number of responses for *Trojan Women* discussed the use of projections and screens within their designs, although were not always fully clear as to what might be projected onto them. A few candidates wrote *only* about use of screens and this was felt to be limiting. Most candidates clearly identified the chosen stage when writing about set, and in some cases, named a specific theatre or venue for the performance. This was helpful. There tended to be a repetition of ideas for costume in both texts. For example:

Candidates who wrote about lighting tended to offer quite simplistic interpretations e.g. red wash = anger, green wash for Hecuba's jealousy, blue for Poseidon.

Overall, some examiners felt that this question tended to be better answered than 2a/bi with one noting that this question was often a real pleasure to read overall with many candidates using practitioner ideas to help support their design element in action.

Where candidates were not so successful it was where their chosen element was presented in isolation from the bigger picture of the production and there was no sense of an overall concept. It is a difficult balancing act to make sure an answer addresses the question but, like with question one, this structure for question two has not changed since the specification was introduced and there are papers readily available. Examination technique is something which centres may wish to consider a focus for the coming year, particularly with the introduction of the new

specification coming on line and the new Unit 4 being worth 30% of the specification marks.

3a

A common approach was to write first about the performance seen, and then to give a historical overview. Stronger responses made connections throughout the answer, but not all did. Many good responses were noted as discussing whether the statement was relevant to the performance seen, but then linking to a historical rather than a dramatic perspective, though some of the better candidates linked to specific productions such as Beerbohm and Madame Vestri's respective versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Garrick's adaptation of 'The Taming of the Shrew'. The wide scope of the historical view sometimes led to a sense of inaccuracies in candidates' understanding of the development of theatre during this time and there were those who presented a history lesson about the theatre of the 18/19C with little sense of the 21C production seen. Having said that, candidates generally showed a good awareness of how the statement could be applied to modern theatre and were able to comment positively and in some cases analytically about the production seen with, at times, a real sense of spectacle.

3b

The more popular choice. Again, examiners noted that a typical approach was to present thoughts, or more commonly *descriptions*, of the performance seen, (very little in the way of *evaluation*) and then write about the historical view. Most candidates compared with original/Shakespearean conditions. Too often however, this became a straightforward account of general conditions, often with a focus on the experience of the audience (throwing fruit, talking, playing cards, eating, fornicating, urinating) during the performance, and there was little to connect with the performance *seen*. However, candidates did on the whole, show a good awareness of the staging conventions & audience conditions of the time. Most who did make comparisons, tended to comment on how previous audiences would be amazed by contemporary technical facilities, frightened by the realistic interpretations of certain characters for example, witches in 'Macbeth', appalled to see women on the stage, bewildered by a director's *interpretation* and appreciative of music, dancing and fight sequences. There were a significant number of candidates who based the response on their own reactions and linked these to the imagined reactions of a previous audience, though often this type of response did drift away from the audience. Some responses showed a very clear, analytical sense of production seen, with reasoned evaluation in place, though sadly these were in the minority.

Other common productions that candidates had seen for this section included:

- Tim Supple's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'
- Terry Hands' 'Macbeth'
- Kaos Theatre's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'
- Barrie Rutter's 'Romeo & Juliet'
- Michael Boyd's 'Henry V'

It was noted that a very small number of candidates compared the performance seen with a film version with making the connection into the 20th century. Popular choices for this were:

Baz Luhrmann's 'Romeo and Juliet', Kenneth Branagh's 'Much Ado' or 'Henry V', Paul Schofield's 'King Lear'.

There is nothing in the specification to say that this connection should not be made if the question allows. Some candidates, however, struggled with the connecting theatrical elements between the live and the cinema versions of the plays.

Popularity of Questions and Texts

- 'Beggar's Opera' less popular than 'Trojan Women' (approx 25% to 75%)
- 2a/bi more popular than 2a/bii
- 3b more popular than 3a

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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	73	64	55	46	38	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	41	37	33	29	25	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

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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	56	50	44	39	34	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

Notes

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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