

GCE

Drama Example Materials

Candidate K - Example Work with Commentaries

Edexcel

GCE Drama (6DR01 paper 01)

2010

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| Centre Name | Ashby School | Centre No. | 25100 | Centre Use Only | | Edexcel Use Only |
| Candidate Name | Alanna TOROSSIAN | Candidate No. | 9501 | Practical Exploration | 24/25 | See SAMPLE SESSION RECORD CARD |
| 6DR01 - Unit 1 Exploration of Drama and Theatre | | Edexcel COURSEWORK RECORD CARD & AUTHENTICATION SHEET ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES JUNE 2010 | | Exploration Notes | 16/20 | /20 |
| | | | | Evaluation of Live Theatre | 11/15 | /15 |
| | | | | TOTAL | 51/60 | 51 /60 |

TEACHER-EXAMINER COMMENTS

Practical Exploration:

Alanna maintained consistent commitment and focus throughout all practical exploration. She is a natural leader who enthusiastically embraced new methods and ways of working. She tackled challenging character through application of appropriate practitioner theory and practice.

Alanna demonstrated comprehensive understanding of theme and issue within text driving her group to clarify meaning using stylized spiders webs to capture Nora to realise meaning within A Dolls House. Her understanding of Brechtian theory and practice was evident as she encouraged her group to destroy illusion through making strange.

Exploration Notes:

Alanna has worked extremely hard to support her practical understanding and ability with written evidence. Practical observations are embedded within her work and are supported through presentation and photographs. Clear analysis of aim and purpose within practical realisations tasks.

Evaluation of Live Theatre Performance:

Alanna's evaluation of live theatre is excellent with production values clearly understood and their significance is both analysed and evaluated. Examples given are relevant and accurate.

AUTHENTICATION

Candidate's declaration:

I declare that I have produced the work involved without external assistance apart from any which is acceptable under the scheme of assessment and is recorded. I declare that I have accurately entered the correct word count in the above "Word Count" box.

| WORD COUNT | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Exploration Notes | Evaluation of Live Theatre |
| 2942 | 987 |

Signature: *A. Torossian*

Date: 23/02/10

Teacher-Examiner's declaration:

I declare that the student's activities have been kept under regular supervision and that, to the best of my knowledge, no assistance has been given apart from any which is acceptable under the scheme of assessment and has been identified and recorded, and that the final submission has been produced under controlled conditions.

Signature: *H Jackson*

Date: 30/04/10

Exploration notes- A Doll's House.

Firstly, we studied the language of 'A Doll's House' and how it is structured. A well made play always has beginning, middle and end. In this particular play, Act 1 introduces us to all the characters and we also get to know each characters story. In Act 2 it reaches the climax of where Nora becomes very desperate and realises she has a problem that needs solving. However, in Act 3 we come to the ending which in an ideal situation would be a happy one, although in 'A Dolls House' it is the opposite because nothing is tied up and Torvald is left distraught. We also studied 'units of action' within each act. This is when something different takes place and the scene moves on. We also found out that there are objectives which the characters attempt to meet in each act. For example, Nora's objective in the first act would be to get some money. Her overall 'super objective' which runs through the whole of the play is just to be happy. We are led to believe that she does indeed achieve this at the end as she is free of Torvald and is then 'free'. The overall message running through 'A Doll's House' is based around personal happiness and the right to be yourself. Not to be moulded by other elements in society.

There are many examples of non verbal communication used in 'A Doll's House'. One exercise we did to help us with the non verbal communication was a Stanislavsky exercise, 'circles of attention'. We didn't use and verbal communication because it was an individual exercise through the mind. We created our 'circles of attention' which was helped by drawing circles of chalk around us. Then we channelled our energy through our first circles (ourselves) and then a second circle (another person nearby). The third circle of attention would be the audience which we couldn't exercise when all of us were taking part in the activity and there wasn't an audience to observe. I found this exercise quite hard at first, as you had to be in the right frame of mind, but eventually I felt that I was getting somewhere and found it easier. This helped us in many different parts of the play because we we're more focused and could channel our energy better.

Another non verbal communication activity we did was 'emotional memory'. This was where we had to think of a particular event that had happened in our life which either made us happy or sad, hence making ourselves laugh or cry. I did find this exercise fairly challenging because it took me a while to get in the mood. I think with practice this can be accomplished. This was applied in Nora's entrance scene. It helped us to get in the right frame of mind as to how Nora was feeling.

Nora's entrance in act 1 displays vocal awareness. We performed, in pairs, the beginning of the play where Nora enters the house. Each of us was paired up with a boy who played the Porter. We explored how she would hum as she entered through the door, and how she spoke to the porter. I found this exercise easier after we got a wider perspective on how the scene could be performed after watching one another. When we performed our scenes

from the end I found out that the more vocal I was, the more I fitted into the character of Torvald because I felt more masculine.

Characterisation is a huge part of the play. One task we completed was to perform, in groups of four, a part of the script from the start and the end that are parallel to each other, working in pairs. Philippa and I did a scene from the beginning where Nora is all happy and Torvald is more neutral. Jack and Laura did a parallel scene to this where the characters attitudes were the opposite way round. I think that me and Philippa contrasted the characters well.



This also displayed the different tempo rhythms used by the characters in the play and how they contrast. Tempo rhythms are the pace at which the characters are moving relating to how they are feeling/ what they are doing. For the second task of our 'Magic If' scenes I got to understand the character of Nora more as we were playing her from our hunches of how we thought she would have acted before coming home. It also made me think more about 'The magic if' and how it can help with the script work.

To explore the social and historical context of the play, we looked into Nora and Torvald's relationship more and studied a play called 'Look back in anger' and compared it to 'A Doll's house'. It was similar in the way that Nora wants to keep Torvald happy; however the case was more serious in 'Look back in anger' because it involved violence behaviour towards the girl. There is no evidence in 'A Doll's house' that Torvald would ever hit Nora. Some of the hunches we had was that Torvald treats her like a child, and that he is dominant over her and also that she plays mind games. We also discovered that, in those times that it would be very wrong for Nora to do what she did, and would be frowned upon. This makes the play more interesting and exciting because it builds more suspense.

There were many tasks we completed to show Visual, aural and spatial elements. We did a Stanislavsky imagination exercise on the image of the Dolls House. It was a Stanislavsky based activity because he wanted to show the truth and explore text through imagination and emotion. We closed our eyes to help us visualise the picture and some of us were asked various questions of how we imagined the house to appear from the outside. I was asked what the house was made out of and I imagined that it was made of cream stone. Some people described the house as secluded, and this agreed with how I thought it would be. In the imagination exercise, I was thinking of bricks originally, but different people's views

Clear application of theory to explore characters practically

Comparison to Jimmy and Alison to understand context.

Practical purpose in terms of visual elements.

on the house made me eventually change my mind, because they were describing it as more old fashioned than I imagined.

Stanislavsky was the practitioner we explored within 'A Doll's House'. We produced a Stanislavsky scene in small groups based on 'The magic If'. This is taking scenarios off, in and around the script. Our scene was a scene involving Nora and Doctor Rank. As it is Christmas, we suggested that Nora sees Dr. Rank in the street and he asks for a kiss under the mistletoe, this would then lead to Nora humming so contentedly when she entered her home.

Finally, we interpreted the play in many different ways through our work. We discussed 'A Doll's house' and discovered Nora's secret which was that she had borrowed money from an enemy of Torvald's. Borrowing money was strictly forbidden in those days and especially for women to borrow money too. The circumstances were made worse by the fact that Torvald was so set against it. She therefore kept the secret to herself (until he finds out later on in the play). We also studied the subtext within the script and tried to work out how we thought the characters really felt.

Clear
examples
of
interpretation
to ensure
contemporary
relevance

We later explored more of the theory of 'A Doll's House'. We looked into how Nora literally dances to save her life in the 3rd act. She dances out of sheer desperation in order to avoid Torvald reading the letter from Krogstad. This is her lowest point within the play and we were given the task of performing the scene in contemporary theatre. We were put into groups of four or five, and I was in a group with Lori, Phil, and David. We then interpreted this in our own way to create a piece of contemporary theatre.

In our Tarantella scene, we decided to use rope to represent the web of lies that Nora was caught up in. I played Nora and the rest of the group played various other characters involved in Nora's life. We started off where they all tied my up in the rope to symbolise me becoming trapped in lies, and then they started to pull me about as I proceeded to dance. This symbolised the fact that she is being moulded by other people and not her own person. We also tied pieces of ribbon to me and then took them off one by one to represent Nora breaking down. We took extracts from the script as well and added them into our performance. Finally we added music to it to create a mood and make the dancing more effective.



Exploration Notes- Our Country's Good.

We explored the language in 'Our Country's good' through looking at the script and performing some sections of the script to develop our understanding further. We performed the scene 'A science of hanging' in small groups. As there were only three characters in the scene, I played Liz's (Chelsea) conscience. The language used in this scene is very direct and straight forward. Liz doesn't really say much in this scene because she is being measured for the rope and she doesn't want to show any emotion.

Good method
of exploring
language
and non
verbal
sub text

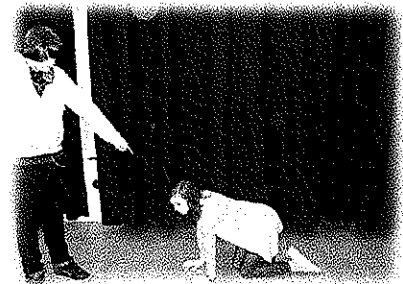
A Scene that we juxta Positioned this to was 'The question of Liz'. The language used here is very different as it is more educated as it is used between the soldiers. 'She won't speak, Your Excellency, because of the convict code of honour' Is an example of this. It is also seen as more respectful. Another scene where we explored language was Act one, scene ten. This language is even more developed than in 'The question of Liz'.

An exercise we did through non verbal communication was to create the feeling of the ship from the first page. In my group we took the section of speech by John Wisehammer in the first scene and created an atmosphere for the audience. We put them in black out because he is describing the ship at night. We also swept a huge cloth over them to represent the sea and the feeling of them being enclosed. At the end of this activity, we had a better view on what the ship would have felt like, without using vocals or verbal communication. This gave us a better feel for the atmosphere.

Interpretation
of voyage
out

Another activity that displayed this was at the workshop when we practiced being Officers, convicts and aborigines. It didn't involve any speech at all, just gesturing the characters and making sure that we we're playing the parts correctly.

To display the vocal awareness through the script, in two separate groups we performed the first and second rehearsals, directing them ourselves. As we performed them off script we got to concentrate on the vocal of the play and how things were said. I played the part of Dabby and began to understand more about the kind of person she was through her dialogue and how she responded in different situations.



Another point in 'Our Country's Good' was the punishment scene, scene 3 because the way the officers speak is very different to that of the convicts. Also some of them have accents, such as Captain Campbell, Major Ross and Ketch. Practising this was important.

It was important that we worked on each of the characters to understand them more. One exercise we did to develop our characters was to get into the role of the soldiers by researching their posture and how they behave. We walked around the studio for a while and told to display different types of character for example, 'Tall' and 'Round'. After we felt more comfortable with developing different characters and able to gesture them easily, we began to form our soldier characters more correctly. In small groups we performed some short scenes from 'Our Country's Good' and did some multi-rolling of characters in order to be able to quickly gesture a new character with no emotional attachment.

Gestures

Another exercise we did was based on the Aborigine scenes throughout 'Our Country's Good'. In small groups we gestured the characters of both the soldiers, and the aborigines. Me



Eddie and Jake, representing soldiers, entered from either side of the lecture theatre, with me in the ^{Cultural} middle and as we proceeded down the room, through the audience, I shouted 'Rule Britannia' for ^{context} the other soldiers to reply 'Yes, Sir' and then 'March'. I felt that doing this scene helped us to get into ^{highlighted} role more, and also with Graeme as the aborigine it helped me to understand more about their ^{through} culture and how they responded to the 'strange ship' they saw approaching them in the play. I think ^{interpretation} that after the scene, I understood more about how they felt.

We looked at the social and cultural context within the play. We had a discussion on the justice system today and how it has changed. We shared our views on what we thought was best; reform or punishment. Obviously times have changed now and there is no longer the death penalty, but we ^{Context and} looked into whether it is better to educate people and give them the opportunity to learn to reform, ^{message} or just to punish them for what they have done wrong. There are many examples in the script where ^{with} punishment is discussed and whether it is right or wrong. 'Justice and Humaneness have never gone ^{OCG} hand in hand', 'It's their favourite form of entertainment' and 'I would prefer them to see real plays' are examples of these.

One activity we did to explore the visual, aural, and spatial elements of production was when we created our aborigine scenes. We made the audience sit as the sea so it created a wider picture, and helped to display what we wanted to achieve. Also, two of the 'soldiers' lifted me up whilst Anthony held my hands from behind as we swayed from right to left. This helped to create the vision of the ship moving through the waters. We also displayed many soldier like movements and Graeme played the drums to create aural elements from the aborigines. ^{Interpretation using design elements.}

Another scene we performed was 'The punishment' scene. The rest of the group were the soldiers and I represented the 'freedom'- or lack of it for the convicts. A white sheet was placed over them, white representing purity, and freedom. I then pulled the sheet off them to show the transition and said the line 'justice and humanness never went hand in hand'. They then saluted and dispersed into a line. After this I held up the 'gun' and shot each one of them as they said a line from the scene and then transformed into birds. David then aimed at me and they all fell on the floor, to represent them being trapped and alone as I covered them over again, as if they couldn't escape. ^{Clear practical examples.}

The practitioner we explored within 'Our Country's Good' was Brecht. Brecht's main theory was to educate the audience. He gets the message clearly across through his work and there is always a clear moral message. Unlike Stanislavsky, Brecht 'gestures' characters so no emotion is attached to the character for either the actor or the audience. You are just able to 'put a character on' and no feeling is involved. This is so they don't feel 'involved' or 'attached' to the play. They should just be viewing it from the perspective of an audience, or as an actor. An exercise to display this would be where we multi rolled and able to switch from different characters with no transition, just straight ^{clear} away. One example of this was in the 'science of hanging' where we paralleled it with the question ^{examples of} of Liz and the characters were swapped immediately. Another scene where this was easily ^{Brecht theory} demonstrated was where we performed some scenes involving 'Shitty Meg' and the boys got to play ⁱⁿ her. This character was obviously played with great ^{practice.} gesture because they were playing the part of a woman.

Finally, a lot of interpretation was practiced through our work. One scene we interpreted was based on the first



scene 'The voyage out'. In groups, we had to perform our ideas on the scene and show how we interpreted it. In our group there was Chelsea, Richard, Jake, Adam, Eddie and myself. We created the voyage out firstly by Adam gesturing the whipping, whilst Jake played the convict being whipped. Me and Chelsea held him still to represent his lack of freedom. We then lowered him to the floor and all fell in a heap to represent the people on the ship and how they felt- trapped and finding their only comfort in sex. As Adam says the lines 'fear whispers, screams, fall silent' Richard whispered in my ears and I screamed as he threw himself on top of me, but no one notices. This shows how nobody else would realise if this sort of thing happened, and even if they did, there would be nothing they could do about it. We then all got up and entwined ourselves with one another to represent the sort of relationship between the people on the 'voyage out'. Me and Eddie then sat down as Richard and Chelsea spoke a few lines from the scene of what we thought represented what we had already shown. It ended with us looking blindingly up at the light as in search for freedom.



linking
together of
all
exploration
elements

1460

Alanna Torossian.

The Long Road By Shelagh Stevenson
The curve theatre in Leicester
18th March 2010
Theatre review by Alanna Torossian

Stephenson's 'The Long Road' was directed by Adel Al-Salloum. The play is about a typical family whose youngest son, Dan, is brutally murdered. We see the family coming to terms with the loss and how they all face a 'Long Road' to accepting what has happened. We also see how the mother deals with coming face to face with the murderer. When first entering the theatre, the pre-set (designed by Juliet Shillingford) particularly caught my eye. It was constructed by many different elements to hint at what might be coming next. A fourth wall was not created within the pre-set and it was open staged and the audience were situated on three sides of the stage. The stage itself wasn't very large, but the design was very simplistic with a table and two chairs, a dresser with another two chairs either side, an urn on top and an armchair. Very little props were present, with just some papers on the table. There was also a clean white strip illuminated around the stage which could represent the metaphorical 'prison' the family felt they were in. The backdrop was based on a large metal mesh which was positioned high on the wall facing the front of the stage. It contained a mixture of possessions such as a guitar, bedding, clothing, books and even an old bike wheel. All these things could have symbolised Dan after his death as they were all covered in grey which relates to the colour of his ashes. It also could represent the fact that he was still very much present in their lives and looked like a nest of which Emma; the murderer has buried herself into, as part of the family's new way of life. On top of the backdrop was a projected picture of Dan's face which blinked occasionally throughout the preset.

There were also many vocal elements to the preset. As the audience were waiting, multiple voices could be heard (created by Jack C Arnold), which seemed to be young people discussing their future. This is ironic because Dan no longer has a future and it is also suggesting the murderer doesn't either. As the production started, the actors walked on and more and more voices could be heard, representing their thoughts and things going on in their heads after the death. At various points throughout the play, more vocal sounds could be heard symbolising different stages of the grief the family were going through.

I would argue that this particular performance was directed at the more mature as Solloums use of dark humour and violence would suggest that it isn't a performance for the most sensitive of people.

There were 5 actors involved in the play and each of them begun by speaking to the audience. This gave us a clear understanding of what had happened.

The practitioner the play was based around was Brecht, and each actor portrayed their character using a lot of gesture. Brecht presents the characters as stereotypes. For example, Dan's brother, Joe, who was the first to speak, was played by Calum Callaghan. He portrayed a typical teenage boy with a heavy London accent, and typical stereotyped stance with hands in the front of his jeans. He was wearing clothes to be expected from someone that age too, with a casual t-shirt, jeans, and trainers. Dan's mum Mary was played by Tracy Brabin She presented a typical motherly character that

Production Values

Significance + evaluative

Significance of production values

evaluation of production values

clearly cared immensely for her lost son. She wore a cardigan and trousers, also very casual and also quite fragile which would be expected of a mother who had just lost her son. Dan's Dad, John, was played by David Leonard. When he spoke, he was very closed which suggests he was very narrow minded, and it was as if he was shutting out all what had happened. You could tell he was broken, but he refused to let it show how damaged he actually was. He also had the use of one prop which was the whisky bottle and glass, which seemed to take up his previous hobby of running. It was finally removed at the end when he starts to come to terms with the death of his son. There is also a lot of dark comedy used by him which features in the play with a lot of hidden subtext which suggests how he is really feeling, and he is just covering it up by being humorous. The social worker, Elizabeth was played by Sarah Niles. She portrayed a typical middle aged woman who was professional and understanding. The murderer Emma, played by Ellie Paskell showed another typical teenager, who was internally damaged, and we learn more about this as the play goes on. Her basic stance as she was sitting was to have her legs open, and slouched down into the chair. This is very much in the style of Brecht because it is giving her a manlier image which would be more stereotypically associated with violence and crime.

Production values

analysis of effect

All the way through the production, as the different scenes take place, different characters are present on the stage. However, Emma is always on the set which could metaphorically represent the fact that she has become a part of the family's everyday life and they can't get rid of her. She is also described by the mother as a cuckoo within the family which symbolises her integrating into their 'nest'.

analysis of set

The lighting within the play was generally very dark and spotlights were placed at different times to highlight an individual character if they were talking to the audience or if it was just focusing on their thoughts and feelings. The backdrop on the wall was also highlighted at various points to suggest the presence of Dan as his face comes and goes.

Alanna Torossian 987.

GCE
Drama Example Materials

Candidate K - Commentaries

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Commentary on Exploration Notes for Candidate K

Top of second band

This candidate splits the notes into two, one half for each text. The first set, about *A Doll's House*, show clear evidence of the candidate working across the elements of exploration through practical workshops. She gives many personal examples of how her understanding is developing. She shows how much she appreciates the approach of a practitioner, showing a real sense of purpose throughout her work through applying the theories. She compares the play to another, *Look Back in Anger*, although there is no requirement for candidates to do this. The historical and cultural contexts of the play are explored through workshops using design and symbolism

For *Our Country's Good*, there is some excellent analysis of how language and design elements can be explored and utilised to create meaning through interpretation. There is some excellent detail around several workshops that clearly enabled the candidate to appreciate how the play works in performance. Characterisation is very well explored through a range of exercises. There is a clear sense that she is making links with social, cultural, historical and political contexts, then and now, and she weaves practitioner ideas very well into her work. This set of notes is stronger than the one for *A Doll's House*.

Centre marks agreed by the moderator.

Commentary on Evaluation of Live Theatre for Candidate K

Middle of second band

Design elements are very clearly analysed and evaluated, including the set and what it represented. Then the actors' performances are explored in great detail. Her section on voice is particularly effective since it shows how she has understood the point in the director's idea of using a voice track to set the scene at the start of the play.

There is some effective weaving-in of how costume and lighting functioned in the performance and excellent detail around the structure and style of the writing and this interpretation of it.

Centre marks agreed by the moderator.