



General Certificate of Education

Dance 2230

DANC2 Choreography and Performance

Report on the Examination

2009 examination - June series

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Report on the Examination DANC2 2009

General

In this first year, many thanks to all teachers and moderators involved for their commitment to the new moderation process and internal assessment of a practical unit.

On the whole the moderation process seemed to provide an excellent means of allowing teachers to feel involved in the assessment process, supported by their knowledge of the mark scheme. The opportunity to discuss what was seen enabled the teacher to feel empowered in the process while supported by the moderator's experience, combined with his/her knowledge of the standards set at standardising for this year's questions. Many teachers commented on the invaluable staff development they felt they had received on moderation day.

In general, teachers who had attended a standardisation meeting and had contacted their AQA Coursework Advisor with any queries/discussion seemed to have a clear insight into the new process and a realistic understanding of the standard. They understood the relationship between mark bands, the impression mark and a question-specific mark scheme and the assessment ran smoothly.

There was slight confusion at times when centres had more than ten candidates. In a centre with more than ten candidates:

- ten solos and ten candidates performing in duos/trios need to be sampled. They do not need to be the same candidates for both tasks.
- The teacher needs to assess **all candidates** seen within the sample of duos/trios even if the moderator is only assessing one out of a possible three candidates in a dance. No candidate should perform his or her assessment pieces more than once.

There is no need to photocopy mark sheets for moderators. They will bring their own.

Video recording

Centres are reminded that:

- all assessments must be recorded
- the recording should try to capture the whole of the performance space, preferably shot from behind the moderator's/teacher's table(s). The introduction of the chance to use a camera operator (preferably someone trained in dealing with moving bodies in space) has proved of great benefit in centres with limited space beyond the performance area
- the moderator may ask to take the recording of the sample away at the end of moderation
- all recordings not taken away should be kept securely with the centre's Examinations Office.

Moderators are asked to arrange visits directly with centres. It is essential that the Dance teacher liaises with centre colleagues and the Examinations Officer to identify several convenient dates when space will be available, before agreeing an assessment date with the moderator. Moderators arrange their schedules at the end of the autumn term and the beginning of the spring term, meeting centres' preferences as far as possible.

It is extremely helpful when teachers provide an email address as this is a quick and effective means of communication.

Teachers should refer to the *Teachers' Notes* for more guidance on the moderation process and relevant paperwork to be filled in/sent to the moderator.

Section A - Solo Choreography and Performance

It was very pleasing to note that all four questions seemed popular this year and candidates enjoyed exploring the range of questions offered to them.

Points relating to the choreography for each question

Question 1 produced some highly imaginative and interesting responses. Some candidates had clearly researched the topic, allowing them to explore the architecture in an informed and creative way, using themes and qualities inherent in the building to present a variety of ideas.

The less successful dances showed minimal understanding and manipulation of the dynamic qualities and limited use of the spatial elements to embrace the size, form and structure of the building. Consideration of the different materials in relation to the architecture also proved difficult for some candidates. Some candidates limited their answer to a contrast between curves and lines, ignoring any further exploration of the architecture in its context.

Question 2 was a very popular question this year and produced a range of responses and achievement. There were many well crafted pieces of choreography with sound interpretations of the musical structure successfully capturing the rhythm and phrasing of the music through careful selection of appropriate action, dynamic and spatial content. These candidates were able to establish and sustain an appropriate and consistent style throughout.

Some candidates found it difficult to sustain their choreographic ideas throughout all the sections of the music – responding well to the slow opening section and its development but failing to fully explore any real development in the later stages of the music, relying on repetition of opening phrases rather than a response to the actual changes in the music. Some candidates were carried away with themes and narrative at the expense of exploring and attempting to embody the musical structure and establishing a style in relation to the music. As in the past, some candidates seemed to choose this question, considering it to be the easier option as there was no need to find music. On the whole it was these candidates who struggled to achieve, not fully realising what was involved in exploring and presenting dance choreography in direct response to a specific piece of music.

It was worrying to note that occasionally candidates saw fit to edit the music and therefore did not explore and 'answer' the entire question.

Question 3 was another popular question that produced a range of responses and achievement. A question based on a piece of poetry allows candidates to explore and develop choreographic ideas in relation to the themes/establishment of mood and atmosphere **and** also in relation to the images contained within the poem. The more successful candidates demonstrated the ability to explore both - presenting well-crafted and complex work, following and embracing quite clearly the structure and the context of the whole poem.

Less successful candidates relied heavily on general images of closing in and reaching out/repetition, without placing these ideas into the context of the whole poem. A wide selection of appropriate music was chosen but at times was not fully **utilised** within the choreographic response.

Question 4 allowed candidates to utilise investigation and research, character analysis and performance skills. There were some very effective dances showing imaginative content, clear demonstration of the character and change, plus a coherent structure. Many different and varied characters and scenarios were seen.

Often the representation of the change in character needed more establishment in terms of action and dynamics to enhance the intention. Some candidates focused more on the feelings and emotions of the character rather than conveying the character through posture and relevant action content. The ability to evoke and/or establish either place/situation/incident/mood/atmosphere proved difficult for some candidates - making viewing and understanding of the work in relation to the question harder to follow.

Less successful candidates misread the question and chose to concentrate on choreographing a dance based on *a character of your choice* which did not allow them to fully explore the notion of being ***in someone else's shoes***.

Points relating to the performance of the solo

As in previous years, in a number of centres there were some outstanding performances of the chosen solo with candidates demonstrating a high level of technical skill, bodily control and interpretative skills, often far exceeding the level required at AS level. It was obvious that time had been allocated to develop these skills alongside the choreographic process. However in some centres candidates struggled with the demands of solo performance, demonstrating technical skills that were not sufficiently developed and appeared unrefined. This tended to have an impact on the candidate's ability to communicate the dance idea resulting in no clear focus, lack of projection, and little attempt at dynamic emphasis.

Section B – Performance in a duo/trio

All moderators agreed that this new task seemed to produce a varied and interesting range of styles and performances, confirming what appears to be an exciting development of the new specification and allowing an opportunity for candidates to be rewarded for skills that were not previously assessed.

There were many different approaches to the creation of the duos/trios:

- links to professional work being studied and A2 areas of study/set works
- dance material used which had emerged from a workshop environment and developed by the teacher, students or both
- original work by the student(s) in any genre/style
- original work created by the teacher specifically for the cohort
- the whole of the cohort performing the same dance (which allowed for interchangeable roles)
- the whole of the cohort performing the same dance with individual variation for each duo/trio
- every duo/trio completely different within the centre.

High achievement was gained in centres where individual strengths of candidates had been considered and where a lot of time had been given to the rehearsal process and the understanding of the assessment criteria. As bodily skills were not part of the performance assessment, it was encouraging that some students with less technical skill were still able to access marks in the higher bands due to their commitment to rehearsing the dance and their

confidence and rapport with their fellow dancers. Both teachers and moderators felt it has also gave candidates valuable insight into working with others and choreographic skills/devices needed for more than one person – an appropriate introduction to A2 choreographic work.

In some centres however, there was evidence of work that seemed to limit the candidates' ability to reveal their strengths - being either too complex/simple or an inappropriate genre/style/theme for that particular duo/trio. At times the work was insufficiently rehearsed and the performance lacked commitment and focus. An over-reliance on unison and a lack of variation with spatial pattern/relationship with other dancers did not really support candidates in achieving marks in the higher bands.