

GCE

Drama Example Materials

Candidate L - Example Work with Commentaries

Edexcel

GCE Drama (6DR01 paper 01)

2010

Centre Name	Ashby School	Centre No.	25100	Centre Use Only		Edexcel Use Only
Candidate Name	Chelsea CANE	Candidate No.	9087	Practical Exploration	25/25	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	20/20	/20
				Evaluation of Live Theatre	15/15	/15
				TOTAL	60/60	60 /60

TEACHER-EXAMINER COMMENTS

Practical Exploration:

Chelsea is an outstanding student whose practical exploration of text is beyond exam requirements. She maintained consistent commitment, effort and enthusiasm, embracing new ways of working and exploring practitioner theory and practice. She demonstrated natural ability in roles as diverse as Nora in A Dolls House to Liz in Our Country's Good.

Chelsea clearly understood themes and issues in both texts, focusing group analysis and reflection and encouraging creativity to ensure relevance for contemporary audience.

Exploration Notes:

Chelsea's written evidence shows outstanding knowledge and understanding of theatre practice as she compares and contrasts text and practitioner. Practical exploration observations are embedded throughout and her analysis is accurate and purposed. Clear evidence of research beyond direct sessions.

Evaluation of Live Theatre Performance:

Chelsea's evaluation of the live theatre performance is outstanding. She is fully aware of a wide range of production elements and is able to analyse the effect it may have on the audience. She supports this with detailed examples.

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
3000	856

Signature: *CCane*

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: *[Signature]*

Date: 30/04/10

Exploration notes on A Doll's House and Our Country's Good

The sessions held while we were exploring A Doll's House and Our Country's Good were focused around and built on the theory's of two separate theatre practitioners and their very different ideas of how drama should be. While we explored A Doll's House we focused around the techniques and theories of Stanislavski to apply to our practical work. Stanislavski believed that to portray a character successfully, the emotions the character are supposed to experience must come from within the actor. Stanislavski believed actors should evoke emotion from the audience by relating to the character they are acting, and become who they are and what they are. Authenticity was a vital factor within Stanislavski inspired productions. I explored the techniques used by him by participating in a group imagination. Since the lights in the studio were switched off, and we had to sit in an isolated space, I was able to direct my attention to the task and really visualise the characters and scenery the group was made to imagine. It was interesting to see how people can interpret the same description differently. The technique of tempo rhythm was introduced. Tempo-rhythm is the idea of incorporating both speed and intensity to Stanislavski's method of physical actions. As humans, we pace life differently according to given circumstances. Not only will maintaining the correct tempo-rhythm keep a performance truthful, but it will also help the actor to develop character emotion. Rhythm is just one more link between the inner and outer expressions. During our exploration of Our Country's Good we studied Brecht's theory of theatre. Brecht's aim was to make the audience think consider and question the content of theatre. He rejected Stanislavsky's notion that the actor should become emotionally involved so the audience will. He believed that emotion blocked the audience's ability to be educated by a play, and they were unable to question what was going on. Since he believed the audience should not get emotionally attached to the characters it was obviously necessary for him to prevent the actor from becoming involved. Brecht believed you should simply wear and gesture your character. To improve our understanding and ability to gesture a character we made to walk around our drama studio and snap into the characteristics of three different types of people: a round person, a small person and a tall person. By observing other people I understood how small gestures with your neck of how you walk can ultimately change you appearance. Wertebaker overloads her play with Brechtian technique because of her obvious purpose to educate. She gives everything away in a scene in its title, which takes away the danger of the audience becoming unfocused until the end when they can discover what the outcome is.

response to practitioners

Clear grasp of theory and practice

Context

The performance of A Doll's House was surrounded by mass public condemnation because of Ibsen's courage to challenge the conventional duties a wife and mother was supposed to act and the standard she performed them to. Naturally, the suppression of women's freedom was difficult to comprehend from my contemporary attitude and I realised that to utterly understand the play is to understand the exclusive masculine society that existed at the time A Doll's House was written, in 1879. Regardless of the time period this was written and set in, I still think the play is relevant just not quite so divisive today. Because ultimately the focus of the play is Nora's super objective, to find happiness; a human emotion we all want to, and presumably have experienced. The cause for her unhappy disposition towards the end of the play was Nora's deteriorating marriage. This is an issue that not only exists today, but is more common, more accepted and more recognized today than it has ever been, which is why think that A Doll's House could be more relevant today than any other era. During our exploration of Our Country's good, education was a central theme and purpose of the play, which allowed us to study the political and social aspects in terms of the concept of edification. It seemed as though Wertebaker held judgments about punishment, but presented the theme of the argument of punishment or reformation in an unbiased, thought-provoking manner, with her dynamic use of character and language.

To guarantee a deeper understanding of both plays, it was important we could interpret each text accurately, but individually. The given circumstances are anything the author has supplied with his story. They are a vital part of a play; you are able to establish where you are, who you are, what you are doing, and why you are

doing it, which are all the fundamental bits information that affect the quality of your acting and set. In one session our ability to understand, obey, and interpret the given circumstances was tested when we had to read a long piece of given circumstances about the set design of Nora and Helmer's house in A Doll's House. We were made to position almost everything that existed in their house ranging from a piano to engravings on the walls in the correct place. This made me realise, to achieve the authenticity practitioner Stanislavsky required you must achieve everything stated in the given circumstances, even minute details, which helped my understanding and quality of acting in certain scenes and characters of A Doll's House. We focused on understanding and interpreting the purpose of Our Country's Good, and the topics it explores, the main one being education. My class discussed views on our justice system and debated whether education and refinement were most effective in reforming criminals or whether punishment is most valuable. The very fact this debate sparked so many ardent opinions and thoughtful question proves that the interpretation of justice is still relevant to today's society, even the youth. Because our actions are essentially defined by our morals, hearing different beliefs on this subject gave me a degree of understanding as to why characters such as Ralph have a calm, compassionate conduct towards the convicts, and why Ross behaves ruthlessly and callously towards them. It gave me insight as to why the officers share contrasting opinions of justice, because some valid points were raised for and against reformation and punishment in our discussion. Interpreting each officer's philosophy helped us characterise, therefore enact them, but did not help characterise each of the convicts. It in fact did almost the opposite and grouped them all together, dismissing their individuality.

Analysis
of text
through
practical
involvement

What helped us define the roles of officer and convict was the session we juxtaposed the 'Punishment' and 'An Audition' scenes. The purpose of the session was to show the difference in behaviour, and language of officer and convict and to illustrate how money and class do not immediately get you a hot ticket to power. Working separately on both scenes enabled us to look intricately at an individual's character and status, but by then juxtaposing them, we had to work to clearly gesture the role of officer and convict, and show a obvious division between the two. We explored how and why each character obtains power in both scenes. In 'an audition' particularly we explored how it is possible for a convict to achieve a higher status than officer. Dabby dominates the atmosphere in 'An Audition' by having the ability to make Ralph squirm as he desperately tries to explain the unsuccessful attempt of two women having sexual intercourse. Dabby revels in his embarrassment by 'giggling', which only fuels his discomfiture. Liz Morden obtains the highest status in the scene because she takes speech away from other characters when 'there is a silence'. Her short, monosyllabic sentences and directness emphasises her point and her power. In a parallel world we portrayed fragments of a conversation with the officers, which was essentially to prove we understood the concept of gestus given that the officers and convicts are absolutely opposed. These scenes helped us personalise all of the characters and see the importance of their individuality and roles. This is true for the scene Adam and I worked on when Nora left Torvald in A Doll's House. This scene meant we could identify with Nora and Torvald in the mixture of their raw emotions. Nora frequently almost became an actor of herself in conversations with her husband. She protected her secret by giving Torvald no reason to doubt her naivety, and allowed herself to stand the nickname "featherbrain" But as she leaves her husband and her children we see Nora at her most candid and truthful self. I tried to do Nora's honesty justice by using emotional memory to stir emotions I imagine she would be feeling. Tempo rhythm was another technique I worked closely with in order to portray her truthfully. I played Nora motionless except for when the subtext indicated her to put on her shawl, bag and hat. The fact these three actions were separated and there were conversation exchanges in between supports my interpretation of Nora being still. I allowed her no gestures or physical contact which emphasised her point that it the marriage over.

Characterisation

Analysis of
character
purpose and
status

Stanislavsky
emotional
memory

The end scene between Nora and Torvald forced me to concentrate my voice on portraying what Ibsen gave us to say and charge it with emotion. In everyday life, particularly in sensitive situations a person's voice is what controls the nature of their words; it's the essence of us. It's how you're able to identify when someone is joking, or being insincere, it's why we raise our voices when we're upset. True to the title of this section, we are completely aware of our vocals during our daily lives, but more so whilst acting, just as a singer would be at

Vocal awareness

a concert. You are unable to retract or repeat your words whilst acting; they just hang in the air, so it was fundamental for me to say them effectively and appropriately. I continued the theme of calmness from my tempo rhythm into my vocals but delivered them in a frank and firm way. I interpreted Nora being very convinced and confident in her decision to leave her family when I read the text so that is how I attempted it to sound. Nora tells Torvald "no it is forbidden" to write to her which I said in a stern tone, but simply by dragging out the words, or altering the pitch or volume of your words it could completely change the weight that sternness carries, thereby changing the sincerity. After learning to characterise each officer and convict in Our Country's Good our performances in terms of vocals was heightened. It follows that I usually speak the words of characters that are in favour of reformation such as Ralph in a compassionate, uncertain voice. That same concept of how a character's views affect their vocals applies to characters like Ross whom people speak with an assertive, intimidating authority. The session when we paralleled the first and second rehearsal gave us an opportunity to show the difference in all of our vocals for each character. We were able to show the dynamics of the group by speaking a characters line with their accent which immediately gave the characters truth and authenticity about them. All of the convicts, except Sideway were given a common London accent which slotted in well with the content of their speech. It allowed them to be separated from the officers whom we spoke with a posh accent which only demonstrated how class earned you an officer's job. Because he is Scottish Ross was spoken in a Scottish accent which added aggression to his voice. These small additions to a characters voice and accent adds a vibrancy and energy to both of the scenes because it disengages you from yourself, so you are thereby applying Brecht's theory of gesturing a character just as you would put on and take off a coat.

Clear grasp
of tempo
rhythm
with
vocal
↓
transfering
learning

Practical
explanation

The language of 'a doll's house' script we studied is written in contemporary format, where subtext is common in almost every scene, which was a crutch to me since I am familiar with contemporary theatre, this is compatible with my understanding. We studied a short act of a similar themed play to A Doll's House called Look Back in Anger. We focused on the behaviour of a woman who is subjected to domestic violence. The language of Look Back In Anger helped me understand Alison participates in Jimmy's game of squirrel and bear characters when she sees the opportunity to prevent his devastating mood changes. In a similar context in A Doll's House, Nora endorses Torvald's attempts to display her 'naivety' by encouraging his demeaning attitude towards her. By positively reacting to and even calling herself a 'featherbrain', Nora can protect her secret, and essentially her marriage. Torvald's tone has a very condescending element to it when he is speaking to his wife, and often presents her with playful rhetorical questions, that would be more fitting in a conversation with a child. Throughout the entire play of Our Country's Good, Wertebaker shows us how it is possible to achieve status and respect, and indeed intimidation and disrespect by language. In one session we all studied Liz's monologue in the scene 'Visiting Hours'. Liz tells the story of how she wound up on the ship, except the story element is removed since she just lays down the facts. She covers up the emotion you are supposed to feel by not offering her thoughts or feelings. She sums up horrific event in her life just as someone would when they're describing the plot to a film with their feelings completely detached, much like Brecht's theories. Liz speaks in very short sentences, sometimes one-worded ones, which serves as a contrast to the articulate ways the officers speak in. We also studied the scene 'The Science of Hanging' which shows Liz in a quiet, more poignant role as she remains silent and motionless. These two scenes with Liz indicate how language, and the lack of it can empower a character. I played Liz in one of our performances, and exploring how Liz uses language to attain power enhanced my performance on stage. By understanding the power of her words, I was able to say and place them in more intimidating ways than I could if I had simply read then acted them.

Language
Comparison
to
Look Back
in Anger

Analysis of
'Liz'

Non verbal communication is important to maintain the chemistry between actors and the focus within yourself beyond language, and also when it is not present. Emotional memory is a technique devised by Stanislavsky which requires you to choose a memory that evoked an appropriate emotion to what the character is feeling. In one scene in A Dolls House, Nora enters a room humming contently in pure happiness, which meant my memory had to come from my happiest memory. The frame of mind I put myself in did allow me to feel cheery, and that genuine emotion allowed me to feel comfortable in an otherwise uncomfortable

Non-verbal
Use of
Sub text.

situation. In the exploration of Our Country's Good my group had to weave in and out of each other to symbolise the sex Wisemhammer describes in his monologue. It was impossible to choreograph exactly where the individuals in the group should move to, so we had to interpret each other's body language to read who was going where to make it successful.

We explored visual, aural and spatial elements in a Doll's House in the form of Nora's tarantella which is a dance she performs in front of Torvald in the play. Music was played as I played Nora in the centre of the stage. 3 people in my group were behind me and represented Krogstad. They were a metaphor for the degree of control he has over Nora, as they pulled imaginary strings attached to Nora, and controlled the moves in her Tarantella. We used a flower to represent the letter Krogstad wrote to Torvald. I grabbed the flower and picked off its petals enacting the childish game of "he loves me, he loves me not". I said "he loves me" on the last petal, but in effect the flower is dead and lacking its beauty, which symbolised the death of the marriage. Torvald, played by Eddy found the dead flower, representing the letter and asked "what is this"? a penny could be heard on the floor followed by "the penny's dropped" which relates back to Nora's tendency to spend money. Our aborigine scenes in Our Country's good explored all three elements with inspiration coming from the sounds of our hands and the paint on our faces. My group painted our faces in black and white, and gave volume to our hair which is quite typical of a tribe. We made a rhythm, almost like a chant on the floor with our hands while we were in a large circle. The sound it made was meant to reflect the tribal communities that existed in Australia in the eighteenth century, and built up the tension until David banged his stick to tell a 'story'. He read from scene two "A giant canoe drifts onto sea" which was represented by people lifting me to form the canoe on the waves, but two people who were part of sea fought the coffin of 'death' and disease and tried to go against the current it as the aborigines ancestors would. We then ran back into our circle, but a smaller one and continued to slam our hands on the floor. Jack read from Act two scene 5 which described the dream as 'disturbed' and 'hungry'. Chelsea, Philippa and Jack ran and hid, while they looked curiously upon the 'disturbed' dream which represented the English. Myself, Richard and David ran around with a bent, animalistic posture, interfering with the audience. We reversed the roles of the British officers; in comparison to the aborigines, they're sophisticated gentlemen, who are aware of the arts, theatre science and education. But because of the immorality they show towards the aborigines they're represented as scavengers. We all then reunite in a smaller circle as aborigines. This shows the decreasing number of them, and how their culture being smothered and replaced.

Tarantella
recreation
(interflection)
(as well!)

Aborigine
Scenes

Clear
understanding
of text.
through
interflection

The Long Road by Shelagh Stephenson

At the Curve Theatre in Leicester

On 18th March 2010

THEATRE REVIEW BY CHELSEA CANE

Stephenson's focus is around the family of Dan, the murdered victim, and she explores the inevitably different reactions each member of family experience while trying to find solace after their loss. Adel Al-Salloum's interpretation of Stephenson's 'The Long Road' informs the audience immediately this a Brechtian style performance as voices, created by Jack C Arnold filled the theatre as the audience take their seats. Over soft, synthesised chords, the voices spoke about their high hopes for their futures. Al-Salloum placed the voices at the beginning to exist as a bitter reminder for the audience of the tragedy as we discover that two young people's futures had been stripped from them. The character Dan dies after being stabbed by the character Emma who then spends her next few years in prison.

The simple set created by Juliet Shillingford remained the same throughout the play continuing to gesture the locations of the play such as the family home and the prison we visit Emma played by Ellie Paskell resides in. Designed with a single table on a blue carpet at the centre of the stage with 3 chairs around it. An armchair at the front of the stage facing inwards, and a sideboard upstage in the centre where the ashes of Dan were kept. The minimal, almost empty set invoked a feeling of emptiness, which is evocative of Dan's absence. Towering above the set, a large, cracked face embodying Dan was positioned high on the wall. The face was projected on a collection of Dan's belongings attached to a mesh structure. The image of his haggard eyes blinked until the brother, Joe said "in the blink of an eye he was gone". At this point the eyes stopped blinking as it marks the beginning of the 'Long Road' and the end of Dan's life.

The structure of the play begins with consecutive monologues. Firstly from Callum Callaghan as Joe, Juliet Shillingford's chosen outfit for him was a hooded top and jeans which is typical attire for teenagers today. The content of the monologue enables the audience to understand the contemporary relevance as he speaks on issues relevant to our current climate, like drugs and knife crime especially when the perpetrator is female.

David Leonard as Dan's father, John next spoke about his struggle with his son's random murder. Adel Al-Salloum continues to adopt the theory and practice of Brecht by using minimal props to signify the attitude and emotion of the character. She gives John a whiskey bottle which he physically attaches himself to during the scenes as he metaphorically buries his feelings within it. Something the character turned to after a knee injury preventing him from running, his initial method of handling Dan's death. The physical injury portrayed by Leonard as the character of John reminds the audience that the character cannot run away because he has been wounded by the grief.

Adel Al-Salloum places Emma sitting behind Brabin playing the mother, Leonard as the father and Callaghan as the brother during their monologues which denotes that she is constantly lingering in their presence, squatting like a cuckoo in their family nest as Stephenson's script suggests. It is the only time we see her exposed and looking remorseful which allows us to see she regrets what she

Practitioner
effects
for
audience
+
production
values

effects
for
audience
analysis

Evaluative
analysis
of
production
elements

egs

Practitioner

did. Stephenson created the killer's character as a complex character whose childhood was a string of abuse and neglect. She claimed to drink and take drugs at a very tender age and when her grandmother died she felt deserted by her only respected figure since her mother was never around. Ellie Paskell portrayed the character with typical male gestures, like sitting with her legs open. This is the stereotype society will perceive her to be because of the nature of her crime. She gestures aggression through waving her arms around in a defensive manner and is non-responsive to Dan's mother, Mary, played by Tracey Brabin. However, when she began to build bridges with Elizabeth, Paskell changes her gestures to show the little girl within the character by sitting with her legs closed and becoming responsive to others. Al-Salloum ask the audience to consider how judgemental and wrong society can be about a person through applying these gestures to this character.

Adel Al-Salloum explores the theme of redemption and forgiveness through Mary. Naturally, her frustration in her quest to find closure is felt by the audience, but Stephenson highlights an original concept when we are shown Mary and Joe helping Emma with her literacy. Throughout the play we saw Brabin's character battle with her clashing emotions about Emma and she eventually chooses forgiveness. As she does, the projected face of Dan morphed into a peaceful face, in comparison to the cracked, haggard one we were shown throughout the play. The transition of a tormented face to a peaceful one came as a direct result of his mothers strength and her desire to understand. The moral message that signifies to an audience how the greater virtue is to forgive.

856 words

GCE
Drama Example Materials

Candidate L - Commentaries

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Commentary on Exploration Notes for *Candidate L*

Top of first band

She roots her notes within the practice and theories of two theatre practitioners- a very sound idea. Her grasp of the theories of each of them is outstanding and she clearly links each play with the way these figures might have explored the text. The innate differences between the plays are explored through social, cultural, historical and political contexts and then she goes on to show how she analysed each text, via her practical involvement with them. There is an outstanding example of this, where she locates a character's behaviour in their probable moral landscape.

There is some outstanding character analysis, elucidated through practical drama, such as through what appear straightforward status exercises, but which are used to explore how the play's language gives the actor clues how to play it. For example, the way a character can take status away from others, just by not allowing them to speak. She uses this understanding herself in the workshop, when interpreting Nora in such a way as to emphasise how the marriage is over, by doing nothing. As the teacher says in her annotations, the candidate transfers her learning from one context to another, throughout the process. There is excellent evidence that Chelsea has carried on thinking about her drama outside of the workshop, preparing herself for what is to come. The detail in her exposition about the interpretation of several scenes shows clearly how effectively this candidate has used and interwoven the whole set of exploration elements.

Centre marks agreed by the moderator.

Commentary on Theatre Review for *Candidate L*

Top of first band

From the start, she is evaluating what is going on, not just describing it, communicating her take on the meaning of every aspect. She locates her opinions in the theories of Brecht and through the director's interpretation. There is detailed analysis and evaluation of production elements, with the exception of lighting, and each character is explored through the performance of the actor playing them. She explores the effect the production could have on a contemporary audience, through linking the director's interpretation and individual performances with modern social and cultural issues.

This is a highly accomplished and economical piece of writing, she still had 150 words left over, but within it we read an evaluation that truly communicates what she has seen and learned.

Centre marks agreed by the moderator.