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Examiners' Report/
Lead Examiner Feedback
Summer 2018

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Performing
Arts

Unit 1: Investigating Practitioners' Work
(31555H)



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A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade, Distinction, Merit and Pass.

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the external assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark should be for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

Variations in external assessments

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Unit 1: Investigating Practitioners Work (31555H)

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3			
		N	P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	9	19	30	42

Introduction

Unit 1: Investigating Practitioners' Work is a mandatory externally assessed unit on all qualification sizes of the BTEC Nationals in Performing Arts. June 2018 is the third opportunity for assessment in this unit.

The paper is set twice every year with a different task released in December and in March. The submission deadline for learner work is in January and/or May depending upon the series.

This Level 3 unit has 90 guided learning hours, ensuring learners have plenty of opportunity to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills before the release of the set task and assessment.

This examination requires learners to investigate the work of performing arts practitioners and to develop critical analysis skills and contextual understanding of how practitioners communicate themes in their performance and production repertoire.

The unit requires learners to respond to a set task. The set task changes every series and it is essential that learners respond to the specific set task set in the year and series of their assessment.

Once the set task is released it is expected that learners, working independently, spend four weeks carrying out research and preparatory work, prior to three hours of supervised assessment, which should take place in week five of the timetabled period.

Learners need to produce a piece of extended writing (up to 2000 words) and a separate bibliography.

Learners may take their own notes into the supervised assessment to support them in responding to the set task. These may be handwritten or word-processed and do not need to be submitted to Pearson.

The pieces of extended writing and the bibliography must be printed out and sent to Pearson.

Learners should approach the task as an investigation into the performance and production repertoire of **two** practitioners relevant to the set task and theme. They should undertake effective research into the theme, the contextual factors that have influenced the practitioners, and the contextual factors that have influenced the practitioner's performance and production repertoire in preparation for this assessment.

Reference to performance and production repertoire can be a response to live, recorded or any practical work the learners have completed themselves during the qualification.

In preparation for the set task release learners should be encouraged to analyse the performance and production repertoire of a range of practitioners, this can include scores, choreography and the learners own work in the style of particular practitioners. They should also be encouraged to research the contextual influences on the practitioners and the work they are analysing. This preparation will aid learners in becoming more selective in their choice of appropriate material for use in the completion of the set task.

The set task for learners in this series was to select and justify the inclusion of the performance work of two practitioners for a series of performances being organised by an international arts organisation who are looking for a thought-provoking performance work exploring the theme of *Bridging the Gap*.

Centres and learners should read the whole set task carefully as this provides the vocational context for the completion of the whole task, the task does not just require learners to respond to the theme.

Centres are reminded that at least one of the two selected practitioners should be from the list of prescribed practitioners. The other practitioner can be one of the learners' own choice, but may also come from the prescribed list.

There was evidence this series that some learners had chosen practitioners that were not appropriate for the completion of the task. Examples of such practitioners are individuals or companies who do not have international recognition and an established reputation and presence. This always has an impact on learner's achievement as it means they have not addressed an important requirement of the set task.

Careful choice of practitioners that link to the requirements of the whole task including, although not just, the theme is an important part of the research period and will always lead to more successful responses to the set task.

The most successful work was from learners who also ensured they could critically analyse the practical performance and production repertoire of the practitioners they choose and did not just, for example describe the plot of a play text which *Bridged the Gap* or the techniques of a practitioner who *Bridged the Gap* without significant reference to the practitioner's performance and production repertoire.

Referencing of sources is an important part of this unit. Learners should know how to reference and cite their sources. There is no set style of referencing prescribed however Harvard appears to be the most popular format used in this and previous series. The use of citations within the body of the extended piece of writing is good practice, to support the learners' critical analysis of the practitioners' performance and production repertoire.

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

Much of the information in the Lead Examiner report from the last two series is relevant and thus repeated in the report for this series. Overall, examiners reported that the same issues occurred during this series in terms of administration and learner responses as in the last two series. It is hoped that the content of this report will assist centres in preparing learners for the completion of the set task in January. The format for the set task is changing in the next series however the knowledge and understanding which learners must demonstrate in their answer to the set task remains very similar.

Examiners reported seeing a wide range of work covering the full range of marks available. Most learners responded well to the task and produced a structured piece of writing that reflected all the requirements of the set task.

As usual a number of practitioners proved very popular, e.g. Matthew Bourne, DV8, Frantic Assembly, Konstantin Stanislavski, Bertolt Brecht, Bob Fosse, Christopher Bruce, Stephen Sondheim and Akram Khan.

It is worth pointing out again that careful selection of practitioners is paramount to success in this unit. As mentioned earlier there was more evidence this series that some learners had used a practitioner that was not suitable for the task. It is clearly stated in the unit specification and the task paper that practitioners should be internationally recognised and have an established reputation and presence. Learners who had selected an inappropriate practitioner often found it difficult to identify the contextual factors; this also impacted in the selection of the practitioner's practical performance and production repertoire, which was often not directly linked to the set task or the theme.

Examiners commented upon the fact that learners tended to provide a stronger response to the task when they felt a connection with the practitioner or had actually seen their work. Then they would vividly describe moments for example in *Revelations*, *Things I Know to be True*, *Love Song*, *Zero Degrees*, *The Cost of Living*, *The Nutcracker* and *Ghost Dances*. By chance some of the strongest answers this series used contrasting practitioners from different disciplines.

Occasionally some learners did not understand what the practitioners had accomplished and how the contextual influences helped create, and shape the practitioner's performance and production work. It is also important to remember that factual information on the practitioner and their work needs to be accurate.

Whilst there were some less strong and/or brief submissions, these were fairly few and far between. Where learners did well their work excited the examiner with the depth of knowledge and ability to write persuasively. There were many instances of clear thought, backed up by research, detail and some insightful critical analysis of the performance and

production repertoire.

Responses that gained higher marks had carefully selected two appropriate practitioners and had clearly researched the contextual factors on the practitioner themselves and considered how these factors had influenced the development of the practitioner's work (performance and production repertoire). The selection of performance and production repertoire was again linked specifically to the task and the theme, was discussed practically and critically analysed with '*perceptive insight*'.

Examiners reported that some learners just wrote about practitioners who had developed an approach or techniques, which they considered *Bridged the Gap*. For example:

"Frantic Assembly Bridge the Gap with the younger generations as they have more and more people every year being a part of the many workshops that they run for people who are interested in performing."

Or

"Brecht wanted to use the technique of Epic theatre to make sure the audience always knew they were in a theatre. He did this to help Bridge the Gap between reality and imagination"

This approach is not appropriate for this task paper as learners are required to respond to the requirements of the set task, as outlined in the introduction. The task paper specifies what the task is and who the task is aimed at, in this series an international arts organisation planning a programme of thought-provoking performances.

As in the previous two series, there was evidence of responses that were unbalanced in terms of time spent on one practitioner. It is possible that learners were running out of time and then wrote a few relevant points about the second practitioner. However, learners should be advised when preparing for this external assessment they need to consider both practitioners equally.

There were fewer examples in this series of work which adopted a formulaic approach. It was evident that more learners had engaged in an appropriate investigation process, which allowed them to focus more clearly on the set task. It was very evident in the pieces of extended writing when learners had really engaged with their chosen practitioners' practical performance work.

When discussing the practitioners' performance and production work, learners should use their critical analysis skills to demonstrate their understanding of the performance and production repertoire. Simply giving a plot synopsis is not very useful and suggests that learners have not completed an effective investigative process or applied their critical analysis skills appropriately.

Some good discussion was seen in pieces of extended writing in all disciplines especially in relation to Ailey, Bourne, Fosse, Graham, Frantic Assembly, Berkoff and Lin Manuel Miranda in much of this work there was a sense of the practitioner's

performance and production work having been studied and analysed. There were many detailed and perceptive references linking aspects of this work, to the theme and the contextual influences.

Learners who used Stanislavski and Brecht as their practitioners often did not analyse practical performance and production repertoire. These essays tended to be either quite weak with tenuous links to performance and production repertoire, very literary in focus and/or plot-based narratives. There were a few exceptions where centres had chosen Brecht or Stanislavski and had visited the theatre to see live productions giving learners a first-hand experience to discuss performance and production repertoire in a practical way rather than a literary study of the set text they worked on and/or the practitioner's performance techniques. Augusto Boal was a practitioner that examiners reported they saw more often this year and in most cases learners found it fairly difficult to analyse his performance and production repertoire which also meant that the contextual factors they had identified were not applied very effectively to Boal's work.

Many learners discussed the work of practitioners who *Bridged the Gap* with little reference to the practitioners' performance and production repertoire and as such they did not respond to all of the specific requirements of the set task.

Other learners made very tenuous links between the performance and production work they were discussing and the theme. For example:

"The actress who is playing Mother Courage is stood on top of a cart, asserting her dominance, the audience question why there is a strong female lead, which is bridging the gap between women in theatre who have fought to be able to act onstage in previous years."

Most learners adhered to the word count. Responses that were overly long tended to lack focus and were therefore self-penalising. Likewise work that was significantly under the word count missed opportunities to fully explore the practitioners' work. Quotations, footnotes and citations are not included in the word count.

Almost all learners produced a bibliography, however, several of these only consisted of a list of websites that had been accessed. In some learner responses, it was difficult to see how the investigative process had been applied to the task, as there was no reference in the writing to the sources listed in the bibliography. High quality work was seen where learners responded to all the demands of the task, particularly the analysis of performance and production repertoire, the work was well written with clear referencing and the application of research was evident.

Some examiners also reported that work was occasionally received without all relevant documentation completed. Please refer to the administrative support guide and the documents on the Pearson website for guidance on what needs to be submitted.

Set Task

AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contextual factors that influence work of performing arts practitioners

Learners are required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of contextual factors that have influenced the work of performing arts practitioners.

This assessment outcome requires learners to identify what contextual factors have influenced the practical performance and production repertoire work of their chosen practitioners. Factors included should be relevant to the set task, as this will help learners to more effectively meet the assessment objective. Learners should explore a wide variety of both primary and secondary sources. These could include live performances, interviews and case studies. Learners should identify a range of these factors and keep them in mind as the rest of the task is completed.

There were unfortunately still some instances of learners tending to give general biographical details with little sense of contextualisation. Some learners just included date and place of birth with some other superficial commentary but went no further to explain how the contextual factors had influenced the practitioners they were discussing.

However in other cases learners considered a vast range of the contextual factors that have had an impact upon their chosen practitioners work. The best responses clearly explained why the contextual factors mentioned were relevant, how they were evident in the practitioners work. These responses tended to link their discussion back to the set task and theme and often provided a perceptive quotation in order to further support their investigation process.

“Bridging the Gap between cultures and religions is Khan’s specialty; he creates work that tells the story of his dual heritage. London born into a Bangladeshi family, Khan was ‘taught Bengali folk dance by his mother and at seven, began studying Kathak...’ (Roy, 2009). He ‘first came into contemporary dance at university. From these diverse strands, a unique movement language developed’ (Bremser and Saunders, 2011). Khan has been influenced by his Bangladeshi/English heritage and uses these influences in works such as Zero Degrees.....”

Some practitioners such as Ailey, Sondheim and Brecht have a wealth of contextual factors that influence their work, and these were often commented upon very effectively. Learners were often less successful at identifying the contextual influences on practitioners such as Kneehigh and Frantic Assembly although there are many contextual factors that can be applied to these practitioners’ work.

“Kneehigh was founded in 1980 by Mike Shepherd and the way in which the company rehearse and work has a direct influence on the work they choose to create. ‘Cornwall is our physical and spiritual home. We draw inspiration from the landscapes, history, people and culture.’ (Kneehigh website).....”

A contextual influence can come from many sources such as the influence of geographical and physical factors, influence from other practitioners and performers and influences from education, teachers and mentors. Responses gaining higher

marks identified the contextual influences and then linked these to the theme and the performance and production repertoire of the practitioners being discussed.

“Miranda’s upbringing and family history are significant influences on “Hamilton”... the son of Puerto Rican immigrants, he is passionate about raising awareness of Puerto Rico’s struggles. His clear passion for his homeland has many correlations to historical figures portrayed in Hamilton such as Alexander Hamilton (an immigrant from the west Indies) and Marquis de Lafayette – a French immigrant, military officer and one of Hamilton’s close companions. The plot incorporates themes of bridging the gap between nations, coming together to fight for America’s independence – a theme explored in lyrics such as “Immigrants, we get the job done”. Miranda also reflects the theme by bridging the gap between ethnocentric casting within the industry. This bridges the gap between modern day USA and the origins of America, present through the story of the founding Fathers. Quinonez states in an article: “choosing to cast the founders of our country as people of colour may not be “historically” accurate, but it is culturally accurate as a reflection of a 21st century nation built by immigrants”. The opening number reflects themes of bridging the gap through its prominent genres of hip-hop and rap.....”

Some learners this series had been encouraged to look at the influence of other practitioners on their chosen practitioner, for example the influence of Brecht, Artaud and LeCoq on Berkoff. This tended to support the learners responses very effectively.

“Swansong is a fusion of modern dance and classical ballet. Bruce incorporates three different styles into his piece, Graham technique, Cunningham technique and classical ballet. An excellent example showing the fusion of these styles being used is when the dancer portraying the criminal in this piece moves downstage right and performs a grand jete to upstage left and performs a pas de bouree into a pirouette en dedans with his arm in first position. The dancer turns and performs another grand jete and then curves his body around which is a signature movement in Cunningham’s technique. His arms following the direction of his body movement to go into a turn with his upper back stretched and his arms in the air following the direction of his movement and lands with his pelvis curved, his legs facing centre and his abdominals contracted which is a signature Graham technique. Bruce Bridges the Gap between these styles to make contemporary dance in his own style.”

When considering what constitutes a “range of contextual factors”, there is always a good place to start.

AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of how contextual factors influence the creative intentions and themes in the work of performing arts practitioners

AO2 requires learners to apply their knowledge and understanding of how the contextual factors have influenced the creative intentions and themes in the work of performing arts practitioners.

Learners are required to use what they have learnt in AO1 and apply it to the set task and theme explaining why and how practitioners created the selected examples of performance and production repertoire that each learner is analysing in their piece of extended writing. This needs to be supported with examples from the practical performance work and connections should be made between the practitioners' intentions and the set task and theme. Many learners focused on the theme, some to an extreme where almost every sentence had a reference to *Bridging the Gap*.

"In the First World War Brecht was a medical orderly this meant that it was Brecht's duty to work with soldiers who were close to death , heal and treat them. This shows Brecht bridging the gap between life and death....."

Brecht appeared in front of the un-American activities committee influenced him to go back to Europe in 1947. Brecht getting himself back to his home country shows that even without his plays he bridges the gap as he Bridged the Gap between himself and his home."

There was a very definite move, noted by many examiners, in the tendency for learners to relate contextual factors to the theme rather than to the practical and performance repertoire of the chosen practitioners. This occurred frequently in centres where the repertoire became secondary to the theme and instead learners explained how their chosen practitioners *Bridged the Gap*, often, in everything they did. This tended to re-focus the whole investigation onto the theme and did mean that learners were not addressing all the requirements of the set task thereby limiting the marks that could be awarded.

The majority of learners were able to identify and then apply contextual factors to their analysis of the practitioner's performance and production repertoire whilst relating the creative intentions back to the theme. These learners tended to write in a focused and structured way, gaining high marks.

"Lovesong was originally inspired by a frank account of a relationship by an audience member in a post show discussion of Stockholm in Chichester. "...of course the old have stories just as salacious and juicy as anything the young can imagine. We are all guilty in varying degrees of forgetting this." (Frantic Assembly Love song Resource Pack). One of the directors was also inspired by the T.S Eliot poem The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock. "Returning to the poem revealed a world of insecurity verging on self-loathing, a troubled pessimistic mind looking back over a love life paralysed by fear" (Frantic Assembly Love song Resource Pack). They became interested in the idea of someone looking back on life and revisiting moments that memory took you to so the older and younger self were able to be in the same space thereby Bridging the Gap between the past and present, memory and reality. In one scene it begins with the older Billy looking on at the younger version of him and his wife arguing. His mouth is open in surprise and eyes wide in anger as he attempts to reach out unable to influence the situation. The older Billy comes to stand with the younger Maggie, gazing at her in awe as if she is the only object of his attention. He then lifts her gently so she appears weightless, and spins her around in his arms as the soft music envelops them. He then lifts her higher so she is above him, looking down at him as he looks up at her, enamoured by her

presence and youthful frame which is how he remembers her. She is then lowered down and is held in a cradled position by Billy as she leans into his shoulder with her arms around him in a protective embrace, he clings to her as though clinging onto his memories of her which is all he will have left when she dies. This Bridges the Gap as different periods of time are encapsulated in one moment.....”

Learners who had difficulty identifying contextual factors in AO1 were often again limited in applying their knowledge to practitioners’ intentions in AO2. As outlined above there is also a very strong interconnection with AO3 and if learners have not analysed performance and production repertoire in any detail for AO3 then they were often not able to provide an effective or in-depth understanding of how contextual factors had influenced the practitioners’ work.

“In Zero Degrees there is an eclectic mix of styles, which Bridges the Gap between both choreographers (Akram Khan and Sidi-Larbi Cherkaoui). Cherkaoui trained in ballet and contemporary and has experience in flamenco, hip-hop, jazz and tap. Khan’s training was largely Kathak and then ballet and contemporary. The different use of techniques can be seen in a turning section in the dance when both Cherkaoui and Khan perform a turning pattern in unison. Cherkaoui turns on the balls of his feet with his legs pulled up whereas Khan turns on his heels and is much more grounded showing two opposites next to each other in the same stage space, which helps to Bridge the Gap between the differences in their styles.”

Looking at reviews and critical responses to the performance and production repertoire works of each practitioner being referred to in the learners piece of extended writing is the best starting point for this particular AO. Taking this approach should then allow learners to be more critically selective in the materials to be discussed as part of AO3.

AO3: Apply critical analysis skills to develop and demonstrate understanding of performance, production and repertoire

This assessment objective requires learners to apply their critical analysis skills to develop and demonstrate their understanding of performance, production and repertoire.

This assessment outcome really does need a practical discussion of the practitioner's performance and production repertoire. Again, it is the careful selection of the material that will help. Learners should select and critically analyse material that supports the whole set task, including the theme.

Some learners provided a lot of detailed analysis of practitioner's performance and production work however other learners 'scraped the surface', with little analysis of relevant works. For example:

"Frantic Assembly tend to use a lot of movement, music, text and design combined to make their productions. They use movement to help portray the feelings of the characters as well as the type of scene they are doing. So for a love scene the movements would be calm, relaxed peaceful and mostly carried out slower than you would generally move."

The higher marks were awarded where learners went into deeper analysis and linked the analysis back to the contextual influences on the work and the set task including the theme.

"In Lovesong we can see the old woman is longing for her youth when she tries to walk in her heels, but can't and she sinks sadly back on to the bed – then the younger version of her husband comes to dance with her – this signifies her memory, bridging the gap in time. He can't remain and runs back through the wardrobe – she tries to follow but reaches a closed door....."

In several cases it appeared that learners had not seen a piece of performance and production repertoire relating to their chosen practitioners and therefore discussion was often limited to a narrative discussion of the plot which often meant that learners were not applying critical analysis skills or demonstrating an understanding of performance and production repertoire thereby making it difficult for them to achieve many marks for this assessment objective. In the case of some other learners they only referred to YouTube trailers for the practitioners' work, which does not give them enough knowledge and understanding of the performance and production repertoire to analyse it in any depth.

Examiners do not need a complete discussion of the whole piece of repertoire. Learners need to take the examiner on a journey and direct them to examples of appropriate pieces and moments from each practitioner's performance and production repertoire.

Many dance learners again usually made very clear reference to specific moments in dances such as Lamentation, Revelations and Swan Lake, which not only clearly explained moments but also analysed the work offering personal engagement and the learners' opinions on the pieces.

As mentioned earlier in this report centres and learners do need to be careful to ensure that if they are using practitioners with a number of 'techniques', for example in the case of Stanislavski and the training of an actor, that the response does not become focused on this aspect of the practitioners' work. The task does not require learners to analyse the theories of these practitioners and how they *Bridged the Gap*, rather to analyse their performance and production repertoire and/or other performance and production work in the same performance style.

There were still instances where the reference to the performance and production repertoire of some practitioners was little more than plot summary.

Only a few learners referenced their own practical work however when it was focused on a relevant text and practitioner it could be detailed and pertinent.

In summary there were many examples of perceptive analysis of performance and production repertoire that were clearly linked to the set task and theme. In many cases this demonstrated an accomplished application of critical analysis skills with an in-depth understanding of performance and production repertoire.

"In Kneehigh's Tin Drum, "The Black Witch is a nursery rhyme bogey-man, a folkloric character who bears a resemblance to Adolf Hitler, dressed in what appears to be a Nazi uniform with Kneehighs's own version of a swastika on her arm. As she bursts out of the smashed windows she begins to sing a low-toned mantra of 'come to me' slowly and hauntingly with the slowed down music which makes the other characters halt in their tracks, hypnotized to watch her, their morality completely forgotten as they are being brainwashed by her. They then begin to dance manically as the music changes to a fierce electric mode with jerky, violent choreography as if they are her puppets; she is louder and drowns out all of the other sounds on stage as she uses a microphone. The stage becomes frantic, the lights flashing as in a disco and the music roaring. Kneehigh are effectively warning the modern audience of the rise of the far right and how society can be brainwashed just like the characters on stage who were once good, moral people dancing normally and in a smooth rhythm then as the music suddenly changes they are a product of the Black Witch. Kneehigh are depicting how Europe can become destroyed and divided as a result of the referendum in the same way as in the dystopian world of Tin Drum and like fascist Nazi Germany."

The description of the repertoire here is detailed and you can visualise what was happening on the stage. It is clear that this learner has completed a sophisticated investigative process and so can be rewarded in AO2, AO3 and AO4.

Please note that performance and production repertoire can include text, choreography, score, content, genre and style. Performance skills could include discussion of the use of voice, movement, dynamics, timing, facial expression, gesture, characterisation etc. Production, design and technical elements such as set, costume, make up, lighting, sound, special effects and multi-media can also be used to critically analyse the practitioners' performance work.

AO4: Be able to apply an effective investigation process to inform the understanding of the work of performing arts practitioners, communicating independent judgements

Learners are required to apply an effective investigation process to inform the understanding of the work of performing arts practitioners, communicating independent judgements.

This assessment objective provides learners with the skills necessary for completing work in Higher Education and is a very useful skill for learners to master. Learners should be encouraged from an early stage in the process to record the information they have looked at during the 'teaching and learning' and investigative process. Learners need ownership of their work and they should be encouraged to formulate their own opinions and make their own judgements on the performance and production repertoire work of practitioners.

Overall the pieces of extended writing were generally well written and structured, with, at the very least, a clear use of language. Most learners were able to form opinions and express their reasoning. Those learners that had embedded relevant and appropriate quotes, particularly in relation to the performance and production repertoire tended to be those that achieved more highly.

Almost all learners had provided a bibliography, which ranged from a quite comprehensive list of sources from live performance and production repertoire, recordings to books, while others only used references to Wikipedia and/or YouTube, which can be a useful resource if learners are watching professional work but is of little use if they just watch a trailer for the work. There was generally an improvement in the use of effective referencing. With a good use of footnotes reflecting professional practice in presentation and across most essay bibliographies these tended to be presented in line with Harvard expectations, although that is not a requirement.

Summarising key points of information during the preparation period will help learners begin to make independent judgements on the work of the practitioners. They should be able to make decisions on what examples of work and what sources of information they are going to use when completing the written task.

Keeping the bibliography up to date as learners prepare their notes will help them keep a focus on what sources they have looked at and which of them will be useful to use in their response to the set task in order to support them in explaining their independent judgements to the examiner.

Summary

Based on the work seen during this series the following should be considered:

Learner responses

- The main focus of learner's response to the set task should be analysis of the two chosen practitioners' performance and production repertoire in response to the theme. This should be supported by analysis of the contextual influences that have been applied to the chosen practitioners' performance and production repertoire plus the identification of a range of relevant contextual factors on the practitioners themselves.
- Centres should support learners to achieve in this external assessment by developing their ability to critically analyse the performance and production repertoire of a range of practitioners. They should encourage them to research into these practitioners and identify the contextual factors that have influenced the practitioners themselves, they should also encourage learners to research into the contextual factors that have influenced the performance and production repertoire of the practitioners. If this work is completed during the 'teaching and learning' period before the set task is released then once the set task is published learners should have a wealth of knowledge and understanding on a range of practitioners and their performance and production work.
- Thorough and detailed preparation in advance of the release of the set task will enable learners to consider all the specific aspects of the set task including the theme once the task is released. They should have a wealth of knowledge and understanding from which to select two appropriate practitioners for successful completion of the set task and one or more pieces of performance and production repertoire for each practitioner in response to the set task and theme.
- The discussion and analysis of the performance and production repertoire should be practical in detail and relevant to the theme. Plot narratives and descriptions of character are not going to support learners to achieve very highly.
- Learners should be encouraged to give equal consideration to both practitioners when preparing for the assessment period.
- The bibliography can be completed during the teaching and learning period and refined during the research period. This will allow learners to be selective in the use of relevant sources when referencing/citing.
- Centres should encourage learners to practice the use of referencing and citation when preparing their notes. There is no set format for referencing.
- A wide variety of resources should be used when conducting research with less reliance on sources such as Wikipedia.

- Remember there is a vocational context to the set task. It is an investigative process where learners are asked to make recommendations based on their investigation.

Administration

- Ensure the correct task paper for the series is used.
There are two opportunities for learners to be externally assessed in this unit each year and each series will have a different focus and set task. Learners must respond to the set task for the relevant series in which they are being assessed.
- Centres are reminded that they must complete the essential documents relating to each learner and the centre itself (the Learner Record Sheet and the Centre Register). The examiner requires these for marking. It is essential that this paperwork is printed out and provided as a hard copy, which the examiner can write on and not just sent digitally. This also applies to the Authentication document for each learner.
- Each learner's work needs to be clearly identifiable and should have the centre name and number and the learners name and registration number on it.
- Each learner's work and documentation should be kept together either by stapling it together or keeping each learner's work in a plastic wallet.

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