

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCSE

GCSE Drama 1699

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Summer 2008

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1699 Paper 1 Drama Exploration

Overall, the marks awarded to candidates ranged across the 5 bands with a significant number meeting the criteria at the top of band one. It was also good to observe a number of candidates achieving lower band marks who had clearly benefited from appropriately differentiated work and had produced portfolio evidence to reflect such positive experiences.

Centres tended to fall into three groups: those that used the 6 hours correctly as taught sessions but confined the candidates to a limited range of teacher-selected strategies, medium and elements; others who had more challenging themes and texts with imaginative uses of strategies for Response but used Development as a period of rehearsal for performances which were evaluated inappropriately in Task 3 of the portfolios; and lastly those who met all the requirements with imagination, challenging their candidates to meet the criteria in interesting ways. The first two penalised their candidates by limiting their opportunities to meet the Assessment Objectives while the latter balances good practice with an evident observation of the specification requirements.

Choice of themes and texts were generally appropriate for the specification: Blood Brothers and War are still the most popular while Prejudice and Protest were less in evidence. There were some interesting subjects; Summer Floods and the Other 9/11, for example, as well as abstract themes such as Change. Centres that chose interesting and challenging themes or issues advantaged their candidates who earned marks across the scale with a considerable number in the top band. 'Whose Life is it Anyway?' and 'Taste of Honey' have returned to Unit 2 although Mark Wheeler's plays remain the most used of any single playwright, however in Unit 2 some centres are still using the play text as a starting point to explore related themes so candidates are unable to meet the requirements or Assessment Objectives.

Use of published schemes was as popular as ever, although commonly these did not meet the abilities or interests of the candidates and often failed to meet the specification requirements. For example, one scheme on Sanity/Madness does not explore the theme at all, candidates use strategies to interpret the texts in discrete sessions. It was noted by moderators that centres where the Records of Work were clearly outlined with evidence of Assessment Objectives and a range of strategies, elements and medium used in exploration of the chosen theme and play text that the work itself was of better quality. Those centres that confined the two units to the basic requirements for strategies, medium and elements did their candidates a disservice by not enabling them to use their drama experience and understanding to the full.

A few centres examine the first unit of Paper One in January of year 10 and the second in the summer term before devoting year 11 to Paper 2. It is felt that these candidates do not meet their potential because much of the work is still KS3 level. Some centres are making good use of local TIE and theatre companies as part of the course with some input into this paper. However, because the agencies concerned have a different agendas and plan 'one-size-fits-all' sessions the work was not usually challenging enough for GCSE. Most candidates were fortunate to be able to see live theatre; from professional to TIE, amateur and school productions as well as GCE and BTEC examined performances. The richness of theatre experience clearly advantaged the candidates.

Many portfolios reflect the interest and enthusiasm of the candidates and generally illustrate the teachers' purpose as outlined in the Records of Work. Although most centres do adhere to the three tasks for each unit many do not ensure that their candidates meet the requirements as laid out in the specification. For example, evaluating their own performances and others in Unit 1 Task 3. Creative writing or scripts in Unit 1 Task 1 helped to meet the assessment tasks but required contextualization and discussion to justify the elements and medium used in the practical sessions. A significant number of candidates' marks were reduced as a result of their failure to meet these tasks.

Where centres had enabled candidates to work in depth on part of the chosen playtext in Unit 2, annotated extracts with diagrams show most successfully how they had interpreted and experimented with the play. It was clear that while groups of candidates had worked collaboratively, their records and reflections were individual and reflected their own experience.

Although exceeding the 1,000 word limit may reflect candidates' interest, it is inappropriate. Some centres permitted their candidates to include 'research' and downloaded information that was related to the issue or playtext but this was generally superfluous and did not help to fulfil any of the tasks. Centres should enable their candidates to be more specific about meeting the tasks and avoid spending an inappropriate amount of time on this part of the paper.

The standard of questioning in some centres was excellent and had had an effect upon the quality of reflection and discussion in the portfolios. Too often evaluation consists of identifying and defining the strategies used and discussing how 'they could have made it better' which is more Year 7 than Year 11 level.

A few centres did not observe the three tasks for each unit, requiring their candidates to write paragraphs for each session to meet each objective. An increasing number do not meet the specification requirements for portfolio and practical work. For example, working towards performance in both units so candidates fail to meet the three objectives, using Response to discuss the texts in literary terms, entering creative writing for Development.

Concern was expressed about the number of centres where portfolio tasks are stuck onto card and not stapled firmly enough. Moderators found it difficult to moderate portfolios which had to be pieced together by identifying handwriting or styles of presentation.

The DVD/VHS recordings were generally clear, giving the moderators a clear understanding of the standard of work at the centre, and enabling them to identify the sessions in context. However, evaluation during many practical sessions was still undeveloped and had an effect upon the quality of analysis in the portfolios. Centres where a variety of tasks and groupings were seen met the criteria most successfully.

Centres are advised to read the specification and ICE document very carefully. Candidates will lose marks if the work does not meet the published requirements.

A number of centres had supply teachers or NQTs who pulled their groups of candidates together, managing to meet all the deadlines and specification requirements. They are to be congratulated for their efforts and professionalism.

PROBLEMS

A significant number of centres' marks were adjusted downwards because the evidence to support the practical marks was not available - Centres were informed by their moderator and instructed to inform their examinations officer. Lost Coursework forms were completed for each candidate in the moderated sample. In the past practical marks were taken on trust but each year the number of lost or missing recordings has increased. Once contacted by Edexcel or the moderator, some centres did discover the missing items - Records of Work, DVD/ VHS recordings of sessions from Units 1 and 2 - and they were sent promptly.

The second reason for mark adjustment was the failure to meet the assessment tasks in the candidates' portfolios.

It has been increasingly felt that centres that have not had their marks adjusted do not read their moderator's E9 Report and so do not pick up on issues that need to be addressed. More adjustments have been made this year than ever before despite centres being alerted to over marking or failure to meet the specification requirements in the previous year. Most centres ensured their sample for moderation was with the moderator in good time - many even arrived well before the deadline. Centres that employed courier companies did not always fare so well and deliveries were sometimes delayed.

ADMINISTRATION:

The majority of centres completed all the paperwork and ensured that the D1a: Teacher Examiner Comment Sheets had been signed by the candidates and teachers and that the Standardising Teacher for the centre had signed the OPTEMs.

Most centres' work was returned during the last week of term (July 14th - 18th July)

Some centres were contacted to send extra candidate portfolios as evidence for Awarding. The Principal Moderator is most grateful to those centres that responded so quickly to this request.

1699 Paper 2 Drama Performance

Centres are reminded that although this is an externally examined paper, the assessment objectives and criteria do not change from those printed in the specification. In preparing candidates for this unit the specification must be read with close reference to the ICE. Each centre chooses the options taken by candidates, the texts or content for devised work and the audience present for the examination performances. This paper uniquely has elements of both an examined and coursework unit.

Overall, the examining team reported that the standards of previous series had been maintained. In most centres there is a high level of understanding of the requirements of this paper and the majority of candidates are well prepared to both achieve in the examination and enjoy the experience of live performance both as performers and enthusiastic and supportive audience members.

There was however, a slight increase in candidates being poorly prepared for this paper when compared to previous series. Where work was seen that could only be awarded marks in the bottom two mark bands it was often due to lack of commitment by candidates often reflecting inconsistent attendance.

As in previous series there were many candidates who produced work that not only met the requirements of the paper but exceeded top GCSE standard. These candidates were awarded full marks and often examiners noted that in fact they exceeded full marks.

This year there were an increased number, compared to 2007, of both new centres and teachers preparing candidates for the first time for this part of the examination. It was commented upon that many of these centres produced work that showed good understanding of the requirements of this paper. Those teachers in their first or early years of teaching who picked up a year eleven group in September 2007 were praised by examiners as usually having enabled those candidates to have a sense of achievement in their performances.

As was noted in 2007, there remains concern regarding the number of non-specialist or supply staff working with candidates on Paper 2, and some examiners noted that candidates had been taught by several teachers during the course of Year 11. However, it is also of note that this paper continues to have a majority of highly skilled, experienced, committed and enthusiastic teachers whose understanding of the requirements of this paper and the needs and skills of their pupils produces work of high quality.

Requirements

Despite these being reported on in considerable detail in the two previous examiners' reports the same issues of concern were reported by the entire examining team. Centres must ensure they put in place the requirements for this paper as detailed in the ICE. This is revised each year in the light of both examiners' and teachers' suggestions to ensure that the administration of the paper is clear to all centres. This essential document is only available on the Edexcel website and hard copies will not be sent. A considerable number of centres used the 2007 ICE or even earlier series. The ICE includes all the documentation needed for this paper. Centres must download copies of the 2009 document. The specification is also available from the Edexcel website.

In 2007, this report highlighted the concern that centres do not appreciate the need for examination conditions to support the candidates and ensure security of the examination. These are clearly stated in the ICE document. Examiners report that an increased number of centres ensured that two or more centre staff were available throughout the examination sessions to ensure the performances were conducted under exam conditions. Centre staff must ensure that all candidates and audiences understand that this is an examination that happens to be a performance. Providing candidates with the best possible conditions is of paramount importance. Again this year there was concern that in some centres the perceived needs of the audience took precedence over those of the candidates. There is an increase in centres choosing evening performances and although centres have the choice of examination times many examiners report that not enough time was allowed between performances for them to consider their marks as the centre was more concerned that the audience should 'not have to wait'.

There were no changes made to the documentation for this paper this year. However, many centres failed to supply 3 copies of the registers. This is to support the monitoring and tracking of the marking of this paper. Examiners report again this year a noticeable decline in the attention to detail by centres in completing the necessary paperwork for this paper and meeting the deadlines for administration both before and after the examination sessions. Again this year the candidate sheets requiring a description to be given of how the candidate will appear in the performance were left blank. Examiners are not required to complete this task.

Many recordings were sent many days or weeks after the seven working days deadline. There were again a number of centres who did not send any recordings at all. It was also clear that many centres do not check the recordings and examiners on receiving them reported a catalogue of problems. There was a considerable increase in centres supplying the recordings of the performances on DVD. However, many of these could not be played in a DVD standard player. All centres are reminded that examiners must be able to view the performance of candidates in order to check and also complete Enquiries About Results. Again, many of the performances were so badly recorded it was impossible to identify candidates.

Timing of the Examination

The examination can take place in March, April or May. Most centres were contacted in early January and the vast majority of visits were arranged and confirmed swiftly. There were centres who having arranged a date, requested a change of date and/or time near to the exam. All centres are reminded that examiners cannot be expected to rearrange visits and centres may have to have their performances marked from a recording.

Twilight or evening sessions were popular again this year. Centres felt the examination as a performance had a greater sense of occasion and appropriate audiences could attend. However, examiners reported concerns that inappropriate audiences disadvantaged some candidates. This year it was felt that some audience members only wished to see certain performances and that the constant changing of audience numbers did not create a supportive atmosphere. Centres felt examination conditions particularly regarding external noise and giving examiners a private place to consider their marks between performances could be easier to put in place. Examiners report that there was pressure on them not to leave the performance area and be given enough time between each group.

Centres are reminded to consider carefully the organisation of the examination timings.

This year there was an increase Paper 2 exams taking place mid to late May. Very late exams caused concerns as candidates were involved in other exams or on study leave. Examiners felt that some candidates had not had a final concentrated preparation time immediately before the examination.

Administration

The overwhelming concern from examiners again this year was the poor administration by too many centres throughout the process. A great deal of the required paperwork was incomplete, inaccurate, late or non-existent until the examiner's arrival at the centre. Examiners need to come well prepared for the examination and cannot do so without this vital information. Examiners are instructed to arrive 30 minutes prior to the first performance/presentation so any changes can be considered at that time.

Overall, the time management of the examination was done well, particularly in centres doing Paper 2 during the school day. This may be due to the timing of the sessions being set during the initial contact with the centre. Examiners expect to examine at least 20 candidates in a 3-hour session. However, some examiners arrived at the centre at the agreed time and were waiting for a considerable time before meeting the candidates. The sessions (morning /afternoon/twilight/evening) must run concurrently.

Some examiners report arriving promptly for a morning session to be told candidates were not present or ready and the examination not starting until after 10 a.m. This was also true of twilight and evening sessions.

There remain a small number of centres with fewer than 20 candidates wanting the examination to take place over one or more days or wanting a time that was spread over 2 sessions. For example a morning start and late afternoon finish. Centres wishing to have a time period or day outside the regulations of this examination will be required to record the work for external assessment. However, the majority of centres completed all administration very well and the examination was conducted with professionalism throughout.

The practice of providing the examiner with large group colour photographs clearly labelled with candidate names, numbers and roles played increased again this year. This is both very helpful for the visiting examiner and can be invaluable to any senior examiner monitoring the work from the recording. Most centres ensured candidates introduced themselves clearly on the recording. Hurried head shots not in costume edited in at a later date were unhelpful and should not be submitted in future.

Thanks must be given to the centres that had an accompanied visit from members of the senior team. This is an important part of the ongoing monitoring of examiners for the practical performance units. At all times this extra requirement was dealt with by centres with understanding. Although these visits should not have effected the running time of the examination, in some cases it did occur and Edexcel apologises for this.

The Importance of the Recording of the Performances/Presentations

It is felt that most centres do understand the importance of the very best possible recording being made of all performances and presentations. In order to maintain the standard of the examination and ensure that examiners work is monitored throughout the process a great deal of centre work is viewed by the senior team alongside examiner's notes. Centres should be aware that the senior team may randomly check centres' work and if examiners have any concerns they must seek another opinion.

Overall, it was felt the recordings of the performances had improved. Where the recording was poor examiners identify the following errors. Too often the camera was not placed close to the examiner and was frequently so far back from the performance that the candidates could not be identified. Another common mistake was the examiner and audience heads taking up most of the frame. If there is a large performance space and scenes are performed in different areas the camera may pan to record the work. If the person operating the camera knows the piece some judicious use of close ups can be useful in capturing individual performances.

Performance Support candidates' presentations must be made to the camera and the examiner will sit next to it. Some examiners felt that candidates expected them to question them as they looked at the documentation. Examiners will look at this evidence after the presentation but will not question the candidates. Performance Support presentations can be pre-recorded and will be viewed by the examiner prior to the performance along with the documentation.

Centres must keep a copy of the recorded examination work. Centres are reminded that the recording sent to Edexcel via the examiner is the basis of any Enquiries About Results procedures.

Many centres completed the time sheet well. This is most important for the ease of finding performances or presentations when looking for specific groups or individual candidate's work. It is important for centres to comment on the quality of the recording. Many centres realise that the recording did not capture the performance well was incomplete. Some centres did not complete the form at all. Centres must check all performances and presentations in their entirety for the correct timings and the quality of the recording. This was clearly not done by some centres.

Many more centres sent work on DVD. Examiners and centres welcomed this as when it is correctly presented, the quality of the recordings is excellent and is easily accessible but there were considerable problems again this year. Centres must ensure that the DVD can be played on a standard domestic player. Good practice was when each performance and presentations by performance support candidates was provided on a separate DVD and work was in chapters.

Identification of the Candidates on the Recordings

Despite concerns in other aspects of administration this was one area that was completed well by many centres. Without exception examiners commented on how much less stressful it was for all involved if candidate identification was swift to complete. It is invaluable to later viewing of performances in the recorded format.

Centres must ensure that all candidates introduce themselves immediately before their performance /presentation, as it will appear on the recording. This can be pre-recorded and edited in by the centre.

Design candidates must state clearly and slowly the centre name and number followed by their name, candidate number, chosen skill and the performance title and group number. It can be helpful if they have the centre name and number, their name and candidate number written clearly on paper and held up to the camera.

Performance candidates must line up in their performance group. It can be helpful if this is done in order of appearance. The first candidate must state clearly and slowly the centre name and number, the date of the performance followed by the performance title and group number.

All candidates must then state clearly and slowly their name and candidate number, role(s) played and give verbal description of all costumes worn in the performance. It is helpful if there are costume changes if any costumes worn later are shown to the camera. It can be helpful if their name and candidate number and role(s) played are written clearly on paper and held up to the camera.

The camera must then record them as a group in long shot. It is preferable for candidates to repeat their name and roles played. The group shot must be held for enough time for someone watching the recording to clearly identify them all. This is the equivalent to completing the front sheet of a written paper.

On the examiner mark sheets, candidates should give detailed written descriptions of how they will appear in the performance, both physical appearance and costume. Small head and shoulder shots must not be attached to the form as they have proved to be of limited use in aiding identification and can be time consuming for centres to provide.

Report of Specific Feedback

Examiners report that there was definitely an improvement when centres had received the individual feedback from 2007 and acted upon it in 2008. This information is sent in hard copy to the Exam officers not the teacher running the GCSE course, in the autumn term.

Inappropriate Work

Centres are reminded that this paper is a GCSE examination. There seems to be two areas of concern. Most importantly it is the content of the work and its treatment in performance. Centres must take the responsibility to monitor this particularly in relation to the audience viewing the piece.

There was an increase in work being too focussed on the examiner. Candidates questioned examiners rhetorically within the context of the performance or designed the performance to centre around the examiner. Centres are reminded that candidates must demonstrate communication with the whole audience. It was strongly felt this was poor practice as examiners must have the facilities throughout the performance to mark without interference. If examiners feel they cannot mark and make notes with security they may stop the performance.

Devised Performance

As in all previous series this is the option taken by the majority of candidates. Work was seen by examiners that covered the full mark range. A few candidates did attend the performance but did so little that no marks could be awarded. There were many candidates whose work exceeded GCSE standards.

Examiners comment on a very high level of understanding by centres of the criteria for this option and it was clear that a well-structured preparation and rehearsal period had taken place. In many centres examiners noted a 'house style' that could support the candidates' approach and final performance. However, there was concern that although this supported less confident candidates it could be limiting for the more able.

The detail provided for the Outline Description of the Performance was again excellent this year from the majority of centres. Many centres continue to produce a pro forma for this that matched their style of performance. Many more produced complete or outline scripts. These were often of an excellent standard. Some of these detailed such things as moves, motivations and music cues. It was felt that the understanding of the layout of scripts had been influenced by the work done in Paper One Unit Two. Examiners greatly praised this as it enabled them to be well prepared for the wide range of performance styles and subject matter chosen by candidates and also showed an understanding of the importance of thorough preparation for this performance paper. A breakdown of scenes was also useful particularly if candidates put the whole performance in context with an introductory paragraph. Many examiners comment on both the thoughtful and often witty titles given to performances.

The content of devised performances was diverse as always. The most effective work was when candidates had something they really wanted to communicate to their audience and had researched their material. It was noticeable that many referred to work completed in Paper 1 or earlier in the Programme of Study. The challenges of contemporary teenage life remain a popular topic as do the issues facing contemporary society, such as race, class, gender and conflict. It was of particular note that much of the work again this year was supported by considerable research into the subject matter and some centres included it or references to it in the information provided to the examiner. Examiners commented on learning new things themselves.

More successful work used a range of strategies for example monologue, freeze frame, flashback, abstract movement or physical theatre. There was an increase in centres using a wider range of candidates' performance skills such as dance, music, costuming and settings. In the majority of cases this enhanced the performances but there was some concern that if there was a lack of balance and candidates did not

meet the specific criteria. Much of this work was felt to be innovative, challenging and thought provoking theatre as well as a GCSE examination.

Less effective work often tended to have a more naturalistic approach and linear narrative structure. Other work attempted to squeeze in too great a range of both ideas and approaches and so did not produce a coherent performance. It was felt that often some work was highly influenced by current popular television or films and was often a poor copy or parody lacking a sense of candidate ownership or creativity. This was particularly true of comedy performances. Centres need to enable candidates to understand the demands of live theatre performance.

The vast majority of centres ensured that group size and performance length requirements were met. Most groups were between 4 and 6 candidates producing a performance of around 20 minutes. There remains a number of very short performances that are self penalising. Some gave estimated performance times that matched the requirements while some listed the number of candidates e.g. 4 to 6 and said the time would be in single figures. This did severely limit candidates' achievements. Some performances when seen in the recordings were even shorter than examiners had thought in the live work. Centres must address this time requirement. There was some concern that for some tight ensemble pieces using much group movement and vocal work it was a challenge for examiners to identify and mark each individual.

Examiners report instances of very overlong performances and often these were seen in centres where there were only one or two performance groups. All centres are reminded that examiners will stop marking at the times given in the ICE.

Scripted Performance

The number of candidates offering scripted performance was much in line with 2007. Centres chose to present complete short plays, extracts or adaptations.

There were still a number of candidates who did not appear to understand the demands of this option and were under prepared, in some cases sitting and attempting to read an extract from a play. However, examiners comment that work was seen that exceeded performances seen for AS Unit 2 performance.

Work from authors including John Godber, Mark Wheeller, Berkoff and Brecht was frequently seen. There was an increase in challenging texts being performed with high levels of understanding and often considerable style, ranging from Shakespeare both in extracts or using some excellent published adaptations to contemporary young writers working with theatres such as The Royal Court or National Theatre Connections programme. Some interesting work was seen from genres such as Victorian Melodrama or Theatre of the Absurd perhaps because they were mentioned in last years report. Some candidates presented comedy texts. This can be a great challenge but again Oscar Wilde and Jo Orton were seen as positive choices for candidates. There was considerable concern where centres let candidates choose comedy sketches in the main written for film and television as this was all too often a poor immature imitation. Little Britain and Catherine Tate were given as examples again this year.

In general, extracts could be poorly chosen and were less successful than when candidates communicated a sense of the whole text. However, some extracts do make a coherent performance.

Centres must provide in advance, a copy of the text as performed. Many centres also provided notes that gave an insight into the interpretation. This was excellent practice and is encouraged for future series.

Scripted work was often overlong and candidates lost focus and pace. Examiners felt that some of this work was being used in another context and did not meet the requirements of this exam. Again work was seen that included several non examination candidates. Most commonly extracts from a fully mounted production previously produced were performed. This was usually unsuccessful and should not be done in future as all examiners seeing this work felt it disadvantaged candidates in the examination context.

Again this year there were instances of candidates not turning up for the exam. Examiners felt that this most disadvantaged candidates offering scripted work as other candidates or teachers had to read in and this had an impact on the whole performance and candidate's marks.

The Third Way

This is an increasingly popular option. Again this year work was seen that covered the complete mark range. Play texts, film adaptations, novels, short stories and poetry were used as the stimulus and the final performance included both devised and original text. Examiners felt that this approach was supportive to all candidates, giving them a clear basis that led to the final performances using the characters and lines from the original texts as well as devised scenes.

Centres are reminded that the criteria for performance candidates are identical except for in scripted work the descriptor is 'interpret a role[s]' and in devised it is 'create a role[s]'. This option has elements of both.

Again it was felt this approach supported all candidates as it could give them a clear structure, defined roles and well crafted language to build their performances on.

Performance Support

This is the least chosen option. Most examiners report seeing no performance support candidates again this year. They were most often seen in centres with Performing Arts status where there were the facilities and resources needed to support this option. There was some excellent work seen but also some very weak work. These candidates frequently had no supporting evidence and refused to do a presentation. Some did not attend at all or left the exam before their group performed.

There was a noticeable improvement in how well candidates had been prepared for the presentations and support materials. There was evidence of in-depth research, a sense of working with the performers and available resources in order to produce in performance a contribution that reflects 40% of a GCSE course.

Lighting and costume remain the most popular choices. In 2006 it was reported that set design sometimes had many interesting ideas that could not be realised in performance and so could not be awarded marks. Again this year examiners report seeing simple but well thought out and highly effective sets that gave a real sense of performance values to both scripted and devised work. Some candidates demonstrated good knowledge of and skills in using new technologies. There was an

increase in the use of projection either to give information in a true Brechtian style or create atmosphere or environments. Much of this work was very impressive both technically and creatively.

The majority of performance groups work without a Performance Support candidate but can use sound, set, lighting and costume to enhance their performance. However there was some concern that some centres placed too great an emphasis on these elements and there was not enough focus on the actual individual performance work of the candidates.

The Performance of Candidates in this Paper

High scoring work showed some of these features:

- Well taught with close reference to the specification and ICE 2008.
- Reflected standard of 40% of a 5 term GCSE course.
- Met all five criteria.
- Performed with a sense of occasion to a suitable audience.
- Understood that the performance was an examination.
- Communicated with enthusiasm, passion and commitment.
- Well prepared and presented.
- Clear ownership of the performance.
- Devised work had a challenging and imaginative initial stimulus.
- Scripted work well edited and structured.

Middle scoring work showed some of these features:

- Often well taught but candidates had not put in enough individual effort.
- Erratic attendance had hampered group achievement.
- Inappropriate stimulus material given.
- Too little teacher input during preparation.
- Too little preparation time.
- Too long preparation time.
- Poor choice of text for candidate's ability.
- Brief or overlong performances.
- Scripted work had unimaginative adaptations dividing a longer script into meaningless sections.

Low scoring work was:

- Under prepared, some improvised on the day.
- Poor attendance by group members.
- Under or over confident performers.
- Unsuitable material.
- Little understanding of creating live performance.
- Often very brief.
- Did not meet all criteria.

Consortium Centres

Again this year there were some difficulties with centres that had not completed the Consortium Information Forms available in the ICE document. The completed forms must be sent to Edexcel as early as possible in the academic year. For all candidates being examined not in their registered centre the examiner must be informed beforehand and 2 copies of separate register must be provided giving full details of 'home' centre name, number, candidate name and number.

This information must also be detailed on the DVD or videotape.

Conclusion

The concerns detailed in this report could be addressed if all centres referred closely to the Specification and ICE documentation.

Centres are reminded that Edexcel offers a national programme of Inset courses led by members of the Senior Examining Team. Details have been sent to centres or are available with booking details on the Edexcel website. Edexcel can also provide individual support to centres, details of which are on the website.

This report highlights examiners' concerns in some detail but overall it was felt that the standard of work was very much in line with previous series. The range and diversity of centres and candidates involved in this specification would seem to continue to show that this is a specification that has the flexibility for the widest range of candidates to achieve and for all teachers to bring their own skills and enthusiasms to the delivery of Paper Two. It is a unique examination that enables candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of drama by doing it in a performance. Examiners report every year on the great pleasure it gives them to work with all those involved in this examination.

Beyond the requirements of this paper the work done to encourage creativity, confidence, leadership, working as a member of a group, meeting deadlines, making decisions will all be skills that young people will need in the rapidly changing 21st century.

It was a pleasure for examiners to see such a wealth of creative, challenging, thoughtful and engaging work. Young people today have much to give the older generation and in this examination they certainly did so in 2008.

As was said in the 2007 report despite much that we read about young people the majority of GCSE drama students in 2008 were a credit to themselves and their inspiring and hard working teachers.

Grade Boundaries

| Grade | Max Mark | * | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | U |
|-------------|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|
| Lower Limit | 100 | 97 | 88 | 76 | 65 | 53 | 41 | 29 | 17 | 0 |

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