Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

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GCSE English Language (5EN03)
Spoken Language

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Introduction

This was an unusual entry with the vast majority of students achieving higher grades.

Speaking and Listening

Although all centres were using completely new criteria, they had generally applied these accurately when marking the performances observed during the moderation visits undertaken. In many centres, good use seemed to have been made of the Edexcel Standardising DVD, both to internally standardise teaching teams and also to indicate to students the standards required for the award of particular grades.

Where there was a discrepancy between the mark given by the centre and that of the moderator, there was no pattern of leniency or harshness. Moderators' reports show that across the three contexts, they were as often awarding higher marks than the centre as they were giving lower marks.

One area of concern in a minority of centres is the significant gap between the mark for the Speaking and Listening component of this unit compared to the mark for the other tasks. In these instances, clutches of candidates had been awarded a Speaking and Listening mark which was as many as 15 or more marks higher than the others. The new criteria give the opportunity to ensure that teachers are "re-calibrating" their marking using the Band descriptors. Although it will always be the case that some candidates perform significantly better on Speaking and Listening, it is important that, where a centre finds it has awarded many candidates marks which are significantly higher for this part of the unit, they ensure that:

• robust internal standardising has taken place to guarantee that all teachers are applying accurate standards
• the teacher with responsibility for GCSE within the department is confident that there is sufficient detail in the notes being kept by teachers to justify the higher marks

A feature of future moderation visits will be a check by moderators whether the centre considers they have any candidates who are likely to get significantly higher marks for Speaking and Listening, and where practicable, these candidates should feature in the sample being jointly marked during the visit.

Spoken Language Study Task

Most students used the resources produced by the exam board. This allowed them to explore all of the assessment criteria. Some centres provided their own resources which allowed their students to explore all of the assessment criteria.

Most students performed well. Many students understood how language changed according to context and explained clearly how language worked. Unfortunately, some students relied too heavily on identifying features of

spoken language, using a wide range of technical vocabulary, without analysing why these features had been used and what effects they might have achieved. Generally, centres need to focus more effectively on the fourth assessment criterion which asks students to explain how and why language use can influence the language of others.

Centres need to understand that the students should analyse two examples of spoken language. Some centres required students to analyse television scripts which was not appropriate. The sources that the students analyse should be included with the moderation sample if they are not the materials provided by the exam board. Students should analyse these examples rather than just describe them. Some centres awarded students marks in Bands 4 and 5, which require 'assured understanding' and 'perceptive understanding', whereas the students' work only showed 'clear understanding'. Some students were hindered by technical vocabulary which they did not entirely understand – this prevented them from analysing the spoken language. While students need to show how language is used in different ways in two different situations, they are not required to make comparisons. Some students penalised themselves by trying to make comparisons which made their analysis unnecessarily clumsy.

Writing for the Spoken Voice

The exam board set a range of tasks. However, the vast majority of students wrote speeches. Rhetorical devices were often used effectively and arguments developed coherently. Some students did not understand the conventions of speech writing and produced interesting pieces of persuasive writing that were difficult to reward as pieces of writing for the spoken voice.

Centres were more confident assessing their students' writing for the spoken voice because they were familiar with this style of writing. However, students were not always clear about the purpose and audience of their writing. Students did not always demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of their chosen genre. For example, the writing of speeches requires the use of rhetorical devices and engagement with an audience.

General comments

Centres that had previously entered students submitted efficiently organised samples. However, many centres entering students for the first time made a number of errors. It should be noted that samples should include:

- All of the scripts requested by the exam board
- The top and bottom candidates
- A printout of the entry which identifies the students in the sample
- Front sheets which record the students' marks, and which are signed by the students
- A copy of texts used for the Analysing the Spoken Language task.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx