

Tasmanian Secondary Assessment Board

SD806 Speech and Drama

Report on 1997 External Examination

Practical

As in previous years much of the work presented was of commendably high standard. There was an enormous range in both the content and style of the material presented both in and between schools and colleges. It is evident that the teachers of students in those schools where the work was of an indifferent or fail standard would benefit from seeing work in other centres and thereby more fully recognise and understand the imperatives of teacher direction and guidance at this level.

A specific problem encountered by assessment panels was the lack of balance within solo programs, eg, prose was too long and poetry too brief. Generally, characterisation within the drama was more successful but there was, occasionally, misunderstanding of the requirements of ensemble playing. Candidates are yet again advised that they should not call for a prompt when this is required. A prompter should be present for each program. There were mispronunciations of both English and foreign words - particularly in the solo presentations - which indicates inadequate research by the candidate or that the work has not been sufficiently supervised by the teacher.

In some centres, speeches from plays were inappropriately presented as poetry and in certain schools the literary merit of the dramatic excerpts was questionable.

The practice of excising lines from prose passages should be discouraged. If sentences, and even paragraphs, are deleted by the candidate, it is circumvention of the author's intention. Equally it is quite inappropriate to present solo programs in character costume.

The use of stage props (in both SD806 and SD811) does require further rehearsal. In some cases it seemed that candidates did not encounter these until the day of the performance.

Dramatic realism should demand that there us actually liquid in the glass or cup from which the performer is ostensibly 'drinking'!

Some organisational issues still require attention in certain centres. Any set change required should be accommodated between programs rather than during the presentation. Generally, time limitations were adhered to but there were some transgressions of between 5 and 10 minutes. One group managed to run 13 minutes over time. This is quite unacceptable. Students as audience members are occasionally positioned too closed to the examiners.

Written Examination

Live Theatre

A wide range of theatre had been seen by candidates during the year and many candidates displayed a perceptive and informed appreciation of the issues, theatrical forms and individual performances they had seen.

Notable, however, was a tendency to avoid using specific theatrical terminology in analysing productions. Candidates often relied on long-winded and imprecise explanations when the use of simple terminology such as 'focus' or 'status' would have made the explanation so much more precise.

There was also a lack of careful analysis of the factors which contribute to making an individual performance successful or otherwise. The technical aspects of acting frequently received cursory, if any, attention, and candidates relied on vague statements about ‘playing the part convincingly’ or ‘maintaining her role well in the play’.

Similarly problems arose when candidates tried to explain what they had learned from live theatre they had attended during the year. It must be stressed that answers need to include a detailed explanation which analyses in depth the art and technique of the actor, the director and the designer. It is not enough to make simple statements such as ‘he spoke too loudly’ or ‘his character wasn’t believable’ unless there is further detailed explanation.

A few candidates wrote mini-essays which were virtually three separate short critiques of the three productions being discussed. Essay structure must appropriately allow a comparison between the three productions, and focus on the precise requirements of the question.

Scripted Drama

Candidates who chose wisely were able to answer in depth and address all aspects of the question. Question 4 and 5 were answered competently, but candidates struggled with Question 6. They found it difficult to address all parts of the question and were often confused about HOW the atmosphere was created and sustained. Answers often described the technical elements used in their production without relating them to the question.

Experimental Theatre

Generally students who answered in this section were able to recall and satisfy those parts of the question which asked to discuss the process, problems and outcomes of their module 2 study. However, many students were unable to express the extent to which the ‘production achieved its purpose’. Question 9 was extremely well answered in a considered and articulate style. Group devised drama which heavily relies on scripted material often impeded the candidate’s response. Candidates who had the opportunity to devise the majority of their material gave much stronger responses.

There was a perceptible deterioration in the standard of written expression and, in particular, spelling this year. Teachers and students may be interested to try to work out what words some of the following examples chosen from this year’s answers actually refer to:

PREFORM	SCREENS	SCENES	BOUGWHA
TRADEGY	TRADGEDY	DISSAPPEARANCE	JUVINIAL
		S	
IRITIC	EXADURATED	AJSADURATED	REMEMISSENSES
OVERBARING	EXTREAMILY	HAMPHRIDITE	FEMNIN
PLAN (plain)	WONERFULL	INOSES	NIEVE
EVELS	SIMALER	REMAND	ESIENTELE
ENSOMBLE	ENSOMBYLE	PREMIS	BLIMSBURY CLUB
CHANTTING	CONTEMPARY	TROP	SUMMENED
PRECUSSION	OBVLIOSLY	ALLABERATE	HUNNYMOONING
GLUMY	MISCHIVAS	MISCHOVIS	TRADGIC
JELOUSE	WOURLD	SALUM	SALAM
BORDEM	FEMINE	PROMIDANAT	JELLS
SHINNIEST	PORTREYED	MEATPHORE	CHARECTOR
GOSSEP	ATMOSPHER	RELIVANT	PURPOUSLY
HUMMER	EXCENTUATE	SOLUMN	COMPARASIONS
CENILE	GINNIPIG	LEVALS	

Statistical Summary

Award Summary

Outstanding Achievement	(OA)	21
High Achievement	(HA) 67	
Satisfactory Achievement	(SA)	136
Reassessed into neighbour		40
Total		266

Gender Breakdown

Males	58
Females	208

Summary of external ratings

	A	B	C	D
Criterion 4	17	58	136	54
Criterion 6	20	67	123	55
Criterion 8	34	65	112	54
Criterion 9	12	57	131	55
Criterion 10	35	88	87	47