



SD865 Practical Examination

As in previous years much of the work presented was of a commendably high standard and is a tribute both to the candidates and teachers. There were, however, some problems that have been highlighted in previous years. Less able candidates still continue to experience difficulties with the prose passage – evidenced particularly by the mispronunciation of unfamiliar words. Both teachers and candidates are again strongly urged to address this issue in the initial stages of preparation for presentation. Such errors give the impression that the excerpt had not been sufficiently supervised prior to the assessment.

The wearing of inappropriate costume in the presentation of solo work continues to place the candidate at a distinct disadvantage as it is often difficult to separate the impact of the material being presented from the often 'inappropriate' visual image before the panel. This issue must be addressed and is easily overcome by better organization and utilisation of time within the group. The wearing of 'blacks' or neutral attire is the normal requirement for the presentation of poetry, prose or dramatic monologue within SD865.

Certain organisational issues need to be addressed in some centres: Program selections must be **organised in order** as it is confusing for the examination panel and counter productive for the candidates if this is still being established once the program is underway. There continues to be error in the transcription of candidate numbers to program selections or schedules. Teachers are requested to be particularly vigilant in this regard. The provision of a room for the privacy of examiners in marking and adjudication after the assessment is essential. **Videotaping of the practical examination is not permitted.**

Guidelines for length of program must be rigorously observed. Teachers must realise that candidates will not be advantaged by this stratagem. Nor should their award be put at risk by the wilful disregard of the guidelines. Programs must be strictly timed – well in advance of the day of performance for assessment. The often hear lame excuse that 'It ran to time during rehearsal – I don't know why it ran so far over today' is arrant nonsense and carries no weight with the examiners who have been obliged to endure 10 to 12 minutes of flagrant abuse of the guidelines. In instances where this occurred the examiners simply closed their books and ceased to examine the candidates. It may be necessary to impose a warning bell (as in certain eisteddfods or debating procedures). This will be discussed with TASSAB and at moderation during 2003.

Written Examination

Candidates wrote comprehensively – describing both their productions and experience of live theatre in some detail. There was a genuine attempt to fully answer multi-faceted questions. Theatre terminology was utilised extensively even if there were some extraordinary misspellings! e.g. 'preformance', 'scences'. Indeed, errors in spelling and written expression were more pronounced than in previous years and this clearly hindered the clarity of some answers.

Some candidates neglected to name their production or explain its form. This made the deciphering of intention somewhat difficult! The range of productions discussed was noteworthy as was candidate understanding of the creative process leading to performance. It was pleasing to read about challenges experienced in staging and characterisation other than the simple learning of lines and attending rehearsals.

Some answers on the experience of live theatre reflected a tendency to generalise with insufficient supporting evidence for the observations and assertions made. This aside, the range of shows experienced along with the corresponding responses was a most pleasing feature of the examination. A number of candidates attempted questions on technical aspects for which they were clearly not prepared.

SD875 Performance Stage 5

There was evidence of very solid preparation and effective presentation within this syllabus. Teachers are, however, reminded that the purpose of the presentation is to present candidates for assessment in the designated criteria. This should continue to take precedence over production 'features' and/or directorial choices. In choosing and editing the material, teachers **must abide by the requirements of the practical examination in respect of the duration of the performance.** Yet again, in some centres the play ran considerably overtime.

It should be noted that the **staring time for evening performances is 7.30.** This must be observed. **As for SD865, videotaping of the examination performance is not permitted.**

In one centre a member of staff played a major role in the production. The guidelines clearly state that under no circumstances should an adult participate in an acting role. The provision exists for another candidate to read the part should circumstances dictate.

Teachers are reminded that 'theatre etiquette' should be observed – **it is a performance** and there should be no unwarranted distraction such as giggling and 'noises off'! Equally, attention to detail should prevail – anachronistic and inappropriate wearing of jewellery, nail polish and 'trendy' shoes must not be allowed to detract from the production.

Journal

Candidates are reminded that it is necessary for the cover page of each journal to be countersigned by the teacher. Candidates are advised to avoid making disparaging comments about fellow candidates or teachers with the body of the journal.

Monologue Presentation

Examination panels have raised the concern that in some centres this aspect of the syllabus does not appear to have been **sufficiently monitored by the teacher.** In some cases the **context** of the monologue was either dimly realised or wildly awry – leading to an often nonsensical interpretation. The entire play in which the monologue occurs should have been read. It is clear that there is often an over-reliance on excerpts culled from audition manuals. Again, attention is drawn to the guidelines in respect of running time. All monologue presentations should be within the range of 3–5 minutes. A disturbing feature of this aspect of the examination was the often extraordinary enunciation of particular words, viz: 'anythink' (anything), 'liddle' (little), 'millyen' (million), 'weld' (world), 'bedder' (better).

Overall there were some well-chosen and admirably presented productions. The difficult and often raised issue of disparity between roles and the occasional role deemed inadequate in scope and size for assessment in SD875 is gradually being addressed.

Teachers new to the subject are advised to seek advice from their more experienced peers in other schools, including seeking advice from TASSAB appointed moderators.

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