

GCSE (9-1)

Moderators' report

DRAMA

J316

For first teaching in 2016

J316/01/02 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

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Introduction

Our Moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on centres' assessment of moderated work, based on what has been observed by our moderation team. These reports include a general commentary of accuracy of internal assessment judgements; identify good practice in relation to evidence collation and presentation and comments on the quality of centre assessment decisions against individual Learning Objectives. This report also highlights areas where requirements have been misinterpreted and provides guidance to centre assessors on requirements for accessing higher mark bands. Where appropriate, the report will also signpost to other sources of information that centre assessors will find helpful.

OCR completes moderation of centre-assessed work in order to quality assure the internal assessment judgements made by assessors within a centre. Where OCR cannot confirm the centre's marks, we may adjust them in order to align them to the national standard. Any adjustments to centre marks are detailed on the Moderation Adjustments report, which can be downloaded from Interchange when results are issued. Centres should also refer to their individual centre report provided after moderation has been completed. In combination, these centre-specific documents and this overall report should help to support centres' internal assessment and moderation practice for future series.

General overview

In this second year of the examination it is wonderful to see so much good practice in preparing candidates for this component and in the submission of work for moderation. Centres are to be congratulated for providing ideal performance conditions for candidates. The use of minimal props, simple staging, costumes, lighting and sound were generally used well to support the creativity of the candidates.

Administration

Administration continues to be a strength in many centres who ensure all paperwork is correct before sending to their moderator. There is still some work to be done in a minority of centres who did not attach all the necessary paperwork before despatching the sample. The moderation sample should contain:

- An electronic copy of the marks submitted for this component.
- Candidate portfolios securely attached to the fully completed Centre Assessment Form.
- A chaptered and labelled DVD/USB.
- A Running Order.

Those centres entering work through the portal should upload these documents to the appropriate location.

Samples for moderation should arrive with the moderator three working days after the request has been sent to centres. Some centres were late with their submissions creating additional work for moderators. A few centres are still entering their candidates for J316/01 – which is the option whereby the work is uploaded to the repository – and sending the hard copies to the moderator.

With the advent of GDPR more centres are encrypting their USBs but must make sure that they send the password to the moderators.

Moderators reported an increase in the number of clerical errors this year. Thorough checking of the CAF before submitting marks would help to reduce this.

It is essential that centres understand that the audience for this component is the moderator and therefore make sure that candidates are clearly identified on the DVD. Best practice is for each candidate to hold a sign with their name and candidate number in front of them whilst giving their name. Some centres encourage candidates to identify their character(s) and any costume changes. These small things ensure candidates are clearly identified. It is also imperative that the camera is placed in a position where it can capture the full extent of the performance area. A few centres placed the camera behind the audience thereby compromising the view that the moderator received. It is worth considering lighting when setting up the camera – some stage lighting washes out faces thus obscuring facial expressions. It should also be remembered that a blackout causes the camera to refocus and this can cause blurring of the picture until it resets its focus.

More centres this year followed the advice given last year to use A4 paper and not to allow candidates to use exercise books, large art books or hardback folders.

Centres where more than one teacher taught the cohort were very proactive in completing internal moderation. This was excellent evidence of rigour in the assessment, moderation process.

Stimuli

Unlike last year when only half of the stimuli were accessed this year there was an even spread of responses across all ten stimulus items. Themes of equal rights, mental health and fairy tales were the most common.

Best practice included: soundscapes, dance, multi-role, split stage and physical theatre. Some centres used Frantic Assembly (especially chair duets) again this year with mixed results. The best responses had integrated the chair duet into the drama whilst the least successful responses had included it almost as an add on without seeming to consider its function within the piece.

Most performers created credible characters and effective characterisation. There was more experimentation with different genres and styles this year which generated some very interesting and thought-provoking work. The most successful candidates had clearly stated dramatic intentions and the devised performances reflected this. Less successful candidates did not have clear dramatic intentions and the devised pieces therefore lacked focus and direction.

Designs

There was a slight increase in candidates choosing design options this year. Candidates who were most successful focused on the design skill in their portfolio and demonstrated specific subject knowledge. It is essential that design candidates have the same skill based teaching as their performer peers. Most lighting and sound candidates included cue sheets in their portfolio. Costume design tended to be done really well with some very thoughtful costumes created which enhanced the performances in their group.

Portfolios

Most portfolios were in prose and typed. Best practice is to divide the portfolio into two sections with an evaluation of the final performance. Section 1 – Research and Developing, Section 2 – Creating and Developing and Final Evaluation.

Section 1 should contain evidence of research – some candidates referred to research but no evidence was given of the research or how it was to be used to inform the devised drama. Some candidates submitted research on more than one stimulus – this is unnecessary. Candidates should focus on the stimulus they are using. A few centres did not appear to give candidates a choice in the stimulus item to be used. This was less successful than allowing candidates to choose from all ten stimuli. The point of this component is to encourage candidates to choose a stimulus which they want to explore dramatically.

The research included in the portfolio should always be referenced and should be linked to the candidates' initial ideas. Less successful candidates spent more time on their initial ideas than on the research.

Some centres were overly generous in their marking of this section. Moving rapidly to the top of the mark range for a couple of sentences of research.

Section 2 should contain details of the devising process. Successful candidates gave details of decisions made. These decisions had been analysed and evaluated in terms of impact for the audience. A few centres used an essay format which tended to lack the specific detail needed to access the top range of marks. Some candidates adopted a diary format for the portfolio which led to more descriptive documents.

The final evaluation should be of the performance of the devised drama. The mark for Portfolio: Analysis and Evaluation should cover all elements of analysis and evaluation within sections 1 and 2 and the evaluation of the final performance. Some centres did not give enough credit to the analysis and evaluation present in sections 1 and 2.

Most candidates were able to evaluate throughout the portfolio and then the final performance.

Candidates do not need to select a practitioner around whose theories the work is built. Practitioners should only be referenced if a specific theory or technique is being employed. Candidates do not need to include peer evaluations.

Final Comments

It was delightful to have so many reports from moderators about the quality of the devised drama produced and the enthusiasm shown by candidates for their performances.

Most common causes of centres not passing

Candidates must make sure that they address all assessment objectives within the portfolio – it is essential that in Section 1 candidates talk about the research they have done and how this impacts on the devised drama. A disproportionate amount of this section spent on initial ideas rather than research.

Generosity in marking by the centre. Ensuring that all teachers in the centre who teach this unit understand the assessment criteria. It is important to use the marking criteria to differentiate between candidates. Too often the top mark is used when the candidate has not fully met all the criteria.

Common misconceptions

Candidates do not need to research practitioners. Increasingly candidates are researching and writing about the theories and techniques of practitioners taking up valuable time and effort which would be better spent identifying the techniques/theories to be used – how and why – and being very clear about how this enhances the drama.

Candidates do not need to research more than one stimulus item. As part of the process it is hoped candidates will explore all 10 stimulus items before deciding which one offers them the most scope for creating a piece of drama. It might be that candidates start with one stimulus and then change their minds after working on it for a time. At this point they would change to another stimulus and within section 2 of the portfolio they would explain why they made that change. Portfolios which contain details of all ten stimuli are not encouraged because it diverts focus from the main stimulus and initial ideas.

Avoiding potential malpractice

Centres should make sure that candidates do not submit group documentation without identifying its source. Clearly candidates are working in groups and therefore they might create a document collaboratively which might show for example a rehearsal schedule or character details. These documents must be clearly marked as collaborative documents.

Centres must not provide candidates with a writing frame either through documentation or in the form of verbal questioning. Some Centres, in an effort to support some weaker candidates, have used an interview type style to encourage candidates to talk about their work. This is not allowed. Some Centres have also provided headings/prompts for the portfolios which again are not permitted.

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