2019 Drama Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the previous year’s assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school assessments and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Group Presentation

Students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a play-script or dramatic innovator through the process of practical application. The teacher acts as supervisor and facilitator in this group presentation, advising students on, and supporting their choice of, successful strategies.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* knowledge and understanding
* application
* analysis.

The more successful responses commonly:

* clear understanding and application of their role within a common dramatic vision or interpretation
* used the allocated time to present the depth and breadth of their learning
* recorded evidence clearly and analysed their role and the page-to-stage process in consideration of the groups dramatic intentions
* provided a record of evidence that directly linked to the task. It included a range of evidence such as diagrams, designs, photos and/or video, with relevant annotations
* included a clear a clear statement of intent, especially for students in off-stage roles (designers, directors, etc.), which was embedded in the product
* included a product that was able to stand alone as the focus of the task. The dramatic intent was clearly embedded in the application of processes and techniques
* drew from well-scaffolded task design from the teacher, who explicitly taught a text, innovator or style(s) facilitating students’ deeper understanding and personal connection to the task.

The less successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated inconsistencies in the product. The over-arching application of a dramatic technique or style did not closely relate to their performance or film
* adopted too many roles which led to superficial analysis and minimised their capacity to demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding
* did not consider the context (social, historical, cultural) of their script or innovator
* dealt with text or innovator and central dramatic ideas theoretically without practical experimentation and exploration. The lack of connection and integration resulted in poor synthesis
* did not provide a record of evidence to clarify their understanding and application of skills of analysis.

Assessment Type 2: Folio

Report

The report focuses on the student’s own experience of making dramatic work in *Assessment Type 4: Performance.* Students expand their knowledge and understanding of drama as a performing art, and developing skills of observation, analysis, and criticism, and the ability to apply arts-specific terminology.

Review

Students view, review, and analyse a range of live or recorded theatrical performances. They have the opportunity to use the knowledge and experience they acquire throughout the course of study to reflect on, and evaluate, the work they have viewed.

For the Folio assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* analysis
* evaluation.

Report

The more successful responses commonly:

* clearly articulated the director’s concept/vision. They were able to express how it informed the development of their own role, as well as the holistic creation of the performance
* deeply engaged with the processes, techniques and technologies required to fully develop their role
* provided thoughtful analysis of dramatic successes in relation to the director’s vision
* expressed knowledge and understanding of their role within the process, and examined the importance of collaborative skills
* provided key moments that were indicative of the student’s ‘journey’
* utilised appropriate dramatic terminology that demonstrated their application of theatrical skills and techniques
* conveyed a clear understanding of the potential and actual impact on audiences, and analysed and evaluated choices throughout the report
* discussed the interdependent nature of dramatic artistic pursuit.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked evaluation of the qualities of practitioners’ choices and how successfully they were conveyed on stage
* provided a general overview of the production at the expense of deeply exploring the development of their role, and their role in relation to others in the ensemble
* included irrelevant, unannotated photographs that did not contribute to analysis of dramatic choices
* ignored the vision of the director, intentions of playwright, and/or the style of performance
* used a diarised or journal format with minimal effective use of dramatic terminology.

Review

The more successful responses commonly:

* included key moments of the performance or film that provided an opportunity to deeply analyse and evaluate dramatic intentions and their realisation
* included vivid and concisely described key moments, providing a sense of the visual and aural experience for the reader
* integrated discussion of theatrical elements and their combined effect on the audience
* demonstrated an authentic and engaged student, analysing and evaluating the with the transformative effect of the performance
* reviewed performances or films that were age-appropriate, affecting and multi-layered. These allowed students to deeply analyse and evaluate a range of dramatic features
* included use of appropriate dramatic terminology for live theatre reviews, and cinematic language for film
* included reviews that considered dramatic perspectives, and explored the intent of the director. They also demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of theatre or film conventions and techniques
* used succinct quotations and/or descriptions to support and justify their discussion
* provided specific analysis of the contributions of practitioners, and synthesised these to evaluate the whole as a dramatic work.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were diarised accounts of the performance or film. A formulaic approach led to fewer opportunities for deep analysis an evaluation of dramatic intent
* were unable to synthesise and interpret the combined effect of theatrical elements. Separate paragraphs dealt with lighting, costume, sound, set and acting
* used generalisations and incorrect dramatic and/ or filmic terminology
* structured as a promotional, newspaper-style response. This limited students’ capacity to analyse and evaluate in depth
* provided too much recount of the narrative of the production at the expense of analysing and reflecting upon key moments
* provided simplistic, unjustified and vague responses that did not engage with the dramatic intent of the performance or film, e.g. “I thought the use of grey costumes was boring.”
* did not engage with the director’s intent in terms of eliciting the audience’s response.

Assessment Type 3: Interpretative Study

Students investigate and respond to a play-script adopting the role of director, actor, or designer or they investigate and respond to a dramatic innovator, creating a question that they answer in their study.

Students must provide evidence of how they have applied their knowledge of the play-script or dramatic innovator investigated. A bibliography and appropriate acknowledgement of sources must be used in this assessment.

The Interpretative Study should be a maximum of 1500 words if written or 9 minutes if oral, or the equivalent in multimodal form.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* knowledge and understanding
* application
* analysis.

The more successful responses commonly:

* adhered to the word count/time allocation
* had a clear guiding question that provided focus and scope for dramatic investigation
* many multimodal options demonstrated creative and original responses
* utilised appropriately sized and annotated visual examples to demonstrate knowledge and understanding. Script extracts that were used included detailed and relevant annotations to support the focus of the guiding question
* considered the ‘questions beyond the question’. These responses demonstrate a strong connection to audience impact, dramatic style/form and concepts
* teachers scaffolded the task to enable students to identify theory and practice connections. A selection of only one or two scripts or innovators enabled explicit teaching so that students could then deeply understand and analyse dramatic intent
* generally, play-script selection for this task was more successful. Students were able to demonstrate a stronger knowledge and understanding of the text and synthesise their learning
* based their response on a well-defined dramatic theory and/or stylistic form
* demonstrated interpretation in a product as well as through their analysis
* provided substantial and relevant evidence to support their choices.

The less successful responses commonly:

* open-ended, broad question choices led to recount instead of deeper investigation. Focus of the question was unclear
* did not maximise their use of the word count/time limit
* explored multiple innovators (more than three) which limited depth of analysis
* oral presentations were delivered too quickly
* were essays that didn’t demonstrate student’s interpretation of a work, and subsequent impact on an audience.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 4: Group Performance or Individual Performance or Presentation

The external assessment task for Drama is weighted at 30%. It offers students the chance to develop the craft of theatre through its many disciplines and allows students the opportunity to develop work that is collaborative, practical, creative, and delivered to an audience. The group production allows the students the opportunity to celebrate the richness and depth of human expression in dramatic forms.

On-stage performers should present a performance aggregating to a *minimum* of 10 minutes in-focus on stage time, while off-stage presenters have a *maximum* of 15 minutes to present evidence of their learning and creativity relevant to their specific off-stage role, to the three markers only (teacher and two SACE markers). Students completing an individual presentation adopt the role of a practitioner in developing work that is presented to an audience of peers, other classes or schools, parents, or the wider community, and is also marked by the teacher and SACE markers. This presentation should be a *maximum* of 15-minutes to demonstrate their application of the knowledge and skills they have acquired through their area of study. All presentations are delivered on the same day.

The more successful performances or presentations commonly:

* were supported by the teacher – as director – through a clear vision or directorial concept which was conveyed to all students, and the students actively engaged with this intent and concept. This then was able to anchor performances and presentations for both on-stage and off-stage students
* involved judicious consideration of the skills, experience, and aptitudes of the class, and selected a work commensurate with these factors when choosing an appropriate text to perform
* when adapting, editing or devising scripts, teachers ensured that the core essence of the plot lines and character development were retained
* teachers ensured that each student had enough on stage time so they were able to create and develop the ‘inner life’ of the character to the depth and breadth of the role
* ensured that the size of roles meant that students could sustain the interpretation throughout the performance
* ensured that students applied appropriate vocal skills, especially clarity, audibility, projection, rhythm, pace, pitch and modulation and when using accents these were consistently held
* provided each actor with the opportunity to develop nuanced characterisation and depth of subtext
* students demonstrated on-stage motivations for all actions/lines that are clear and justified
* actors, technicians and designers who were clear about their role within the ensemble as a whole. This was evident in the on-stage product, as well as the 15 minute presentation for off stage students
* actors clearly established their role from the outset and were able to develop the interpretation, where appropriate, throughout the performance
* the basic elements of stagecraft had been taught well by teachers and clearly demonstrated by students
* teachers and students together explored and deconstructed each of the specific features of the performance standards so that the students understood the basis on which they were being assessed
* students sustained and controlled stage presence that engaged the audience throughout the entire production
* involved developing and exploring stage business and consistency of character both when delivering dialogue and when part of the ensemble
* actors who could find the rhythms within the text and combine this with integrated vocal and physical variation. They not only found the light and shade of their role, they also clearly revealed the inner life and ‘multi-layered’ elements of their character
* for students playing more than one acting role, they clearly differentiated each character vocally and physically
* when the student effectively demonstrated working relationships with others on stage, showing an ability to set up moments for others
* actors who captured the dramatic form and style of their performance by utilising appropriate techniques (i.e. gesturing in Commedia Dell ‘Arte, or fluid delivery of physical comic routines/slapstick in Melodrama).

Off Stage

* when the teacher negotiated the performance text to give possible off-stage designers a context in which to create interesting and artistic products
* teacher discussed director’s intent and concept with students who then created a conceptual approach in their role from this interpretation
* off stage students who were well rehearsed and prepared. The most successful communicated clearly, and provided relevant evidence to demonstrate the development of their designs and highlight their understanding and analysis
* off stage students who could clearly identify the dramatic form and style of the performance, provide context for their role (i.e. social/historical, director’s intent etc.) and communicate their role within the ensemble
* off stage students who could clearly apply their ideas to the stage and demonstrate originality and skill in the execution of their role
* designers, stage managers and dramaturges who were aware that they needed to demonstrate the ways in which they had experimented with a variety of ideas, applied the appropriate methods for their role, and developed creative solutions
* off stage students who could clearly articulate the technical requirements of their role. Students who based their final product on solid dramatic research of practitioners and dramatic theory provided a depth of knowledge, understanding and synthesis.

Individual Performance

* individual performers who chose to pursue a field of strong interest and developed a clear focus for their study
* individual study students who worked towards an appropriate dramatic outcome, ensuring that they addressed the designated specific features in their presentation
* clearly and obviously were supported by the teacher to a level equivalent to that given to students involved in the group performance.

The less successful responses commonly revealed or involved:

* that a lack of preparation was evident (actors and off stage)
* that the director’s vision and intent was not communicated and deconstructed with students, both in on‑stage and off-stage roles
* that stage time for actors was lacking, or they were cast in roles that didn’t have a great deal of depth. Students need to be given the opportunity to fully develop a character, or demonstrate skilful application of dramatic technique. Character arc or ‘the rise and fall’ of the character, where appropriate, needs to be evident
* performances that appeared to be too complex for students. The selection of performance material should challenge students but not be out of reach for the abilities of the students
* performance material that did not extend students or provide opportunities to show a range of skills or develop roles
* long works which students found it difficult to sustain energy. Teachers should take into consideration the class size in the context of the length of play
* limited opportunity to present creative staging concepts, both for onstage and offstage roles
* when scripts have been altered and shortened only to have too much of the essential elements such as character arc and development removed, and not giving students the opportunity to develop character’s given circumstances and relationships with obstacles
* when students took on too many roles and then had difficulty in transitioning between them, being unable to demonstrate equally convincing, fluent and consistent interpretations for each character
* emerged when actors were allocated unrelated sections from a play that prevented them from exploring and developing characters
* off stage students who were unclear about their role, or were given too many roles (i.e. make-up, hair, costumes and publicity at the same time) and only skimmed the surface of each role. Students were unable to demonstrate a depth of knowledge and application of skills
* off stage students who were unable to provide artefacts of their product(s) and process in their presentation. This made their presentation challenging in terms of providing visual or aural evidence for marking.

Operational procedures:

* teachers are required to communicate with the assigned contact marker after receiving the initial official SACE Board documentation
* teachers are encouraged to contact the assigned marker at least two weeks prior to performance with any updated student and performance information
* teachers are strongly encouraged to program presentations by off stagers prior to the on-stage performance
* teachers are required to provide an appropriately private marking space after the show. Teachers should quickly move markers to that space after the show to provide ideal marking conditions
* ensure markers are given an opportunity for a break when the performance and presentation schedule is particularly long, especially due to multiple off-stage presentations and/or an overly long performance
* identify students who have more than one role and, if students are similarly costumed (or masked), develop a set of identifying symbols to ensure ease of process for the markers
* teachers are required to use the performance notes sheets to mark the students and provide notes throughout the performance and presentations, using the identifiers and language from the performance standards and providing examples of when and how these were demonstrated during the performance. These marks and notes form the basis of each students’ final external assessment grade.