2024 ASSESSMENT REPORT

SDP315 THEATRE PERFORMANCE

General Comments

All teachers must ensure they and their students refer to the 2025 External Assessment Specifications. These are published in Term 1 and located under the Supporting Documents tab in SDP315120 Course.

Marking panels were appreciative of the clear establishment of exam conditions for both play performances and monologue exams at schools. A wide variety of texts were used, including newer works. Statewide, the more successful students presented polished work that enabled them to demonstrate high levels of ensemble and solo performance skills and show versatility as an actor. There were improvements in accuracy of memorisation.

Teachers are encouraged to focus on stagecraft skills, the selection of theorists with practical application to performance work, and the formal writing requirements of the Independent Reflective Study (IRS).

Practical Component

Use a range of vocal techniques to create character (Criterion 1)

High achieving students demonstrated vocal control, pitch and tonal range, and a use of their voice to enhance authorial intention throughout their performance.

Students who did not attain higher ratings for Criterion 1 presented work impacted by the loss of clarity due to pace. This was often evident in both the play and monologue performances. A focus on ways to generate and sustain vocal pace and energy in action scenes without the loss of articulation is encouraged.

Students who performed play and monologue characters with the same accent failed to address the criterion as a whole: ‘Use a range of vocal techniques’.

Use stagecraft and theatrical production elements in polished performances (Criterion 2)

This was an area where many students across the state achieved ratings lower than their internal assessment. Markers noted the following in the play performances at varying levels across the state.

Students:

- struggled to sustain focus when not delivering dialogue
- ‘tuned out’ and appeared to stop listening or re-acting when not directly involved in the dialogue or action

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- were noisy behind others speaking
- pulled focus with fidgeting or moving set, props and costume
- made eye contact with audience members out of character
- struggled to sustain eye contact with others during dialogue or not look down to the floor
- were out of sightlines, behind others in key moments.

Teachers are encouraged to look specifically at the stagecraft elements listed in the Standards (below) and work with students to ensure there is a clear understanding of the purpose of each that emphasises awareness, adaptability and responsibility on stage. Importantly, students should be supported to build an understanding of the ways in which their use of these stagecraft elements in a polished performance is evident on stage.

Stagecraft Elements

Includes but not limited to spatial awareness of self and others in performance, listening to others in performance, use of eye contact, audience awareness, solving of unexpected problems in performance, management of personal properties, costume and set items.

Length of Monologues

Students again presented work that was undertime and their assessment was negatively impacted. The three (3) to five (5) minute requirement allows sufficient time for the establishment of character and setting, supports adequate development of the dramatic arc of a character's story, and supports equity of assessment. Students are penalised against element 5 (*sustains focus, control and concentration, and appropriate levels of energy in performance*) and also limit their ability to show versatility as a performer. The filling of time with unnecessary stage business, set and prop movement or overly long pauses is strongly discouraged, does not support authorial intention and will negatively impact assessment. Students should be aware that any part of their monologue that runs over the required five (5) minutes will not be assessed.

Perform and sustain a range of characters (Criterion 3)

Sustains character on stage (Element 5)

Teachers should note the comments under Criterion 2 as the sustaining of character is closely supported by students' ability to sustain stagecraft elements during their performances.

Whilst the complexity and challenge of casting large classes equitably is acknowledged, teachers are asked to consider carefully the casting of a student in multiple small roles with little or in some cases, no dialogue. A number of less skilled students struggled to show a difference between their characters vocally and or physically (element 1), had limited opportunity to sustain their character's motivations (element 2) and were unable to demonstrate sufficient evidence to meet element 5.

Whilst a student may view an online (YouTube, film, stage production recording) performance of their play and or monologue as part of their research (and should reference this if they do), they are strongly discouraged from memorising and then reproducing another actor's performance physically and or vocally for an exam.

Folio Component

The Independent Reflective Study (IRS) is an opportunity for students to provide insight into their acting process and decision making, alongside demonstrating their understanding of genre/context, theory and directorial intention.

There were a number of outstanding responses that clearly articulated their page to stage process. A considerable number of students wrote with good detail about their work and would have reached the higher award had they addressed the *why* behind the decisions they described. Weaker responses tended to narrate the class's process (we read the play, we did a workshop) or spend overly long outlining the plot of the play and or their scenes. Descriptions of costume(s) are only relevant if the students explain the impact these had on their physical acting.

Appraise own dramatic and performance techniques (Criterion 7)

Elements 1-5

Element 1: A number of students wrote about their work in isolation, with little or no reference to the ensemble or others in key scenes. Element 1 refers to the *performance ensemble* and students are encouraged to consider <u>on stage</u> aspects such as energy, timing and character relationship in their discussion. All references to rehearsals must be about the on-stage process and decision making; references to other students' absenteeism or lack of memorisation or other personal details are not appropriate.

Element 2: Markers were pleased to note an increased range of theorists studied by students. Those students who were able to explain *how* and *why* they applied aspects of a theorist's approach to their own work on stage achieved higher ratings. Teachers are encouraged to ensure that the theorists selected by the class and/or student include ones whose approaches are evident in performance. Many students wrote solely about theorists whose focus is on the internal process of character development and markers often struggled to see tangible evidence of this work on stage. For example, the application of Stanislavsky's Emotional Memory may be an excellent tool for a student to use during the rehearsal process, but specific details about how this impacted their physical and or vocal acting decisions needs to be explained in the IRS to meet this element.

Elements 6-9

Students continued to include facts, titles of works, names, theory and images that were not their own and were not referenced.

Students are encouraged to research and include a variety of sources to support their IRS. It is expected that a student undertaking the study of plays unfamiliar to them will supplement their understanding with further reading from websites, textbooks and visual sources. Students may then choose to include this knowledge in their writing; however, without any acknowledgement of where they sourced and have come to know this information, their work does not adhere to TASC's Academic Integrity Policy and the assessment of elements 7, 8 and 9 will be negatively impacted.

This is a formal essay and must be presented with adherence to <u>all</u> the presentation requirements listed in the EAS.

Students must state on the 2025 cover page the referencing style they are using in the IRS.