

Online Support for Centre Assessors (OSCA)

Reference Material: Exemplar 3

GCSE in Drama

5DR01 – Drama Exploration

Issued: 2011/12

PREFACE

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Notes on the Exemplar

Please note that:

- The original portfolio work has been reformatted and condensed to reduce the file size and document downloading time.
- The portfolio exercises are original candidate work and may contain grammatical errors and spelling mistakes.
- Some items may have been removed altogether, please refer to the notes by the Principal Moderator for specific references.

Principal Moderator's Notes on the Exemplar:

It must be emphasised that these examples of student work are from a real centre and students and, as such, are neither exemplar materials, nor examples of "perfect" work. The publication of these materials is intended to give centres an idea of how students were able to meet the criteria for Outstanding and Excellent in 2011. It must be made clear that although these students would have gained either A or A* in 2011, the commentary below refers to the Assessment Criteria level rather than grades. Grade boundaries for all subjects are set each year based on the achievement of the cohort however the Assessment criteria and therefore the Standard remain constant. It is also worth noting that although these were students working at a very high level of achievement, and there is one 'full marks' piece of work, this student gained full marks for her Documentary Response but not for her Practical Exploration. This reflects the rigorous nature of Edexcel Drama GCSE where, in line with other subjects at this level, 'full marks' students are very much the exception. This rigour will not affect the number of A and A* grades awarded.

Centre Name		Centre No.		Centre Use Only				
Student Name	Sophie	Student No.		Practical Exploration (6 hours – Paper 01)	36 / 40			
5DR01 - Unit 1 Drama Exploration	Edexcel CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT RECORD CARD GCSE DRAMA JUNE 2012		Documentary Response (Paper 02)	20 / 20				
			TOTAL	56 / 60				
			TEACHER-EXAMINER COMMENTS					
Practical Exploration (Paper 01): Sophie demonstrated a flair for realising dramatic potential and a consistently sophisticated practical understanding of the concept of "Feminism?" especially when developing roles in smaller groups. Over the 6 hours it was apparent that her ideas were changing and developing for example through the subtle use of irony in her narration in the last assessed session.								
Documentary Response (Paper 02): Sophie's evaluation reveals a very high level understanding of the issues explored and how these impacted on choices made throughout the practical exploration. There are many clear examples in place where Sophie evaluates the work analytically both in terms of her own choices and the exploration of others. Her discussion of both shows a real sense of the collaborative approach with which she fully engaged over the 6 hours. Her understanding of and links to the theme of "Feminism?" show a real sense of how her thinking has changed as a result of the exploration, a fact upon which she herself reflects. Her passion and commitment are reflected throughout the evaluation. Overall this is a highly articulate, impressively mature response to the practical exploration.								
AUTHENTICATION								
Student's declaration: I declare that I have produced the work involved without external assistance apart from any which is acceptable under the scheme of assessment. I declare that I have accurately entered the correct word count in the above "Word Count" box.				<table border="1"> <tr> <td>WORD COUNT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Documentary Response</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1,998 words 2,000 words maximum</td> </tr> </table>		WORD COUNT	Documentary Response	1,998 words 2,000 words maximum
WORD COUNT								
Documentary Response								
1,998 words 2,000 words maximum								
Signature: _____				Date: _____				
Teacher-Examiner's declaration: I declare that the student's activities have been kept under regular supervision and that, to the best of my knowledge, no assistance has been given apart from any which is acceptable under the scheme of assessment and has been identified and recorded, and that the final submission has been produced under controlled conditions.								
Signature: _____				Date: _____				

Documentary Response - Feminism?

In our first session of exploring 'Feminism?' we explored a guide-sheet for 1950s housewives concerning their husbands. It immediately provoked animated responses to points such as, *"Be a little gay and interesting. His boring day may need a lift... Try to understand his world of strain and pressure. Let him talk first"*. We had to direct our responses into group still-images. We were exaggerated to show we felt this "perfect" way of living was a completely misleading depiction, like an artificial television advertisement. Although we each chose different points to explore, he used similar techniques to illustrate how we felt. The men were usually placed higher than the women to show their supposedly 'greater importance'. They took up more space, frequently reclining or lying back on chairs. We showed the children kneeling on the floor taking up little space in comparison and looking up to their father.

When movement was added the characterisation became increasingly stereotypical. The husband's large gestures contrasted with the submissive wife's exaggerated facial expressions (e.g when picture-perfect smiling was taken to frightening extremities). When we added dialogue the overall approach seemed mocking of this 'perfect lifestyle'. Alice's line *"it is hard being a man"* showed how we scorned this unequal representation of men and women.

Whilst discussing, Ella brought up the shared disbelief of the fact that it was only about sixty years ago that women would've lived like this. The idea of respectable women taking it seriously was unfathomable.

We then created characters based on women at a point of unhappiness. We used the Stanislavski method, meaning we first constructed our characters lives before approaching acting. I find this an effective way of seeing the characters as real people. By knowing their lives in detail, concentrating on even the minute seemingly unimportant details, we create a person who we're able to relate to, and therefore act more convincingly. My character was a very high-powered businesswoman who'd discovered she was infertile. Someone commented afterwards on the opposites in the situation, a modern woman wanting children, a need deemed as out-dated to women like her.

I learnt a lot from the diversity of the other pieces, each individual story told so much. For example, Clementine used an effective drawn-out repetitious sound in her opening alluding to a housewife chopping vegetables. The harsh sound made the image seem sinister and set the tone for her entire piece. Lucy took the cleaning housewife to the extreme and made a character psychologically afraid of dirt and germs. Lucy's shrill high-pitched vocals and frenetic movements whilst she feverishly cleaned made it obvious she had a certain problem bordering on psychosis.

Something I'd found surprising during discussions was that although we were a group of well-educated middle-class girls, we didn't feel as strongly about feminism as perhaps we should've. It seemed that generally we felt female inequality wasn't such a serious problem as it was and therefore there wasn't need to be so involved; there were other problems that had greater impacts on us (e.g. the recent student budget cuts).

However this rather sheltered belief was drastically altered when we began the lesson with an 'EqualityNow' handout, making it clear discrimination against women was still a serious problem. It angered me seeing women exploited; we'd thought female rights movements had made huge differences in society. Although they had done so much, it was still shocking to see that we still had so many problems to overcome.

We channelled this energy into an image depicting the handout issues. We showed an abstract interpretation of degradation of women in the workplace. Placing the men on chairs around the woman showed their alleged 'greater importance'. Her humiliation was made clear when, as the men we proceeded to jeer, poke and laugh at her. It was an over-exaggerated, surreal portrayal of the unfairness women suffered in a male-dominated atmosphere.



We then incorporated a ticking clock symbolising how our chance to change was gradually running out. Incorporating a harsh, continuous sound in the background was also an effective way of creating tension and suspense. In the foreground three of us in cannon would answer a telephone, saying "Hello this is the police department, how can I help?" We got faster until we talked over each other, signifying the increasing chaos yet contrasting with our clinical vocal presentation.

Our last scene again made use of levels, the male agents of the state faced the audience whilst on chairs showing they were deemed as morally superior since they were civil servants but also the power they held over the woman. The woman seeking help had to look up at them, although the audience couldn't see her reaction they saw the lewd expressions of the men alluding to the situation's demeaning nature, and the metaphorical as well as the literal rape and violation of the woman.



Another group chose to set it up as a trial showing the message in a different light. Their layout was effective; each character was cut-off, facing away from the others, isolated, especially the woman on trial who was placed kneeling alone on the floor in the middle of the others. It showed a realistic specific case of discrimination against women.

We then devised duologues loosely based on personal stories from Amnesty using victim and 'interviewer' roles. In my pair we wanted the young girl's situation to remain unclear to the audience. Her 'interviewer' appeared insincere although outwardly just trying to gain her trust, repeating "It's okay, you can trust me" which, as the audience commented after, seemed to have the opposite effect. We felt the piece represented the girl's predicament, personifying the insecurity when you no-one to trust. The audience was placed directly in her position. As the girl I was backed into the corner cowering close to the wall and looking at the floor, showing her resistance and fear. I tried making it obvious she was the victim by amplifying her claustrophobic state and avoiding eye contact and by taking up as little space as possible. By acting tense with my shoulders hunched forwards I communicated the idea of the victim's despondency.

However Lucy cornered me, entrapping me with her arms. Her role as the ingratiating/ 'chummy' interviewer was emphasised vocally, with an over-sweet tone that suggested she was trying too hard. When we shared our work, others' reactions to our improvisation varied, there were those who felt that Lucy was trying to take advantage of my character. Lucy's uncomfortably close proximity and use of invasive gesture amplified this idea.

I found the variety of the other pairs work inspiring. For example, Alice and Katie created the scenario of a young defenceless girl being forced into prostitution. As the 'victim', Katie used gesture in a similar way to mine, cowering against the wall whilst Alice towered over her with the dominant physicality of an aggressive interrogator rather than a neutral/ positive interviewer and this cleverly reflected the character's experience with her 'pimp'. Another pair used the space creatively, positioning the victim as though looking into a mirror to interview herself. This cleverly turned the whole notion of victim and interviewer in on itself; the idea that the one character played both roles could also be related to the roles women adopt in the real world.

One of our final tasks where we considered these was an 'in role' debate about feminism. This was spontaneous improvised task and the fact that we had each 'taken on' a specific persona with a set point of view allowed us to explore a wider range of issues and conflicts. The drama form used meant that I began to embody my character's beliefs as I argued *against* the idea of feminism, a stance I would not have voluntarily taken. The whole task was thought-provoking and enabled me to see the debate from a new perspective, with my own judgements informed by what I had learnt in character.

Our last task also explored the notion of expected female roles, using cross-cutting. We focussed on the Amanda Knox trial as this showed a woman who was more forcefully scrutinised and smeared by the media than the case's male counterparts. We tried making the media's savagery dear, focussing on our society's biased nature and the swiftness of our capability to judge before we even understand.

We showed the media in two lights, Katie portraying the face of the media we're used to seeing, but then a contrasting more abstract image of snarling animalistic creatures surrounding Knox, depicting the story-hungry reporters. Katie narrated throughout the piece, portraying the character of a TV journalist

highlighting the media's ability to control and influence our decisions. Katie addressed the audience in presenter mode saying, "Innocent or guilty? You decide." what we really wanted to show was the insincerity of this idea. How can we decide when the media already has our minds made up? However at the same time there is a subtle truth to the point. The public had practically convicted Knox before a fair trial even took place, based on the evidence of slanderous stories about her. You could almost argue that in effect, we were the ones who marked her out as guilty forcing the media to follow suit.

Another group also focussed on the media but took on a more naturalistic style to bring home the subject's reality. In one scene magazine editors decided a photograph showing a celebrity with large bruises on her thigh must only mean one thing: the "serious problems" her and her husband were having had finally ended at physical abuse. Without any facts or truths they decided to write that article, for the mere reason that it would make an interesting story that would sell. They then cross-cut to the woman herself who simply explained she'd bruised herself by tripping. She was taking pills for sleeping problems she was having due to the fact she was missing her recently passed mother. However they happened to make her clumsy meaning she fell a lot. It was such a sad simple explanation, a world away from the editors' fickle gossip. It made me realise how damaging this type of careless slander was. The woman was alone, almost pleading with us as she explained the truth whereas the editors were huddled in a group, as Alice K commented it was like spiteful Chinese-whispers that continued to worsen. It was obvious who was supposed to be in the wrong.

And yet when we discussed it later I began to feel unsure as Amelia brought up the point that the editors were only doing their jobs, as were the journalists in my piece. They weren't deliberately setting out to hurt people. It was the demand from the public for this type of malicious gossip that showed that sometimes we seemed to have a trepid fascination to see others fail.

Our views concerning incidents such as the Madeline McCann case made it evident that we felt there was a deep-rooted insecurity in our society regarding women. Pavan brought up an interesting point that I thought held a lot of truth: we're harsher to women we believe are in the wrong because women are stereotypically seen as the child-bearers, the life-givers. Women are supposedly only meant to nurture and care for others, so it's all the more shocking when the opposite comes to light.

Even with the Knox trial, only the woman was considered a suspect whilst the two men involved were hardly mentioned. It made me realise that as a society we need to be aware that feminism is definitely important, I now see that it's vital that we fight back against inequality, no matter how hard it's along the way. The following quote is an example of the reason that I now consider myself to be a feminist.

This unit has definitely opened my eyes to these problems women face; I will strive to remain faithful to the movement of women's rights, especially in the face of inequality.

Moderator Commentary

Documentary Response – Sophie - Feminism?

A very well written and highly analytical response which is able to link in real detail different key moments within the 6 hour exploration to the student's learning about the theme of "Feminism?". Although this is largely a continuous prose response, the student has chosen to use several images from the exploration to illustrate the evaluation; while no marks are deducted for including these, they are irrelevant to the quality of the evaluation itself.

There is a sense of genuine understanding throughout and of the student moving quickly through a huge body of work rather than getting side-tracked by description or narrative. The response includes both evaluation of her own and others' work as part of a group, and clear examples of her own work and the work of others with a more specific focus.

The analysis of the first task considers the impact of the approaches to the strategy chosen by the whole group and shows a clear understanding of how the use of this strategy demonstrated the ironic attitude towards this historical view of women. Points made in discussion reflected are carefully linked to practical exploration for example the comment about the way that Alice's line showed the students' scorn linked to the shared disbelief of how recent such attitudes were (p.1). The second task shows a split focus between evaluating the process of creating characters and the impact of the way the drama medium was used (p.1) with a real understanding of this impact in place, for example the comment on the sinister sound effect repeated by one student.

There is neat link back to the theme of "Feminism?" before the evaluation of the next task in terms of the impact created which leads into the evaluation of three improvised scenes created. The vocabulary used shows a very high level of understanding of how this very different use of form was used to create meaning for example the comment on the use of the ticking clock or on the literal and metaphorical rape of the female character (p.2) focussing on the student's own work within an exploration group ("we"). The brief comment at the end of this section (p.2) evaluates the work of another group with real effectiveness and there is a sense of specific evaluation of her own work in the response to the next task (p.3) which shows a sense of her intentions, for example the comment about how she tried to amplify the victim's claustrophobic state.

Comments throughout the evaluation are similarly sophisticated and high level, for example those on the use of the 'in role' debate as a freeing experience (p.4) and on the intentions behind the last task and the contrast created by the use of cross-cutting (p.3-4). The evaluation concludes with a thoughtful, personal response to the theme in connection with the last task, clearly provoked by the practical exploration. Although the response is loosely divided into four sections to correspond to the four sessions of exploration, the breadth of the examples, the depth of analysis and the sense of the student's ideas progressing have resulted in the fullest evaluation of the whole six hours.

20/20