

Theatre Production and Performance presentation

Notes for teachers

NOTE: *The following was written in December 2008, prior to the first assessment in the Theatre course in 2009. As a result it will be revised and redrafted after June 2009. Teachers are advised to always ensure they are working from the most recent documentation.*

This should be a straightforward, though challenging assessment component. The following notes are designed to ensure that teachers and students are aware of how best to prepare for the presentation and to warn of pitfalls that might affect performance.

1. **THE JOURNAL:** the Journal is a crucial tool in the preparation of this component. The student needs to have a record, in whatever form, of the experience of the course and the work on the Journal, especially if it is focused and involves the rhythms of analysis, synthesis and reflection, will be fundamental to a detailed presentation.
2. **THE STRUCTURE:** the presentation needs structure, it is after all a selection from the whole course and that selection needs to be stringent enough to allow the examiner to see how the student can build the general from the particular, how the student can move from analysis of a specific skill or action through reflection into a wider synthesis where creative relationships between different aspects of the course are explicitly acknowledged. The HL candidate needs also to show how research into aspects of theatre practice or theory have been worked into the material that is being presented and may either be complimented by it or, indeed, contested within it. The factor of time cannot be divorced from decisions about structure and content. The content issue is resolved by careful reference to the rubric of the component and the explicit demands of the assessment criteria, the structure is a matter that is left to the student but the titles of each assessment criterion explain where the emphasis must lie in how the content of the presentation is conveyed. A simple narrative of the course without any attempt to analyze, synthesize, reflect or apply will not get into the higher achievement levels.
3. **THE VISUAL IMAGE:** The visual images can be an effective tool not only for conveying the essence of an idea, concept, or action thus supporting, illustrating or amplifying the presentation, but they can also be effective in structuring the presentation as framing devices or as building blocks. Although there is no explicit reference to the use of visual images in the assessment criteria teachers need to be aware that they may be effective as a source for analysis or synthesis, certainly as a source or stimulus for reflection, or application to practice. A visual image will concentrate information and the discourse of the candidate needs to acknowledge the image in order to release its power in the presentation. They need practice in this and they have to start from the point of recognition that theatre, among many other things, is always visual. Teachers should be careful to ensure that students refer to the required number of visual images in the presentation.

4. **PRESENTATION:** The presentation should if possible be animated and vibrant. Again there is no explicit reference to this in the criteria but an audience of peers as well as the teacher will encourage the student to see the presentation in performance terms and can also make the act of communication central to the process. A student needs to aim for clarity and coherence and the implicit demand on those values an audience will make is one more useful way of ensuring that the student is continually aware of this as his/her fundamental responsibility. Passion and conviction are qualities we have a right to expect from students and so our teaching needs to encourage the development of the convictions about theatre that once passionately held may be passionately communicated.

5. **THE CORE SYLLABUS:** The student needs to select areas from the course that not only reflect an experience but that reflect learning experiences, the core program will have involved the student in encounters with different ways of making theatre, with theatre from other cultures and with different approaches to theatre performance. Within that body of work the individual student will be developing convictions, making choices, exploring, experimenting, contesting, relating and acknowledging. The flavor of this process is caught by the obligations to analyze, synthesize, reflect and apply in relation to theatrical practices (one non-text based) from other cultures, a range of diverse performances, theory and the essential elements of production and performance. The selection of the content or the presentation is a crucial factor in the success of this process.

6. **GENERAL OR SPECIFIC:** Given the range of the course and the size of the content it is always a danger for the student that he/she be general in the approach to the presentation of the material. This pitfall must be avoided; the teacher needs to insist on specific detail as the basis for any general statement or conviction expressed by the student. The act of critical reflection is not arbitrary, it is considered, reflective, it is not simply a response to something, on the contrary, it is a reflection on something. The act of reflection is analytical not anecdotal and the purpose of it is to build arguments not value judgments. It is of no concern to the examiner if the student “likes” something but it is of concern to the examiner if a student can register an understanding of something through placing it in its own and a wider context. The student needs to work for the general statement or conviction through an analytical process which achieves wider understanding of theatre through an act of synthesis. Knowing about lighting is the first specific detail leading to an appreciation of theatre production by relating lighting to other aspects like color, to space, to movement and to costume.

7. **THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER:** The teacher is fundamental to this component while explicitly recognizing that in the preparation of it the student will work independently. Through the course the teacher will raise awareness of the skills of analysis, synthesis, reflection and application with the student. These skills are fundamental to understanding Theatre and will be reinforced through the experience of the core syllabus, they are also reinforced in many other areas of the diploma program. We have identified the Journal as the crucial tool in this process and noted that selection from it will form the basis of the content of the presentation. We have also noted the importance of structure in the presentation and the demands made by time and the inclusion of the visual images to any decisions about that structure. We have emphasized that the style of presentation is important and the teacher needs to facilitate this by ensuring an audience of peers and be always vigilant through the recording procedure that the candidate is operating in conditions that are most conducive for his presentation. If the student falters or panics the teacher can intervene to support the student but interventions are not encouraged in the normal course of events.

N.B. This is a recorded presentation. No time should be given to the listeners and/or teacher asking questions. Should this happen the examiner will stop listening when the actual presentation stops (i.e. when the questions begin) and judge the length of the presentation up to that point which means it will most likely no longer meet the time limit. Q&A will NOT be counted either in time or in terms of what is said. It is NOT a part of the task.