GCSE

Drama

8261/C
Report on the Examination

Guidance on devising

The choice of stimulus material is central to the success in deciding a theme and devising the content of the dramatic presentation and it was interesting to note the various ways in which the stimulus material had been presented to students. Most centres produced interesting pieces of work that showed students' knowledge and understanding of other theatre makers and took them through a process of exploration. Many teachers chose to introduce a range of stimuli over two or three lessons, some had created packs of material on a theme and others set up workshops or research projects in order to investigate a particular topic. One innovative approach was to take students to the Tate Gallery where, with permission, they took photographs and recorded conversations which were then used in a verbatim piece. Another successful piece had a main stimulus to create impact, supported by several linked stimuli to allow exploration of variations on the theme. An example of this is illustrated by a group using the dangers of modern internet technology as a starting point. The initial impact was made by a striking photograph of a young person chained to a laptop; this was then supported by themes from 'Black Mirror' the TV series exploring blackmail by technology, news stories connected with social media, abduction, abuse and social conditions and excerpts from 'Room' by Emma Derbyshire on the infamous Fritzel case. These stimuli led to a compelling, if dark, look at the complexities of the human condition.

Weaker responses tended to occur where students had not had the opportunity to develop their ideas from a range of stimuli but had been presented with, for example, a title or a theme such as 'loneliness' or simply asked to come up with their own ideas. Some teachers had narrowed the stimuli significantly, or students reported that their teacher had dictated the topic of the piece (e.g. 'our teacher told us we were making a piece about stereotypes'). This inevitably limited the quality and scope of the responses, as students were unable to develop the necessary depth in Section 1 of the devising log. More mature work was shown when students stepped outside their own experience. When they relied on teenage angst the work was often very thin especially in terms of language and demonstration of skills.

Trends in the themes chosen for either stimulus material or the final devised performance:
- Social media
- Mental Health
- War
- Seven Deadly Sins
- Children's stories
- Street art/graffiti
- Quotations
- Photographs
- 1984
- Song lyrics
- Collections of images and/or props
- Bullying
- Homelessness
- Domestic Abuse
- Mental Health issues
- Zombies
- Suffragettes
- Refugees
- Themes such as Trapped and Escape.
- Songs, poems

- Historical/social events were popular such as WW2/Holocaust, School shootings, terrorism acts.

Moderators noted that they had seen a wide range of performance styles and genres with the most popular being physical theatre, documentary theatre and naturalism. Many pieces were influenced by practitioners such as Brecht, Stanislavski, Artaud, Kneehigh and Frantic Assembly. The most successful work which was influenced by a practitioner demonstrated an excellent understanding of their practices and philosophy and this was sustained throughout the piece. Weaker work lacked a clear understanding and often combined the ideas of two or more practitioners. Many pieces introduced a chair duet into the performance which did not always make sense because it either did not arise naturally out of the theme or did not enhance a moment in the plot. Much of the Artaud inspired work was disappointing because of the graphic nature of the chosen theme that too often resulted in a self-indulgent performance. Students who demonstrated a good understanding of Artaud's work were able to go beyond merely screaming and grunting at the audience and produced work that was visually stunning. Please note that although AQA recommend that students choose one or more genres or performance styles for their devised piece it is not a mandatory requirement.

There were some centres that made errors with group sizes and the performance time duration, all of which is made very clear in the specification; if in doubt please consult your centre's NEA advisor who will be able to answer any questions relating to Components 2 and 3. Please note that the specification advises that performances failing to meet the minimum performance times will be subject to a mark of zero and pieces that are too long are likely to self-penalise. Students should be made aware of the timings and encouraged to work within them. It was disappointing to note that although monologues are not permitted for this component a few centres did enter students performing monologues either on their own or under the guise of group work where there was no interaction at all between the performers.

Specialisms
Please refer to the specification for guidance on theatrical skills. It is always helpful if students have a clear idea of what the expectation is in order to achieve the best outcome of their chosen specialism in the final devised performance.

Performer
There were many outstanding acting performances which demonstrated an extensive range of skills, thorough preparation and development and an excellent understanding of the needs of the piece. Additionally these students achieved a highly successful realisation of their individual artistic intention, a well-developed sense of audience and total commitment to their partner/group. Where students had worked as an ensemble there was considerable evidence of collaboration and trust between the performers. Some very strong physical theatre work displayed a confident understanding of relationships and demonstrated a wide range of performance skills. Moderators noted that when movement sequences had been carefully choreographed students were able to perform with confidence and sensitivity. This was also observed in some very well-rehearsed and convincing fight sequences.

It was interesting to note that the more polished performances tended, where applicable, to use design elements to support the piece. Many moderators reported their disappointment that some work appeared rushed and unfinished with students in the same piece performing in their school uniform whilst others had a semblance of costume. The problem of whether to costume or not was solved by those who allowed their students to perform either in their drama blacks or their own casual clothes. Although it is not necessary to use props in the devised performance it was interesting to note how well performers handled these and used them to enhance both the piece

and the characterisation. When props were mimed it was noted that the most polished performances demonstrated excellent skills in terms of establishing a prop such as pulling an imagined rope tightly round a character with the rope growing smaller and the performer using their physicality to show how they were being squeezed. Less successful mimes resulted in mimed props such as cups, glasses and plates simply disappearing; most driving mimes were equally disappointing. The most successful work dealt efficiently and creatively with transitions between scenes while the weakest relied on short scenes punctuated by blackouts which were sometimes longer than the scenes themselves.

Design

Students who chose a design specialism tended to fall into three groups, as evidenced by their devising logs, and were either whole hearted enthusiasts with prior knowledge and experience of the demands of their chosen specialism, keen to learn first timers, or students who had been directed towards design because they were reluctant performers. In the first and second instance it was clear from reading the logs that the students had been full members of the group and were fully engaged with the creation of the devised performance. These students demonstrated an extensive range of skills with highly inventive designs that made an outstanding contribution to the performance. It was apparent, again from the devising logs, that much less successful designs showed a lack of skill on the part of the student and a lack of understanding of the requirements of the specification and the expected range of skills; there was also a sense of the student working in isolation with little or no reference to the group.

Lighting designer

This was a popular specialism and moderators reported seeing many that made a most positive contribution to the devised performance. The most successful lighting designs tended to be those for group performances lasting between 10 and 20 minutes because these afforded the designer the opportunity for greater creativity. It was evident from the devising logs that the most effective designers had worked closely with the group and understood how to establish a location, time of day and enhance the mood or atmosphere of the piece. The cue sheets and notes were most informative and reflected an excellent understanding of many or all of the theatrical skills outlined in the specification as well as identifying the equipment used. Effective use was made of special effects such as shadows, flashes, UV and gobos.

Less successful designers offered limited designs and poor notes; cue sheets were either sketchy or non-existent and there was little evidence of collaboration with their group. Students who worked with just two performers tended to rely on a blackout followed by a general wash set on one level of intensity and ending in a blackout. Overly long blackouts were an issue as was poor crossfading and snapping off cues. Rubric infringements occurred when candidates had written in their devising logs about designing for more than one devised piece and had been marked by their teachers in the final performances on all of these. It is important to remember for both the devising log and the demonstration of the selected skill that **only one design for one group** will be assessed.

Sound designer

As before the most successful designs tended to be for devised pieces which lasted between 10 and 20 minutes because students were able to create work which truly enhanced the devised performance. The most thorough exploration of this specialism was demonstrated by those logs that showed a thorough understanding of the technicalities associated with live, recorded and directional sound effects and enabled the students to select appropriate methods to support the action of the performance. One particular piece set in a forest at different times in a day used sound to help move the action from a calm dawn with bird song to a warm and soporific noon with bees humming to a swiftly worsening storm. Another piece set in a classroom went beyond the usual ticking clock to mark the passage of time and underpinned the frustration of the students in

detention with the sound of chalk scraping down a blackboard, scratching of pens, sharpening of pencils and the sound of students outside the room as they left the building.

Most sound plots included, mainly, appropriate intro and outro music but for some students this was all they had achieved and although this may have been entirely appropriate to the piece, it did not give sufficient scope to award higher marks for inventiveness and range of skills. There was a sense in some performances and logs that the actors worked in isolation and the sound candidate was doing the sound for the actors' piece afterwards rather than being an integral part of the process. Another trend that had mixed success was the underscoring of dialogue in many instances the level of sound did not enable the dialogue to be heard over the top of it. A lack of opportunity within the piece to create a comprehensive design often resulted in the fading in and out of an existing song, piece of music or a repetitive sound such as the beat of a heart.

Set designer
This was not a popular specialism and the range of designs seen was sometimes disappointing because they did not contribute positively to the overall effect of the performance. The most successful designs clearly communicated meaning for an audience and fully supported the action in the performance space. One set which depicted the mental instability of a character provided the actor with inventive spaces where they could hide from the people they found threatening. The action was set in a bedroom with a wardrobe, a balcony, door to an en-suite bathroom, cupboard, blanket box and a book case. Another successful design used ladders to create different spaces; some were upright and others lay on their side and three were flat on the ground to create the sense of a railway track. Several designers used projected images in their design to establish a location. Other successful designs made excellent use of appropriate set dressings which helped to create location and period and provided opportunities for stage business; a fence made by one student was absolutely integral to the piece.

The less successful designs were very simple and tended to only use chairs to create a set; this often resulted in noisy set changes with chairs being dragged across the space to be placed in a different configuration. Little attempt was made to be creative and it was incongruous to see a performer in a period costume sitting on a plastic chair placed behind a very modern coffee table. The devising logs for less successful students often lacked evidence of research and collaboration and would certainly have benefitted from the inclusion of sketches and ground-plans to show both the development of their ideas and an understanding of the needs of the piece.

Costume designer
There was evidence of some misconception about the demands of this specialism with many students focussing on make-up rather than costume design. Several designs were based solely on the creation of scars, bruises and cuts with no reference at all to clothing. The specification does state that costume designs may include hair and make-up as well as clothing but students must be made aware that the costume must be something a performer will actually wear. It was a pity that a few designers simply used the school uniform or PE kit as their design. Difficulties also arose for moderators when students had designed for more than one performer, this was not a particular problem in the devising log, but students must identify the one costume that is to be marked in performance (*see notes on filming the final devised performance).* Often the devising log focussed more on the devising of the piece as a whole rather than the justification of the student's own design choices. Moderators commented on their confusion when they came across such work because the specialism was generally only identified on the statement of dramatic intention.

The most effective designs demonstrated an excellent understanding of how the costume could support the piece and the performer. Such students were able to identify the need, for example, to consider the performer's movement, the role that colour and texture played in the creation of a costume and the hair, make-up and accessories which would complete the design. A design for an

ensemble piece which used physical theatre took into consideration that the performers would need to have some uniformity but would also need a costume that allowed for some individuality as well as freedom of movement. The student's solution was to purchase cheap white decorator's dungarees which she then dyed six different colours. The three boys wore black trainers and black tee shirts and the three girls white tee shirts and white trainers. The designer chose one of the girls' costumes to be moderated; this was a yellow dungaree and the hair was tied in bunches with matching yellow ribbons. Make-up had also been part of the design and was red lipstick, rosy cheeks, light blue eye-shadow and a light brushing of mascara; all of which depicted a young and carefree character. Another designer made good use of his centre's costume cupboard and found items which he could adapt for his 'Mad Scientist' design. He had noted in his log that he had no budget but that he aspired to create the best costume ever. There was excellent evidence of research with annotated pictures, swatches of fabric, thoughtful observations of the devising process and consultation with the actor he was designing for.

Puppet designer
This was a rare choice for students and those that did opt for this specialism had rather mixed results. Moderators had seen interesting designs and research in the devising logs for some students but the final design had not been realised which meant zero marks were awarded for performance. Another very simple design of a sock puppet could not be seen clearly in the performance recording because it was used in a dream sequence in very low intensity light. Moderators also observed that in some performances the puppet was not utilised extensively enough to allow for sufficient exposure needed to ensure the highest levels of achievement. More careful collaboration with the group would be helpful in order to fully integrate the puppet into the work.

As with the other design skills the most effective designs were those that had been researched thoroughly and were used to good effect in the performance. The most notable areas of research came from students who had been influenced by Shadow Puppetry, Bunraku, War Horse, Kneehigh and Found Puppetry. From their research each student had produced an impressive puppet with careful consideration of the materials and processes associated with its construction. The presentation of the log, with use of images and annotations, allowed the process of creation and refinement to be well documented. One Found puppet was created using kitchen implements such as a colander, sieve, washing up sponges and a mop head; it was a dog like creature which frightened naughty children. Sadly, as with other inspired creations it was not used effectively in the performance. The most successful puppet seen by a moderator was a dragon made in the style of a Handspring Puppets, not only was the devising log clear and informative but the puppet was also employed consistently throughout the performance.

The Statement of dramatic intentions
Some teachers were concerned that the dramatic intention for a student had to be exactly the same as that identified in Section 1 of the devising log. It does not matter if this is different to the one identified in section 1 of the devising log because the intention may evolve as the piece takes shape during the devising process and is therefore likely to be a more coherent and developed aim. The statement is there to provide a context for the teacher and moderator and is simply a justification of the student's theatrical choices. Brevity is preferred to overlong statements which often retell the plot of the piece. Designers may also attach additional material such as cue sheets, photographs and ground-plans to the Statement of Dramatic Intention; these are not included in the word count for the devising log.

Performance notes
The presentation and format of the performance notes is vital to the smooth running of the moderation process in that they ensure that each student and their chosen specialism is clearly

identified for the moderator. The best examples conformed completely to the requirements of the specification and were presented as follows:

- Clear identification of the performance group
- Title of the piece
- A recent colour photograph of the student; many performers were photographed in the costume they were wearing in the performance; costume designers were photographed standing next to the performer wearing the costume that had been designed, puppet designers were either holding their puppet or were standing next to the performer who manipulated the puppet on stage and set designers tended to be photographed standing in or by the set they had designed.
- Student's name and candidate number
- Student's chosen specialism

Recording Performances

Moderators reported many mishaps in the recording of the final devised performance. Common problems were:

- Centres failing to ensure performance spaces were not interrupted by extraneous noise both inside and outside of the performance area.
- Many centres did not identify the students at the start of each recording.
- The encrypted disk/USB had on occasion not been sent with a password making access to the material impossible and meant that moderation time was wasted whilst moderators chased these up.
- DVDs were most useful when split into navigable chapters, again clearly labelled.
- Positioning of the camera not allowing an effective view of the performers.
- Footage which was taken from a distance and/or with a poor-quality camera inevitably made the subtleties of the performers' acting and design skills difficult to see.
- People panning and zooming sometimes meant that it was difficult to watch. Please note that assessed performances must be recorded with a single camera from an audience perspective from start to finish and be unedited.
- Some camera angles were fixed in a side position where all the performers could not be seen throughout the performance.
- There were instances of where either a teacher or a member of the audience obstructed the filming by sitting directly in front of the camera.
- The most common fault was when actors failed to move into the light. More thought needs to be given to the use of lighting with performers being directed to be aware of the lights
- The lighting of the performance space was too dim which made it difficult to see the action on stage.
- Overly harsh lighting was an issue in some performances with too bright a wash which blurred the faces of the performers.
- Sound presented many problems with several centres presenting material with no sound whatsoever.
- Some of the sound within recordings was poor and only audible with enhanced volume control via headphones or with external speakers.
- Underscoring of action did not always enhance the piece because it was either too loud or not appropriate.
- Noisy and often overlong scene changes also failed to enhance several performances as did those where the filming finished abruptly or where the camera had only been live well after the performance had started.

Advice for recording the final devised performance
- Prior to recording future devised performances, it is recommended that centres test the equipment first and also run a sound and lighting check.
- Check the duration of the performance/s to ensure that minimum and maximum performance times are adhered to. A dress and technical rehearsal is strongly advised to ensure the smooth running of the final performance.
- Candidates must be identified by name and candidate number at the start of the performance. *Please refer to AQA guidance which states that students should hold a card/piece of paper with their candidate number to ensure clear identification is facilitated; it is also helpful, if students are wearing drama blacks or masks, to ensure that there is a clear means of identification during the performance such as a coloured ribbbon or a fabric swatch pinned to their clothing.*
- Do allow the camera to linger on the set, puppet or costume design students so that it is absolutely clear to the moderator who and what they are moderating.
- It is helpful when work is clearly labelled on a USB, with the title, group number or candidate names.
- DVDs are most useful when split into navigable chapters, again clearly labelled, rather than on one continuous run.
- Moderators were grateful to those centres that included separate files for individual group performances because this is a much more efficient way to access and identify individual students.
- It would be a good idea to tape out the performance space covered by the camera before recording so that performers do not wander out of shot.
- Try not to let the sound drown out the words being spoken.
- Avoid lighting that prevents performers from being seen clearly.

Marking the performance
Initial feedback from teachers and moderators is most positive about the 'user friendly' marking criteria and on the whole there was a lot of agreement over the marks that had been awarded.

Level of theatrical skill – This mark relates to the consistency of the student's application of the relevant theatrical skill.
- 1 mark was awarded to students who showed little competency and little consistency in the use of theatrical skill. Examples of this were performers who were rather passive and did not engage with others and designers where weaknesses in the realisation of their designs showed a poor understanding of theatrical skill.
- 2 marks recognised a student's developing competency; very often moderators noted that some candidates faded a little in the performance, missed cues or a mishap affected their design.
- 3 marks were awarded to those students who demonstrated secure and consistent use of theatrical skill but needed a little more finesse in the realisation of their role or design.
- 4 marks were awarded to those students who demonstrated in their performance or design highly developed and sustained use of theatrical skill. These tended to be the actors who really led their audience on a journey and designers who produced work of an outstanding quality.

Range of theatrical skills demonstrated – Please refer to the specification for guidance on the range of skills assessed for each specialism.
- 1 mark awarded represented those students who demonstrated a narrow range of skills, for example, the performer who mumbled or didn't make eye contact, the designer who produced an insubstantial design.

- 2 marks were achieved by those performers who very often took a less demanding acting role or failed to sustain characterisation to a high degree. Designers were generally awarded this mark for efficiency in the demonstration of their skill but lacking detail in aspects of the design.
- 3 marks demonstrated a student's ability to exhibit a high level of theatrical skills in their performance or design.
- 4 marks were achieved by those students who were able to demonstrate an extensive range of skills. An example of this was a performer whose characterisation of an elderly woman was utterly convincing both physically and vocally. Many designers were able to produce outstanding work, particularly in the case of set designers who had realised an exceptionally high level of sophistication in the realisation of their design.

Contribution to the effectiveness of the piece – It was evident in some of the teacher's comments that this mark had occasionally been awarded retrospectively for work undertaken during the devising process and was in these cases very often the mark with which moderators were not in total agreement. This mark **must** be awarded for the actual contribution made during the final devised performance.

- 1 mark was awarded for those who were present as performers but contributed little and designers who had made little attempt to produce an effective design.
- 2 marks generally went to those who as performers supported the group but, in performance, were followers rather than leaders. Designers who made some meaningful contribution, such as a basic costume, set, lighting, sound or puppet were also able to achieve this mark.
- 3 marks went to those students who made a considerable and effective contribution largely through their support for others and the piece as a performer or designer.
- 4 marks were achieved by those who demonstrated an outstanding contribution to the effectiveness of the piece. These were the students who as performers tended to take control of the leadership of the piece and drove the action along and designers who were able to ensure their design not only supported the piece but also enhanced its effectiveness.

Inventiveness of individual's work – marks were lost here because perfectly competent work lacked a certain edge or was rather pedestrian.

- 1 mark was awarded for work as described above.
- 2 marks validated work that was able to rise above the merely pedestrian but lacked sustained inventiveness.
- 3 marks were achieved by those students whose work exhibited many inventive qualities or moments during the final devised performance.
- 4 marks were achieved by those students whose work was highly inventive and sustained throughout the performance.

Success in realising individual artistic intention – Moderators found that marks for this indicator were not always awarded appropriately because some teachers discounted the statement of dramatic intention and tended to award this mark in line with others already achieved by students. Marks were occasionally awarded even though the statement had not been completed.

- 1 mark, as stated, little success in realising individual artistic intention. This often occurred when a student had dried or corpsed and when the design just didn't meet the ambition of the designer.
- 2 marks for some success in realising individual artistic intention usually reflected the work of a student, be it a designer or a performer, who started off confidently but could not sustain their artistic intention.

- 3 marks were awarded to students who had produced a secure realisation of their intention, but needed to go a little further to move into Mark Band 4.
- 4 marks were achieved by many students because they had been highly successful in the realisation of their artistic intention. These were the students who had high expectations and aims and were able to set themselves an achievable target to ensure success.

The Devising Log
Formats
The most popular format for the devising log was entirely written and most conformed to the upper limit of 2,500 words. Many designers took advantage of the written accompanied by annotated photographs and/or sketches/drawings and/or cue sheets. Some did exceed the 15 pages but most used a portfolio style book and added other elements such as a gel colour wheel, swatches of fabric, mood boards and cuttings from newspapers and magazines. *Please be aware that it is only the annotations and student's notes which go towards the overall word count and not headings or the content of an article. Be aware also that JCQ regulations do not permit the use of writing frames or sentence starters.* It is helpful to remind students that is the content that is being marked and not the adornments and embellishments; it was occasionally difficult to actually get to the heart of some of this material because moderators had , for example, to work their way through opening small packages tied with ribbon which had been glued to the page, unrolling scrolls and even unlacing an attachment only to find it contained something that had to be unbuttoned which in turn had something that had to be unzipped. This format is not suitable for moderation.

Written accompanied by audio/visual recording/s and entirely audio/visual/audio-visual recording(s) were, on the whole, rather disappointing because most students simply read from prepared notes. It was noted that in some instances teachers were either interviewing the student or asking direct questions. *JCQ do not allow teacher intervention in any recorded format.* The most expressive and informative delivery came from students who used a power-point presentation. This was particularly successful for design students who were able to guide the observer through each section of the log using their own notes to prompt themselves.

It was pleasing to note that the majority of centres had taken great care in the presentation of the devising logs and moderators certainly appreciated those that were attached to the Component 2 record forms. Many logs were word processed and clearly annotated either using track changes or teacher notes; these were far more helpful to the moderator than an abundance of ticks which tended to show only that the work had been read.

The Devising log sections
The specification clearly states that the log must be in 3 separate sections but sadly this was not always the case and resulted in moderators having to work on a 'best fit' basis. Another problem for moderators occurred when centres had mixed elements of criteria for all three sections, for example analysis and evaluation in section 2, which could not be credited. A smaller number of centres had given incorrect titles to the different sections which caused confusion such as 'Section 2a/2b', 'Section 4', 'Analysis and collaboration', 'Evaluation of development', 'My Working Notebook' etc. It is also helpful if students are encouraged to note word/timing counts at the end of each section.

Section 1: Response to a stimulus
The most informative responses came from students who succinctly identified the stimuli presented by the teacher, outlined their initial response and then focused on the chosen stimulus. Ideas, themes and settings were considered and very often a collaborative approach to research evolved with each member of the group taking on a specific task. The research findings and how these were going to inform the devising process were made very clear and it was interesting to see how

these evolved in section 2 of the log. Their own dramatic aims and intentions and those of the group revealed a pleasing awareness of audience as well as style and genre.

Students who spent a vast amount of time detailing what each stimulus was and likely scenarios for their performance tended to ignore the other elements required and therefore failed to respond fully to the demands of this section of the log. Other students failed to explore the potential of stimuli in any detail they just got straight into outlining the plot of their piece Research was often completely ignored or fell into a rather general statement about having done an internet search. Many students gave an overlong biographical description of the work of a chosen practitioner which was not necessary. Weaker logs lacked clear group and individual dramatic intentions. Less considered aims and intentions were generally along the lines of; "Our group want to do well" and "I want to be a funny character".

The mark scheme is looking for evidence of skills in creating and developing ideas to communicate meaning, which means that ideas need to be linked back to the chosen stimulus and research findings in order for the explanation to achieve the intention of this section of the devising log.

Section 2: Development and collaboration
This was very often the longest section of the log and there was evidence of really purposeful exploration of ideas and techniques during the devising process. A useful strategy was employed by some students to show how their piece had been refined and developed. To do this they chose key rehearsals and detailed how they as an individual had moved the piece forward from their initial ideas to the final polished performance or design realisation. It was interesting to note the strategies and rehearsal techniques employed in the development of their individual skill and that of the group. When these were used there was a very clear outcome and application which impacted the piece. Feedback was an important aspect of the devising process and it was fascinating to read where this was coming from. Examples were, peer assessment, teacher feedback, self-review, response to filmed segments, critique of model boxes and designs, student as director, previews and questionnaires. Students then wrote about how they had used this in order to refine their own skills and move the piece forward. Reflections on the final performance were focussed entirely on how they used their refined skills in the final piece.

Less informative logs outlined how the group had sat down and written a script without any reference to the practical development of the piece. Designers made no mention of a collaborative approach to the development of their design and were clearly working in complete isolation which meant that their design would be imposed on the group rather than being specific to the needs of the piece. There were several instances of students either writing about what they might have done rather than what they actually did or what they did but not how this had been developed. Few references were made to feedback and how it was acted upon and there was a distinct lack of awareness of how theatrical skills were refined and developed. Students who had used some rehearsal strategies and techniques such as hot seating and conscience alley too often failed to report a specific outcome and application which they then applied to the piece. Reference to the final piece was often lacking and meant that there was a lack of awareness of their personal development and that of the group.

In order to achieve the best marks students, need to ensure that they are painting a word picture of how they are creating and developing their ideas and their skills to communicate meaning through their chosen specialism. Moderators found it interesting to read about how problems were solved and how students' understanding of the devising process evolved and enhanced their creativity.

Section 3: Analysis and evaluation
This tended to be the shortest section of the log with a huge variation in how it was interpreted. Some centres analysed and evaluated the final performance whilst others analysed and evaluated

the process and ignored the final performance. The best logs were reflective and critical and supported the analysis and evaluation with close reference to both the devising process and the final devised performance. There was a real honesty and confidence in many of the reflections made of how far they had developed their theatrical skills and there was always a real sense of achievement experienced by the students. It was perhaps an easier task for the designers to assess the benefits they had brought to the group and the impact they had made as individuals because they had more tangible evidence on which to pin their observations. It was evident that many performers found this a difficult concept, perhaps because they had worked as an ensemble and couldn't quite see the value of their own contribution.

Moderators noted that less successful candidates neglected to write anything at all for this section. Another observation was that weaker responses were brief and this raised the question of whether students had run out of time to complete it or didn't understand how to. Others wrote broadly about elements of the process undertaken rather than focusing on individual contribution. Many students did not appraise areas for further development in their devising work, which is a requirement in this section.

In order to achieve success in this section of the log student responses need to demonstrate the ability to be critical and insightful about their contribution to the devising process and the final performance, their development and refinement of skills and their impact on the piece. Points made should be supported by relevant exemplification.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator