Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2013

GCE English Language and Literature
(6EL02/01)
Creating Texts

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Outline of unit

Students are required to produce two pieces of creative coursework, accompanied by a concise commentary for each. The main aspects students need to consider for their creative work are audience and theme. One piece is intended for a reading audience, the other a listening audience and both must be linked by a theme taken from a list provided in the syllabus. The commentary, which should be 500 words only, must be self-analytical; explaining how work has been deliberately and consciously crafted and how a central, stimulus text has influenced the decisions made by students. Additionally, the commentary should describe the literary and linguistic make- up of the creative work, with an emphasis on an equal balance between these two key focuses.

Topic areas:
- Entrapment
- Dystopia
- Women's Lives
- Gothic and Supernatural
- Journeys and Pilgrimages

Overview

The Gothic genre was by far the most dominant theme represented, followed by Dystopias, Entrapment and a minority, but often technically and creatively outstanding, Journeys and Pilgrimages. There were very few centres choosing Women's Lives. The standard of work continues to improve as the syllabus becomes embedded within centres. The overwhelming majority of centres clearly try to give students as much freedom as possible regarding creative work, which is in line with the spirit of the specification. This is apparent when students from one centre reflect a variety of approaches for each intended audience piece. This is pleasing to see, however, centres must ensure a rigorous and effective process is in place which guides students to select a task which adheres to the requirements of the specification. In a minority, but significant number of centres, task setting is proving problematic. In some cases tasks set are too similar, thus limiting the opportunities available for students to fully show off their skills set. In others, the intended audience is not totally apparent. This is particularly true of listening audience work. Sensible practice would be to advise students to select a task which has a listening audience as its primary focus. So, rather than students writing a play; advise a radio play. Rather than a film script; advise a script intended to be performed orally and so on. Particularly able students might prove an exception here, although only if they are able to fully explain which aspects of their work are aimed at, or allow, for a listening audience specifically.

Creative work

It is vital that students understand that they are to use their background research and wider reading closely in their own creative responses. In this way the stimulus text(s) should directly inspire students and serve as exemplar material for them to mimic and experiment with in their own work. The weakness most apparent was when centres allowed students to link work too loosely to a central theme or when reference was made to a film as the stimulus

text. The stimulus text must be considered to be of significant literary worth by the teacher. It is also very clear when students have read widely around the theme selected and when they have not. Students should be given the opportunity to read across the genres of drama, prose, and poetry. This is a requirement of the specification.

Reading Audience

For the purpose of this report, students have who have written well, but not been awarded top marks have been chosen as exemplars. It is hoped that this level of response will be more useful to centres than work which might only represent a small fraction of the highest achieving students.

The following Reading Audience extracts are taken from the same creative piece. Following each are noted areas of success, in the form of bullet points.

Exemplar 1

(Here, we can see an effective opening to a story extract. It soon becomes apparent that the theme is Dystopia and the stimulus text is 'A Handmaids Tale')

> *'The note had come through the ventilation-K had told J that it was possible: after all he was one of the men who had built the system. He had heard the faint scratch of the starched paper as it landed in the bend pipe that ran parallel to K's bed, and where he had been taking his prescribed nap. Surreptitiously he rolled onto his side, and both blocked the view of what he was about to do whilst glancing around to see that it is safe. His capsule that hung from the side of the complex's main vertical tunnel was not being watched, its glass walls, though dangerous when trying to conceal something, had offered K a very good warning of when one of the cousins were on their way.'*

Points of interest here include:
- Immediately interesting and effective devices employed; such as character names.
- Clearly links to dystopian theme and wider reading.
- Theme quickly apparent through plot and considered vocabulary.
- Tension established very quickly.
- Plot development effectively creates interest.

Exemplar 2

(Taken from the middle section of the story extract)

> *'Just as the cousins were masculine, the mothers were the most glowing examples of the feminine, the God Mother being the most beautiful. K could understand as he observed her startling blue eyes and hair the colour of a rapeseed field in full bloom; how men could be beguiled by the beauty of this woman who ruled them all...'*

Points of interest here include:
- Deliberate language devices, such as careful word choice, simile, alliteration, simile.
- Interesting use of religious title.
- Considered punctuation.

Exemplar 3

(Taken from near the end of the story extract)

'And yet, as K trembled with pain before the God Mother, he could only see little girls clutching the skirts of the Mothers behind her. Boys were undesirable, alphabetised and sent to do their duty to their God Mother-work. '

Points of interest here include:
- Atwood influence evident; including strong thematic signals, nameless and titled characters, oppressive social order.

Accompanying Commentary

Exemplar 1 – opening

Atwood's 'A Handmaids Tale' served as inspiration for my dystopian short story, with Fahrenheit 415 a secondary focus. Bradbury uses prolepsis as anticipation of events through his declarative and interrogative, 'it doesn't like me,' said Montag, 'What the hound?'- This hints that the hound will be important in some way, otherwise it would not be mentioned.

Points of interest here include:
- Clear reference to stimulus text and other influencing text.
- Explanation of both literary and language devices.
- Self- referencing and quotation used effectively.

Exemplar 2

Atwood uses biblical imagery, 'Angels' 'Guardians'. However, she makes it clear that the people do not view these groups as parallel to their names. Contrarily, using verisimilitude stemming from biblical imagery. I gave my groups ('God Mother') the appearance of being truthful 'ethereal beauty' 'glowing examples of feminine'. Connotations of 'glowing and ethereal' are with angels. Consequently, we can see how the appearance of trust and the idea that religion is pure can be manipulated to cause great harm.

Points of interest here include:
- Clear links to stimulus.
- Developed, specialised vocabulary.
- Effective use of 'we' address.

Listening Audience

In general, listening audience work continued to improve this year. There was a greater variety of task attempted with some quite unique and experimental work offered. One particular response proved problematic at times; the dramatic monologue. Whilst content was often engaging and entertaining, there was often little sense that it had actually been crafted for a listening audience as the specification outlines. This was exemplified in some cases by the commentaries. Students often successfully identified the language and literary techniques they had used, however many did not link these to specific use in the monologues that they had studied. If a student writes a monologue here, they should be advised to select a completely different sort of writing for their Reading Audience piece.

The following Listening Audience extracts are again taken from the one creative response. This student selected to write what they described as 'A Gothic Speech.'

Exemplar 1

'Good morning students. I am Dr Burke; I will be giving you the lecture for this morning. You are all obviously interested, intrigued and even passionate about medicine for you to be here. There is a lot of work and dedication to come. You will be working together like ants...you will be playing different roles, communicating with one another...you must be extremely hard working and mentally strong to survive this kind of life style...'

Points of interest here include:
- Purpose made apparent immediately, through address and formal register.
- Address establishes piece as a speech.
- Language devices deliberately used; power of 3, simile, modal auxiliary verbs.
- Gothic theme introduced.

Exemplar 2

'For many people medicine is a magical thing; it will save lives and protects people from fatal diseases. It is the mystery of medicine which makes it so magical; how it works and how the possibilities are never ending. Medicine is always being developed and new discoveries are found all the time.'

Points of interest here include:
- Interesting links made to Gothic theme.
- Specific use of punctuation.
- Alliteration, assonance.

Accompanying Commentary

Exemplar 1

'I have retained Gothic links to the supernatural such as including a semantic field of magic to describe medicine, showing the mystery of it and the fear of the unknown. `Dracula` influenced me when writing of the symptoms of the patients because I think Stokers` description of Lucy's symptoms are convincing and effective.'

Points of interest here include:
- Establishes thematic link.
- Identifies stimulus text.
- Links content and explanation effectively.

Exemplar 2

'I have used modal auxiliary verbs to express possibility and obligation, 'You must be extremely hard working. The word 'must' show that it is required and compulsory. This also gives the speaker more authority and power. Yet there are also politeness strategies used such as negative face strategies, 'if you look at this patient'. By using 'if you' (the speaker) makes sure that the audience are not feeling threatened or obliged to do something. This then ensures that the speaker is respected.'

Points of interest here include:
- Clear language analysis.
- Attempts technical vocabulary.
- Clear use of self-referencing quotation.
- Points followed by explanation.

Commentary work in general

Commentaries are much improved. Many centres have evidently adopted a 'check list' approach with students to ensure all necessary elements are included. Often, the opening few lines, explain audience, purpose and theme quickly and succinctly. Other aspects such as the stimulus text, context and language/literacy devices then get a separate paragraph.

Self- referencing quotation is now apparent in almost all work.

A fairly common weakness was that students often successfully identified the language techniques they had used, but did not always effectively link these to specific use in their own work. Thus, students were merely feature spotting their own creative responses. This greatly suppresses the mark awarded, which is a particular shame if the device has indeed been used effectively in the first instance.

Moderation

There was plenty of evidence of really good practice by teachers, with internal moderation made apparent (where possible) and annotated comments, linked to the Assessment Objectives, helping to explain where key decisions had been made.

Bibliographies

It is a requirement of the specification to include a bibliography detailing the students' wider reading which quite a number of centres are still not consistently doing. The best examples here are not necessary long (perhaps detailing 10 to 12 texts) but reflect a breadth of reading, to include poetry, prose and drama; as well as both fiction and non-fiction.

Conclusion

As the specification has matured centres have settled into consistently improved assessment practices. The result is that this was the least problematic session to date.

The one Poetry and one Drama text demand has improved this year. There was less evidence of unfocused stimulus text choices, with fewer media sources cited. This remains an area where it is crucial for centres to ensure students waste little time on minor secondary stimulus material. The Linguistic/Literary balance seemed reasonable with few centres neglecting one aspect completely. The range of linguistic terminology could be slightly improved in general although one must remember that at AS level this proves very problematic for most students. It is clearly important to 'drip feed' technical vocabulary ensuring students are given time to really come to grips with each new word. This would normally necessarily involve allowing them to see a word in a variety of working contexts before allowing them the opportunity to experiment with applying the word within their own work. Research suggests that when students teach or instruct other students the depth of learning is enhanced. This seems to work particularly well in this knowledge area and might be worth investigating by centres if they haven't already done so.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx

Ofqual

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

CEA
Rewarding Learning