

**In this bulletin:**

- An open letter from Gabrielle Thurston, Chair of Examinations
- More on new diplomas in 2014.

**OPEN LETTER TO TEACHERS**

This year has been a very busy year for our Speech New Zealand examiners and we have really enjoyed being able to meet your students, be treated to their dedication and enthusiasm and be privileged to examine their work.

**Complaints.** I have reported in other forums that 2013 has seen an increase in complaints lodged with National Office. When you send a complaint to the office it is forwarded to the examiner in question as a matter of natural justice so that he or she can respond to the complaints. National Office then refers the complaint and the reply from the examiner in question to me as Head of Examinations.

Not being in the exam makes it impossible to make some judgements. Most of my judgments are based on Speech New Zealand protocols, processes, procedures and my own personal experience over many years.

Please appreciate our examiners are standardised - but not cloned. We all have memories of our own experiences as young candidates presenting before an examiner and will recall that every examiner had a slightly different approach because of personality differences. Do encourage your own students to be resilient and to not be intimidated by questions from the examiner. It is through questioning and subtle probing that an examiner gets an appreciation of the candidate's level of understanding, depth of knowledge and experience (*No questions – No grades.*)

Examinations prepare the candidate for the real world and interviews and appraisals in the outside world can be quite difficult and bruising.

There are many reasons why an examiner questions a little further –

- The student is interesting and has a lot of information to share.

- The student has not shared their level of experience and understanding and the examiner is trying to find out what they know – not what they do not know.
- An obviously gifted and talented student who might like a challenge.

If an examiner is discussing a topic with a candidate it is quite acceptable and expected that the examiner share their own point of view - within reason. Reassure your students that if an examiner does not entirely agree with them it makes no difference to their mark, it is a general discussion and they like us should be open to other people's ideas as well.

**Examiners are human.** All examiners make the occasional mistake on a report. It is a very busy time, under pressure, working to the clock and the days and expectations are considerable. If you have a minor issue with the report please ensure you forward the report to the Local Secretary as soon as possible. In most cases examiners make these corrections prior to leaving the area.

**Tick boxes.** Please explain to your students that the ticks will not necessarily equate to the overall mark. Ticks relate to various things that may or may not have impact on the final mark. For example, you may have a tick to work on your timing. Your talk may have been excellent apart from being overtime which would not stop you getting a top mark. Remember no one is perfect and even if you get *Honours Plus* you will have skills to work on. You may have a wonderful array of ticks but your dramas may lack reality which may prevent a high mark.

**Protocols.** Do not approach the examiner about your students as this is unprofessional, please direct your queries to the Local Secretary. Examiners do not wish to know or need to know personal details about students - they examine what they see before them on the day. Please appreciate examiners need to maintain a distance at all time when examining. However, our examiners are always ready and willing to meet at an arranged time to answer questions about the syllabus, to give advice about teaching the syllabus and to promote the aims and objectives of Speech New Zealand. New Zealand is a 'small village' and we are all connected as friends and colleagues so discretion is vital for the teacher and the examiner at all times.

My sincere thanks and admiration for all that you do as teachers for our profession.

Gabrielle Thurston  
**Speech New Zealand - Head of Examinations**

## **NEW ASSOCIATE AND ADVANCED ASSOCIATE DIPLOMAS:**

Teachers we have spoken to are really excited at the opportunity now for more students to obtain an Associate Diploma (ASB) or, with the addition of some theory papers, an Advanced Diploma (Adv ASB).

The Associate diploma is available in performance for both Speech and Drama and Public Speaking. The Teaching option is only available as an Advanced Diploma. The Performance option is also available at Advanced level.

If you are planning working on the programme for either the Associate or Advance Associate level in Speech and Drama do refer to our website resource Developing Programmes – under Drama - Miscellaneous.

<http://www.speechnz.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Developing-programmes.pdf>

The 2014 Public Speaking syllabus is online already [www.speechnz.co.nz](http://www.speechnz.co.nz)  
The new Associate and Advanced diplomas are awaiting formatting with the printer and will be online by around 12<sup>th</sup> December.

A booklet with full details of the new diplomas will be in the mail to all teachers, along with the new 2014 Public Speaking syllabus, by 20<sup>th</sup> December so you will be able to study these as you prepare for your teaching year in 2014.

A final Teacher Alert will let you know when these are onway to you.

We trust you are enjoying your end of year 'wind down' time.

Warmest regards to all

*Pam*