



Helping our Nation to communicate

TEACHER ALERT

JULY 2019

This teacher alert comes to you as we gear up for the next exam round. Content is based on queries received from teachers, information from examiners in the field and some updates from our June Board meeting. Where appropriate there are also some teaching tips. Read and enjoy – there is something for all.

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2019 Speech and Drama Syllabus:

Characterisations at all levels. Source of materials:

Speech New Zealand is frequently asked about the source of material for characterisations. This is most relevant for teachers seeking a wide range of material to suit their students.

The following should be helpful:

Up to and including Grade 4 the source of a monologue or a group characterisation is not defined. It is only from Grade 5 that SNZ stipulate that it should come from a play, a book or a novel: from Grade 7 it is only from a play.

In junior grades SNZ is looking to develop the skills of drama. However, in intermediate and senior grades SNZ is encouraging the study of specific forms of literature as well which then staircase through these grades to a more detailed study at diploma levels.

Therefore, from Grades 1 to 4, teachers and their students may use stories, books, plays and film scripts as a source for characterisations. These may be scripted direct from a source or devised or developed from those sources, or indeed, could be original work. A script needs to be provided for the examiner

– noting that in early grades this may include ‘allowance’ for some improvised sections within that script.

From Grade 5 onwards it is important to follow the syllabus prescriptions and in preparing work it is important to be fully aware of the differences and progression of skills required in the Learning Criteria through each of the grades so they are fully met.

Development of skills in presentation of Characterisations:

Throughout our syllabus, the Learning Criteria at each level builds on the skills of the previous level. By Grades 7 and 8 Speech New Zealand is looking for evidence of sound development of skills in characterisation.

Appended with this Teacher Alert is a chart showing the staircasing of skills in characterisation through the grades. This may be used as a useful checklist to ensure that your students’ skills continue to develop at each level.

Grades 3 and 4: Section 2 Suitability of plays.

Speech New Zealand frequently gets asked about the suitability of plays for these levels.

While it is extremely important that teachers work to find material that students can connect with and enjoy, it is also important to bear in mind the need to extend your students and to ensure that the learning criteria for a specific grade can be readily met. Up to and including Grade 3 scripts based around fairy tale or storybook characters often work well. However, by Grade 4 SNZ would be beginning to look for more depth in the script. If a fairy tale script is a modernised version, possibly with a clear message, or an element of satire, or brings in comedic skills, then this would bring in greater depth and challenge.

There are plays based on fairy tale characters, such as *Eating the Wolf* by Sarah Delahunty where sections of the play may work with capable Grade 4 students and some other more complex sections may well work with students up to Grade 8.

Grade 4: Impromptu skills - Interviewing.

These are invaluable life skills for students to develop.

This is an impromptu section and there is no set way that this will be approached within an exam situation. Topics will relate to interests and abilities of the candidates and situations should also be within their experience.

Usually these will be done in pairs, however, to suit the grouping or the time available students may be worked in groups of 3 or 4.

Note that examiners do not act as interviewers or interviewees.

The following is a guideline for teachers in working with interviews:

All participants need to be fully aware of:

- The purpose of the interview
- The ‘audience’ for the interview
- The type of interview
 - The medium – radio, TV, one on one
 - The degree of formality/informality

Interviewer:

- Asks open ended questions
- Listens and asks probing questions to extend the ideas
- Listens with the ‘audience’ in mind – what would they want to know or find interesting
- Listens to replies and shapes the interview

Interviewee:

- Listens, responds to what is asked
- Listens and, if necessary, extends answers beyond yes/no
- Listens and extends ideas
- Listens and offers further information

Some situations that might be used:

Say closed TV (or radio) studio at school;

- A book programme discussing teen novels, or aspects of a class set novel etc
- A pre-election interview with potential school student council members
- An interview programme that explores a forthcoming event/activity around school or the community

One on one interviews might involve, say, a librarian interviewing a potential student library assistant.

It is useful to brainstorm practise situations with your students. Fun can also be had working with, say, storybook characters – a reporter interviewing Mr or Mrs Twit after a tricky situation! Perhaps get observers to check on open or closed questions, ability to extend answers, clarity of ideas expressed, listening skills.

I trust this gives you some ideas to springboard some interesting classes on developing these valuable skills.

Grade 5 Module 2

Impromptu section: Running commentary. The following 5 point plan may useful in developing this exercise:

A quick 5-point format:

A way to start suited to the exercise and the situation

The big picture – the ‘longshot’ that frames the event.

- Where you are and what is happening
- Broad details: the weather, the mood, the atmosphere, the sounds, people in general.

The event: ‘the close- up’

- Details of the people/event
- Colours, who, what are they doing, follow an action.

A climax: ‘the unexpected’

- Imagine a ‘happening’, accident, mishap, sudden change, intrusion into event, finale.
- Where, what, who. Choose words to describe people involved and onlookers

A way to end suited to the exercise and the situation

Grade 7 Module 3 Communication:

Option: Tell a story you have created

In telling 'a story you have created' it does not have to be an entirely original story. The story should be told in candidate's own words and, yes, developed for performance. The story may be either original or 'created/developed' from an existing story.

Option: Thematic Study

Many teachers/students are now using this option. Extracts for prose (or poetry) may come from online sources as well as the more conventional ones.

If you want further information on Thematic study do check the resource section of SNZ website www.speechnz.co.nz under the Drama heading.

LSB Performance and Teaching:

All theory assignments are now at **3,000 word limit** both for Speech and Drama and for Public Speaking syllabuses.

Using the Glossary:

In all syllabuses do please read the glossary.

Many terms used in our syllabuses are defined there.

For example:

Contemporary:

For the purpose of this syllabus **contemporary** refers to a writer, poet or playwright who is still living, OR, a work that was written within the last 20 years.

Sometimes the term is not there – in which case, please send in a query for clarification.

For example:

SNZ recently received a query re the term 'Theatre Form'.

Our response was that for theatre *form* you should read theatre *genre*.

SNZ used the term theatre form as this is used by NZQA to describe what many drama teachers working outside the school system would call genre.

The following references give clear definitions of a range of '*theatre form*':

<http://artsonline.tki.org.nz/content/download/7360/39924/version/1/file/Alltogethernow.doc>

<http://www.theatre crafts.com/pages/home/topics/stage-management/glossary-forms/>

Slam Poetry and Performance Poetry

As in all other genre of poetry this ‘newer’ form, which in some areas is attracting poets and audiences in large numbers, still uses elements of Rhythm, Rhyme, Alliteration, Assonance, Repetition, Punctuation, Antithesis, Emphasis, Onomatopoeia, Imagery etc. Free verse was the medium by which early performance poets like Roger McGough and Adrian Mitchell conveyed their ideas, however today’s performance poets, such as Ben Fagan, use whatever words and patterns of language suit their needs to share ideas.

There are certainly no hard and fast ‘rules’ around what constitutes ‘slam’ or ‘performance’ poetry. It draws on a range of traditions, sometimes Hip Hop or Beat, sometimes free verse, sometimes these poems pop up within a speech when the speaker has very strong feelings that can most effectively be conveyed in verse [think Shakespeare’s use of verse to convey heightened ideas]: always in performance they are conveying the poet’s ideas.

For Speech New Zealand Slam poetry or Performance poetry is perfectly acceptable within our exams.

A definition given by Poetry Slam Inc:

‘The mission of Poetry Slam is to promote the creation and performance of poetry that engages communities and provides a platform for voices to be heard beyond social, cultural, political and economic barriers.’

The poems presented in a Poetry Slam are original works performed by the writers.

Students may present **published** works by these poets within examinations.

In performance, the key aspect is that these poems need to connect with their audience. They are written to convey a message or just an idea.

To help you explore these works for yourself and for your students the following website are some that will be helpful.

This from Marc Smith on TedX – founder of the movement.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOpsS9H5dgQ>

Slam poetry of the streets OmarMusa Ted Ex Sydney

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZfJsOGOxnw>

Grand slam Champion Harry Baker TedX Exeter

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxGWGohIXiw>

Speech New Zealand thoroughly recommends an anthology by New Zealander, Ben Fagan, *Some Traveller*. Published by Bx3 an imprint of Burning Eye Books, UK 2017.

Public Speaking and Communication syllabus:

This syllabus is currently under revision for publication in 2020.

Meantime some clarification on timing of an impromptu exercise:

ASB Performance and teaching: Module 3 Section 2 Framing and speaking to a motion.

This section states 2 minutes preparation time and a limit of 5 minutes. It is not intended that speakers will speak for 5 minutes. This should be the total time of the exercise. This will be clarified in the new syllabus. Candidates will not be penalised if they go over time.

LSB Performance and Teaching:

All theory assignments are now set at **3,000 word limit** both for Public Speaking and for Speech and Drama syllabuses.

Professional Speaking syllabus:

To bring this syllabus into line with other syllabuses, all levels will now include a **Pass with Merit**, in addition to Pass or Pass with Distinction.

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LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS and the fine art of asking SMART QUESTIONS.

A booklet written by MARK TREZONA

A toolkit of practical approaches and strategies for strengthening your capacity for making strong, authentic, trusting, engaging and resilient relationships across a diverse range of contexts.

This valuable and comprehensive 67 page booklet contains sections on Leadership Skills and Capabilities: Expert Inquiry Skills: Expert Advocacy Skills. Invaluable for all teachers and also for senior students.

Mark has kindly made this available to Speech New Zealand teachers. All proceeds will go to Speech New Zealand. It is available for \$20 from Speech New Zealand and will be forwarded by email.

Contact info@speechnz.co.nz

Do contact Speech New Zealand should you have any further syllabus queries. Again, please do not send questions direct to Board members, as they may be unavailable. The office staff will ensure queries go to the appropriate person.

Enjoy your teaching for the rest of the year.

Pam Logan
Examinations Division