



## Understanding Verbatim Theatre: Information for Teachers

### Advice for using this resource with Pearson/Edexcel

During the piloting process it was noted that the Understanding Verbatim Theatre resource fits the Pearson / Edexcel Advanced GCE in Drama and Theatre (9DR0), Component 1: Devising criteria. The notes below, kindly given by Ed Boulter-Comer, show how this works.

The following is taken from the Edexcel Advanced GCE in Drama and Theatre (9DR0) Syllabus. [First certification from 2018]. Text in purple shows how 'The Laramie Project' fits with this unit.

There are two parts to the assessment for Component 1.

- A portfolio containing evidence of:
  - interpreting, creating and developing a devised piece from one key extract from a performance text and applying the methods of a practitioner (AO1)
  - analysing and evaluating the creative process and the devised performance (AO4).
- A recording of the group devised performance (AO2).

#### Text

Centres have a free choice when selecting the one key extract from a performance text.

- They must take the following into consideration when choosing the text. Be professionally published and substantial, and have a running time of 60 minutes minimum. 'The Laramie Project' fulfils this criterion.
- Offer students the opportunity to demonstrate exploratory range and depth that is appropriate to the level of demand for A Level study. 'The Laramie Project' fulfils this criterion, particularly in terms of the way in which it was created and the seriousness of its subject matter.
- Offer students the opportunity to access the demands of this component as a performer and/or designer. With multi-roleplaying and an open structure in terms of production design 'The Laramie Project' fulfils this criterion and gives significant flexibility for students to use it as a stimulus.
- Have the degree of challenge, in terms of appropriateness of content, language, complexity of themes, and access to deeper social, historical and cultural contexts to enable students to achieve at A Level and meet the Assessment Objectives. There is significant richness in The Laramie Project when looking at this criterion. Content and themes are engaging and challenging. Language and its importance in Verbatim Theatre are at the core of the piece. Social matters are fully explored and, particularly when working with younger people, the historical nature of the piece comes to the fore. This piece of theatre allows for the exploration of how quickly societal moods can change.
- Cannot be any prescribed text from the Component 3 list. The 'Laramie Project' fulfils this criterion as it is not a set text.
- Must be different from the text studied in Component 3 so that students study a range of performance texts. This means it must differ in at least one of the following ways: time period; theatrical convention; thematic content, form or structure; playwright; social, historical and cultural contexts. The Laramie Project fulfils this criterion (other texts are not based on Verbatim Theatre).

For the purposes of this qualification, a key extract is defined as a scene or a moment that is significant to the text as a whole and at least 10 minutes in length when performed. Centres should consider the skills, experience and prior learning of students in choosing text that will engage their interest throughout the considerable preparation and rehearsal time needed for this component. Students can choose any 10-minute section of 'The Laramie Project' as their key extract. Their final devised piece may have lots of similarities to the play or little directly linked, as long as they are inspired by the play, the practitioner, or the style of theatre. For example, the devised piece created by Mr Boulter-Comer's learners used the concept of 'moment work' mirroring that in 'The Laramie Project'.

## Practitioner

Centres have a free choice when selecting a practitioner. For the purposes of this qualification, a practitioner is an individual or a company that has an established and defined approach to the creation of performance, and which creates both theatrical performances and theory that informs this practical work. Tectonic Theater Project fulfil all of these criteria. Additionally, as they were the creators of the play, there is no need to separately study Verbatim Theatre as written by a playwright, then re-imagined by a theatre company. This saves time in the course but, more significantly, complexity in understanding for candidates.

As with the text choice, the choice of practitioner must:

- Be chosen so it offers students the opportunity to demonstrate exploratory range and depth that is appropriate to the level of demand for A Level study. Tectonic Theater Project fulfil this criterion.
- Offer students the opportunity to access the demands of this component as a performer and/or designer. Tectonic Theater Project fulfil this criterion (multi-roleplaying and open structure for production design).
- Have the degree of challenge, in terms of appropriateness of content, language, complexity of themes, access to deeper social, historical and cultural contexts to enable students to achieve at A Level and meet the Assessment Objectives. Tectonic Theater Project as creators of The Laramie Project fulfil this criterion and give multiple options to cover these objectives.

The choice of practitioner must not be the same as the one chosen in Component 3. However, centres are free to use any of the other practitioners in the Component 3 list for use in Component 1, or centres can choose a different practitioner, for example Katie Mitchell, Frantic Assembly, Grotowski or Forced Entertainment. Tectonic Theater Project are not listed for Component 3 but are an established company.

## The portfolio

All students must produce a portfolio documenting and reflecting on their exploratory process and the skills and techniques that they have developed in response to the text, and the influence of their chosen theatre practitioner. The portfolio is marked by the teacher and sent to the moderator, along with the accompanying performance recording.

The following explains how this resource was used to help the learners create their portfolio.

Each student must include responses to the following statements:

- Outline your initial response to the key extract and practitioner and track how it was developed throughout the devising process. Lessons 1, 2 and 4 were used for this response.
- Connect your research material/s to key stages in the development process and to performance outcomes. Answered more generally on the totality of the lesson plans and subsequent practical work.
- Evaluate how your chosen role/s emerged and developed from initial ideas through to the final performance. Answered more generally on the totality of the lesson plans and subsequent practical work.
- Analyse how your contribution was influenced by the selected theatre practitioner and/or theatre makers, and the impact live theatre has had on your own practical work. Lesson 5 with its focus on ethics was significant here in the process – though variable in the write up. It directly led to the decision to use a story covered in the media, as opposed to one of e.g. a peer.
- Discuss how social, historical and cultural conventions impacted on your work. This question was directly influenced by the text and understanding the social, and historical context.
- Evaluate the creative choices you made and whether or not they were successful in performance. Evaluation not directly affected by the lesson content. The evaluation section, as within the resource, can be in whichever ways suits the teacher's teaching, learning, and assessment purpose.