

## May 2013 subject reports

### Literature and Performance

#### Overall grade boundaries

##### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-13	14-28	29-43	44-56	67-70	71-82	83-100

#### Standard level internal assessment

##### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-7	8-15	16-22	23-26	27-31	32-35	36-40

#### The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a wide variety of texts used for transformation. Some of the authors chosen were Asimov, Burgess, Galeano, Neruda, García Marquez, Orwell, Mistry, Hemingway, Attwood, Owen, and Sassoon among others. At times there was only a tenuous link between the text and the transformation piece that followed. This made the resulting oral presentation a more difficult task since the criteria demand a specific exploration of links. This needs to be borne in mind by the ensemble, at times imagination can fly high while devising theatre; the text is not only an inspiration but also a weight that can ground the work and establish its relevance.

#### Candidate performance against each criterion

##### Criterion A: Performance

In performance the candidates who fared best embraced the work physically as well as intellectually. They demonstrated their grasp of it by finding a theatrical language for it. They were careful to use the stage effectively making their movement intentional and justified. They spoke clearly and were poised as they spoke. They looked for physical modes of expression and were careful to make gesture meaningful not clichéd.

The candidates who struggled seemed to have little sense of the audience. At times they seemed to be speaking into a void and the consequences were immediate. Movement was

stilted and unfocused and the diction too often lacked the concentration to make it effective as communication.

Ensembles should look for fiction or poetry that is not too wordy and is susceptible to ready translation into action. At times very promising staging was inhibited by the sheer volume of words that speeches required, this turned the actors into speaking statues to the detriment of their overall performance. The text should be used as a platform for the demonstration of all performance skills not simply the voice. The tendency to use gestures as a way of beating out the rhythm of what was being said (hand gestures moving with the speech) provided an example of speech dominating over body. Candidates might try to film themselves as actors in other work before the transformation piece so they can work to eradicate unnecessary mannerisms and explore new modes of expression that can help to set them free from their control zones.

Poise and the ability to react as well as act was a key distinguishing feature between levels of achievement in acting. Focus and concentration, posture, breath control, the ability to hold the stage were all powerful indicators for success under Criterion A.

### **Criterion B: presentation of evidence supporting the candidate's involvement in the process leading up to performance**

The examiner relies on documented evidence from the teacher to gain an overview of the achievement level in this criteria but much may also be gained by evaluating the manner of the candidate's oral response. It is relatively straightforward to note a full or a scant engagement by how the candidates present on the task. The accuracy of teacher assessment for this criterion is however very important since it is the teacher who actually witnesses the process leading up to performance.

### **Criterion C: presentation and use of language**

The responses to this criterion varied in that many candidates struggled to deal with the challenge of articulating their sense for the literary features of the original text and their theatrical response to it. The correct use of the terminology of literary criticism and the accurate use of theatrical language should complement the experience of making theatre from poetry or prose. Candidates who are able to move comfortably between the two discourses are able to score highly, not only under this criterion but also in D and E. Teachers should appreciate the importance of critical analysis as they plan the course. This analysis in taking two forms (literary and performance) challenges the understanding of the candidate across genres. Part of the essence of the course is captured in these skills.

The organization of the oral presentation begins with the careful apportioning of time between the demands of each criterion, always bearing in mind the fact that Criterion E has a double award of a possible 10 marks as opposed to the 5 available for B, C and D. The tendency to complete the presentation below the recommended maximum time is, unfortunately, marked. It really is a disastrous tendency that teachers should arrest by ensuring that candidates are able to rehearse the task in order to take advantage of the full recommended time allotment thereby making the most of the task and satisfying its requirements.

The structure of the response is crucial to its success and candidates tended not to do full justice to the demands of each criterion. There were frequent examples of work that was presented in an unbalanced way where aspects of the task were covered with others being neglected. The neglect of a close reading of the text and an analysis of literary features, along with a neglect of a thorough performance reflection were arguably the most marked deficiencies. The submersion in anecdotal narrative was characteristic of candidates who struggled to reach a more academic understanding of the text and the process leading to performance.

#### Criterion D: critical reflection on performance

This was often pushed to the end of the presentation and was presented as an appendix to it. It should not be. Performance reflection is a skill which it is clear few candidates are taught but since it makes up the essence of the written tasks and plays a prominent role in the oral presentation it is clearly worth focusing on. Ironically those candidates who did give this exercise a more prominent place in the presentation often fell into the trap of applying the specific analysis to each of their actions/speech/gestures that is demanded in the written tasks. The term “reflection” calls for a dispassionate register of the knowledge and understanding gained through the process of transformation, it does not require a specific analysis of every breath the actor takes! The candidate should be careful not to lapse into anecdote or an overly subjective approach to this exercise.

#### Criterion E: knowledge and understanding of the literary features of the original text and rationale for its realization

Few schools really gave enough attention to the literary features of the text chosen for transformation. Those who did generally found the rest of the task far more accessible as a result of their building of a secure foundation for their performance decisions by basing them on “literary features” rather than on random slices of content which were often conveyed by the speaker in a generalized and arbitrary fashion. The literary features/style(s) of the original are what the candidate must focus on; this is the challenge of the transformation from one genre to another. To take an example the narrative style in prose challenges the dramatist to find a way of telling the story for an audience rather than a reader. The critical reflection on the performance should focus on how effectively a metaphor from a poem might have found a different mode for its presentation on stage. The best candidates immediately discerned the connection between the demands of the criteria and were able to demonstrate how one may function as an introduction to another. This is especially so between criteria D and E.

The rationalization for the choice of text is often couched in mundane terms focusing on the obvious (“the story had five parts for girls and one for a boy which suited us perfectly”) rather than the interesting (“the text in its focus on identity prompted us to explore the use of masks in its staging”). Candidates should look to the challenges posed by the style of the text and the opportunities such features offer for staging as a better rationalization for choice than the division of roles.

### Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Focus on the physical not just the verbal in acting.
- Always have a justification and purpose for movement on stage.
- Stay focused even if you are not speaking; remember acting and reacting are being assessed. Look for poise and concentration; be generous on stage with your fellow actors. Look to build the ethic of the ensemble.
- Teachers should be aware that the ensemble is responsible for the design as well as the performance of the transformation. Design elements should not be superimposed on the transformation by external technical support. Candidates are judged on their acting not on the brilliance of their lighting plot.
- Candidates need to be taught how to critically analyze the text and how to transform their understanding of the style of their core text and its literary features into performance.
- Candidates should use their allotted time.
- Candidates should structure their presentations in a way that balances the demands of each of the criteria.
- Candidates need to be taught the precise and accurate use of literary and theatrical terminology
- Candidates should take care in the selection of the text and their rationalization for it should have a literary and theatrical basis.
- Reflection on the performance should consider the effectiveness of the transformation of the literary features of the original text.

## Further comments

There were a number of truly outstanding transformations presented for the May 2013 session but technical issues continued to plague the mechanics of assessment.

The formatting of the DVD's caused problems for examiners who experienced difficulty playing some of Performances; a DVD recording under one format does not always transfer which can be a source of some frustration. At times the volume of the recordings were low, at times the shooting of the actual performance was deficient. Taking these issues into account it should be noted that there was some outstanding work to see. The documentation was invariably completed with care and long rationales for the marking were often presented. The detail of some of these rationales was remarkable and very helpful.

Some schools are taking the design element of these performances very seriously indeed with lighting of a quasi-professional standard and sophisticated staging. It is assumed that this is the work of the ensemble and it is hoped that technical expertise is not being used to enhance the performance by creating a platform for performance that is not actually a requirement of the task. The candidates will be judged on their acting not on elaborated staging.

It should not have to be pointed out that candidates need to perform without interruption in designated spaces which are free from any external interference. This was not the case in certain schools where the candidates had to perform under some duress. The other point that teachers need to consider is the transformation of spaces. Schools are often crowded places and performance space is at a premium in many of them but any found space can be quickly transformed into a plausible performance area by temporary designs. Peter Brook's chapter

on “Rough Theatre” (“The Empty Space: Brooke, MacGibbon and Kee 1968, pp 65-97) offers a good model for this exercise.

Schools tended to opt for prose texts rather than poetry as a basis for their transformations.

## Standard level written coursework

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20

### General comments

The assessment task was generally completed satisfactorily by the schools. There is obviously still some confusion about the exact nature of the task which will hopefully be further clarified in the notes that follow. There was some truly exciting work.

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

Shakespeare remained the most popular author for the task with schools focusing on the tragedies more than the comedies. King Lear, Macbeth and Hamlet were all used, with The Merchant of Venice and A Midsummer Night’s Dream being the most popular of the lighter plays. There were some modern and contemporary choices: Wilde, Miller and Dorfman being examples in this respect. Those candidates who clearly stated the role they were playing at the beginning of the essay and followed this by carefully associating literary insight with performance choices in a carefully structured manner were most likely to maximize their potential. It is still a matter of some concern that many candidates never actually stated the role they were playing, thus making the focus of their work a guessing game for the examiner. Others persisted in ignoring previous advice to write exclusively about what “we” did as a group, entirely neglecting what the essay should have been focused on which is what “I” did as an independent actor working with aspects of a part in performance. Lastly some candidates confused the task with direction when in fact it is exclusively about acting.

Some candidates made poor choices in their selection of passages, finding themselves searching desperately for “literary features” in naturalistic theatre whose register was far more mundane than the blank verse of Shakespeare. The choice of Beckett as a playwright should be carefully assessed since the stage directions are so exhaustive and often give the apprentice actor little choice in how to play the role.

Candidates tended to choose one speech for their focus but it is permissible to follow a character through a play by focusing on a number of smaller speeches: Ophelia was an example of a character where this approach made sense.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: analysis of the literary features of the text.

This was often neglected with candidates looking at the *content* of their speech or series of speeches rather than connecting content to style. Content is important but *how* that content is conveyed as speech is what Criterion A is asking the candidates to focus on. The enriched language of Shakespeare lends itself to analysis but excellent work on more modern or contemporary texts indicated that they too can repay analysis.

The nature of what the candidate is exploring is however sometimes subtly different from what an outright literary analysis of a speech might produce. The analysis here is more selective; the candidate needs to select those literary features that will obligate performance decisions to be made. The sound of a word might take a preponderant importance because that word is being subject to analysis in order to work out how it might most effectively be said. This demands an understanding of a further two points, firstly the context of the dramatic scene, and secondly the intended effect on the audience. Only minorities of candidates were able to perform effective analysis of literary features within this pattern but it is this pattern that constitutes the required context to meet the requirements of Criterion A. Whatever literary feature that is subject to analysis should play into performance.

Candidates need to be taught what literary features are and how the process of analysis works. Many candidates mistook themes for features. A literary theme is part of the content of the work; it is not a function of its style. The “theme of mortality” in Hamlet is an emphasis in the material of the play; it is not about how that play is written. Theme can be important in the sense that a candidate might spot a dominant theme and decide to emphasize it for communication for an audience. It should certainly be noted if it is part of the decisions taken about performance but candidates should not mistake a treatment of theme with an analysis of style.

### Criterion B: exploration of the chosen approach to the text

This criterion brings the candidate to a relationship with his purpose as an actor. The chosen approach to the text is about how the candidate/actor engages dramatically with the text in order to make a coherent and hopefully effective communication with the audience. This is an individual challenge and while group dynamics will inevitably play a role (unless the candidate has chosen a soliloquy), they should only be secondary to the list of priorities which place the actor and the text in the very forefront.

There were many examples of keen and insightful interpretations of the text played out through exciting accounts of performance. The grappling with language in order to shape it to communication for an audience is the essence of what the task asks the candidate to do. The more effective essays focused on the text in careful detail but followed through the analysis of the literary features with highly particularized accounts of the voice and body of the actor working out the speech verbally and physically through language, gesture and movement.

The candidates who had most to struggle with here were those who preferred to narrate an experience of acting from a text with very little focus on why they were doing this. Purpose

gives direction and this is why the sense of an audience and the conviction about the kind of communication they receive is so fundamental.

### Criterion C: use of language and structure

The question of language does not change in this subject; it is always about managing the terminology particular to the genres the assessment task is holding in play. In this task the importance of establishing a correspondence between literary analysis and the insights for performance such analysis brings out is crucial for the response to be effective.

The organization of the response usually took two forms, either the candidate analyzed the text and then explored performance approaches, or the candidate made the performance a function of the literary analysis managing to maintain the link between the two. The latter approach yielded some wonderful accomplished work, the former tended to anatomize the approach to the task to the detriment of the work. Many candidates were remiss in presenting work that lacked balance either favoring performance over analysis or vice versa, a tight organization where one follows the other is a useful way of avoiding this.

This is really a straightforward exercise and the three criteria driving performance of it should be approached as organically as possible. Criterion B follows from Criterion A and Criterion C highlights the importance of two fundamentals in any essay, namely language and structure.

### Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Select the speech or speeches carefully
- Learn the language of literary analysis and apply it to a scrutiny of the text *in relation to* performance and performance objectives
- The word “explore” is used in Criterion B so do not be afraid to consider different approaches from the conventional
- Do not tell the story of your encounter with the text, but concentrate on a pattern of analysis and dramatic response
- Language in theatre is about sound as well as sense
- Language in theatre is not simply about words it is also about how those words might be registered in physical movement and gesture
- Write about what “I” did, not about what “we” did
- Make it clear for the examiner in the first paragraph exactly what role you are playing
- Contextualize your speech(es)
- Act from a conviction about exactly what you want to communicate for your audience and how you mean to do it.

### Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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**Mark range:**            0-2            3-4            5-7            8-10            11-13            14-16            17-20

## General comments

This is an open book examination where candidates have the opportunity to prepare their responses in some detail. In the majority of cases candidates were able to do so but many papers were compromised by a misunderstanding of the assessment task.

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

As expected there was a full range of work submitted with some truly outstanding examples of how best to deal with the questions. The choices for the prose text were varied and interesting; among the authors favored were Bronte, Twain, Hardy, Morrison, Saramago, Steinbeck, Orwell, Ishiguro and Fitzgerald, with modern and contemporary literature occupying a prominent place. There were also responses submitted that indicated that the basic requirements for the task had been misunderstood by either the candidates or the teachers who had delivered this part of the syllabus.

The questions are straightforward and ask the candidate to deal with a passage from a prose fiction (selected by the candidate) and indicate, in essay form, how they would stage such a passage for an audience focusing on specific details outlined in the exam questions. The role of the candidate is to indicate how the passage might be staged taking acting, staging and design elements into account depending on the foci of the questions. Some candidates misinterpreted this and far from taking a directorial overview actually wrote the essay from the point of view of an actor taking on one or other of the fictional characters.

The importance of the selection of the passage by the candidate cannot be underestimated. The suitability of the passage to the question the candidate is responding to needs to be established. It is not advisable that a candidate should attempt to prepare *a priori* responses or pre-prepare their essays on the expectation of receiving particular questions. There was evidence for this approach in some of the weaker responses. Candidates are assessed for their ability to apply the assessment task to the specific question not for random knowledge of the text or for arbitrary approaches to staging it.

There was a tendency to adopt a cinematic approach to the novel promoting extraordinary effects that, while sounding dramatic and exciting, were actually either impractical (impossible to stage) or the technique for the staging is not outlined by the candidate. Many of the better candidates drew sketches to outline their staging ideas for Question 2 where setting was important; this allows the examiner to note the visual detail of the idea and can also keep the candidate grounded in terms of practicality.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Understanding of the novel and selection of the extract

The importance of placing the selected passage in the context of the novel thereby generating a sense for the examiner of an overall concept for staging is a key feature of this criterion. The contextualization does not have to be exhaustive but it should be sufficiently detailed to offer a secure foundation for staging ideas that are coherent in relation to the novel and, specifically, the selected passage. Some candidates presented essays that lacked balance because of a neglect of these requirements or, alternatively, an exclusive focus on them. The ability to balance the demands of the different criteria and provide a response that integrates these demands was usually the mark of the more effective work. Question 1 because of its focus on the “crucial discovery” helped candidates to focus on the passage they had selected. A less specific question, arguably Question 3, placed more emphasis for selectivity on the candidate, a reason perhaps for less structured responses to this question?

The “understanding of the novel” is always a selective understanding in relation to the task stipulated by the question. That is the nature of the task. Candidates who struggled with meeting the requirements of this criterion often conveyed an independent understanding of the novel with much irrelevant information and/or detail on their selected passage which was not connected to the question. This kind of material may reflect general understanding but not the specific and detailed response the exercise demands.

The balance that must be struck between the details of the extract and the staging ideas that are a response to it needs to be strictly adhered to. A wealth of detail on the passage and novel that is not picked up in the staging creates a poor impression.

### **Criterion B: ideas for dramatization based on interpretation of the literary text**

The act of interpretation of a literary text is contingent on a critical reading of it. When candidates demonstrated their ability to do this by articulating their awareness of how literary features from the selected passage could play into the staging concept for an audience, they were generally responding successfully to the task. If literary features were not analyzed they found themselves struggling. The plot of the novel, its narrative content, can be important but the literary question of how that narrative is constructed through point of view and choice of narrative style is a question of style. It is the ability to note this that moved the candidate from one achievement level to another. Other questions about style or literary features pertaining to mood, tone, setting, or theme were more or less important considering the direction of the question.

“Ideas for dramatization” depend fundamentally on two preoccupations, the nature of the literary text being staged and the intention the candidate has for the audience. The better candidates never omitted consideration of the audience and were careful therefore to specifically state what kind of performance space was being used, they also noted how the actors interacted in that space, carefully and strategically, in order to maximize their communication for the audience. Design elements like sound and lighting were important concerns for Question 2, whereas the role of the actor took greater prominence in Question 3. Some candidates wrote very well about both the novel and their ideas for staging a passage of it but did not specify their performance space and made little or no reference to the audience.

It was more common to see attempts to respond to these two criteria as basic dividing lines between the two parts of their essay. Some of the best responses did not make this structural division managing to respond to both criteria in a more integrated way. This often helped them to make the response to Criterion A more immediately connected to Criterion B allowing for a more balanced essay.

### Criterion C: Use of language

This proved a challenge for all candidates. The ability to change registers in their discourse according to their focus on literature or performance is a skill which recurs in all of the assessment tasks in the subject. It is a skill that demands constant teaching and practice. Weaker candidates found it difficult to explore the text in a critical manner and to clarify their staging ideas because they had little understanding of how to use the technical language of the stage with fluency and confidence.

Candidates should also work on developing their individual style of writing. The ability to vary sentence length, to register variations in meaning and highlight key concepts in a way that establishes their importance to what the candidate is trying to “do” with the question, is crucial to the sophisticated use of language that the higher achievement levels demand.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates need to be taught how to focus their understanding on the question.
- The selection of the passage for consideration should be made in relation to the question the candidates choose.
- The passage requires contextualization in relation to the novel as a whole but this contextualization should be in association with the staging concept not independent of it.
- The candidate should strive to maintain a balance between prior work on the novel and the selected passage and the ideas for staging. This may be best achieved by not adopting strict demarcation lines between the requirements of Criteria A and B.
- The candidate should not neglect the simple relationships out of which the response should be generated. The passage, its literary features, the ideas for staging, the performance space, the performance style and the communication with the audience. Candidates need to have convictions about these matters since it is conviction which gives style and purpose to their writing.
- Candidates should always aim for clarity and practicality in their understanding of the text and their ideas for staging.
- Candidates should provide sketches of their staging ideas if this helps them to convey these with more clarity.
- The teacher should devise written exercises throughout the course that help school candidates in the application of specific terminology associated to the two genres.
- Candidates should visit the theatre as much as they possibly can. Seeing live theatre can inspire them in so many ways. Perhaps most importantly it can make them more aware of how production elements can be used to enhance performance and communication for the audience.

- Candidates should be bold in their ideas for staging and free ranging in their interpretation of the text but they must be faithful to its content and must be practical in their staging of it.

## Standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-15	16-18	19-25

### General comments

As one of the more familiar exercises in this relatively new course, an essay dealing with the work of two poets, candidates revealed a fairly typical range of work; although there were more essays that were ample and exhibited close critical analysis than in previous sessions. The range of poets studied was also wider, with more familiar choices like Wilfred Owen and Carol Ann Duffy and newer appearances of Gwendolyn Brooks, Charles Bukowski and Margaret Atwood.

### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Firstly, candidates sometimes failed to read the exact terms of the questions.

For example, some were immediately attracted to the question on metaphor, but when it came to demonstrating the connection between the feature and thinking imaginatively or seeing the world in new ways, they retreated to listing at least one or two metaphors and explaining their meaning. It is important that candidates go well beyond pointing to literary features to an examination of how these features help to develop their answers.

A certain amount of paraphrase or seemingly memorized class responses and discussion tended to make for weaker essays, and biographical detail instead of critical analysis characterized the responses from one of the larger schools. Context is important but in the limited time of the examination must be used very sparingly, as the emphasis is on close analysis of actual poems in response to the terms of the question. Register was a noticeable problem this session; candidates need to be reminded that this is a formal academic essay, not a journal exercise.

### The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

There were candidates who were well equipped to produce substantive essays and a fair number that seemed to have a fairly limited grasp of critical analysis that focused on a

particular question. There were answers attempted to each of the 6 questions with questions 2 and 3 appealing to candidates who were able to bring particular and convincing stylistic evidence to bear on their arguments. Question 5 was by far the most popular and candidates exhibited a range of competence. Often enough there was some real appreciation and independent response to some of the poems, with candidates linking them effectively to their own lives and experience. Points of comparison tended to enhance the sense that the candidates could move beyond appreciation of one poet to some wider sense of poetry. Poems were often well selected and the best essays brought an impressive amount of detail to bear on their arguments.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

All six of the questions elicited some responses, which was reassuring in terms of their appropriateness to the teaching of the syllabus and their level of difficulty.

Question 1 was one of the less frequently answered ones, along with Question 4. It may well have been that the poems studied did not lend themselves to this focus or material. Fate or fatefulness is often a concept that candidates find difficult to pin down, but in a few cases essays handled the angle of the question with a primary emphasis on the content of the poems, making stylistic analysis a secondary consideration. The candidates who chose 4 were able to find either plant or animal references, as in Ted Hughes or Sylvia Plath, and did some competent work with showing their roles in the poems.

Questions 2 and 3 were attractive to candidates who had studied more intensively the stylistic features of the poems. Metaphor was eagerly embraced by some; however, in too many cases, the candidates identified the metaphors in poems, but then were at a loss as to 'what to do' with them. Delineation of formal and structured speech as opposed to a mode more conversational was sometimes elusive, though a number of candidates were able to show different poets tending in one direction rather than another. One temptation was to elide the difference between structured speech and the structure of the poem, which was actually the focus of Question 6. The latter was a popular question, but split candidates between those who could engage with the different effects of choices about structuring the burden of the poem and those who suggested that "free verse" effectively implied a lack of any structure. Only the most competent essays were able to show how structure affected meaning.

Question 5 was far and away the most popular question. Often these answers were somewhat limited in scope, since they ignored the primary thrust of the question that asked about the ways in which criticism was delivered through the art of the poet. Many candidates did well enough in identifying the objects of criticism and the nature of the poet's views; they just did not go far enough to address the exact terms of the question.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Given the success of many candidates in this exercise, the recommendations touch mainly on aspects where teaching approaches may be strengthened and developed, especially where there were difficulties in focusing on the particular demands of these questions.

- While context such as geographical and historical setting as well as biography should obviously be included in the teaching approach to the selected poets, candidates should be made aware of the place of such inclusions in this 90-minute examination. Unless such contextual matters are very much a part of the subject matter as with poems of Heaney and Brooks, for example, candidates are best advised to limit their address of such matters in their responses.
- One of the most crucial skills to practice in the latter days of the teaching cycle is the skill needed to read and analyze the questions accurately and prepare to respond to their terms very closely. It can be assumed that the ground note in all of them is a concern not so much with the 'what' of the poet's work as with the 'how': the techniques the poet has used to deliver thought and feeling in an artistic form.
- A careful choice of poets and poems is crucially connected to success for the candidates sitting this examination. Poets whose work is thematically and linguistically accessible produced some of the best work this session: Shihab Nye, Mary Oliver, Seamus Heaney, Emily Bronte and Gwendolyn Brooks were some poets who seemed well able to resonate with these candidates. All provide many elements of craft that are discernible and susceptible to analyses that work for the questions.
- Candidates need a good deal of modeling and practice in distinguishing re-description of the poet's content from analysis of the way the poet is working. This difference is not something they come by naturally: they need clear demonstration of how differently one proceeds with analysis versus paraphrase.
- Lastly, candidates need to understand that they are creating an 'argument' by taking a position on the central focus of the question and that this demands an organization of the points they want to use to demonstrate their position. Again, such skills need modeling and practice as well as feedback on what things work and what does not.