

What Summative Assessments do Drama Educators Use to Assess Student Knowledge and Progress in Secondary Education, and What do They Think of Them?

Emmy Abrahamson

Abstract

Summative drama assessment is often considered both challenging and problematic due to its elements of creativity and performance. This research paper aims to discover what summative assessments drama teachers use in secondary education and to gain insight into what their views are of them in order to hold accountability while simultaneously allowing students freedom of expression and creativity within this multidimensional subject. Data collection and analysis focused on feedback from 26 drama teachers in North America, Europe and Asia in English-speaking and primarily international schools. Beyond simply following summative assessments prescribed by curricula, the findings suggest a clear divide in opinion on the benefits and usefulness of these. The results also identify the need for a range of different criteria such as the necessity to individualise, to use student-negotiated rubrics and a wide variety of summative drama assessments in secondary education.

Introduction

The aim of this research paper is to discover what summative assessments drama educators use in secondary education and what they think of them. As someone who has worked as a freelance drama teacher for over two decades I am now in the process of becoming a fulltime drama educator, and though I am capable of teaching acting, characterisation, voice projection, improvisation, playwriting etc., assessment is the one area within education I have never encountered or had to use up until now. 'How would you assess a student in drama?' is the single common question I have been asked at every drama teaching interview during the past six months, making me realise that not only did assessment in drama constitute the biggest gap in knowledge and experience for me as an educator, and that its understanding and familiarity would be crucial in gaining a job as a fulltime teacher, but also that this information would prove invaluable once I was actually working in an educational setting.

Assessment in drama is often considered both problematic and difficult, due to its elements of creativity (Caroll and Dodds, 2016; Schmidt and Charney, 2018; DeLuca, 2010) and performance (Jacobs, 2016a and 2017). Drama assessment's 'unique challenge' (Jacobs, 2017, p. 128) is regularly posed as a conundrum with education needing to fulfil the requirements of accountability that standards command (Tabone and Weltsek, 2019). Drama is regarded as a 'soft' subject that values more easily assessed subjects that can provide straightforward quantitative facts and figures (DeLuca, 2010). By gathering a list of summative assessments from drama educators at a number of schools, using different curricula, as well as finding out which ones the educators themselves consider the most

beneficial in evaluating student knowledge and progress, the aim of this research paper is to examine this 'unique challenge' and see how it is approached and solved in real life. The use and importance of performance and written work as part of summative assessment in drama will also be examined. The research undertaken will be qualitative, using a paper-based questionnaire, with questions ranging from open and general to more subjective and focussed ones about summative assessment within secondary drama education. The research will be exploratory as the findings will be specific to my area of interest and do not involve testing of any hypotheses.

By analysing and comparing the different – or similar - summative assessments, and discovering what the drama educators think of them, I will hopefully be able to establish which types of assessments hold a general consensus of being fair, unbiased and reliable, while simultaneously being student-centred and meaningful to the learners. As McGregor (1977) states 'the greatest educational benefit to be gained from drama comes from enabling children to use the process for themselves' (p. 268), and I hope to find out how summative drama assessment can become not just a means to reach standards and meeting targets, but also if, and how, it can be enabling and empowering for both the educator and the learner.

A literature review

The definition of drama as a subject

While it is relatively simple to define what subjects like mathematics, physics and biology in secondary education entail, characterising drama is far more complex due to its 'multidimensional nature of activity' (Cockett, 1999, p.63). In literature, drama is described as an eclectic, social medium employing action, character, speech and as involving the student's feelings, imagination and thoughts (Cockett, 1998 and 1999), and as 'concerned with making meaning of experience through fiction' (Silius-Ahonen and Gustavson, 2012, p. 440). It is also defined as a multifaceted subject that engages students in imaginative growth, connects to the human experience and allows vocationally orientated practises (Jacobs, 2016a), and as both a body of discipline knowledge and a form of pedagogy (Hogan, 2019). Being more than a singular art form, O'Toole (2014, as cited in Duffy, 2016) describes it as 'a means of intervention, a source of literature, a method to improve public speaking, a form of play, and has even therapeutic and political application as well' (p. 37). This large encompassing and multitude of descriptions and interpretations of drama lends itself to Shakespeare's observation that 'All the world's a stage' (1599, l. 139), yet this also seems to lead to an ambiguous, often negative, consequence on its status and value as a subject within schools, as well as making the assessment of it more problematic.

Drama's place within the education system

As Duffy (2016) states, drama holds a tenuous place within the education system precisely because of the difficulty in easily describing what it entails. Since drama can mean so many different things to so many different people, it leads to the question of who then is included, or excluded, from defining it and coming up with a curriculum. Drama teachers often work in

small departments and more often than not they are the only teacher of their subject, which can lead to a feeling of isolation within their own school (O'Rourke, 2019), and of feeling under-appreciated and undervalued by both students and colleagues (Cash, 2015). Unfortunately, this under-appreciation as a subject often extends into administration and even to a national level. As Österlind, Østern and Björk Thorkelsdóttir so plainly put it 'the current trends in politics do not favour arts subjects' (p. 43). Drama is not a required subject in any of the Nordic countries, does not have its own programme of study for children aged 5 to 14 in the new national curriculum in the United Kingdom, and in the United States schools exercise 'local control' whether to include drama in their curriculum or not, with many schools, especially rural ones, opting not to have drama teachers within their departments (Österlind, Østern and Björk Thorkelsdóttir, 2016; Cassidy, 2014; Duffy, 2016).

Drama's learning outcomes and benefits

In the drama classroom, students learn the most basic elements of theatre such as dialogue, theme, plot and characters, and are taught dramatic conventions such as tableaux, role play and hot-seating, and, at a more advanced stage, forum theatre, mantle of the expert and teacher-in-role (Cockett, 1999). But what takes place in the teaching space often goes beyond mere knowledge and understanding about practises, stage design and theatre history, and into more holistic skills that are advantageous to the learner as drama in education has been proven to help students improve in a wide range of areas such as self-esteem, communication, public speaking and self-confidence (Appleyard, 2018). The benefits of drama also extend to outside of the educational institution. McGregor (1977) argues that drama contains many values, especially its transference to real life skills such as creative problem solving, social interactions, verbal expression, and emotional, physical and intellectual projection into imagined situations and roles. Hogan (2019) states that students often appreciate drama for its opportunities of self-expression and greater sense of freedom, and notes how the relationship between drama students and the drama teacher is less formal and more democratic as the educator would often join in and 'pretend with you' (p.12). This is a unique contrast to other subjects, with the drama teacher being not only an instructor but also becoming an artistic collaborator. Drama is furthermore often used as an effective technique in other subjects such as English, history and especially in EAL and ESOL as drama can holistically engage students' thinking processes, emotions and past experiences by embodied sharing (Choi, 2018).

Creativity and other skills taught through drama

Drama also teaches creativity which has recently been receiving significant attention as one of the skills employers rate the highest due to its ability to solve problems, think 'outside of the box' and foster innovations (Petroni, 2019). Yet, just like the subject of drama, creativity can be elusive as an artistic and cognitive idea, not easily definable and meaning different things to different people. A personally satisfactory definition comes from Barron who defined creativity as 'the ability to bring something new into existence' (1969, as cited in Gallagher, 2007, p. 1230). Other skills that drama can teach are similarly high in demand by employers, such as being a good team player whilst also being able to work individually with a self-improving agenda (Silius-Ahonen and Gustavson, 2012). Neelands (2009) even argues that drama's 'pro-social ensemble-based process for building community and a common

culture' (p. 175) goes well beyond narrow academic needs and subject boundaries, and provides young adults with a paradigm of democratic living. In our digital day and age where employers value adaptable and social employees, the drama classroom is where to find them with it being full of verbal interplay, social interaction and with its encouragement of high levels of creative thinking (Tabone and Weltsek, 2019).

Assessment within drama

If few subjects are as open to interpretation as drama, then this also makes its assessment more complex and varied. As schools move towards more formal standardisations, many seek assessment structures that can contain descriptive reports, can be used to generate letter grades and preferably contain a numerical ranking (McKone, 1997). The pressure to produce single mark assessments comes not only from hard-pressed teachers with numerous reports to write and from students 'who like to feel they are being placed on a scale of absolute values' (Cockett, 1998, p. 249) but also from schools who need data for public dissemination, comparison and in order to demonstrate large scale measures of student achievement (Spina, 2017). As in any subject, a student cannot know if they are increasing their knowledge and improving their learning without feedback from their educator and vice versa. This is also true for drama even though its learning practice is frequently described as a process (Silius-Ahonen and Gustavson, 2012) and that the gaining of knowledge, skills and control of dramatic methods should not be seen as ends in themselves (McGregor, 1977). Yet the lack of literature about assessment in drama and that more research needs to be undertaken about it is often mentioned (Silius-Ahonen and Gustavson, 2012; DeLuca, 2010; Schmidt and Charney, 2018; Cockett, 1999; McGregor, 1977). As McGregor (1977) states the assessment of drama, unless dictated by a curriculum, will also be highly individual as the 'aims for drama depend on what teachers wish to achieve through drama which in turn will affect what criteria are used to assessment' (p. 268).

Assessing performance

Performance is often seen as an integral part of drama assessment. As Jacobs (2016a, 2016b and 2017) explores, each Australian state and territory uses a different system for assessing drama, yet each identified performance as fundamental. As an audience is a vital element of any performance, Jacobs examines the heightened emotions that students undergo whilst performing in front of an audience and whether this can have a detrimental effect on the learner as performer. The assessors of a performance piece must make connections between the assessment criteria and student choices that are unavoidably based on their individual experiences and implicit criteria, thereby making the assessors 'consciously and unconsciously biased by their own values, preferences and dispositions' (2016a, p. 5). However, Cockett (1999) counter-argues that drama educators make objective evaluative judgements almost constantly even though they might have difficulty in unravelling the evaluative criteria imbedded in their practice. Hanley (2003, as cited in Jacobs, 2014) argues that formal assessment of artistic creations, such as performance, can lead to a stifling of imagination, individual expression, originality and creativity, and not allowing for the novel pursuit of ideas.

Assessing creativity

Like performance, assessing creativity, which is such an integral part and core value of drama, is also seen as problematic. In their article on assessment in drama and theatre, Carroll and Dodds (2016) specifically discuss the difficulty in assessing creativity as ‘unlike the ability to add or subtract numbers, creativity cannot be taught explicitly, and is also difficult to measure systematically’ (p. 23) and how it lends itself more to being assessed formatively rather than summatively. Yet despite literature being abundant of the problems related to drama in education, Tabone and Weltsek (2019) argue that qualitative substantive learning *is* measurable, and many articles even provide rubrics that can be used to measure both creativity and drama (DeLuca, 2010; Young Overby *et al.*, 2013; McKone, 1997; Schmidt and Charney, 2018). In literature, formative assessment methods within drama are often encouraged and mentioned as including informal whole group comments, task sheets and criteria rubrics (Hogan, 2019), an ongoing dialogue between student and teacher (Cockett, 1998), and the use of self-, peer- and teacher feedback (DeLuca, 2010). If Cockett (1998) argues that ‘learning in drama is tied to specific events and experiences that take place during the process’ (p. 249), this ties to the exploration of how educators summatively assess this learning at any given period.

Summative drama assessment in literature

There is a surprising lack of literature about what exactly drama assessment, especially summative assessment, actually entails. Tabone and Weltsek (2019), in their study of qualitative summative assessment for theatre education, recognised five theatre standards that would capture student knowledge, understanding and skills: designing with setting, acting with understanding character, directing with character relationships and themes, script writing with dialogue and explaining and analysing personal experiences and making meaning from text as well as from self to text. These five standards they evaluated using rubrics. Silius-Ahonen and Gustavson (2012) present a summative assessment where the students were asked to dramatise a scientific article and were then graded in relation to learning outcomes on a scale from 1-5 thereby arguing that assessment applied does not need to diminish the art form to a simple function. DeLuca (2010) stresses the importance of the students firmly understanding what the assessment criteria means and consists of, which can be achieved in a joint assessment structure and in applying this to sample work. DeLuca additionally argues that assessment can be restructured as a valuable condition of learning in the arts while at the same time fulfilling accountability demands by using a rubric or achievement chart.

My specific and focused research question

Literature reveals how drama as a subject faces both internal and external challenges, many linked to the assessment of it. As summative assessment in drama is needed for schools to prove accountability and effectively provide evidence of student development, and students require formal feedback and a grade, especially to gain entry into higher education, while drama as a subject in secondary education should still strive towards providing an experiential learning process (Neelands, 2009; Silius-Ahonen and Gustavson, 2012; Cockett, 1998), this leads to my specific and focused research question of: what summative assessments do drama educators use to assess student knowledge and progress in

secondary education, and what do they think of them? Researching how real life practitioners deal with the assessment of drama's multidimensional nature and how the educators are held accountable for their students' improvement and enhance their learning while at the same time allowing the learners the climate of trust, risk taking, playfulness, sense of community and positive relationship between teacher and learner that drama entails (Hogan, 2019), which is exactly why many students elect to study it in the first place, is truly a topic worth researching as well as one that deserves more attention in literature.

Methodology and Methods

My focused research question

The study I am conducting is qualitative, using a paper-based questionnaire as my research method. My focused research question of what summative assessments do drama educators use to assess student knowledge and progress in secondary education, and what do they think of them, is worth asking due to the minimal amount of attention dedicated to it in literature and because assessment in drama constitutes as one of its greatest difficulties and challenges (Jacobs, 2016a). While an 8th grader studying mathematics is expected to know arithmetic, basic algebra, geometry and spatial sense (Anon, 2020), and will be assessed on this precise knowledge, exactly what is expected and assessed of an 8th grader studying drama is more often than not up to the teacher, and even if a drama educator has a set assessment criteria as per a specific curriculum, what they think of this is worth researching due to the personal nature of drama (McGregor, 1977). If the statement that 'creativity is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it with the same status' (Robinson, 2016) holds true, then researching how creativity, an integral and core part of drama in education, can be assessed and valued, is justly worth examining.

Choice of research method

My choice of research method was a questionnaire containing twelve questions (Appendix A). This questionnaire was sent electronically via email to 26 drama teachers at different schools in North America, Europe and Asia. As the teachers follow different curriculums (often more than one within a school in order to provide more options to a range of learners) I was able to gather a large scope of summative drama assessment methods and comments on what the educators thought of them. The 26 drama teachers were chosen through my work with the International Schools Theatre Association (ISTA), a registered charity based in the United Kingdom that organises theatre events all over the world for students aged 6-18 as well as teachers, and were all respected colleagues whose work I value and all have a high standard according to ISTA's values of international mindedness, collaboration and culturally literacy. Apart from two of the teachers who taught at the same school, all teachers worked at different schools and used different curricula such as the International Baccalaureate (IB), National Core Arts Standards, IGCSE, Key Stage 3, Advanced Placement (AP) and USA Common Core curriculum. The full breakdown of the curricula the teachers used was as follows:

Curriculum

Teachers

IB	34%
IB and IGCSE	11%
IB and AP	11%
IB and National Core Arts Standards	8%
IB, IGCSE and Key Stage 3	8%
IB, IGCSE and IMYC (Fieldworks)	4%
IB and the Ontario Curriculum	4%
IB and America Diploma	4%
IB and USA (Common Core) curriculum	4%
IB and NY State Regents curriculum	4%
National Core Arts Standards	4%
Own	4%

Fifteen of the drama teachers were female and 11 male. All schools were co-educational and the teachers were experienced drama teachers working in secondary education with a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 40 years fulltime teaching experience in drama. Other commonalities included that all schools were international and that English was the primary language of instruction. By using open-ended questions in the questionnaire, this allowed the educators to elaborate and provide more robust answers, and on the advice of a colleague (Hatt, 2020), I specified at the beginning of the questionnaire that summative assessment was meant as the practice of evaluating what a student has learned at the end of a given time period (*assessment of learning*), in contrast to formative (*assessment for learning*) or diagnostic assessment (Derrick and Ecclestone, 2008).

The advantages and disadvantages of using a questionnaire

The advantages of using a questionnaire that was emailed to the teachers meant that they could fill it in in their own time and without the supervision of senior management, hopefully leading to more detailed, lengthy and candid answers. The restrictions using a questionnaire sent via email was the possibility of a low response rate and incorrectly filled in answers (Beiske, 2002). Being colleagues through ISTA I consider myself to be both an insider and an outsider in relation to the research participants (Savvides *et al.*, 2014). An outsider in the traditional dichotomy in that I am not a part or teaching at any of the participants' schools, and an insider as we have met and worked together at various theatre festivals over the past two decades and have already built rapport. The challenge of being an insider was the possible preconception that I was going to judge the participants' answers and teaching practices with a few commenting 'hope this is OK' when returning the questionnaire meaning that the teachers might have thought that there were 'right' or 'wrong' answers. Echoing Savvides *et al.* that 'qualitative researchers are not either/or insiders/outsideers' (p. 423, 2014) this made me aware of both the advantages and disadvantages of my position as a researcher and the importance of remaining professional when in communication with the participants.

My approach to data analysis

Twenty-six drama teachers were chosen to collect data from as I felt that this would provide a wide enough scope of summative assessment and views on them from different schools and practices. As the research data was qualitative and exploratory in nature, the research was started by reading the collected information several times in order to establish basic observations and patterns (Bhatia, 2018). After that, and as only 4% of the participants used their own curricula, the data was coded into the various curricula the teachers used as this would constitute the most common pattern and provide the clearest way to group the summative assessments. Codes were also based on the semantic content and coded into positive, negative or ambivalent responses, and the most frequent responses recognised and summarised. Statistics were made of how many teachers used written summative assessment, how many used rubrics to assess their students and how many believed that performance was fundamental to summative drama assessment. Through content analysis according to curriculum the most commonly used summative assessment in drama were identified and a summary was made of what the educators thought of them.

The ethical approval process and ethical considerations

All stages of the research on summative drama assessment were conducted in compliance with the ethics requirements of the University of Sheffield, with the ethics approval given in January 2020 before any research or data-gathering began. All 26 participants were provided with detailed project information as well as an adult participant consent form that they needed to fill in, sign and return prior to completing the questionnaire. It was stressed that the teachers should not reveal their name nor the name of their school as all data should remain anonymous. As teachers were the key participants in this study, considerations for ethical practice were integrated into the research design by making sure that the questions were carefully worded and non-threatening to the educators' practices. Data collection began in February 2020 and was concluded within fourteen days. No deadline was given to the drama teachers of when to return the questionnaire so as not to cause any unnecessary stress when completing it, which could have resulted in rushed and cursory answers. Not giving a deadline was only possible due to the lengthy time period before the assignment needed to be completed, and would otherwise not have been possible.

Analysis and Discussion

The aim of this study was to find out what summative assessments drama educators use to assess student knowledge and progress in secondary education, and what the educators think of the summative assessments. The study's research process went without any issues or delays, with only one teacher declining to participate due to time constraints and fortunately I had some educators 'in reserve' in case of this scenario. For the coding of the various answers of what summative assessments drama educators use in secondary education, please see Table 1 below.

Teacher	Curriculum	Summative assessments (SA) used	Written SA
#3, #5, #7, #10, #11, #18, #22, #23, #25	IB	The IB DP Theatre course currently has four main components: Research Presentation, Director's Notebook, Collaborative Project and Solo Theatre Piece. Each of these have four criteria within the unit and summative assessments are used to measure progress in each.	Yes
#9, #14, #16	IB and IGCSE	For IB: same as above. For IGCSE: Individual monologues from text. Original monologues. Devised group pieces from stimuli – performance and related short-answer and essay questions. Group scenes from text. Original group scenes. Text exploration and related short-answer and essay questions.	Yes
#13, #15, #26	IB and AP	For IB: same as above. For AP: Mid-unit performances, set design tasks, mask construction, playbill task, original script writing, improvisation workshops, circus workshops, class play, hot-seating interactive performance.	Yes
#8, #20	IB and National Core Arts Standards	For IB: same as above. For National Core Arts Standards: Director's log, oral reflection, physical theater, performing, Shakespeare, musical theatre, create.	Yes
#17, #24	IB, IGCSE, Key Stage 3	For IB: same as above. For IGCSE: written exam. For Key Stage 3: a piece of practical work and a SA at the end of each topic of work.	Yes
#4	IB, IGCSE and IMYC (Fieldworks)	For IB: same as above. For IGCSE and IMYC: Perform a series of tableaux, skills based performances, duologues/solo/group performances.	Yes
#12	IB and the Ontario Curriculum	For IB: same as above. For the Ontario Curriculum: in-class presentations, voiceovers with video evidence from class to show a skill in application, assessments of performances, portfolios which document their creative process, self/peer assessments and play responses.	Yes
#19	IB and American Diploma	For IB: same as above. For American Diploma – quizzes, short answer questions and answers re theatre history or practitioners or plays, essay questions re script analysis or play reviews.	Yes

#6	IB and USA (Common Core) curriculum	For IB: same as above. For USA (Common Core) curriculum - monologue, scene, play, improvisation performance assessments as well as design project assessments for stagecraft.	Yes
#21	IB and NY State Regents curriculum	For IB: same as above. For NY State Regents curriculum: a final scene and a final exam.	Yes
#1	Own	End of unit projects/performance. Oral assessment in 8 th grade for one unit of work.	No
#2	National Core Arts Standards	Own design: Independent tableau story project, poetry reading, voice unit, mime solo performance, improvisation, Shakespeare, original monologue.	Yes

Table 1: Coding structure of summative assessments

As 92% of the participants used the IB as their curriculum, or one of their curricula, the most common summative drama assessments were the Research Presentation (an individual filmed research presentation), Director's Notebook (an individual director's notebook that requires students to demonstrate how they would stage a published play), Collaborative Theatre Project (a filmed collaborative performance project with accompanying written work) and the Solo Theatre Piece (for Higher Level students only, and where students create and perform a solo theatre piece using theory of a chosen practitioner). The majority of drama educators used summatives five or more times per year, and several noted that this was dictated to them by either the school or the curriculum with one teacher commenting 'I am often "forced" to do summative more often than I would like to' (Teacher #19).

General consensus on summative drama assessment

In their general opinion on summative assessment in drama, the judgement was clearly divided, as half of the teachers were positive towards it and the other half either negative or ambiguous. A vast majority of the positives viewed summative assessment as being able to provide clear goals, act as an indicator of progress, and that it made their students take the subject more seriously. Teacher #3's view that summative assessment is 'an integral component of the education experience' was echoed by numerous others with it allowing the students to demonstrate their learning, leading to a sense of accomplishment or achievement and that it was motivating. One teacher even viewed summative assessments as 'celebrations' (Teacher #15) and learning moments for future development. Many also framed the positives into a wider context of how summatively assessing drama as a teachable and core subject elevated it and raised its status, giving credibility and weight to qualifications that could be recognised and valued within the school. At the other end of the spectrum, summative assessment in drama was viewed as a challenge, as inferior to formative assessment and as 'a necessary evil' (Teacher #8). One teacher expressed the concern that summative assessments in drama could 'stultify, oppress and skew student work because students focus on an end number and not a creative process' (Teacher #10), echoing both Hanley (2003, as cited in Jacobs, 2014) and Cockett (1998). Challenging issues were expressed as putting a value on a student's learning, not being able to be subjective with the practical components and that summative assessment can feel contrived, limit

creativity and prohibit real growth in the art. Drama's complex, organic and risk-taking nature was seen as an opposition to the need to create assessments that can fully and accurately assess what the students have learned. 'Another disadvantage is that summative can tip the balance and become more important or be perceived as more important than formative' (Teacher #19) which was a view shared by many of the educators.

Written summative assessment

Out of the twenty-six drama teachers, only one (the teacher who wrote her own curriculum) did not use written summative assessment. In Carroll and Dodds' (2016) study on creativity and assessment, the undergraduate drama course leaders felt that reflective writing was a self-development tool and should thus not be marked. It was therefore interesting to note the amount of educators who used portfolio reflections, reflection journals, reflective reports and reflection in role (writing a letter, poem etc.) as part of their summative assessment. Most of these assessments were prescribed by external curricula, and for schools following the International Baccalaureate, at Diploma level, written summative assessments form the main part of three of the four assessment tasks i.e. the Director's Notebook, the Solo Theatre Piece and the Collaborative Theatre Project. 'I would not do these (written) assessments if they weren't prescribed by external agencies' Teacher #14 noted. The one teacher who designed their own summative assessments noted that this was a luxury not afforded many other educators and that students spend so much time on their computers writing, that it is vital that her drama class be physical, hands on and 'not be just another English class in disguise' (Teacher #2). Within the scope of the study, and because of the lack of a direct question with regard to this, it was difficult to detect whether the educators were overall positive or negative (with the exception of Teacher #14) towards using written summative assessment, and this would be a possible area of further research.

Using rubrics to assess student knowledge and progress

Out of all the participants, only one did not use a rubric to assess their students summatively. For the majority the rubric was provided by the examining and external bodies yet several teachers also created rubrics together with their students and stressed the importance of giving the rubrics to the students at the beginning of a unit so that learning goals and expectations were made clear to them as also suggested by DeLuca (2010). 'Arbitrary marking leads to disenchantment' Teacher #7 commented as well as that students need to understand where they do well, in what areas they still need to improve and how they can achieve this. Teacher #12 critiqued the MYP rubrics and criteria as being vague and difficult to understand how to be taught properly. In general throughout the study, several teachers expressed a dissatisfaction with the IB's Middle Years Programme as being unclear in contrast to the Diploma Programme which was viewed as being much more well-defined, meaningful, developed and able to successfully weave performance into the summative assessment. Drama within the IGCSE was also commented on as being 'much more limiting' (Teacher #24) and 'rigorous' (Teacher #17) compared to the International Baccalaureate. Overall, the educators were positive towards using rubrics seeing it as 'a must due to the subjective nature of the subject' (Teacher #25) which ties in with Tabone and Weltsek's (2019) findings on how qualitative substantive learning is measurable, and with DeLuca's (2010) study of how it is possible to assess artistic processes and products by using a rubric

or achievement chart. Several teachers also created rubrics for engagement and collaboration in the classroom as a means for students to feel a sense of success in drama even if they were not yet comfortable performing on stage.

Assessing creativity

The challenges associated with assessing creativity (Caroll and Dodds, 2016; Schmidt and Charney, 2018; DeLuca, 2010) were reverberated by the educators with 50% agreeing that summative assessment practises limit creativity, and 50% disagreeing. 'Creativity (and its core constituents of spontaneity and imagination) is hard to concretise in summative assessment criteria' (Teacher #11). Teacher #19 noted that when students feel evaluated for a number score this brought 'a different energy that stunts creativity' and that summative assessments does not take into account skill development, a lifelong love of learning and that it simply culls intrinsic motivation. The educators who disagreed stressed that this would not be the case as long as students were given an open range of opportunities, providing that the design of the assessment is open ended and acknowledges risk taking and individual creativity. Several concurred that this was all dependant on well-designed assessments with Teacher #7 noting that 'if an assessment makes sense, it should always work'.

Assessing performance

The data suggests that the majority of the drama educators believed that performance is fundamental to summative drama assessment as 'performance is at the heart of most drama... drama needs to be "seen to be done" to be effective' (Teacher #11). The teachers viewed it as a demonstration on learning with Teacher #24 emphasising that students learn by experience and that the students 'will not fully grasp what they are doing until they TRY it'. However, it was stressed that a performance did not necessarily have to equate as acting on stage but could also entail researching, being a director, working as a technician or doing the lighting. The educators who did not believe that performance was fundamental to summative drama assessment stated that one student might possess more aptitude in performing than another, or if the student under-performed on that particular day because 'life throws them curve balls and interferes in their ability to perform at their best' (Teacher #17) this needs to be taken into consideration. Teacher #6 commented that 'there are still many intangibles when watching a performance' that could make one performance more successful than another, even though certain performance skills like vocal and physical expression can be taught and measured successfully.

The importance of individualisation

One important finding in this study was the need to individualise the assessments as 'humans are not one-size fits all' (Teacher #7). If a student was EAL or had special needs this should be taken into consideration by making sure that the language of assessment was amended and by making the goals appropriate. Teacher #13 commented that he had several EAL students who had been pushed by their parents to do drama as a way to learn how to speak more clearly and confidently, and wrote of his concern about making performance a summative as this could potentially lower these particular students' chances of success.

While educators can assess if volume was audible, if lighting framed a scene or if upper body physicality was used, there remains many tangibles of drama that are viewed as unmeasurable. Teacher #24 stressed the importance of knowing the strengths and weaknesses of all of her students, as an introverted student might not contribute much in class but could write an eloquent reflection that demonstrated that they have understood the skills and concepts being assessed. There are students who are skilled at creating, connecting and responding but not accomplished at performing while there are students who get on stage and ‘wow everyone’ (Teacher #18) but do not put the effort into creating, responding and connecting which is why standards based grading that allows for feedback on different components is needed and vital. Drama differing from other subjects due to it being so momentary was echoed by several of the educators, creating the challenging issue that assessing a student’s ability on e.g. devising, might be ‘seriously altered by their personal being on that day’ (Teacher #1).

Summative assessment in drama

The teachers unanimously felt that summative assessment in drama must be relevant, authentic and process-based. Student knowledge and progress should be assessed in a variety of form and throughout a learning period with summatives being student-negotiated to enhance creativity and rubrics used with a student-friendly language. Many noted that in an ideal world they would assess students solely through observation as ‘you get so much insight into what a student can and cannot do when you watch them work with their peers’ (Teacher #4). Several teachers argued for no assessment at all of student progress in drama citing that the drama classroom needs to allow a freedom ‘to explore and create communications that challenge/reaffirm/question who we are and why we are’ (Teacher #10). In the current situation, out of all the teachers, only one stated that they were satisfied with the current summative assessments in place and would not implement any changes. While no assumption should be made, this could mean that the vast majority of the drama educators who participated in the survey were unsatisfied with the current summative assessments yet bound to them by their curriculum or school. Teacher #23 stated that it ‘can be very tough to balance between the drama skills/content that you want to teach versus the curricular requirements’ while another teacher cited ‘the age old drama teaching pull between process and product’ (Teacher #17) as the main challenging issue of summative drama assessment.

Conclusion

Jacobs’ (2017) description of drama assessment as a ‘unique challenge’ (p. 128) has certainly been verified by this study, as well as my research question having been answered, regarding what summative assessments drama educators use to assess student knowledge and progress in secondary education, and what they think of them. The emergent findings indicate that there exist several challenging issues within drama assessment, such as performance and creativity, and that many drama educators are concerned about the limitations and possible stultifications of summative assessment. As assessment within drama constituted as the biggest gap in knowledge for me personally, I now feel that I would be able to elaborately discuss it and provide examples of how I would assess a student in

drama, should this come up in an interview, and be invaluable once I will actually be working in an educational setting as a drama educator.

The study has also provided insights into what type of additional research might be needed, such as the amount and what kind of formative assessment the drama educators use and what they think of written assessment. Further research could moreover delve into what drama educators can do when subject assessment formalities are enforced upon them which goes against the experiential learning process that drama in education ideally should entail (Neelands, 2009; Silius-Ahonen and Gustavson, 2012; Cockett, 1998). Teacher #19 commented that summative assessment within drama is 'a bit of a taboo' and that 'more discuss [sic] is needed, more forums are needed; more examples on line; rubric templates more readily available and teacher training in actual assessment strategies'. Another highly relevant issue would be to look at whether assessment is needed at all with many teachers echoing Teacher #26 that 'I wish we didn't have to assess Drama at all' and that assessment in drama is 'one of the most difficult things to do' (Teacher #4). The limitations of the research is that all the educators were from international, affluent schools with a majority following the IB programme, and did not include any state schools that perhaps would have more limited resources, if any at all. Having twenty-six drama educators participate in the study, still makes it a relatively small sample size and following up the questionnaire with further interviews with the drama educators could have resulted in even more detailed and elaborative responses.

The implications for my future teaching and my pupils' learning is that I will make sure to use a wide variety of summative assessment methods, allow for individualisation, create student-negotiated rubrics as well as make sure that all learning goals are clearly outlined and understood by the students prior to commencing a learning unit. These recommendations appear to respond to the tenuous place that Duffy (2016) states that drama holds within the education system and the 'bad reputation' (Teacher #7) that drama gets from time to time, and that this could then be contested as a theatre educator by exhibiting how drama as a subject can provide clear purpose for learning and progress through well-designed, meaningful and valuable summative assessments.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

1. How many years of full-time teaching do you have? Please also specify how many of those are within drama.
2. What curriculum(s) does your school follow?
3. What do you think about summative assessment in drama?
4. Please list all the summative assessments that you use for drama.
5. How many times per year do you use summative assessment in drama?
 - 1 time per year
 - 1-2 times per year
 - 3-4 times per year
 - 5+ times per year
6. Do you use written summative assessment? If so, what kind(s)?
7. Do you believe that performance is fundamental to summative drama assessment?
8. What are the benefits and disadvantages of summative drama assessment?
9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: summative assessment practices limit creativity.
10. Do you use a rubric assessment structure when grading students summatively?
11. In your opinion, what is the best way to assess student knowledge and progress in drama?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add concerning assessment in drama?