

## ATCL Performing (S&D) Task 4 – Impromptu Talk

NB: this document is downloadable from the website and it is quite possible that the teacher and/or candidate has read it and prepared work accordingly .

**Task 1.1 (4) of ATCL (Speech and Drama) requires the candidate to:**

*“give an impromptu talk on a subject related to performance. The subject will be given by the examiner and candidates will be given approximately 30 seconds to arrange their ideas and may make a few notes. The talk should last about four minutes and may be terminated by the examiner if it shows signs of significantly over-running”.*

**The purpose of this task** is to give candidates the opportunity to speak non-interactively and unprompted about their practical approach to an aspect of performance and, in doing so, to display the levels of knowledge and understanding listed on pages 11-13 of the Trinity College London Diploma syllabus.

**The subject for the talk** will be in some way related to one or more of the pieces that candidates have presented. There are no tricks and no hidden agendas.

### **Examples:**

1. A candidate who had presented a piece of Shakespearean blank verse might be asked to speak on “how iambic pentameter helps the actor” or, if appropriate, “hidden stage directions in Shakespeare”. Clearly the talk will be more informative if the candidate illustrates the talk with specific examples – which could be from the speech they have presented. A candidate who refers to other speeches in the play, or other plays – would give a more impressive answer.
2. A candidate who had presented a piece of Chekhov or Pinter might be asked to speak on “using subtext to reveal character.” In this case the name of Stanislavski might well come up. However, the examiner would be interested in hearing how the candidate applied Stanislavski’s techniques when working on their speeches, rather than hearing a bald summary of the facts of Stanislavski’s career.
3. A candidate presented one of Shen Teh’s speeches from *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, which included direct address to the audience, a song and a mime. The examiner asked the candidate to speak about “Brecht’s theory of alienation”. The candidate did not have a fundamental understanding of this, despite the fact that the speech presented was virtually a text-book illustration of Brecht’s theories in practice.
4. A candidate performed Katherine’s final speech from *The Taming of The Shrew*. The content of this speech presents the 21<sup>st</sup> Century actress with a number of challenges. How does a modern woman of a liberated society speak lines such as “Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper/Thy head, thy sovereign”? The examiner asked the candidate to speak on “playing the role of Kate in 2010”. The candidate had clearly thought deeply about the issues of gender politics that this speech raises, and had consciously made a series of acting choices that reflected her thinking.

In some instances, the examiner may define a notional audience to whom the talk is to be given. For example: "A group of teenagers with very little experience of acting are about to start rehearsing a school play. Give them a short talk giving some tips on how to go about developing a character". In such cases the tone and structure of the talk should be appropriate to the experience and understanding of the notional audience.