2020 Media Studies Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2020 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

The majority of folios this year consisted of two media explorations (maximum of 1500 words combined, if written) and one media interaction study (800 words maximum, if written). Generally, students explored three topics, allowing them to fully explore the four key media concepts through knowledge and understanding, research and analysis, and communication, as specified in the subject outline.

The more successful responses commonly:

* showed evidence of specific understandings relating to key media concepts, specific conventions and consideration of the important role the audience plays in the media process
* explicitly addressed the specific features and provided evidence of understanding in a considered and analytical manner, often by using specific examples that were synthesised with the key media concepts
* included some choice within each topic, allowing students to explore concepts and ideas more deeply
* utilised the media interaction task as an immersive, personal interaction with a media product, form or concept, which was very different from the media exploration, as it clearly consisted of first-person language and a sense of exploring a personal relationship within the wide range of interactions of the media.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not demonstrate learning at the higher levels of achievement because of poor task design or through misinterpretation of the task
* treated the media interaction study as another media exploration or as a review
* presented assessment tasks based on a single, specific media product, such as all students exploring the same documentary, which limited the scope for students to explore the topic
* provided a recount with little analysis
* displayed little understanding of the concept of bias.

Assessment Type 2: Product

A majority of productions this year focussed on the creation of individual works, however there were also many good examples of collaborative productions. Generally, this task was addressed in the form of two Productions accompanied by two explicit Producers Statements.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated a clear understanding of the conventions of the product e.g. producers of TV adverts considered length, conventional content, product placement, font, etc.
* developed a clear sense of narrative
* displayed strong, polished production techniques appropriate to the context of the school and community
* utilised the producer’s statement to further display their understandings, which allowed them to elaborate on their role if part of a group production, and to include visual references and screen shots iterating their development
* created products that allowed them to clearly display their understandings against the performance standards, which was particularly evident where students utilised, or challenged, the codes and conventions
* addressed the importance of failure, trial and error in the producer’s statement, rather than just the successes
* embedded audience feedback in the producer’s statement to support the intention and success of the product.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not address specific feature P1, the design and planning of media products for selected audiences, in enough depth
* analysed multiple texts superficially rather one in depth
* lacked a consideration of planning and production techniques, which was particularly evident in video productions that lacked a consideration of sound, framing or narrative
* did not address, use, or challenge the codes and conventions of the media type focus
* failed to clearly discuss their role in a group production within the producer’s statement
* showed little understanding of the design process or conventions when creating print products
* incorporated a significant amount of material that was not the student’s own work, such as copied advertisements
* did not submit a separate producer’s statements for each individual, for both productions.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Investigation

Popular current media issues investigated for 2020 included coverage of the black lives matter campaign, reportage of the COVID-19 pandemic, and use of social media such as TikTok. It was pleasing to see more multimodal presentations this year.

Student work should be presented in a format that is helpful for markers to view and read. A transcript of audio-visual materials is very helpful as is a reasonable font size and careful placement of graphics.

The more successful responses commonly:

* addressed their question consistently throughout the response
* incorporated the media into the wording of the question, which helped address the key media concepts in the response
* researched current and controversial issues and as a result the sources used were both varied, for both primary and secondary sources, and contemporary. Some older sources were used to paint the current picture of the topic
* were driven by one major guiding question rather than a series of minor questions
* clearly established the currency of the issue of the investigation by referencing this in their introductory paragraphs
* referred to various theories applicable to media and audiences
* used both qualitative and quantitative evidence to give depth to their analysis
* incorporated a variety of visual elements such as graphs, tables, charts, or images into their text that related directly to the research and ensured the formatting did not impinge on text blocks
* were aware of the performance standards and provided evidence of ‘comprehensive and sustained knowledge and understanding of media structures, issues, concepts, and interactions’ (KU1), as well as ‘comprehensive research into and analysis of the ways in which groups and individuals are represented in media’ (RA1)
* used an appendix to provide evidence of correspondence, questionnaires, and information from other sources.

The less successful responses commonly:

* selected a topic where the issues and focus questions did not lend themselves to a media investigation
* provided an analysis of the sources used rather than a focus on an issue
* looked more at political or sociological concerns, rather than the media representation of or role in promoting those concerns
* provided little evidence that demonstrated an understanding of the key media concepts
* broke the response into subheadings of the key media concepts, often losing sight of the initial arguments and limiting the depth of analysis
* omitted discussion about how the audience influences the media, representations or ‘different point of views, bias, values, or intent across a range of media texts’
* focused their response on their own personal views
* recounted events, rather than analysing how the media affected or represented these events or how the audience responded to them
* inserted images, tweets and posts with little or no discussion or analysis
* were heavily scaffolded, often as a class
* used too many words explaining the background of the topic or defining basic media terms.