

Cross-disciplinary Studies

2013 Chief Assessor's Report



Government
of South Australia

SACE
Board of SA

CROSS-DISCIPLINARY STUDIES

2013 CHIEF ASSESSOR'S REPORT

OVERVIEW

Chief Assessors' reports give 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, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 1: Commentary

When designing tasks, teachers are encouraged to take advantage of the variety of ways in which students can demonstrate their evidence of learning, and consider setting tasks that are creative and that allow students to use their imagination. This could include a role play or puppet show to present their learning from their research. Regardless of the form, it is critical to ensure that the task design allows students to meet the performance standards that are being assessed.

It is important to clearly state on the task sheet the capabilities that are being assessed (i.e. specific feature KU3). Students who were able to address the capabilities directly and link their understanding to the learning interest achieved higher grades. Moderators noted that the Analysis and Evaluation assessment design criterion was not well addressed by most students, and often task design was a crucial factor in this. Task design needs to give students the opportunity to demonstrate their comprehensive analysis skills and their ability to evaluate information from different sources and perspectives, identify and evaluate the ways that different disciplines inform the learning interest, and/or analyse and reflect on their learning and evaluate feedback.

Assessment Type 2: Group Project

For this assessment type, students plan, organise, and implement a group project that focuses on a learning requirement or an aspect of the content. Students were more successful when given explicit information about how the group project was to be undertaken and how students were to be assessed. In this way students were able to contribute to decision-making and reflect on their contributions to the final outcome.

Moderators noted that the evidence for grades awarded to students for the Interaction and Communication assessment design criterion was often incomplete in the individual student reflections. It is essential that students address this criterion explicitly to demonstrate learning against the performance standards. Students can address the specific feature IC1 can be with a variety of evidence depending on how students worked within their group.

Successful students were able to demonstrate their collaboration skills in a range of situations and to reflect in depth on their learning relative to the learning interest. They were then able to apply their knowledge and understanding to solve problems and develop further questions in relation to the relevant disciplines.

Assessment Type 3: Presentation and Discussion

For this assessment type, students select an aspect of their learning from across the program for a presentation followed by a discussion. This is an opportunity for students to integrate and apply their cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills in the context of the learning interest and to provide evidence of their learning that encompasses the generation of an idea followed through to its conclusion.

Students often complete the presentation component of this assessment by preparing an oral presentation or performance, or through the use of videos. It is important that all presentations are recorded and all electronic evidence is provided, ensuring that each student is clearly identifiable by his or her SACE registration number and/or name. In 2013, the more successful students included a range of props to demonstrate their learning and enhance their presentation, such as photographs, a data display, a short multimedia presentation, or a combination of these.

The second component of this assessment requires students to undertake a discussion with their teacher. The teacher asks questions that allow students to demonstrate evidence of their learning against the specific features that are being assessed. The discussion needs to be recorded and the recording must be provided, if requested, for moderation.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 4: Analysis

Teachers provided a variety of stimuli for student to respond to in this assessment type, including previously viewed videos or articles, as well as unseen short-answer and extended-response questions. Teachers are reminded that only 60 minutes is permitted for each Analysis task.

It is vital that teachers design questions that provide students with adequate opportunity to meet the specific features assessed by this assessment type. The students who achieved higher grades often had more opportunities to express their knowledge than those who achieved lower grades.

The weighting applied to questions is also important. If only one question is used to address a particular specific feature, and a student does not manage to answer that question due to time constraints, then the student may be disadvantaged. Teachers are advised to provide questions that address more than one specific feature, and spreading these throughout the paper so that time restrictions do not penalise students.

To assist markers, it is essential that teachers provide a comprehensive answer sheet.

Teachers are reminded not to write on or mark student work in any manner. Marks awarded by the teacher should not be revealed to students, and no feedback should be written on student work.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

Teachers are asked to ensure that the specific features on the task sheets match those in the approved learning and assessment plan.

Teachers should ensure that video and audio material is submitted according to SACE Board advice on preparing Stage 2 materials, which is available from the subject minisite. Individual students should be clearly identified in video and audio footage to enable moderators to easily confirm grades awarded by teachers.

GENERAL COMMENTS

, Moderators were better able to determine how a teacher arrived at an assessment decision if teachers provided evidence of the marks awarded to individual specific features rather than just an overall mark for the assessment type. Written comments on school-assessed work that identify the specific criteria being addressed are also useful for confirming marks.

It is critical that the disciplines and capabilities being addressed are clearly stated on the task sheet, as this assists both students and moderators.

Similarly, providing students with specific opportunities to comment on and evaluate the contributions of the disciplines to the learning interest and to students' own learning during the course of their studies enables students to achieve higher grades.

Please be aware that it is not a simple task to convert to this subject part-way through the year. Students may be disadvantaged if tasks that they have already completed do not address the performance standards particular to this subject.

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Chief Assessor