

Tourism

2010 ASSESSMENT REPORT

Society and Environment Learning Area



Government
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TOURISM

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Tourism remains a popular subject for a range of students across South Australia and the Northern Territory. In 2010, 1683 students (1124 females and 559 males) achieved a result in Tourism, with over 85% achieving a satisfactory score. The mean score was 12.6 out of 20, which is identical to the mean in 2009.

As in previous years, the design of the assessment task was a vital aspect that contributed towards students' ability to demonstrate various assessment criteria. Moderators noted that well-focused tasks which provided a moderate level of structural guidelines were more useful than complex, multilayered tasks with excessive scaffolding. Additionally, the alteration of clarifying questions to suit particular tasks occasionally compromised the rigour of the assessment; thus some students were unable to demonstrate adequately that they had met the assessment criteria requirements.

It was pleasing to see the number of teachers who worked closely with their allocated support moderators throughout the year. Those who did so followed the detailed feedback on the appropriateness of their marking standards, and were able to adjust marks accordingly, which benefited their students at final (central) moderation. Moderators appreciated the overwhelming majority of teachers who sent in moderation materials by assessment component (rather than by student), who supplied a class spreadsheet free of inaccuracies, and who followed the documented word-count policy.

The word-count policy applies to the course work, practical activity, and the investigative report assessment components. Limiting the number of words per task ensures that all work is comparable, and that students' workloads are manageable. This year it was pleasing to see a reduction in the number of word-count breaches. Those who did go beyond the specified word-limits often did so by excessive use of tables that contained analysis. Students and teachers are reminded that, according to the curriculum statement, tables should be used for data and summaries, and any analysis (including tables, annotations, and footnotes) is included in the word-count. As the policy states that teachers are not to assess beyond the word-limit, some students' ability to meet investigation, knowledge and analysis, and evaluation criteria was compromised.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 1: COURSE WORK

The focus of course work activities is the critical analysis of secondary sources of information and the consideration of contemporary issues in tourism. Most tasks were designed with this in mind, allowing students to explore tourism issues in some detail. However, tasks that were not issue-based made it difficult for students to meet all criteria adequately; such tasks prompted description of tourism concepts, rather than use of higher-order skills of analysis and evaluation.

Moderators noted that a growing number of students were able to use tourism terms and concepts in their tasks, especially relating to the multiplier effect, profit leakage,

host communities, carrying capacity, niche markets, and motivations to travel. Nevertheless, many students used these tourism terms with little analysis or application in relation to contemporary tourism issues. This was especially so for the compulsory concepts of sustainability and cultural diversity.

Teachers are encouraged to support their students in selecting a wide range of relevant secondary sources beyond a textbook. Tourism journals and magazines, government reports, and tourism websites offer a wealth of information on contemporary tourism issues. Course work tasks also require students to evaluate secondary sources of information. Moderators documented that the evaluation criterion needed to be assessed more rigorously by teachers, as only the most successful work showed evidence of judging sources for accuracy, relevance, bias, and validity. Moreover, the need for students to develop conclusions and to make recommendations is a key component of the evaluation assessment criterion.

Finally, students are required to acknowledge their sources of information, and this aspect is assessed in the presentation criterion for course work tasks. Moderators noted that some classes referred to 'teacher handout' as a source, which is inappropriate referencing. Teachers are encouraged to demonstrate best practice by showing students how to reference sources, and by acknowledging the source of any material they distribute to students.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 2: COMMUNICATION EXERCISE

The communication exercise component requires students to present information using a variety of text types. As in previous years, most students presented at least one exercise as an oral presentation to their tourism class, using programs such as PowerPoint. In well-designed and appropriately assessed communication exercises, students showed strong evidence that they had interpreted and evaluated a range of primary and secondary sources. Likewise, they demonstrated a sound understanding of tourism concepts, effectively using the language of tourism in their work.

For moderation purposes, teachers are reminded to provide adequate evidence of student achievement against the criteria. Examples of useful evidence include digital files or printouts of PowerPoint presentations, cue cards or transcripts; detailed teacher assessment sheets; and CDs or DVDs. This evidence is especially important in showing that students have suited their presentation for a specific setting or audience, and that they have effectively demonstrated a thorough understanding and interpretation of tourism concepts.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 3: PRACTICAL ACTIVITY

The practical activity component requires students to develop their tourism skills both in and *beyond* the classroom; therefore, tasks that emphasised the collection of primary sources of information (fieldwork, surveys, interviews, observations, industry visits, and so on) allowed students to best meet the assessment criteria. An over-reliance on secondary sources, and only using a narrow range of primary sources (such as a survey), were two aspects of many practical activity tasks that were less successful. Conversely, the most successful students' work demonstrated initiative in designing and gathering primary sources, as well as the ability to make connections to existing research. Moderators noted that where practical activities were too tightly scaffolded, student initiative was not evident and the range of sources was limited.

Additionally, tasks that lacked specific focus or contained too many requirements made it difficult to show evidence against the criteria within the limit of 1000 words.

The inclusion of a variety of relevant graphical materials and the integration of practical findings into students' work were improved aspects of many practical activities this year, although some were still more decorative than analytical.

The criterion that acted as the most powerful discriminator of students' results was evaluation. Students are required to make judgments of the validity, bias, and accuracy of sources. Those who were able to evaluate their sources effectively, whether under a discrete subheading or throughout the tasks, tended to produce more successful work.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 4: INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Choice of Issues

A wide variety of contemporary tourism issues were explored in the investigative reports, including those of local, national, and international significance. Even so, markers indicated that numerous students in the same class chose the same issue and often used similar sources.

Teachers are encouraged to ensure that students choose tourism issues that will enable them to meet the assessment criteria to the highest standard. In this regard, investigating issues that are too broad makes it difficult for a student to draw conclusions and make recommendations. Similarly, issues that lack specific focus can be difficult to investigate using a range of readily accessible primary and secondary sources.

Investigation

The mean score for the investigative report this year was 19.4 out of 30.

A key factor in determining the grade for the investigative report was an appropriately selected contemporary tourism issue. Some issues were more relevant to social studies than to tourism, and some students did not choose an issue or a focus that was contemporary. The better investigative reports tended to develop an issue that was open to interpretation, and enabled a position to be argued and supported by evidence. The selection of relevant aspects of a tourism issue enabled students to plan and structure their reports effectively, as their discussion was able to remain focused throughout the paper.

Selection of relevant primary and secondary sources was paramount to producing high-quality work. The most successful investigative reports included sources that provided a range of viewpoints on an issue, allowing authentic analysis to occur, and for students to make valid connections between primary and secondary sources. Primary sources, however, were often limited to poorly conceived and constructed surveys, which hindered students from engaging in serious analysis or evaluation. Students should also be encouraged to search for a wide range of secondary sources, including newspaper articles, journals, magazines, brochures, and government reports, many of which are available freely on the Internet.

The ability of students to critically analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources varied significantly among reports. Sources that were taken at face value, or

merely copied, showed little evidence of evaluation; however, when consideration was given to bias, accuracy, relevance, currency, and possible level of contradiction, higher levels of analysis and evaluation were evident.

Knowledge and Analysis

While the knowledge and analysis criterion was the greatest discriminator of student performance, most students demonstrated at least a good understanding of their chosen issue. Some students provided a very good background research context for the discussion of the issue, and many reports were rich in tourism language, demonstrating that students clearly understood the concepts discussed. However, markers noted that some classes' reports were filled with so many tourism models and concepts that these disrupted the flow of debate and diluted the focus of analysis. Additionally, the level of critical analysis in each paper depended upon the issue chosen for investigation; specifically focused contemporary issues lent themselves more readily to higher levels of analysis. Reports that included a mention of tourism terms (the multiplier effect and the Butler sequence were frequently listed) without discussion in relation to a contemporary issue did not positively affect the final grade awarded. Most students made at least some conclusions and recommendations based on their findings; however, the more successful reports provided considered solutions to the issue under investigation.

Report

An improved aspect of many investigative reports this year was their logical organisation and structure, assisted greatly by the use of various headings and subheadings. Likewise, most of the reports were clearly written with few errors in spelling or grammar, demonstrating an effective use of the drafting and editing process.

The most successful reports tended to use a broad variety of graphical forms beyond the popular pie chart (such as photographs, flow charts, and diagrams), and the graphical materials enhanced the analysis by integrating diagrams into the flow of discussion, rather than including them for aesthetic purposes.

Most students demonstrated a sound ability to acknowledge sources consistently with either footnotes or in-text references. Markers expressed concern over incorrect or inconsistent formatting in some reference lists.

Chief Assessor
Tourism