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Child Studies

2016 Chief Assessor’s Report

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# 2016 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: Practical Activity

**The more successful responses**

* Established a clear connection between each aspect of the practical activity — action plan, research task, practical application, and individual evaluation report.
* Provided action plans that clearly defined issues identified as part of the practical application, supported by detailed discussion of a variety of implementation strategies.
* Incorporated headings in action plans and evaluations to support student responses.
* Analysed and reflected on the results of the practical application.
* Clearly demonstrated where each specific feature of the assessment design criteria was addressed, often with the use of appropriate headings.
* Used tables creatively and appropriately to support information expanded on in the body of action plans, research tasks, and evaluations.
* Responded to a specific question rather than just a topic.
* Responded to questions that were shaped by phrases such as ‘To what extent …?’ and ‘How significant is …?’ which provided opportunity for ‘critical thinking and analysis’.
* Focused on a smaller number of specific features of the assessment design criteria, which allowed students to provide more detailed and insightful responses.
* Included detailed visual evidence (photographs) of the practical application, supported by captions and an image of the final product as part of the evidence sheet
* Used a variety of credible sources in their research task.
* Considered the validity of sources.

**The less successful responses**

* Recounted the ‘tools’ used to complete the task (e.g. laminator), as opposed to providing an appraisal of technology.
* Provided a recount of the activity rather than an ‘insightful’ or ‘well considered’ discussion of the processes and outcomes.
* Used tables to include a summary of pertinent information that should have been discussed within the body of the work.
* Were over-assessed, particularly in the evaluation, which prevented students from producing responses that were ‘insightful’ or ‘in-depth’.
* Did not fully reference work — only providing URLs does not support the credibility of the research.

**General information**

* ‘Appraisal of the impact of technology on the health and well-being of children’ (specific feature E2) should relate directly to the practical application.
* Pamphlets and baby simulators are not suitable practical applications.
* Australian sources are recommended to support the contemporary issue/topic within an Australian context.
* Students who undertake topics of a sensitive nature should ensure that they adopt ethical research practices.

Assessment Type 2: Group Activity

**The more successful responses**

* Participated in group decision-making rather than producing a group action plan.
* Clearly communicated the decisions made about problem-solving and implementation strategies (see specific feature P2).
* Focused on specific feature P2 by providing explicit evidence of group collaboration.
* Conveyed the learning that occurred and formulated conclusions about the effectiveness of the group in addressing the issues identified in the group decision-making in the evaluation.
* Provided an evaluation of the student’s own performance, as well as the group’s collaborative efforts.
* Involved students working with a child/children which allowed for a more relevant and insightful evaluation.

**The less successful responses**

* Included individual evaluation reports that only discussed what roles the student took on, rather the working relationships formed in the group, the issues encountered, and the problem-solving strategies implemented.

**General information**

* It is appropriate for group decision-making to be communicated in creative ways, such as mind maps.
* Area of Study 5: Technological Influences was often addressed as a group activity. Tasks were designed creatively to meet this area of study using technology available to the class or school. Some schools focused on programs that encouraged the use of technology with children, for example, by using Kahoot or by creating QR codes with a group of primary school students. Effective task design ensured that the theme of technology flowed as a set from the group decision-making right through to the individual student evaluation. Students who performed in the higher grade band evaluated the impact of the technology used in the practical application and how it engaged the primary school students; this provided the opportunity to assess students on specific feature E2.
* Evidence of group decision-making could include the contents of a group inbox or a mind map, rather than just still photographs of students working as a group.

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Investigation

Generally, a good hypothesis or research question led to the production of logical and productive focus questions, which could then be researched in depth, critically analysed, and evaluated.

**The more successful responses**

* Included a focused and well-worded hypothesis or research question, enabling students the opportunity to meet the specific features at a higher grade band.
* Demonstrated clear links back to an area of study, which helped focus the investigation and ensured it was aimed at the health and well-being of children.
* Explored topics that required the student to do more than just relay facts.
* Responded to questions that had been refined; this tended to allow for more in‑depth investigation and opportunities for perceptive critical analysis.
* Structured the analysis of the topic around a range of focus questions.
* Provided evidence of multiple perspectives on the issue.
* Made clear connections to the topic rather than just describing what the student had learnt.
* Analysed and interpreted numerical data clearly and succinctly.
* Included graphs within the body of the investigation to provide evidence and to demonstrate an understanding of data collected.
* Used credible and reliable sources for research, including research journals and government websites.
* Relied on overseas sources mainly to supplement Australian data or when no Australian data was available or current.
* When information was used from another country, made clear links to highlight the relevance to the Australian context.
* Used expert primary sources, supported by secondary sources.
* Included quotes from expert primary sources to support secondary research, thus allowing more scope for perceptive analysis.
* Demonstrated synthesis of information drawn from a wide range of sources including articles, textbooks, medical and educational journals, and parenting websites.
* Conducted mini-experiments with children which provided valuable primary data that could be referred to throughout the investigation.
* Used appropriate terminology.
* Evaluated the sources for validity, reliability, and bias.
* Used consistent referencing.

**The less successful responses**

* Tended to have a broad research question or hypothesis.
* Included focus questions aimed at advantages and disadvantages which did not allow for in-depth critical analysis; closed (ie yes or no) questions were also found to be limiting.
* Addressed topics that were too broad, consequently requiring the use of most of the permitted word-count to explain the topic and present information, resulting in a lack of in-depth critical analysis and evaluation of the trends presented.
* Repeated information included in the introduction in the body of the report
* Had conclusions that included repetitive information from the body of the report, rather than analytical and evaluative conclusions.
* Included an appendix containing information that should have been included and analysed in the body of the investigation.
* Surveyed their own peer group or young children, asking questions that the sample group could not accurately answer
* Formulated a methodology before commencing research that was then disregarded during the actual research process; this resulted in valuable words being used in the section which added little or no evidence against the performance standards.
* Included large amounts of largely unreferenced material that was not analysed.
* Provided no analysis of information, or the analysis was contained in a box separate to the body of the investigation.
* Did not reveal the expertise or relevance of sources.
* Included a graph in the piece containing data that was not interpreted.
* Did not adopt basic grammatical conventions including paragraphs and sentences; this made the work difficult to follow.
* Had not been drafted and edited.
* Did not acknowledge primary sources in the bibliography/reference list

**General information**

* There was an increase in investigations focusing on local contemporary issues, thus providing students with strong primary sources and local articles which allowed for excellent analysis.
* There was a significant impact on the grades of investigations which were out of scope, that is, they did not focus on the health and wellbeing of children up to the age of 8. Topics included divorce, child abuse, domestic violence, and breastfeeding (discussing the mother’s perspective only).
* It was evident in some cases that students did not understand the importance of relating their investigation to focus on the health and well-being of children aged from 0 to 8 years
* Students are encouraged to consider formatting their work and adopting an easy-to-read font.
* Students and teachers are reminded that it is not necessary to submit survey questions and/or responses, or interview transcripts, as appendices to the investigation.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

* It is not necessary to include appendices, as they become a distractor and are not part of student evidence when confirming a grade. Furthermore, additional evidence of practicals, for example, story books, recipes, and food orders, are irrelevant to the reviewing process, as all evidence should be communicated within the student’s work or on the evidence sheet.
* Ensure that the learning and assessment plan (LAP) and assessment tasks have been updated to reflect current performance standards.
* A LAP addendum needs to be used when making changes to the assessment tasks. Use the terminology from the current subject outline and performance standards.
* The use of A+ to E– grading levels is required. There is still some use of old performance standards and old language on tasks sheets.
* Student SACE registration numbers or names need to be clearly provided on the cover page/first page of each assessment task.
* Include an approved LAP, a copy of task sheets, and a Variations — Moderation Materials form (if necessary) with moderation materials.
* When packaging student work for moderation, separate the two assessment types (practical activity and group activity), and ensure that each assessment task is securely attached (e.g. stapled) so they don’t come apart,
* Size 10–12 font is recommended.
* There is no need for plastic sleeves or folders.
* Variations — Moderation Materials forms are different to an addendum. A variations form must be filled in and submitted in the moderation bag for any work not completed or missing. It is expected that this form has been filled in and that the teacher has used the key that describes the nature of the missing work.
* Material for external assessment should be de-identified.

## General Comments

Tables should only be used as an extension of knowledge and be referred to within the body.

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