

Information Processing and Publishing

2011 Assessment Report



Government
of South Australia

SACE
Board of SA

INFORMATION PROCESSING AND PUBLISHING

2011 ASSESSMENT REPORT

OVERVIEW

Assessment 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-BASED ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 1: Practical Skills

It was pleasing to see the integration of focus areas within the practical skills tasks for the 20-credit courses. Many teachers developed tasks that enabled students to develop skills in both focus areas. Courses in which a balance of assessments between the two focus areas were provided, enabled students to better develop and display their skills in both areas.

The use of performance standards for the first time, as outlined in the subject outline, has helped teachers to clearly assess student's levels of achievement in the areas of development and application, and analysis and evaluation. In instances where the teacher continued to use past criteria marking sheets instead of the performance standards students were disadvantaged as they were not necessarily provided with opportunities to demonstrate each of the specific features as outlined in the performance standards by the completion of study of the subject.

For this assessment type, students provided evidence of their learning in the following assessment design criteria:

- development and application
- analysis and evaluation.

Student work that was presented with the performance standards displaying the students' achievement for each task assisted the moderators in understanding how the teacher arrived at their assessment for each student within this assessment type. Assessment of each task against the performance standard is also a very good way of providing feedback to students on their level of achievement.

The use of templates and automated publishing software restricted students in achieving the highest level of performance in these areas. Thematic tasks within this assessment type restricted students in their ability to demonstrate their development and application of practical skills. In many cases the same design was used for all practical skills tasks with little additional content being added. Students can be disadvantaged if opportunities for new design are not available in each task.

Many students undertook tasks that required back-to-back printing. If students do not have access to this type of printer it is better to modify the task rather than have students gluing pages together.

There must be sufficient text in each practical skills task to allow students the opportunity to maximize potential layout (whether text is provided by the teacher or sourced by the student). Limited text in a practical skills assessment may lead to too much white space within a document. Good task design should ensure adequate text is required for students to demonstrate proficient design and layout skills e.g. a task that asks for a letterhead, business card, and with compliments slip, could also include a letter, flyer and menu.

For a 10-credit subject, practical skills assessments should total a minimum of five A4 pages or the equivalent with sufficient text, which may be enhanced by graphics. For a 20-credit subject, practical skills assessments should total a minimum of eight A4 pages or the equivalent with sufficient text, which may be enhanced by graphics.

Students should be provided with opportunities to demonstrate evaluation of text-based products against design principles (AE2), in at least one of the practical skills tasks in a 10-credit subject. In a 20-credit subject it is advised that opportunities for this specific feature to be demonstrated should be provided for at least one task in each of the focus areas.

In demonstrating evaluation of text-based products against design principles there is no need for students to replicate documentation that will be undertaken in the external assessment (e.g. the product and documentation). Students could demonstrate this by writing about the design principles and process, how they were developed and used in achieving the final product.

There should be no evidence of scrap booking (for example; ribbons, stickers, glitter) in the production of final practical tasks. Final products that are not A4 in size need to be cut or folded to the size of the product e.g. business cards. Products that are intended to be back-to-back should be printed as such; voucher books should be assembled as one. Final products should be presented in the manner in which a client would expect them.

If borderless printing is not available when printing an A4 document, it is acceptable to leave the white borders without trimming them. The type of paper the final products for each practical skills assessment are printed on should be appropriate for the product and the audience it is intended for. Mail merge tasks should include evidence of the list of recipients, data fields, and final mail merge.

Themes that are extended across all practical tasks may provide limited opportunities for students to demonstrate to the A grade level of the performance standards. Students who achieve a C grade for a logo in Business Documents or for a banner in Electronic Publishing that will be used within all practical tasks may be disadvantaged in all following assessments.

It is strongly recommended that the use of background graphics is avoided as they provide poor contrast making text difficult to read.

Students who demonstrated at the A grade level in the area of development and application manipulated graphics, demonstrating a highly proficient use of software. Students who achieved within the A grade band were given practical tasks that increased in complexity and difficulty over the course of the year.

Electronic Publishing

Successful students within this focus area avoided the use of scroll bars, borders or content that was created by other online sites and needed connection to the Internet to be seen. However, external links to other websites are acceptable. Graphics must be manipulated, enhancing the design and layout. The progression of skill development must be evident throughout the practical skills.

In the focus area of Electronic Publishing, when marking student work consideration must be given to file management. Work in progress files, such as Photoshop files, should not be included as they impact on the download time of a site. File names should be lowercase with no spaces; if spaces are indicated then an underscore is to be used to indicate a space. All files that are part of the file management of the site are those that are being used in the site, hence work in progress should not be included in the final submission. The file management of the final website should be of a standard enabling it to be uploaded to the Internet, demonstrating good download time, no missing images and the home page labeled as index and (not home).

Design and layout should reflect the use of columns, not continuous writing from left to right of the site, demonstrating consistent and thoughtful application of layout and design principles in the area of Electronic Publishing.

E-publications is a new area of Electronic Publishing. Evidence of the documents created before the final publishing of the E-Publication assisted the moderation team in confirming the teacher's assessment decision.

An area of concern within the Electronic Publishing focus area were the number of tasks submitted that had not been published, for example flash files that had not been published as .swf. Often with unpublished files that were submitted the related files were not present making it hard for moderators to confirm teacher's marks.

Assessment Type 2: Issues Analysis

For the first time students were required to analyse and evaluate the impact of social, ethical, and/or legal issues related to information-processing and publishing technologies within this assessment type. This could be demonstrated in the issues task(s) and/or the technical and operational understanding task. Students who demonstrated at the A grade band for the Understanding, and Analysis and Evaluation assessment design criteria specifically addressed them within the report/oral presentation. Many students demonstrated a poor level of understanding and did not analyse or evaluate them at all in the body of the report but included them in an appendices that was not referred to. Social, legal and/or ethical issues should be explicitly mentioned within the body of the report, not just alluded to.

Task design should provide opportunities for analysis and evaluation. Some tasks did not provide scope for comparisons, hence little analysis was evident. Appendices are to be labeled and should be referred to within the response. Appendices are placed last in a report, a bibliography precedes any appendices. A glossary (explanation of technical terms) forms an appendix and is not part of the report in a table. If an appendice, table, or diagram is used, it should be clearly labeled and referred to in the essay/report/presentation.

So as to not disadvantage students, word counts should be adhered to and clearly indicated on the task sheet. A number of schools undertook a task that asked students to compare and recommend products. To help students make a fair comparison and informed recommendation the technical and operational understanding assessment could provide restricted price range, narrowing the field of options that students need to investigate.

When citing legal implications it is recommended that they are based on South Australian/Northern Territory law making the recommendation authentic.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 3: Product and Documentation

This was the first year that teachers were required to send work in to be marked externally. From this exercise it was evident that a number of changes need to be made next year in order for this process to run more smoothly. A task sheet included with every student's work would enable the markers to clearly understand what the product should be. It is recommended that students submit their work in a lightweight A4 display folder divided into sections clearly marked with Investigation, Devising, Producing, Final Product, Evaluation and Bibliography. Materials are not recommended to be submitted as loose leafs or stapled documents

Successful students clearly displayed the word count in each section of the documentation e.g. it was included at the bottom of each of the three summaries (Investigation, Devising, Evaluation). They also clearly labelled their work with the number of words used in their final product by doing a word dump to show the actual number of words in the final product.

In the Investigating section of the documentation, statements about the task requirements and constraints, statements about the student's assessment using the design principles and statements about the hardware and software used for the task should all be included. Software and hardware investigation need to include reasons as to why the software is appropriate for the task and why the hardware has been chosen.

When students are reporting on the design principles of contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity, a good recommendation is to incorporate the annotations in an appendix and the summary only is needed in the Investigation section of the document. Students who excelled in this part of the product and documentation assessment actually referred to the design principles of contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity within the examples investigated rather than making general statements about the design principles. Students that showed a good understanding of the design principles through annotations investigated a variety of examples. The Devising section of the Product and Documentation assessment task was the area that most students were less successful. In this section there should be a statement with a comparison of fonts, colour combinations, and graphics with each clearly labelled stating why the student is considering them for their final product. Also within the Devising section should be the design plans which reflect the final product. Many students did not produce design plans that were detailed and thorough. Their work could have been improved by making sure that fonts, colours, sizes, backgrounds, layout and actual graphics were clearly marked on their design plans, e.g. instead of

'image', it could be 'image of restaurant'. One design plan per page or screen if it is a website is all that is required. Students who were successful in this section provided detailed design plans that would enable anyone to pick them up and reproduce the final product

The Devising section should also include a summary of the final choices made and why. Therefore mention of the colour combination, fonts and graphics being selected, and the design plans being used needs to be incorporated in the summary. If students use their own photographs, they should ensure that this is stated in their documentation because it shows an extra level of competence. In this case one item of hardware they mention should be a camera, and should include whether it was a mobile phone camera or a DSLR camera that was used. Students who were successful in the Devising section included original images and the altered images, writing about the changes they had made.

Markers require that vouchers, business cards, tickets and with compliments slips, etc be cut to the actual size and not printed on an A4 sheet of paper. Some business cards were far too large to fit into a wallet or purse. Also folded documents need to be folded so that markers can see if the alignment is correct.

Having the student registration number and the school number on all work is imperative because sometimes work falls out of folders or plastic pockets and without any identification on it, may not be returned to the correct folder.

It is recommended that the timing of the Product and Documentation by the teacher be as late as possible in the school year in order for students to develop their practical skills and not be disadvantaged. All marking sheets and names of students should be deleted from the final product. There should be nothing to identify the student or the school in the final documentation e.g. photocopy magazines with the school stamp.

Product and Documentation final products from the focus areas of Desktop Publishing, Business Documents and Personal Documents are to be printed and reproduced in a manner that implies a realistic and authentic final product. To assist the external marking process of the final documentation, all documentation regardless of the focus areas should be printed and submitted in hard copy rather than submitted in an electronic format.

In the focus area of Electronic Publishing, good file management with a clearly labelled index file enabled the marker to immediately find the website. Untitled pages were an area where students could improve their work. It is recommended that every electronic task have a screen dump of each page in the document folder. This assists the marker to match each student with the correct website, and in case the digital work is lost for any reason or the school's system goes down (as sometimes occurs) then evidence that the student completed the task is provided.

Inappropriate content is something to be aware of as in some cases the topic studied or the work received by the teacher was not appropriate for this subject. Teachers are disadvantaging their students if they allow their students to use templates from programs such as Publisher. Good answers in the Evaluation section of this assessment reflected on the design principles of contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity. Students who achieved well in the Evaluation section designed and gave out surveys to the target audience. Feedback from the target audience was then referred to in the Evaluation.

Clearly marking CD's with the student registration number and school number makes marking much easier.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

Teacher's Folder

To help moderators affirm teachers' grades it would be helpful for a teacher's folder to be submitted with student materials for the moderation of school assessment materials. The teacher's folder should contain: a copy of the learning and assessment plan (LAP) including a signed addendum indicating any changes; a signed variation to materials form if applicable; and a copy of all tasks from Assessment Type 1 and 2. A labeled CD of student work containing all electronic products should be included if Electronic Publishing is one of the focus areas. Presentation of student work in an A4 folder is preferred to A3 folders or loose leaf. Yellow coloured mark sheets sent to schools, have final grades entered on them. Based on the final grades submitted on the yellow coloured sheets, the SACE Board will select a student sample to be sent to final moderation. The SACE Board then sends a blue form that identifies a nominated sample list of students whose evidence of learning for school assessment is to be submitted for final moderation. The selected student samples must be included in the moderation sample. If there is a deviation to this sample, a 'Variation in Materials for the Sample for Final Moderation' form must be filled out and included in the teacher's folder.

In helping students achieve the highest grades task sheets should provide students with appropriate instructions, including specifications such as maximum word counts as prescribed in the subject outline.

When sending in student work at the end of the year, it would assist moderators if all students had their own folder containing all tasks from Assessment Type 1 and 2. The inclusion of shaded in performance standards along with the grade given by the teacher for each of the assessment tasks assists the moderation panel in confirming the teachers assessment decisions.

Student work should be clearly marked with the students name and SACE number. If some of the tasks have not been submitted by students, teachers should indicate this on the 'Variation in Materials for the Sample for Final Moderation' form.

Preparation of non-written materials such as oral presentations

Students who provided a variety of evidence to the moderation team, such as: power point presentations, cue cards, video files, audio files, helped confirm the teacher's assessment decisions.

GENERAL COMMENTS

With the introduction of the new SACE at Stage 2 it was evident that teachers have been working diligently to implement changes. A major change that caused some confusion was in the process for submitting schools assessment grades. In the past a predicted grade was submitted prior to the final grade being confirmed. The process in 2011 did not include the predicted grade being submitted. This new process will continue in 2012, so please be aware that the submission of school assessment grades to the SACE Board will only occur once, and therefore the

grades submitted must be the final combined grade formed from all assessments undertaken.

For the first time there appeared to be a trend for students to use blocks of text without proper formatting of paragraphs eg; space between paragraphs or indenting to indicate a new paragraph. A new paragraph should be started when a new idea is presented. Left and right aligned text should generally be used with some occasional use of centre alignment. Feedback given to students from teachers should not be written all over the student's final product, but written elsewhere. This is particularly relevant for the External component.

When undertaking a 20-credit subject, the course must have two focus areas. When creating tasks for Assessment Type1: Practical skills, there should be evidence of a balance of both focus areas in the assessment tasks. Where the assessment used in the class varies from the approved Learning and Assessment Plan, teachers should indicate the amendment in the addendum and include an amended copy of the LAP with their school assessment materials.

Evidence of the student's passion for their work in Information Processing and Publishing was often evident in the creative work produced by some students. The amount of time spent by teachers and students working with the changes in the new SACE this year needs to be commended. Teachers need to be congratulated for their hard work and their tireless energy which has encouraged their students to work to the best of their ability.

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