



# Examiners' Report Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2021

Pearson BTEC Firsts  
In Creative Digital Media Production (31668H)  
Unit 5: Specialist Subject Investigation.

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## Introduction

Unit 5: Specialist Subject Investigation is mandatory for the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Creative Digital Media Production. Learners are provided with a Set Task Brief (Part A) five weeks before the assessment period directing them to conduct research into a specialist subject topic. They are required to focus on a contemporary specialist media issue or debate detailed in the Set Task Brief and use this as a starting point to undertake investigations into it using a range of primary and secondary research methods and techniques. This preparatory stage includes 12 hours independent preparation and 6 hours undertaken in monitored conditions. The assessment period includes the preparatory stage prior to a two-hour period of supervised assessment where learners will respond to the activities and stimulus material provided in part B.

There are two assessment opportunities each year and May 2018 was the first external assessment opportunity for this unit. The January 2020 stimulus material required learners to research conduct research into the impact of violent content in media products within a particular media sector.

## Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

Learners responded well to the focus of the stimulus material which proved particularly topical in the wake of the recent Black Lives Matter protests; responses indicated that learners engaged with the topic well and were able to access a wide range of relevant research sources.

Research conducted by learners was generally purposeful and relevant. Higher performing learners accessed a range of available sources and demonstrated a clear purpose and focus to the research they had undertaken. Learners performing less well used limited sources and relied heavily on the stimulus material within their responses.

## Individual Questions

### Activity 1

Analyse the representation of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities and individuals within a specific media sector with reference to the issues/debates mentioned in the statement:

*'BAME characters and communities are underrepresented in the media and often the subject of negative stereotyping. More BAME media producers would lead to better representation.'*

You should refer to the research carried out in the stimulus material and/or your own research, making reference to the validity of the sources used.

\*

For this activity, higher performing learners focused clearly on the statement, referring not only to the stimulus material, but to their own research findings, to support a well-reasoned response.

Less developed responses often simply summarised the information which had been provided in the stimulus material, and identified key themes within it, but provided little in terms of interpretation of the data or discussion of the media debates. Some learners summarized their own findings, but without relating them to the statement, which led to them then duplicating this in their response to Activity 3.

The higher performing learners typically presented a detailed and specific response to the statement with points well supported by reference to the stimulus material and/or their own research, demonstrating a clear understanding of the relationship between the research and the statement. Learners at this level would also typically make judgements about the validity of data, e.g. that it was outdated, or was from a reputable source, though these often still lacked in depth consideration, e.g. 'the source can be argued with because it was release four years ago.'

**The following response gained 14 marks out of 15.** The learner discusses the significance of the topic and refers to different elements of the stimulus material and their own research to develop arguments to support the arguments they make. The latter part of the response directly links the arguments to the statement provided. Reference is made to the validity of some of the materials, though this is not always detailed or well expressed.

In this question I will debate whether BAME characters and communities are underrepresented in the media. I carried out a survey with 30 participants to gain an insight of what people think about the representation and diversity of BAME communities, This gave me quantitative data. The survey was randomly distributed and ~~on questionnaires and answers~~ all responses were anonymous to ensure that the survey was unbiased and valid. The first question I asked was for their age which ranged from 11-55+ this conveys ~~the~~ how a wide selection of different age groups participated. Another question

I asked was 'Is the BAME community represented in the same proportion as the counterpart in the media yes/no' Out of the 30 participants 24/30 answered no this shows that people feel as though the BAME community is underrepresented in the media.

I also carried out a focus group with 8 participants 4 male 4 female all of different age groups and different ethnicities to represent a fair and valid sampling. I held this focus group to get a clear understanding of why and how people may have separate opinions of this chosen topic. Random sampling was done to ensure that it was unbiased by choosing different age group participants.

In the stimulus material given a 2017 report states that '3% of employees in the production are from a minority ethnic background' This implies how only a small number of people ~~there~~ are employed from an ethnic background. Although this source can be argued against because it was released in 2017 4 years prior to where we are now.

For my secondary research I gathered information from websites one of them being ofcom.com where I managed to find a report that states 'Ethnic minority employees are under-represented making up only 12% of the employees across the 5 broadcasters. Ethnic Minority representation is even lower at senior levels. Across the BBC only 6% of senior role people are from an ethnic minority background. This source is valid because it is a reliable government approved regulator. This shows how the BAME community is under-represented. The benefits of carrying out secondary research is that it is more valid and gives you quantitative data however sometimes it can have a negative impact because the data on the internet could be outdated.

\* I also asked my participants 'BAME groups have the same opportunity in improving their career progression yes/no' 82% answered ~~yes~~<sup>no</sup> leaving only 18%



who said yes meaning that they don't believe that there is a way to progress because of their ethnic background.

The use of more BAME presenters would help decrease the stereotype that is conveyed about BAME characters as they are often portrayed negatively. In the stimulus a report from ofcom.com states that 'Authenticity is not just about who we see on the screen - it can be influenced by who is behind the scenes too. This suggests that in order to gain the correct image of BAME characters a wider selection of the same background producers ~~and~~ and behind the scene workers should be incorporated.



**The following response gained 5 marks out of 15.**

Although the learner has provided a lengthy answer and constructed an argument relating to the set task topic, the response does not specifically address the statement in activity 1. The learner refers to their own research activity to support their argument, but the sources of the research are not specified, and comments rely heavily on the learner's own opinions on representation within films they have viewed. The conclusion of the response restates figures given in the stimulus material, but these are not discussed or used to support the argument being made.

The representation of BAME communities in movies are some times represented in both a good and a bad way. For example, in the <sup>black</sup> movie <sup>production</sup> such as Black panther the character is <sup>Portrayed</sup> ~~shown~~ as a hero and someone who does not commit a crime. Black panther is also represented as someone who brings hope to his community. Where as in the movie Tsotsi he is represented as someone who commits crimes, causes violence and inflict pain on other people. At the start of the movie Tsotsi is in a gang and this gang cause chaos but at the

throughout  
~~rest~~ of the movie Tsotsi is  
 in some way redeems himself by  
 taking care of a baby that  
 was not even his. At the end of the  
 movie Tsotsi ~~is wearing~~ surrenders  
 to the police and Tsotsi is wearing  
 white which sometimes suggest  
 innocence. #

According to my primary research  
 there is a balanced judgement  
 for representation of black people  
 in movies. For example some black people  
 are represented fairly the actors  
 such as Will Smith, Denzel Washington  
 and Morgan Freeman are very respected  
 in the filming industry and a  
 especially Morgan Freeman lots of  
 people would say that he is their  
 favourite actor. On the other  
 hand black people say my primary  
 research tells me that black  
 people are represented poorly in movies  
 as most movie stereotypes show  
 them as being aggressive and as  
 criminals.

The representation of Asian people in movies are some times ~~repr represented~~ represented in a good way and a stereotypical way. For example in the movie franchise Rush hour Jackie Chan is ~~repras~~ portrays a police officer from Hong Kong and comes to the USA to solve crimes. Also in the <sup>movie</sup> first rush hour films his accent is not all the way there.

My primary research tells me that people can argue over the fact that Asians are represented well or bad. Some Asians are represented fairly ~~but not~~ for example Jackie Chan is well respected in the filming industry and lots of people love him on and off the screen. On the other hand I think they are that Asian people are represented ~~poorly~~ poorly as they suffer from a lot of the same issues that black people do, being mostly represented

by offensive stereotypes in movies such as can't speak English properly, fighting and being skillful in fighting.

The stimulus material states that Creative Access surveyed BAME employees in the publishing industry. 32% of them said it had been difficult to progress in profession. 45% of the said they had not seen an improvement in diversity since they started working in publishing.

## Activity 2

Justify your choice of the secondary research that you used to investigate the key areas of the set task topic in a specific media sector.

\*

For this activity, less developed responses typically:

- Identified the research sources without explaining the reasons why they were selected or how they specifically linked to the set task topic.
- Learners often included information relevant to activity 3, i.e. discussed what they learned from the sources rather than why they selected them. This should be strongly discouraged as discussion of the research findings is not rewardable for this activity.

More developed responses included a wider variety of sources and evaluated in detail the reasons for choosing them. The rationale given for the choice often included information relating to the validity of the research and, even though this was not specifically required by the question, it was rewarded as part of the rationale for the choice.

**The following response gained 12 marks out of 15.** The response explains the relationship of the research undertaken to the set task topic. The response mostly follows clear chains of reasoning to provide a rationale for the sources used, and in places begins to evaluate these sources.

I chose three of my six sources as my most useful sources, these allowed me to get lots of different information from each on which allowed me to come to better conclusion from my research.

My first source was Hollywood diversity report which was released in 2020 and was written by Darnell Hunt and Dr Ana Christina Ramon, this source is very useful as it gave me both quantitative and qualitative data which are very useful it gave me statistics in areas of BAME communities in specific roles such as, (4) only 1.5 out of 10 film directors are people of color and only 1.4 out of 10 are film writers. This information is very useful and helped me get a clear picture for how little diversity there is in the film industry the source was also very useful as it was an American source which then allowed me to compare my data from the UK to there to see what the difference is as part of my research was to find out where is better for BAME communities the USA or the UK. The source was also a very modern source as it was it was released in 2020 with having research dating back to 2019 this made the information very relevant and up to date which other sources weren't and would give misleading facts, as well as people on and off screen which it mentions, it also goes in depth on different areas of the film industry as such as ticket sales and audience members which is very important as I couldn't find any information like that in my other sources. The source overall is very reliable and valid as the source as very new, the people who had made that had major backing by a very

big university which looks into in depth research on social sentence, the source has also had longevity as this was their 9<sup>th</sup> instalment to the series as the first one was released in 2011. This information however from American can be triangulated through my sources like the BFI reports and my primary research allowing me to overcome the limitations.

My second source that I used was the BFI race and ethnicity in the UK film industry report this was very useful as it had good detail into statistics on how the film industry is like in the UK it mentions the BFI's beliefs and all of their research. It covered though their research their finding on specific geographical locations across the UK which is hugely important as this research was missing from other sources as well as being very useful to find out. This source was released in 2020 in July making it a very relevant source which is important to have the latest statistics in many ways, this gave me quantitative and qualitative data which was very useful as it had quotes from people as well as good numerical data, this research was carried out between September 2019 and May 2020 and captured a sample of the diversity standards data on race/ ethnicity across several production contexts, a major focus for this source was the film setting location as it has been to show an impact on representation for example the south east and north west showed higher representation of BAME communities behind and in front of the screen 50% however this was over only nine productions, this source is very reliable and valid as the BFI have very longevity as they have been around for roughly 87 years making them a very old organization they are also government backed organization which shows they are a trustworthy source and in addition they are a national recognized organization as



well as being a leader in the UK film industry. This source can be triangulated and cross referenced from my other secondary research as well as findings from this source supporting information found in my primary research.

My third source is the Barriers to diversity in film which was written by Dr Reena Bhavani. This is a much older source as it was released in 2007 however this source gave me lots of information as it was my largest source the source is much older this means I can compare my data and research now which is up to date with information from 2020 to this as I can then see how things have changed over the years and I can try to see trends this is very useful as things that were set to increase in this source have and I found this from my other sources. This was very useful as well for giving me a picture of how bad representation of BAME communities was back then which is very interesting for example it shows that even back in 2007 there was a problem with specific geographical locations, more black and ethnic staff are based in London 7% compared to 5% in the rest of the UK as there are now in 2020. This source is reliable and valid as it the UK film council backed the report and was written for them in 2007 making it reliable as well as this the information can be cross referenced between my other sources as they both state points about location and workforce problems.



**The following response gained 3 marks out of 15.** The response describes the nature of the secondary research used and is related to the set task topic. However, it does not identify the specific sources used but focuses on the findings of the research, which is not rewardable for this activity.

I researched what TV series / ~~films~~ are ~~ea~~ being released with BAME characters playing ~~in~~ the main lead roles and the results I came up with was ~~the~~ ~~for~~ 3 films/TV dramas. These were 'Infinite' (May 2021), 'Space Jam/A New Legacy' (July 2021) and 'The Eternals' (February 2021) there is also 'Cyborg' but that does not have a release date due to the uncertainty of the release of the film. I also researched that there are also more than 5 superhero films which are ~~not~~ yet to be released ~~the~~ in the years 2021 and 2020. ~~is~~

I also researched that throughout the creation of the Black Panther film majority of the cast and crew were of the BAME community ~~the~~ and the film came out very ~~successful~~ successful. The Avengers Black Panther film showed the talent of the ~~A~~ crew filled of the BAME community but when it came to the production of 'Infinity War' and 'End Game', which is also Avengers films, the crew for the production of these films were filled ~~way less~~ of BAME people. had less people of the BAME community.

### Activity 3

Explain the conclusions you have drawn from your research and evaluate how these support/challenge the findings of the stimulus material.

You should make reference to your research sources to support your conclusions.

\*

For this activity, less developed responses typically;

- Summarised learner findings with a brief conclusion but this often relied on the stimulus material, or on generic statements, e.g. 'to stop negative representation we need to hire more BAME actors because most movies feature white actors so there isn't much equality.'
- The research was clearly related to the topic within the stimulus material but learners at this level did not typically comment how their own findings supported or challenged the findings of the stimulus material; if any comments of this kind were made, they were limited to generic statements such as 'my findings agree with the stimulus material that more BAME media producers would lead to better representation.'

Higher performing learners provided detailed information of the information collected, including both primary and secondary research. Learners at this level referred to both qualitative and quantitative findings in detail. They drew clear and logical conclusions from this research and made frequent, direct and logical comparisons between their conclusions and those of the stimulus material. The most developed responses often included citations within their responses or, where they did not, made detailed reference to the specific element of research that supported their conclusions.

**The following response gained 11 marks out of 15.** The response directly references findings from the learner's research to develop clear chains of reasoning. While it does make relevant comments relating to how the research supports/challenges the findings of the stimulus material, these would have benefitted from more in-depth justifications.

My first conclusion is that there is a under representation in films which impact what is seen and has and impact on the audience its self.(2) Since of around 45,000 roles credited to all actors in the UK and only 218 were lead roles of black British actors, in addition(4) 3 out of 10 lead actors are people of color this all shows a huge under representation of BAME actors in front of the screen there is also lack of diversity behind with(4) 1.5 out of 10 directors being people and 1.4 being writers, this has a major impact on the audience as they don't have lots of representation to watch which has detrimental effects on the audience as well as that this leads to long lasting prejudice and inherent racism from the film industry. Which allows for this under representation to carry on. This supports the stimulus material as it states that in 2017 a report showed that the work foundation found 3% of employees in production are from minority ethnic background. This highlight and supports my conclusion as this are stating the huge gap in diversity in the film industry.

My second conclusion is that representation of BAME communities is also impacted by the location of where the filming is taking place as (6) the film workforce is highly concatenated in and around London as a separate analysis reveals that more black and ethnic staff are based in London 7% compared to 5% the rest of the UK this state was back in 2002 which is a long time ago this would have increase in London and decreased in the rest of the UK this can be found through my other research from the BFI diversity standard report. As well as this in the (5) entire midlands region there where no films that passed the diversity test from 2016-2019 and a number of films passed diversity

standards but had no off screen BAME employment this is all due to the location as in the UK there are region pockets that clearly still have inherent racism problems as well as produce towards BAME communities. This again relates to the point from the stimulus that a report made in 2017 found that 3% of employees in production were from minority ethnic backgrounds, this supports as my conclusion is about under representation in the film industry and location so this again supports my claim.

My third conclusion is that progress has been made to address issues however lots more needs to be done. (3) according to the census which is from 2011 in this report BAME population is due to increase to 20% by 2030 from 13%. This shows that lots more needs to be done in the film industry as their population is growing and growing there must be more improving. (4) in early 2020 white men were heads at 11 of the major and mid studios, CEO accounted for 91% white 82% male in 2015 it was 94% white and 100% male showing a huge gap in representation of studio heads and executives, this leads to long lasting under representation as if more BAME communities were heads more BAME communities would be working in the film industry. Over the last 9 years the Hollywood diversity report shows that people of color in the director's role has only increased marginally from 12.2% from 2011 however in 2019 it has almost tripled. Writers almost doubled from 7.6% to 12.9% after staying flat for almost 8 years, however white shares still dominated with 89.6% still dominating in 2018. As well people of color's share of actors accounted for 27.6% in 2019 nearly tripling from 10.5% in 2011. This supports the stimulus material as it talks about hits like Black Panther and Crazy Rich Asians breaking away from negative stereotypes which is what is happening if shares of directors, writer and actors keep increasing as it will give new original stories however these statistics fluctuate every year and the information represents America not the UK so there might be larger differences.

**The following response gained 5 marks out of 15.** The response does explain the conclusions drawn by the learner; however, it does not support those conclusions with reference to the research undertaken or make reference to whether the conclusions support or challenge the findings of the stimulus material.

(15)

One conclusion I have drawn from my research is that in order to stop the negative & representations of Bame individuals is to hire more Bame actors and employees to movie businesses. I have come to this because the majority of movies made often feature more white actors than Bame individuals Black so their isn't much equality. There should be an increase of Bame in the film industry it would stop the inequality and ensure that more Bame actor are represented possibly in film.

I have also concluded that Bame individuals are often & represented negatively in film due to companies relating to stereotype on their race to save time on planning & full character development for a Bame actor. For example in the movie Bad boy Both main characters Will Smith and the other play are often sassy mouthed, violent and shout ~~over~~ every thing. This is to save time on planning

individual characteristics and to relate to stereotypes for the audience to ~~the~~ understand.

Also I have concluded that BAME communities are often shunned and oppressed in ~~the~~ films by ~~the~~ white management. For example the 6 major film companies are mostly owned by white ~~male~~ men who ~~is~~ often hire only white people. This makes it easier for films to show more negative representation toward BAME communities due to white ~~pre~~ prejudice and not allowing many BAME individuals to be hired by possible white ~~terror~~ suprematism.



#### **Activity 4**

What changes would you anticipate in the representation of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities and individuals in your chosen media sector in response to the research findings?

You should refer to your own research and/or the stimulus material.

\*

For this activity, less developed responses often began the response with phrase like 'In my opinion...' and went on to give a suggestion that could be logically derived from the stimulus material, but without developed chains of reasoning to support this. A typical example may simply rely on past performance as an indicator to predict future changes, using statements such as: 'There has been a big increase in the number of films with black actors in the leading roles. In my opinion this will continue and we will see more films with black actors as the main star.'

More developed responses used specific and diverse elements from both their own research and the stimulus material to support a logical argument for the changes they suggested. They would draw upon research from a number of sources, often including their own secondary research, to provide a detailed argument supporting their conclusions.



**The following response gained 8 marks out of 10.** The response uses clear, and mostly effective, chains of reasoning to develop an argument for this activity. The response makes sustained reference to specific findings of research that has been discussed in earlier activities but would benefit from more specific reference to the sources of the findings used.

Some films/TV series that are coming out with BAME characters playing the main lead roles are Black Panther 2, and Green Lantern. This ~~also~~ shows that there is a super limited amount of BAME characters represented in the media industry. I would like to see more people from BAME being ~~had~~ introduced into different sectors of the media industry especially the film and TV series. This is because most ~~age~~ young people struggle with finding a BAME ~~peer~~ person to look up to.

Some things that Ofcom have ~~&~~ done is some of the broadcasters have targeted apprenticeship, internships and interest groups. Viacom offers both year-long apprenticeship and paid internship in conjunction with creative access, resulting in half of the intakes being from an ethnic minority background. This could help with more jobs for people in BAME.

Skynet: Sky has also set a target for senior production team roles and writers to at least equal the representation in society as a whole making it more fair for BAME in the media industry. It also provides the future generation different ethical people to look up to. The positives of these measures are that they are giving opportunities to other ethnic groups to be more inclusive but some may argue are these opportunities based on merit or benefit or ~~are~~ they want to meet a target so they can just show people that they ~~are~~ have ~~done~~ done it.

**The following response gained 3 marks out of 10.** Although the response relates to the topic of the stimulus material, the chains of reasoning are limited, and the references made to research are superficial.

I would believe that there will be changes in the follow years with representation in video games due to more BAME game developers joining the industry, my research proves there isn't alot of representation, but as time goes on more and more BAME people will make games and will influence character choices and other parts of the game due to unconscious bias.

my primary research shows that people believe there needs to be a change so I believe there will be one as seen with other forms of media.

## Activity 5

Explain what further research could be conducted into this topic and how this would help to gain a greater understanding of the impact of the representation of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities and individuals on audiences in your chosen media sector.

\*

For this activity, less developed responses typically described a number of additional research activities, often referring to what they themselves could have done differently, e.g. 'I could have given out more questionnaires to a wider range of ages'. Where they referred to professional research, responses lacked specific suggestions for research, e.g. 'More people should be interviewed to get a wider range of opinions.' Some lower scoring responses presented circular arguments to the question posed in the activity, such as 'to gain a greater understanding of the topic I would conduct further research into the impact of the representation of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities and individuals in films.'

The best performing learners made logical arguments which follow on from their previous responses to support the reason for further research into specific areas of the topic.

**The following response gained 7 marks out of 10.** The response effectively analyses recommendations for future research. Although the recommendations are mostly supported by reference to the research undertaken, the response would have benefitted from more specific and consistent links to the research, e.g. referring to specific studies where research was limited.

I found that there were areas that further research could have been conducted into this topic and would have made for greater understanding of the situation as well as the understanding of it.

Research that was missing was representation of women of color, age, sexual orientation and disability. There were huge gaps in all of these departments as all of my sources didn't cover it. Hollywood diversity report had some stats about different groups in the BAME community and if they were male or female however this was for America there was no research done for any of these in the UK which would be very valuable and important to know as there are long term benefits and short term benefits as you could find out how many people there are in the groups working you could find out trend if the representation goes up and down.

The next area I thought was missing was information from my primary research as I thought that the diversity levels were wrong through the focus group, interviews and survey as I aimed to get more BAME communities as they would give better information as they would be speaking from experience as well as that locations seemed to be an issue as primarily the respondents grew up and live in London giving it a very one-sided affair and not taking the rest of the UK into consideration.

Other areas that were missing research was information into specific geographical areas even though the BFI race and ethnicity report did research into it I think more can be done to help understand the situation of underrepresentation this would be very beneficial as long term you could see trends of areas it locates as well as this you could see the areas that had done the best and areas that had done the worst, American had no research done into this which I think would be a massively important thing for them to do.

**The following response gained 3 marks out of 10.** The response provides relevant but superficial suggestions for further research. Though there is some explanation for these suggestions the rationale given is unsupported.

More research for the impact of representation for BAME could include learning how people believe those who aren't affected by it's impacts manage to ignore / exclude it. For example actors who simply go along with the way blacks ~~are~~ ~~for~~ people are represented in film as poor and thieves. ~~that is~~ This could help inform the BAME communities of how many actually regard the issue but ignore it so that BAME can speak up to them.

Finally how past films may have worsened or improved the situation with regards to stereotypes and representations towards BAME individuals.

## Summary

Based on responses seen in this session, centres and learners are offered the following advice:

- Ensure learners conduct sufficient research in advance rather than having to rely heavily on the stimulus material with responses.
- Respond clearly and specifically to the statement given in Activity 1.
- Where required by the question ensure that their responses show consideration of the validity of research, e.g. whether information is current, from a legitimate source, etc.
- Clearly identify the specific purpose and focus of their own research in Activity 2.
- Clearly identify the research methods and sources they have used, and discuss these in detail in Activity 2, justifying the selection of each source/method and its relationship/ relevance to the topic.
- Make clear comparisons between their own research and the stimulus material in Activity 3 and specifically discuss how their own research supports/challenges the findings of the stimulus material.
- Clearly justify all conclusions made with logical chains of reasoning and support this with detailed reference to the research undertaken, particularly within Activities 3, 4 and 5.

Learners should avoid:

- Relying heavily on their own opinions and prior knowledge rather than research.
- Discussing the findings of their own research within the response to Activity 2, these should be discussed as part of Activity 3.



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