General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012

Home Economics: Child Development   **45802**

(Specification 4580)

Unit 2: Research Task

Report on the Examination

General comments

The controlled assessment tasks proved accessible to candidates of all abilities and provided
opportunities for them to achieve positive success while allowing for differentiation.

Controlled Assessment Tasks

Support and Guidance

It was clear that where centres had a clear understanding of the requirements of the
controlled assessment tasks, they were able to give appropriate guidance and support which
allowed candidates to independently produce individual work which clearly demonstrated
their knowledge and understanding. It was equally clear that some centres had adopted a
very structured approach, especially for the Research Task which often resulted in almost
identical work being produced by candidates, making differentiation almost impossible and
often leading to mark adjustments.

Time allocations

While some outstanding work was seen for both controlled assessment units centres are
reminded that there is a recommended time allocation for both tasks. While most centres had
clearly tried to work within the respective timeframes it was obvious that some were allowing
candidates to spend much more than recommended time resulting in work that was clearly
overlong, often in terms of research and sometimes at the expense of other elements of the
work. Often this research was repetitive and not always relevant which made it difficult to
justify awarding high marks for knowledge and understanding (AO1) and where assessment
criteria required work to be "concise", "selective" and "relevant"(AO2).

AQA Controlled Assessment Tasks

Centres are reminded that to fulfil the requirements of the specification for both Controlled
Assessment Tasks one of the range of board set tasks **must** be used. These are available
on the e-AQA website. Failure to do so invariably leads to some mark adjustments.

Assessment criteria

Both controlled assessment tasks are marked holistically using the AQA provided
assessment criteria. Centres need to be aware of how the assessment criteria reflect and
relate to the requirements of the specification and when marking need to select
statements/parts of statements within the mark bands that best reflect the levels of skills and
understanding shown in the work. Highlighting these and using a "best fit" approach can help
both teachers and moderators to determine the marks to be awarded.
While it is important when deciding on marks to be awarded that centres recognise that
"strong performance in one area can balance weaker performance elsewhere" marking must
reflect any additional support and help given (page 38 of specification). Centres must also be
mindful of the mark tolerance for the respective units.

Annotation of controlled assessment work

It is a requirement of the JCQ Instructions for conducting controlled assessment that centres provide clear annotation to support the marks being awarded. While annotation provided by many centres was excellent and detailed, making good use of the annotation sheets provided by AQA and highlighted copies of the assessment criteria, some centres provided no annotation to show how and why marks were being awarded. This made it very difficult for the moderator to support the centre's assessments and sometimes marks were subject to possible adjustments – in such cases work can be returned to the centre for clarification of marking.

Internal Standardisation

Where more than one teacher is involved in the delivery of the subject it is imperative that internal standardisation is rigorous to ensure that all work has been marked to the same standard and to avoid possible adjustment of marks.

45802: Unit 2 Research Task

Once again some exceptional work was seen for this unit – it was clearly one that candidates had enjoyed working on and one that gave opportunities for candidates of all abilities to achieve success. Where centres had clearly worked within the suggested timescale work was mainly realistic, manageable and of an appropriate length. However, some of the work submitted had obviously taken far longer – this is unfair on candidates and unnecessary. Where centres had clearly provided a very tight structure for candidates to follow this often resulted in almost identical studies from all candidates and severely limited opportunities for them to demonstrate knowledge and understanding, individuality and an ability to work independently. While this may be an acceptable and necessary strategy for lower ability candidates, for the majority of candidates this support is not permissible and can result in mark adjustments.

Centres are reminded that the Research Tasks **must** be chosen from the AQA provided tasks available on the e-AQA website.

Task analysis
- The full task should be written at the start of the work so that candidates can plan effectively.   - Candidates need to be encouraged to show their understanding of the relevance and importance of the task within its wider context. This would help them to independently decide on and plan relevant and realistic research.   - Frequently candidates simply identified and described 'key words' or re-wrote the task using the same words but in a different order, neither of which showed high levels of knowledge and understanding.
Planning
- Planning should where possible reflect the task analysis and candidates are expected to produce **their own** action plans – these should be realistic and manageable within the time allowed and should identify what research is needed, why, possible sources and methods and ideas for presentation.   - Flow charts, step-by-step plans, tables and charts and spidergrams are all acceptable – but only one plan is needed.

Research
- Where candidates gave an aim/focus of each piece of research before writing it, information work was generally more relevant, easier to evaluate and often used more effectively.   - Candidates need to try to include a range of appropriate primary and secondary research, acknowledging sources used. They must be discouraged from including large amounts of internet research – even when annotated this rarely demonstrates knowledge and understanding.   - Books and the internet were the two main sources of secondary research and often information was repetitive. Encouraging candidates to use these sources for different areas of research can avoid this.   - It is acceptable for candidates to work with others to collect data (e.g. questionnaires, surveys etc.) and for teachers to provide class based activities (e.g. comparisons of home-made and bought baby foods). Candidates must independently explain in their own words the aims/purpose and results and analysis and evaluation of results. This needs to be verified by the teacher annotation.   - Teacher initiated class based activity should not be the only evidence of primary research.   - Where questionnaires are planned these need to be focused with a realistic number of questions.   - Candidates need to be encouraged to try to use some of both the primary and secondary research in the final outcome. Too often it was not referred to or used at all.
Analysis and evaluation of research
This is one of the most important elements of the whole task – when not done it impacts on all three assessment criteria.   - This is the link between the research and the choice, planning and production of the outcome – without it there is often very little evidence of candidates' own opinions and consequently knowledge and understanding.   - Where ongoing analysis of the research has been carried out an overall evaluation is often more focused – it needs to concentrate on what is seen as the most important and useful information and should highlight how and why this might be included in the outcome.   - Following the evaluation candidates should decide on what the outcome and focus might be, why and, where possible, suggest a possible target audience - thus enabling candidates to show knowledge, understanding and logical decision making.   - Evaluations should not be detailed comments on the process and description of what had been done, why and how as this does not equate to the assessment criteria.
Planning the outcome
- Planning for outcomes needs to be clearly evident and should be carried out beforehand, not retrospectively.   - Planning needs to be sufficiently detailed to show how the outcome will be produced – this could be in the form of sketches, mock-ups or prototypes. There should be some consideration of layout, font, colour, images etc. as well as content. While some excellent planning was seen too often it was a poor sketch clearly done retrospectively.   - Candidates should not include all of their research in their outcome and it is not expected that all outcomes will be the same.   - Where existing leaflets and PowerPoint presentations had been analysed there should be some evidence this should actually be used when planning outcomes.
Outcomes
The majority of outcomes were of very high quality and demonstrated excellent presentation and ICT skills and many innovative ideas were evident. More able candidates were selective in what they included based on their stated purpose and

the proposed target audience – others simply cut and pasted all their research into the outcome.
• Where a PowerPoint is the intended outcome candidates need to understand that this is intended as part of a visual presentation and not as leaflets. More able candidates limited the content but included presenter notes.
Analysis and evaluation of outcome
• The assessment criterion requires this to concentrate on the outcome and it should comment on effectiveness and appropriateness in terms of its intended purpose and target audience. It is realistic and acceptable for candidates to comment on strengths and weaknesses and suggest and justify possible changes and improvements.
• Too often evaluations were simple a summary of the research done or repeated information already given in the research evaluation section.
• Evaluations need to be reasoned and logical - high marks cannot be awarded for simplistic statements.
• A 'final evaluation' of the whole task is not needed.

Marking and using the assessment criteria.

AO1: Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of a range of contexts

Knowledge and understanding can and should be credited throughout the work – in the task analysis, choice of research, selection and use of appropriate information, analysis and evaluation of information, its use in planning and producing the outcome and the evaluation of the outcome.

Personal opinions and logical reasoning should be evident – where information was clearly copied from text books of downloaded from the internet without any comment, analysis or acknowledgement of sources it was often difficult to justify the high marks awarded by some centres.

AO2: Apply skills knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts and in planning and carrying out investigations and tasks.

To justify awarding higher marks clear planning must be evident for both the research and the outcome. Where planning was identical and clearly teacher-led it was not possible to justify some of the high marks awarded.

Initial planning for research needs to identify **and** justify sources and research methods. Where possible **both** primary **and** secondary research should be carried - it should be concise, selective and realistic for the time available and presented using a range of different techniques.

Planning for the outcome should include **both** the secondary and primary research and needs to be sufficiently detailed to show the rationale behind the outcome. Where planning included a draft layout and consideration of different fonts, sizes, colours and content higher marks were justified. Lack of planning often resulted in confused outcomes with no clear focus – in some cases they were simply a summary by the candidate of what they had done and why.

Outcomes were often excellent and overall candidates demonstrated high level ICT skills in their production.

AO3: Analyse and evaluate information, sources and evidence, make reasoned judgements and present conclusions.

Evaluations are clearly improving but for many this remains the weakest element of the work and often centres were over generous when crediting marks within this criterion. Some of the more able candidates did produce good on-going evaluations of research and linked their findings to suitability for the final outcome but this was not always the case. However many were simply descriptive résumés of what had been done and how, with generalised comments on the usefulness of sources and/or how easy it was to find information. Many were not used to actually plan outcomes in any way.
Evaluation of research needs to **identify** what is seen as the most suitable and potentially useful information for the focus of the chosen outcome and use this to develop their planning. Often this was done at the end of the task within a 'final evaluation' and after the outcome had been planned or produced.
The outcome evaluation needs to concentrate on its **effectiveness, usefulness and fitness for purpose** and relate back to the stated focus. Often where candidates completed a 'final evaluation' they simply repeated the research evaluation.

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the AQA website at
www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html