2021 <Subject> Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2021 assessment cycle, gives 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, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

The folio is made up of three different assessments: Interaction, Text Production, and Text Analysis. Schools have the choice (as stated in the Learning and Assessment Plan) of requiring students to complete between three and five assessments for their Folio, including at least one assessment of each of the above assessments listed.

The more successful responses commonly:

* used a range of tenses and vocabulary appropriately and expanded their answers beyond simple responses
* used correct pronunciation and intonation. Students sounded natural and comfortable with the language
* demonstrated a variety of complex vocabulary and authentic Spanish sentence structures
* demonstrated a high level of initiative and confidence during interactions by consistently elaborating on responses, including giving opinions
* demonstrated depth, breadth, detailed content, a variety of expression and justification of opinions
* demonstrated a wide range of evidence in a variety of text types, including letters, emails, articles, diary entries, and blogs
* provided a good range of details with supportive evidence from the text
* demonstrated good interpretation of meaning
* seemed to include a variety of moods, tenses, connectors, vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions in both the text production and interaction.

The less successful responses commonly:

* relied on pre-prepared (often memorised) responses rather than spontaneous discussion
* demonstrated no natural flow to the conversation
* used simple ideas or opinions
* lacked detail and depth in the response
* did not provide supporting evidence from texts
* presented many errors in syntax and grammar
* had difficulty analysing linguistic and stylistic features of the text
* did not apply appropriate conventions of the text type.

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

Students undertake an in-depth study demonstrating research and personal reflection on an aspect or aspects of a topic associated with ‘The Spanish-speaking Communities’ or ‘The Changing World’ themes. The in-depth study is intended to be more than learning a body of facts and reporting on them. It requires analysis and reflection.

The more successful responses commonly:

* discussed a contemporary issue with a Spanish-speaking world connection that students could relate to and could easily be compared to one in Australia
* met the required word limit and contained reflection on culture, language, and the learning process
* were fluent and rich in vocabulary use in the oral presentations
* included analysis and evaluation of texts accessed, as well as the impact on the students’ own learning
* differentiated in purpose, context, and audience for the written and oral tasks
* were based on topics that could be explored in-depth and allowed for research using a range of sources
* analysed the researched information and personalised their response
* showed higher level of reflection in the reflection in English task and had chosen a suitable text type for their writing in Spanish task, that also allowed for students’ use of imagination and creativity.

The less successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated a recount of information in their oral presentation rather than an authentic oral presentation
* presented a recount of information rather than a reflection on their learning from the entire research process
* focused on the content of their research in the reflective response in English, rather than on their understanding of cultures and values, learning, beliefs, and ideas, and how these have changed or been enhanced through their learning
* contained limited, if any, reflection on cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas
* focused primarily on the research process, not the impact of the research on self and others
* lacked originality and interest thus not engaging the audience.

It should be noted by teachers that oral presentations should be *clear* and *audible* without background interference.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

The examination consists of two assessments: an oral examination and a written examination.

Oral Examination

The oral examination of 10–15 minutes comprises a general conversation and a discussion of the student’s in-depth study. In the conversation, students converse with the examiners about their personal world.

Section 1: Conversation

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated the ability to hold a conversation on a variety of topics and to interact and maintain a conversation
* were extensive and non-predictable, demonstrating a range of accurate and sophisticated language and vocabulary
* were consistently relevant to the questions asked and topics discussed
* presented a good range of information, opinions, and ideas
* developed ideas on comments made by the examiners and used correct tenses and connectives to create an interesting conversation
* demonstrated culturally appropriate behaviours, and used conventional greetings
* showed evidence of preparation and confidence in interacting in Spanish
* were well-prepared and responded effectively to questions about their personal world.

The less successful responses commonly:

* relied too much on prepared responses and this affected the natural flow of the interaction, especially when the answer required extra and/or more nuanced information
* lacked flexibility, including the ability to rephrase, and struggled to elaborate on their answers, indicating a lack of preparation
* generally included appropriate information but lacked depth
* regularly required the examiners to repeat a question before providing a response
* demonstrated difficulty structuring sentences and finding suitable vocabulary, particularly when using the masculine gender or plurals
* used a limited range of vocabulary and were often slow to respond
* used simple and repetitive cohesive devices
* had frequent silences because of lack of comprehension.

Section 2: Discussion

The topics discussed were interesting and varied. For example: ‘The Nini genaration in Spain’, ‘A comparison between soccer culture in Mexico and Australia’, ‘La cultura y comida argentina’, ‘The Alpaca industry’, ‘Pope Francisco: first Latin American pope.’

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated familiarity with the topic and in-depth understanding of the content
* demonstrated the ability to reflect and comment on significant learning that had been undertaken
* showed evidence that the student had investigated a new perspective
* demonstrated an appreciation for what was learnt
* provided in-depth explanations about how the chosen topic impacted on the life and future of the student, showing an ability to make a personal connection with the in-depth study
* created interest and engaged the examiners
* demonstrated outstanding mastery and knowledge of the basic tenses and were at ease using technical and subject-specific vocabulary
* demonstrated higher order thinking and gave opinions
* brought visual material to support their chosen subtopic.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were unable to express in-depth knowledge on the topic for discussion
* were unable to provide personal opinions about the topics discussed or reflect upon the research
* lacked evidence of research
* did not carry the conversation forward with spontaneity and provided one-sentence answers, expecting assessors to keep asking questions
* were related to topics that were too challenging for the language skills of the students, who had a limited range of vocabulary and were unable to advance the discussion.

Written Examination

Section 1: Listening and Responding

There were two texts in Spanish, all of them varying in length and nature. For all texts, the questions and answers were in English.

Question 1

The more successful responses commonly:

* displayed comprehensive understanding of what would motivate someone to join this academy.

The less successful responses commonly:

* identified few relevant information.

Question 2

The more successful responses commonly:

* provided comprehensive justification of the interviewer’s opinions about Esmeralda’s story
* identified three main purposes of Esmeralda’s stories.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not provide evidence from the text to support the response to what the interviewer thinks about Esmeralda’s story
* identified some or none of the main purposes of Esmeralda’s stories.

Section 2: Reading and Responding

Part A

Question 3

The more successful responses commonly:

* identified the three main purposes of this blog
* provided comprehensive understanding of how the title of this blog relates to the information in Alberto’s blog
* identified five techniques that the writer uses in this blog to engage readers and supports the answers with examples from the text

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not use evidence from the text to explain how the title of this blog relates to the information in Alberto’s blog
* provided a translation into English from the text without interpreting the question properly.

Part B

Question 4

A friend of yours is deciding on a career path. After reading this advertisement in a newspaper, write an email to your friend: explain why you want to attend the expo and try to convince your friend to go with you.

The more successful responses commonly:

* used the correct text type required – an email
* explained why you want to attend the expo (based on the information provided in the advertisement)
* used the information in the advertisement to convince your friend to come with you
* referred to how it can help your friend choose a career path
* used of persuasive language
* organised information and ideas logically and coherently to meet the requirements of the task.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked depth, grammatical correctness, and detail
* demonstrated limited understanding of the requirements of the task
* demonstrated limited evidence of the ability to organise information
* used repetitious vocabulary and sentence structures
* reproduced lengthy sections of the stimulus text.

Section 3: Writing in Spanish

Question 5, Option 1, 2 and 3, of varying nature were available for the students to choose.

Most students chose Option 2 (a talk to students in your sister school on the theme ‘socialising in Australia’).

This was followed by Option 3 (a letter to your school principal to provide feedback about the advantages and disadvantages of the online classes you took during the year).

Option 1 (a letter to a store’s customer service manager to outline your complaint about your recent online shopping experience at the store) was the least popular.

The more successful responses commonly:

* wrote their responses in Spanish, with fluency and creativity
* demonstrated extensive knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and sentence structures and, manipulated language authentically and creatively to meet the requirements of the task
* demonstrated effective use of cohesive devices to connect ideas and paragraphs
* demonstrated a good command of syntax and a sound knowledge of the conventions for each text type.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked depth and breadth
* used simple grammatical structures and vocabulary that was often incorrect
* demonstrated variable accuracy, with some basic errors (for example: use of gerund instead of the infinitive, grammatical agreement between subject and adjective)
* demonstrated a degree of inconsistency in register and/or tone
* did not use proper question and exclamation marks at the beginning of a sentence when it was needed
* had many typing mistakes to the point that meaning was compromising.

It is recommended that students are more familiarised with the Spanish keyboard rather than the autocorrect in their laptops.