May 2016 subject reports

REFLECTIVE PROJECT

Overall grade boundaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark range</td>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>25-30</td>
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The range and suitability of the work submitted

This year saw an increase in the variety of formats chosen by students, with a wider use of film and plays, as well as the continuing popularity of the PowerPoint / written report and essay. The range and suitability of the work submitted was similar to previous sessions. Both teachers and students are urged to read previous reports and follow the guidance given, particularly on the difference between a descriptive and analytical project. Students who chose a clear ethical dilemma, with at least two differing points of view which could be analysed scored highly. However, too many students limited themselves to a description of the dilemma rather than looking at the intentions and thinking behind the issue.

An example of a good ethical dilemma was the use of standardised testing in schools. Here an ethical dilemma was isolated that arose from the experience of the candidate and which could be analysed in a particular context, allowing for a deep and convincing analysis.

At its best, the Reflective Project epitomizes the heart of the IB philosophy – that someone with a different viewpoint to your own may be right.

Candidate performance against each criterion

The following problems have been frequently encountered this year.

Criterion A: The issue in context

Students often spend far too much time describing the context. The best projects are able to concisely summarise the context of the issue and then focus on the ethical dilemma and analyse this.

Criterion B: Community awareness

The issue of the community is often misunderstood by students leading year after year to a proliferation of surveys amongst classmates. As said in previous years, this is not convincing and risks being irrelevant. The communities concerned are often very broad, encompassing almost everyone, and here it is very difficult to clearly engage with the community. It would advisable to narrow the focus on the community where possible.
Criterion C: The ethical dimension of the issue

Most students are able to score at least a 1 here, as there is an implicit ethical dilemma in the work. However students often fail to gain a 3 because they limit themselves to describing the arguments for and against a particular position.

It is important to reiterate the advice given on being wary of the controversial topic rather than the ethical issue. Also teachers should steer students away from the projects that are too technical and which ask questions such as ‘What are the effects of .......... On ..........?’

Criterion D: Cultural awareness

To satisfy this criterion, students are often tempted to list a series of different religious viewpoints on the issue that they have chosen and not to integrate this particularly well into the body of the project. Students seem to be less comfortable with identifying, exploring and analysing their own culture.

Criterion E: Reasoning

Most projects were able to offer at least a basic argument but again students are urged to ensure that they equally consider two different points of view.

Criterion F: Supporting evidence

Students still heavily rely on the internet for evidence and should be encouraged to critically engage with the evidence that they find. Students should be directed towards the document ‘Effective citing and referencing’ which is available on the OCC.

Criterion G: Student voice

Students are often comfortable with expanding on their own view on an issue. This needs to be integrated into the project as a whole.

Criterion H: Reflection

The Reflective Project should document a journey that the student has taken to investigate an ethical issue. The best projects showed precisely this: that a student had identified an issue and then spent time thoroughly considering the merits and drawbacks of opposing viewpoints, before re-evaluating their own position.

Criterion I: Communication

It is perhaps worth stressing here that the examiners seek to mark positively here and not to penalise unfairly students who are clearly writing in a second language.
Criterion J: Presentation

Students must ensure that the project has a logical structure with a clear line of argument. In terms of format, it is worth being wary of the popular PowerPoint – an attractive format for students but which is too often simply a repetition in bullet point form of the additional written report.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

1. Introduce and explain the nature of the Reflective Project to students early on in the course to allow them to have the time to make the essential reflective journey.

2. Ensure that students and the career-related course supervisors are very clear on the nature of ethics and how moral dilemmas could be applied to their subject area.

3. Students choose an ethical dilemma which they can analyse and not simply describe.

With the growth of the IBCP schools are urged to take advantage of opportunities for training and discussion on the Reflective Project.

IB disclaimer

Reference is made in this document to the IBCP, but schools must bear in mind the following note:

The phased implementation of the name change from the IBCC to IBCP has the following implications:

May/November 2016 graduating cohorts will be registered for, and awarded the IBCC

May/November 2017 one-year anticipated candidates (as part of a two year programme, graduating in May/November 2018), and May/November 2018 graduating cohorts, will be registered for, and awarded the IBCP