GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

MEDIA STUDIES

JANUARY 2013

Statistical Information

The Examiner's Report may refer in general terms to statistical outcomes. Statistical information on candidates' performances in all examination components (whether internally or externally assessed) is provided when results are issued.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

MEDIA STUDIES

General Certificate of Secondary Education

January 2013

UNIT 1

Chief Examiner: Mr. J.C. Ashton, B.Ed., M.Ed.

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next, and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
4391	746	80	47.7

Grade ranges

A*	70
A	62
B	54
C	47
D	41
E	35
F	29
G	23

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UNIT 1

General Comments

It is very pleasing to report on a successful January series of the examination with the vast majority of candidates completing the whole paper and very few incomplete scripts in evidence. Candidates responded well to the examination text of the extract taken from *Merlin*, which clearly allowed candidates across all levels to access the questions in Section A of the paper. Section B, however, presented a greater challenge in that the topic of Web-Based Drama proved a little problematic for some candidates. There was much evidence to suggest that most candidates found Section A more accessible than section B. The majority of candidates performed better on Section A than on Section B and, in a number of instances, the difference was quite significant.

The balance of questions and marks available ensured, however, that candidates attempted questions across the range of GCSE levels. At the highest levels, candidates performed magnificently, demonstrating sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of the specification, such as genre conventions, representations, audiences and wider organisational issues in both Television Drama and Web-Based Drama.

Section A

Q.1   The vast majority of candidates achieved highly on this question given its part marked structure and scope to explore the range of appropriate camera shots in the examination extract. Explanations varied for different shot types, but most candidates could explain each shot in detail, with some further media language in evidence other than that rewarded in the first section. Candidates used media language or technical terminology drawn from technical codes, such as camera movement , angle and focus, or identified how camera shots highlighted particular symbolic codes, such as dress, body language, gesture, settings and objects, explaining their connotations in terms of genre, narrative or character.

Q.2   Again, candidates performed particularly well on this question with most candidates being able to identify two characters from the extract, although in one or two instances candidates identified Guinevere, who did not appear in the extract. Most candidates offered detailed descriptions of the characters chosen, with higher level answers explaining their role in the extract linked to Proppian character functions or narrative devices such as binary opposites. Answers at the top of the mark range explained how these characters were represented as stereotypical of the Fantasy sub-genre in Television Drama or in terms of intertextuality with myths and legends.

Q.3   Most candidates attempted the question and were able to explain the appeals of Television Drama. The most popular approach seemed to be to address issues of the uses and gratifications for audiences of Television Drama, rather than considering the appeals of genre conventions through visual, audio and narrative codes and conventions. Many candidates are still attempting to apply Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model to audience appeals, which often limits candidates' ability to develop sufficiently detailed responses and access higher level marks. Most candidates were able to offer two or more examples from appropriate Television Drama case studies. A number of candidates chose to use the examination text which was appropriate and acceptable this year. There were, however, a number of candidates who offered examples which were clearly not Television Drama, taken from the Situation Comedy or Reality Television genres. Centres would be well advised to choose secure examples of Television Drama to use as case studies. Soap Operas, such as *Eastenders*, or examples like *Waterloo Road* or *Dr Who* worked particularly well, as did examples where candidates had clearly explored a sub-genre, such as Medical Drama.

Q.4   This question proved a little challenging for some candidates with some attempting to discuss scheduling methods such as hammocking as a form of promotion and many candidates confusing promotion with scheduling. This was acceptable where candidates had clearly identified scheduling of Television Drama as a clear distribution activity for new dramas, identifying the target audience in a wide range of distribution activities as part of the promotion and marketing of the programme. However, many candidates did indeed address specific promotional activities and techniques such as television trailers, (although few candidates used this term, preferring television adverts which did lead to some confusion in the answers where a BBC programme was used as an example and explanations were offered of buying spots on television). Print-based advertising was also used as an example, but was less confidently explored, as there were few answers which addressed editorial and publicity in print. Many candidates were far more secure in explaining web-based promotion on official websites of television organisations or social media, such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*, and some candidates could therefore access Level 4 of the mark scheme where a clear understanding of convergence and organisational synergies were explicit in their answers.

Section B

Q.5   Task 1

Most candidates chose an appropriate name for their new Web-Based Drama, with the best examples demonstrating imaginative connotations and a sense of genre.

The vast majority of candidates could offer at least a basic explanation of the title and higher level answers explored the choice of title in detail. The highest level answers contained media language usually based on a sense of genre, sub-genre and audience appeal.

In a small minority of centres, all candidates from the centre offered the same title and same idea, which had clearly been taught as a whole class approach. Whilst it is expected that candidates will prepare for the examination by practising creative tasks and generating ideas, centres are reminded that the examination is an individual assessment and therefore this whole class approach is not acceptable.

Task 2

Most candidates could offer two appropriate settings linked to their Web-Based Drama and offer an explanation of each, with higher level responses linking their choice of setting to the genre, such as a Teen Drama. Higher level responses often demonstrated a real sense of mise en scene linked to the genre or narrative.

Task 3

Most candidates completed at least 6 frames for the storyboard, identifying the camera shots. Many candidates drew the shot in the frame but the corresponding information and technical term used were incorrect. At the highest level, there was evidence of some outstanding and creative Web-Based Drama storyboards, demonstrating a real sense of genre and sequence.

In some cases, candidates offered storyboard ideas which did not essentially reflect Web-Based Drama. Some were more like short films or Television Dramas, whilst others were examples of very ambitious Science Fiction films or even Westerns. Where these ambitious examples were justified as spin-offs from existing Television Dramas, they were more secure.

Task 4

The vast majority of candidates offered at least a basic explanation of their Web-Based Drama, with higher level answers demonstrating a real knowledge and understanding of the idea developed in the storyboard and previous tasks. They offered detailed explanations of how their opening sequence would appeal to audiences through a range of technical, symbolic and narrative codes, at best making explicit reference to issues of representation and appropriate and pertinent organisational issues.

Task 5

The vast majority of candidates could offer two appropriate differences between Television Drama and Web-Based Drama, with the most common answers being length of the webisode or production cost. Explanations of these differences were often, however, undeveloped and lacked sufficient media language and terminology to access the higher levels of the mark scheme. The best responses demonstrated a sophisticated grasp of the differences and often explored issues of production values linked to finance and budgets available for this type of media production. There was evidence of some candidates being able to explore issues of regulation and control and how these affect Web-Based Drama productions through content, organisational issues and audience appeal and usage.

Overall, this was a successful examination session, although there was a significantly reduced entry from last January. The examination extract for Section A proved effective in allowing candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of Television Drama, its key codes and conventions, narratives, representations and appeals to audiences. In Section B, examiners reported some rather disappointing responses to the storyboard activity, a basic pre-production activity, where some candidates struggled to identify the correct camera shot in the frame or write the correct terminology in the space provided in the task. Consequently, a number of candidates struggled to attain higher level marks and this often resulted in their explanations in Task 4 being undeveloped. Combined with the challenge of question 5, based on wider organisational issues, this resulted in many candidates performing less well on Section B than on Section A.

Advice to Centres

- Prepare candidates for Section B of the paper with a range of pre-production activities appropriate to Web-Based drama.

- Ensure that ideas for pre-production activities clearly demonstrate the codes and conventions of Web-Based Drama.

- Avoid identical whole centre responses to the creative tasks in Section B.

- Ensure that case studies chosen for Television Drama are secure in the genre.

- Address the wider organisational issues associated with both Television Drama and Web-Based Drama.

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