

“How Does The Media Influence Voting Behaviour?”

(A Grade)

Proposal

The title of the proposal is clear and was linked to the broad contexts that are identified, i.e. citizenship and employability. The project outline makes it explicit that both visual imagery and persuasive communication will be looked at within the context of their effects upon voting behaviour. This is an excellent level of detail and clearly demonstrates that the candidate has thought through the different strands associated with the media and the issue of voting behaviour. The candidate would like to study Politics and Psychology at university and the candidate makes clear that the IP would permit the development of research skills in these areas. At present the candidate is also studying persuasive communication as part of Social Psychology and so the links across disciplines were clear and well-argued. The candidate clearly identifies a range of learning environments including the school, GCU library, the Social Science department at GCU, IT facilities, teachers, and the local MSP. This broad range is good although the candidate might also considered making contact with the media itself, i.e. newspapers, journalists, radio, etc., to get their take on the topic that was the basis of the IP. The skills development section is extremely honest and detailed. The candidate clearly explains how she will apply her existing subject knowledge and understanding, how she intends to build upon this, how she will organise everything during the course of the IP, and how she intends to present the results. All of this constitutes clear evidence of the candidate having met all of the C and A grade criteria, as is ticked by the Assessor.

Plan

The plan presented is extremely competent. In particular, the detail associated with specific objectives (1 – 7) provided in the planning section is to be commended. The timescales associated with the IP are good, although more could have been made of other commitments that the candidate will have, for example, holidays, prelims, etc. An early start to the IP is indicated and this is good. The research methods indicated are good although the candidate could have indicated that she might pre-test the questionnaire with a small group of school pupils. In relation to the anticipation of issues with the IP the contingencies are excellent, especially the plan to contact a councillor if an MSP is not available for an interview, as this should be relatively straightforward. Perhaps in the resolution to a ‘poor response to the questionnaires’ the candidate could have considered that as online surveys have an extremely low response rate the best way to increase this would be to conduct the questionnaires

on a face-to-face basis or to get individuals in a room at a scheduled time when questionnaire completion can be supervised. The candidate clearly indicates how she will record her own skills development by using the progress log and commendably the candidate indicates that she will use this as a reflective document to support the progress of the IP including the interim review. The Assessor's feedback in relation to ethical issues associated with the use of questionnaires is extremely useful. Overall, it is clear that all of the C and A grade criteria have been met.

Presentation of Project Findings/Product

The presentation comprised a poster presentation to S5 and S6 students, a written report, and a verbal report to the Head Teacher and the Assessor. The comments provided by both the candidate and the Assessor are extremely helpful here, especially in relation to the marking criteria awarded. On first reading the awarding of the A Grade Criteria might have seemed generous, however it is clear from the comments that the candidate did consider in detail the presentation methods chosen and showed a clear deepening in understanding as a result of this. Therefore all of the C and A grade criteria are met, As the Assessor points out, a leaflet could have been produced for the audience to take away and the candidate could have asked for feedback from the S5 and S6 students on the poster presentation (a simple sheet to complete after the poster presentation for example). No mention is made of any feedback that might have been sought with respect to the report that was sent to the MSP. This could be because of time constraints but it could have been mentioned. Finally, the poster itself could have been put on display within the school – no mention is made of this here (although it does transpire that this happened in the next section).

Evaluation of Project

The evaluation is excellent. The candidate makes it clear that she has reflected in detail on all aspects of the projects: planning, time management, data collection, communication and presentation, etc. This is all to be commended. The candidate clearly describes what worked well, what did not and what she had learned as a result. The candidate clearly developed her interpersonal skills, her research skills, and her knowledge base as a result of completing the IP. The idea associated with taking the project further and looking at trends in relation to voting behaviour in other countries is excellent. All of C and A grade criteria are easily met for this aspect of the IP.

Self-Evaluation

The self-evaluation is all excellent. The candidate clearly details her skills development against the list of generic and cognitive skills. For example, the candidate clearly articulates what she had learned as a result of her first to attempt to use questionnaires to collect data. Additionally, she talks in an open and honest manner about her interpersonal skills development with respect to all the people with whom she had to interact to make the IP a success. The candidate makes it clear that she took feedback into account and that she reacted to it appropriately. The self-evaluation is extremely well-balanced and clearly shows that the candidate has developed a range of skills that, as the candidate indicates, will be extremely useful in the context of preparing for university level study. All of the C and A grade criteria are easily met for this section.

Overview

Overall, the IP was awarded an A grade. Probably the weakest section in relation to the A grade criteria being met is the presentation where I think that the issue is really one of the student not writing more. For example, as indicated above we find out that the poster associated with the IP was on display in the school in the evaluation. More could have been made of this in the template for the presentation. There were a few additional points that could have been picked up with respect to the proposal and plan but these were relatively minor. The evaluation and self-evaluation were of an extremely high quality and it is easy to see why all of the A criteria were fulfilled.