

“How Does The Media Influence Voting Behaviour?”

(C Grade)

Proposal

The title of the proposal is relatively clear and is linked to the broad contexts that were identified, i.e. citizenship and employability. The rationale for the project is also clear with links between Sociology and Politics identified with the candidate explaining that she intends to read for a degree in Social Sciences at university. There are comments associated with ‘statistics and voting behaviour’ but they are vague and should be more detailed. The learning environments identified are primarily school-based. The candidate makes reference to a university, but the reference is vague. Contacting a local MSP is a good idea, however, as this would definitely take a school student outwith their normal zone of comfort. The skills development section is relatively brief although the candidate does indicate that she will improve her research skills, interpersonal skills and presentation skills. As the Assessor comments indicate, however, exactly how these skills will be developed is not entirely clear. Clearly all of the C grade criteria are met, as indicated, but the proposal is not particularly challenging in terms of interdisciplinary connections nor is it particularly well argued in relation to its background rationale. As seen, these A grade criteria are quite correctly not ticked. There are connections made across subject areas but the tick for the A grade criteria relating to ‘substantial links’ may be viewed as on the side of generous.

Plan

While acceptable, the plan is a little vague and the timescales indicated do not really take into account commitments such as prelims, holidays, UCAS application, etc. The Assessor does comment that more thought could be given to completing some of the project aspects earlier in the process and this is good advice to the candidate. It is not entirely clear why the candidate should wait until October to visit a university library when this would be clearly part of the reading/data collection process. The actual research methods used are relatively simple, viz. the internet, books, a university library, an MSP, and a questionnaire. No detail is given with respect to the type of questionnaire, whether it will be pre-tested, etc. In relation to the anticipation of problems, again the statements are brief and not entirely clear. For example, what would happen if the candidate could not get access to the university library and the school resources were not sufficient? The Assessor does comment that if the student could not meet the MSP would the stated contingency work and this is useful but the candidate does not explore this. The weekly recording of skills development

is a good idea. The C grade criteria are met for the plan but it is clear that none of the A grade criteria is met. Far greater detail would be required with respect to the choice of research methods, anticipation of problems, and an identification of how the candidate intends to fulfil her own development needs. Overall, the plan is achievable but it needs a lot more detail to meet any of the A grade criteria.

Presentation of Project Findings/Product

The presentation consisted of a powerpoint to peers and teachers and a report. The comments by the candidate on the template are extremely brief. The C grade criteria are just about met and it could be argued that the A grade criterion that was ticked was slightly generous. The candidate should provide greater detail with respect to the presentation, in particular, its organisation and content. If the candidate wanted to achieve A grade criteria then feedback from the audience should also have been sought. With respect to the report that was sent to the MSP, some feedback should have been requested. The report could also have been made available within the school, via the school website for example. More detail on the questionnaire should also have been provided within the context of the presentation. Overall, far greater detail is required in this section for A grade criteria to be achieved.

Evaluation of Project

As with the sections listed above, the evaluation is relatively brief. The candidate did indicate what she has learnt from her experiences, especially in the areas of time-management and the development of overall presentation skills. The comments associated with aspects that might be taken further with respect to the project are unclear. The candidate does not explain how a suggested follow up questionnaire might relate to the work actually presented in her IP. The C grade criteria are just about met. If the candidate wanted to meet any of the A grade criteria she should really have included a SWOT analysis (or equivalent) as well as evidence supporting the careful choice and skilful use of communication methods throughout the timescale of the IP. Greater detail should also have been provided with respect to the project aims, i.e. how well were these met? What worked? What did not? What would the candidate have done differently if she were to repeat the project again? In essence, more self-reflection by the candidate is required in this section in the context of evaluating how the project went.

Self-Evaluation

The self-evaluation is good. The candidate evaluates her skills development against the list of generic and cognitive skills in a clear and honest manner. Some of it is slightly repetitive (e.g. support from IT with respect to the power point presentation

crops up at least three times) but otherwise it is good. The candidate makes it clear that advice was taken on board with respect to the project and that the candidate learned from having to interact with people outwith her comfort zone, i.e. talking to the MSP. The candidate clearly says that she learned from this experience and that her confidence has developed. The candidate clearly articulates that she believes that the work she has undertaken will be good preparation for university and this is most certainly the case. She understands that working on your own requires good time management skills as well as initiative, organisation and confidence. All of the C grade criteria are clearly met as is the A grade criterion that is ticked. If the Assessor had wanted she might possibly have ticked both A grade criteria but this would be a borderline decision and it would not have affected the overall grade that was awarded.

Overview

Overall, the IP is awarded a C and this is correct given the criterion-referenced marking system. The candidate undertook research work that involved the use of literature from the school and from a university, she devised a questionnaire, and she interviewed an MSP. The project was presented as a power point and as a report. Of the five template sections completed probably the best item of work was the self-evaluation. If the candidate had wanted to improve things, a greater range of research resources should have been consulted, i.e. talking to a greater range of political groups that use the media, talking to journalists, newspapers, etc. The candidate could have made the project more interdisciplinary if she had wanted. The detail associated with timescales and planning could also have been better but you do get the impression that the candidate was aware of this by the end of the IP. The actual presentation would have been markedly improved if feedback associated with it had been sought. The presentation might also have been recorded and placed on a school website along with the slides used and the written report giving greater dissemination of IP results.