



Case study: good practice in assessment:

Scots Language, SCQF Level 5 – Lourdes Secondary School, Glasgow

Introduction

This case study covers Scots Language: Understanding and Communicating Unit, delivered to a combination of S4 and S5 candidates.

Background

This award was offered as part of the wider Scottish Studies Award. For the purposes of this case study we selected the following units: English – Analysis and Evaluation within a Scottish Context (National 5), Media Content with a Scottish Context (National 5), Analysing Media Content with a Scottish Context (National 5), and Scots Language: Understanding and Communicating (SCQF level 5).

We decided on the Scots Language award for a combination of reasons:

- ◆ The literacy skills were transferable to the other units in the Scottish Studies award
- ◆ The possibility of using Scottish texts for Scots Language dovetailed nicely with the English: Analysis and Evaluation within a Scottish Context (National 5) unit, and, more broadly, would be valuable for candidates who were – either concurrently or in the future – also studying Scottish texts for National 5 English
- ◆ It was felt that this introduction to, and discussion of, Scots language and wider cultural issues would be of great interest to our candidates, many of whom speak Scots without being aware of it explicitly.

Information on the Award

In total, 12 candidates completed the National 5 Scottish Studies Award, which included the Scots Language: Understanding and Communicating unit (SCQF level 5).

The candidates chose to do this Award for a variety of reasons, ranging from personal interest to attainment of a literacy qualification.

Candidates could complete the Scots Language Award in future by doing the Scots Language: History and Development (SCQF level 5) unit.

Some candidates have also expressed an interest in doing Scottish Studies at Higher level in the next academic year, which would include the Scots Language: Understanding and Communicating (SCQF level 6) unit.

Delivery and assessment

The core resource for delivery of this course was an Education Scotland unit on *A Chitterin Bite* by Anne Donovan (<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/scots9-AChitterinBite.pdf>). The completion of the Understanding and Communicating activities in this unit was evidence of meeting the necessary outcomes.

We complemented this with a range of additional activities, which included:

- ◆ Lots of discussion around the fact that Scots was a language in its own right and not just 'slang' – the candidates often expressed surprise that Scots could be used as a language, including in literature
- ◆ Reading, analysis and discussion of a range of Scots literature, including: poetry by Tom Leonard (*Liaison Officer*, *Unrelated Incidents* [3]); Stephanie Green (*Embra Buses*); *Bus Queue* (Agnes Owen); Edwin Morgan (*Glasgow 5th March*); and Liz Lochhead (eg *Prologue to Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*; *Fat Girl's Confession*, *Trouble Is Not My Middle Name*, *Favourite Shade*)
- ◆ We were also incredibly fortunate to have Liz Lochhead come in to the school and share a reading and discussion session with the class. In this session, she read some of the aforementioned literature and spoke about her use of Scots and its impact on the audience. The candidates asked her questions about her inspirations and use of Scots. This was a highly valuable session.

In addition to the above, we also asked candidates to translate newspaper articles from Standard English into Scots. This was to consolidate evidence of being able to communicate in Scots, and also to make students aware of the fact that Scots is a separate language which is written and sounds differently from English.

Throughout, myself and other colleagues who shared this course were in touch with a Scottish Studies Glow group (Grp-Scottish Studies and Scots Language in Glasgow), in which members shared ideas and resources and supported one another through this new qualification. This was highly beneficial in terms of learning from one another's best practices and experiences.

Benefits of delivering this award

Above all, this award was enjoyable to deliver and allowed for the development of a range of stimulating resources. It fostered genuine, engaging classroom discussion as candidates came to value, increasingly, their Scots language and culture. The literacy skills developed in this unit are transferable to broader English/literacy qualifications which candidates may be pursuing, hence this award consolidates the delivery of other subjects.

Specific benefits for teaching staff

Please see **Benefits of delivering this award**. Also, this award allows for great flexibility and creativity in the use and development of resources which staff may find stimulating (we did!).

Specific benefits for candidates

This is an SQA literacy qualification which will boost any CV. Furthermore, I believe that candidates genuinely enjoyed the award: they learned to view and value their language and culture in a new and empowering way. Please see, however, one example of a candidate's response to an end-of-course.