Cambridge Technicals

Digital Media

Level 3 Cambridge Technicals Certificates in Digital Media **05843, 05844**

Level 3 Cambridge Technicals Diplomas in Digital Media **05845, 05846, 05875**

OCR Report to Centres January 2017

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Unit 1 - Media products and audiences

General Comments:

It was pleasing to note that a number of centres seemed to have used both the online resources and the OCR endorsed textbook to support the teaching and learning of Unit 1 for candidates. Some candidates were especially well equipped in terms of understanding media industries with clear examples, and many candidates gave detailed responses to fully communicate their answers. However it was also clear that some candidates did not have enough grasp of theory as a foundation to ensure full access to the extended response questions about how production techniques create meaning (Q5) or the wider media effects debate (Q8). Therefore answers to the extended response questions were not as comprehensive as they could have been. It should also be noted that candidates did not seem to have been encouraged to explore media texts in the depth that is required in order to fully understand how the product is produced to create meaning and attract a specific target audience.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

This section required candidates to analyse and interpret audience data from NRS and RAJAR. In general it seemed that candidates had been prepared to analyse research data.

1a) This question allowed candidates to demonstrate their wider knowledge and most gained the maximum two marks for their explanation of 'readership'.
1b) Again, candidates were able to successfully describe the difference between the target audience of The Sun and The Daily Mail based on their data.
1c) Whilst this was answered successfully by some candidates, it seemed that some candidates were not aware of the differences in content between different newspapers and therefore not able to think about how content links to demographic data. It is recommended that centres teach across different media sectors exploring the differences in content in relation to target audiences.

2. For this specific question, candidates had to use their knowledge to assess why RAJAR data had suggested Hallam FM's listenership had decreased since 1999. The answers for this particular question stood out as particularly disappointing, with many candidates saying that the content is 'boring' rather than the more obvious answers that streaming, online distribution or portable devices had led to the decline of people listening to radio stations. This knowledge is covered in the specification under the impact of new media technologies in relation to the distribution of products.

Section B

This section required candidates to use their knowledge about industries and specific media products and how they target audiences.

3a) This question was done well by most centres; conglomerate ownership structures and examples had clearly been well taught.
3b) Candidates, again, understood the differences between how a public service company and a commercial company operates. BBC v. ITV were used as examples.
4a) Answers by candidates in terms of the identification of an independent company clearly referenced the delivery guide and textbook (Warp).
4b) Centres are encouraged to explore local independent companies and the specific products they produce. There was both a lack of knowledge about Warp products, for example, and a distinct lack of knowledge about how they were marketed using social media.

5. The most popular media sectors studied were film and print. However, as noted in the general comments above, there was a lack of engagement with the production techniques of a specific product. Where a question asks for a product to be referenced, then this should be clearly identified in the candidate's answer. For those studying film texts, there was a lack of understanding of production techniques or micro elements that were encoded to create meaning. The most successful candidates applied theory to their work; for example, candidates that quoted narrative theory, such as binary opposition, then explained how editing techniques or mise-en-scene choices reflected that theory, and therefore clearly understood the meanings created. Again more successful candidates displayed their knowledge with a range of production techniques.

6. Few candidates were able to successfully state the specific demographic of a product and then how the content both engaged and targeted that demographic. More successful candidates also applied theory, such as Imaginary Entity or Uses and Gratifications, to this question. It is vitally important that candidates are encouraged to study specific products.

7a) Answers to this question demonstrated that candidates knew the differences between traditional and online methods. Again, we saw a lack of referencing of products, which was the requirement of the question so candidates' marks were unfortunately capped.
7b) This was done well by most candidates, however there was a lot of repetition in the distribution channels when candidates referenced varieties of television channels or social media tools so, again, full marks could not be achieved.

8. This question was either answered exceptionally well by candidates, or was answered badly owing to a lack of understanding or engagement with theory or case studies about the media effects debate. Again, some candidates did not reference a specific product as per the requirements of the question. It was clear that if candidates had investigated a specific product fully and applied the suggested theory such as the passive v. active audience, moral panics, Hall, Cohen, Gauntlett, Anderson, Mulvey then answers would have been more successful. Answers that explored a specific product in relation to the media effects debate and wider effects issues such as representations of gender and race demonstrated that candidates were able to fully understand the requirements of the question. Products such as Grand Theft Auto, Call of Duty, Fight Club, A Clockwork Orange, Football Factory, and Inception were deconstructed well in relation to relevant debates.

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