Workshop samples for Language and literature part 4 Internal Oral Commentary (IOC)

Mushrooms

**Mark: 6+5+2+2=15**

**The poor presentation and language used in this commentary actually mask a student who has a good understanding of Mary Oliver’s verse, and the ability to analyse it in some detail. This script illustrates how hard it can be to spot technical competence and analytical ability when work is badly presented.**

**The focal passage is an appropriate choice, although Oliver’s style is rather dense, and might be considered difficult for weaker students to unpack. The guiding questions are vague, and might be applied to any poem or passage. They provide little help to the student.**

This student is inclined to paraphrase, and his rambling style does not assist him. However, it is clear that he does in truth have an adequate understanding of this poem. He presents some interesting interpretations of the language, and he seems to engage fully in the quest for understanding this poem invites. His references are far too wide and general to earn him more than an adequate mark in criterion A, however, and his frequent focus on other Oliver poems is a detraction in this exercise.

There is adequate awareness of the literary features of this poem, although this student has a tendency to generalise rather than focussing on precise examples. When he does focus in on an example, he merely identifies it before wandering away to wide ranging speculation and description. He never really works to unpack the language in front of him.

This commentary is not well organised, and this does impact negatively on the overall impression. He rambles about vaguely – there is no introduction and no conclusion – but he is sometimes able to present an idea with clarity, and he is able to take the listener with him through most of his ideas.

The student is very hard to listen to. His speech is not always appropriate to the exercise, as he includes a lot of slang expressions, and he is prone to use distracting fillers. However, the speech is comprehensible, and he manages to convey some complex ideas successfully.