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

The Hanging

**Mark: 7+7+4+4=22**

**In general this is a good, solid commentary, demonstrating an understanding and analytical ability that just fall short of excellent.**

**The focal passage is an appropriate choice, accessible and interesting and also presenting a good range of material for literary analysis. It is 35 lines long, which is an appropriate length. It would have been better if the lines had been numbered. The guiding questions should NOT have been numbered.**

**The guiding questions, while appropriately focussed on the passage, are far too difficult to assist the student. The first one, in particular, is highly complicated, and requires the student to think about the passage in a very narrow way. It is (sensibly) ignored by the candidate. The second question is perhaps too wide and vague to provide support.**

This student manages to show a very good knowledge and understanding of the text. Her understanding is obviously quite wide, and she is able to comment extensively on Orwell’s techniques. She supports most of her ideas with well chosen references. However, her comments lack depth at times, and she sometimes presents the comment and then leaves it to the listener to make the interpretative effort. This lack precision and focus on the references just holds the commentary short of the top mark band in criterion A.

A similar deficiency in detail and precision also affects the mark in B. The appreciation of literary features is good and often detailed, but there is a lack of consistency in the approach that prevents the commentary reaching the highest band. The student presents examples of the use of literary feature, and quite often lists the effects; however, understanding is sometimes not demonstrated sufficiently, with the student simply stating that “Literary feature X creates feeling Y in the reader”, and then moving on. For understanding to be clearly demonstrated, it is important that students explain HOW the feature creates the effect on the reader.

The organization of this commentary is also good, just short of excellent. The student chooses a structure, and sticks to it, no neglecting the listener’s need to follow her ideas about the passage from an introductory overview to her final “thank you”, that indicates the commentary is at an end. However, there are occasional confusions in her presentation, such as when she moves from one topic to another using transitions that imply a relationship when she does not intend to make this relationship clear (“furthermore”). There is also a tendency to present ideas in an unconnected list, which detracts from the student’s ability to demonstrate an overall comprehension of the essay’s construction. No summary conclusion is offered, which is a shame, as if such had been planned, the student might have found a way to focus her ideas on the overall impact of the passage and its construction.

Criterion D also merits a good, but not an excellent mark. The student’s language is clear and appropriate, and her grammar is highly accurate; however, the speed of her delivery, coupled with a vague and imprecise technical vocabulary, detracts from the overall impression.