Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board

The Demand of Writing Tasks: A Multimodal Perspective

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Factors Affecting the Demand of Multimodal Writing Tasks

1. Task Strategy
   "*Task strategy:* The extent to which the student devises (or selects) and maintains a strategy for tackling the question."

   (Hughes, Pollitt and Ahmed, 1998)

2. Contextualization Propensity (CP)

3. Interpretative Space (IS)

4. (In)Congruence in Ideational meaning between task and picture

5. (In)Congruence in Interpersonal meaning between task & picture

Contextualization Propensity (CP) & Interpretative Space (IS)

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Contextualization Propensity (CP) refers to "the degree/extent which linguistic items … contextualise the meaning of visual images"

Interpretative Space (IS) refers to the "space to create, invent and author meaning"

(Cheong, 2004)

**High CP
Low IS**

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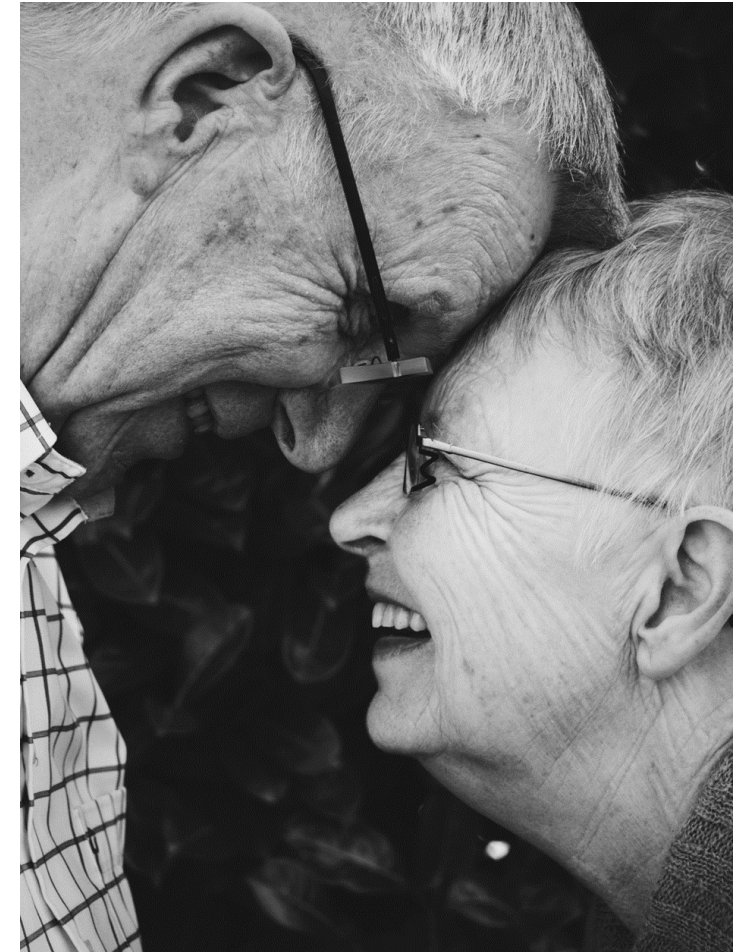
(Cheong, 2004)

**Low CP
High IS**

Are These Writing Tasks of Comparable Demand?

Write a story about these two persons using the picture above

Write a story about revenge using the picture above

Write a story about the reunion of two long-lost family members using the picture above.

Contextualization Propensity (CP) & Interpretative Space (IS)
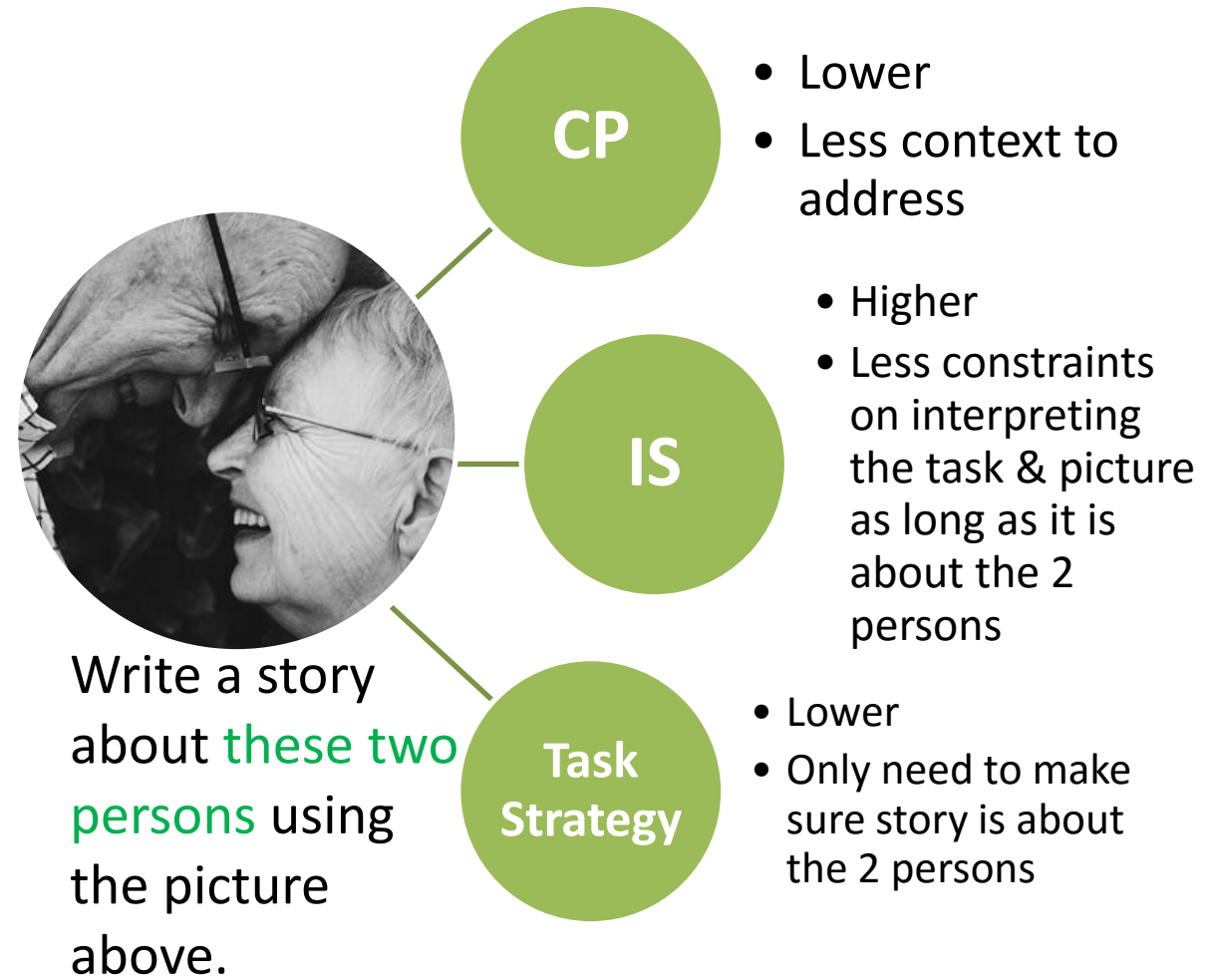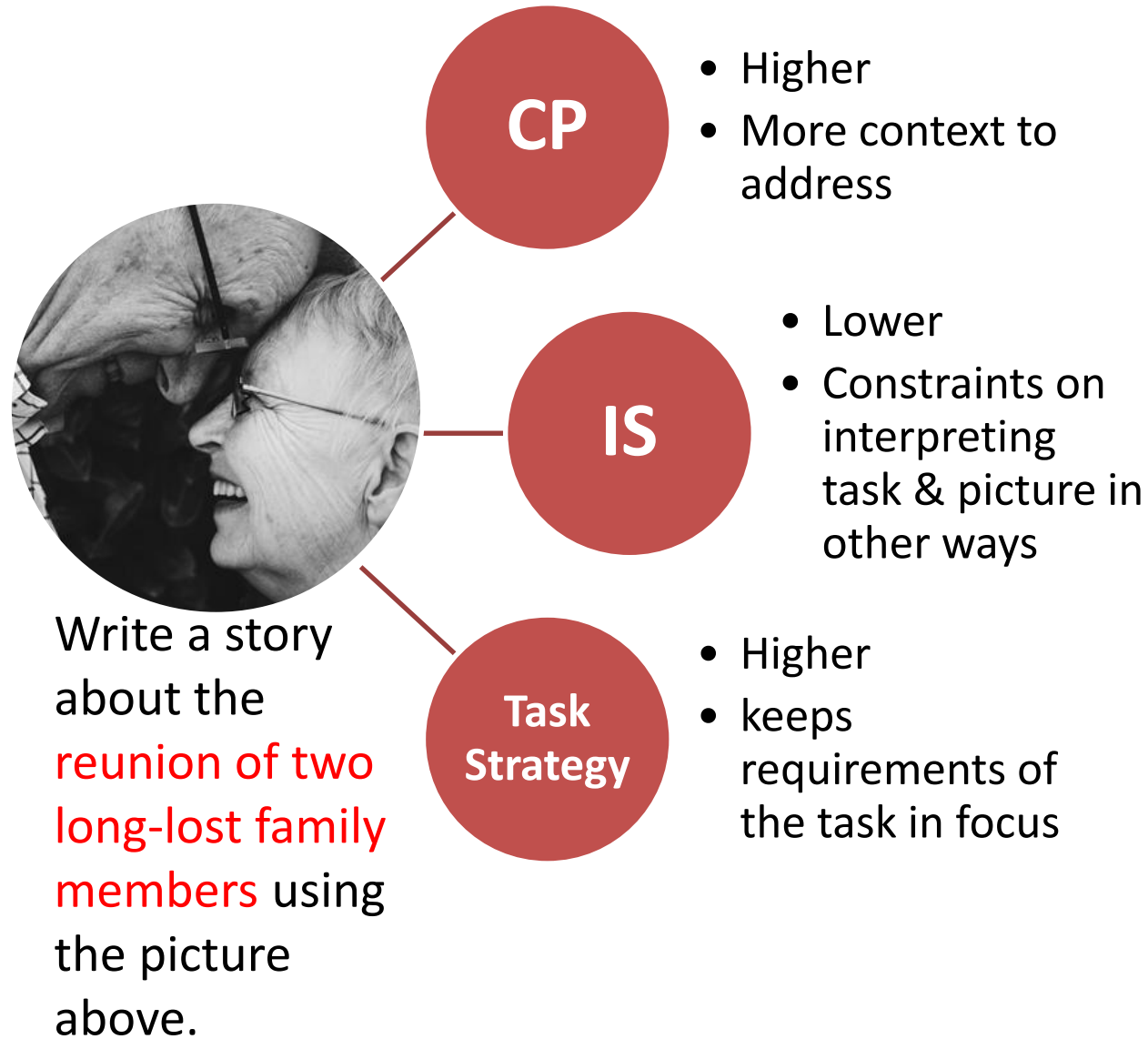
CP
- Higher
- More context to address

IS
- Lower
- Constraints on interpreting task & picture in other ways

Task Strategy
- Higher
- keeps requirements of the task in focus

Write a story about the reunion of two long-lost family members using the picture above.

CP
- Lower
- Less context to address

IS
- Higher
- Less constraints on interpreting the task & picture as long as it is about the 2 persons

Task Strategy
- Lower
- Only need to make sure story is about the 2 persons

Write a story about these two persons using the picture above.

Factors Affecting the Demand of Multimodal Writing Tasks

1. Task Strategy

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   (Hughes, Pollitt and Ahmed, 1998)

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5. (In)Congruence in Interpersonal meaning between task & picture

(In)Congruence in Ideational Meaning

Task	Picture
Ideationally about a reunion	Ideationally about togetherness, represented participants in close proximity
- Both task and Picture are **Ideationally congruent** - **Less demanding** for students to make connexion between them	

Write a story about a **reunion** of two long-lost family members using the picture above.

(In)Congruence in Interpersonal Meaning

Write a story about a **reunion** of two long-lost family members using the picture above.

Task	Picture
'reunion' is Interpersonally positive	Engages audience in an Interpersonally positive way

- Both task and Picture are **Interpersonally congruent**
- **Less demanding** for students to make connexion between them.

(In)Congruence in Ideational and Interpersonal Meaning

Write a story about **revenge** using the picture above.

Task	Picture
Ideationally about revenge	Ideationally about togetherness
Task and Picture **Ideationally incongruent**	
'revenge' is Interpersonally negative	Engages audience in an Interpersonally positive way
- Task and Picture **Interpersonally incongruent** - **More demanding** for students to reconcile Ideational and Interpersonal incongruence.	

Consider all Factors Holistically when Estimating Task Demand

|	CP	Constraints on IS	Incongruence in Ideational meaning	Incongruence in Interpersonal meaning	Task Strategy
Task 1 Write a story about these **two persons** using the picture above.	Low **5**	Low **5**	Low **5**	Low **5**	Low **5**
Task 2 Write a story about a **revenge** using the picture above.	Mid **10**	Mid **10**	Very High **20**	Very High **20**	Very High **20**
Task 3 Write a story about the **reunion** of two long-lost family members using the picture above.	Very High **20**	Very High **20**	Low **5**	Low **5**	High **15**

Visual Representation of Task Demand

Task 1
Write a story about these two persons using the picture above.

Task 2
Write a story about revenge using the picture above.

Task 3
Write a story about the reunion of two long-lost family members using the picture above
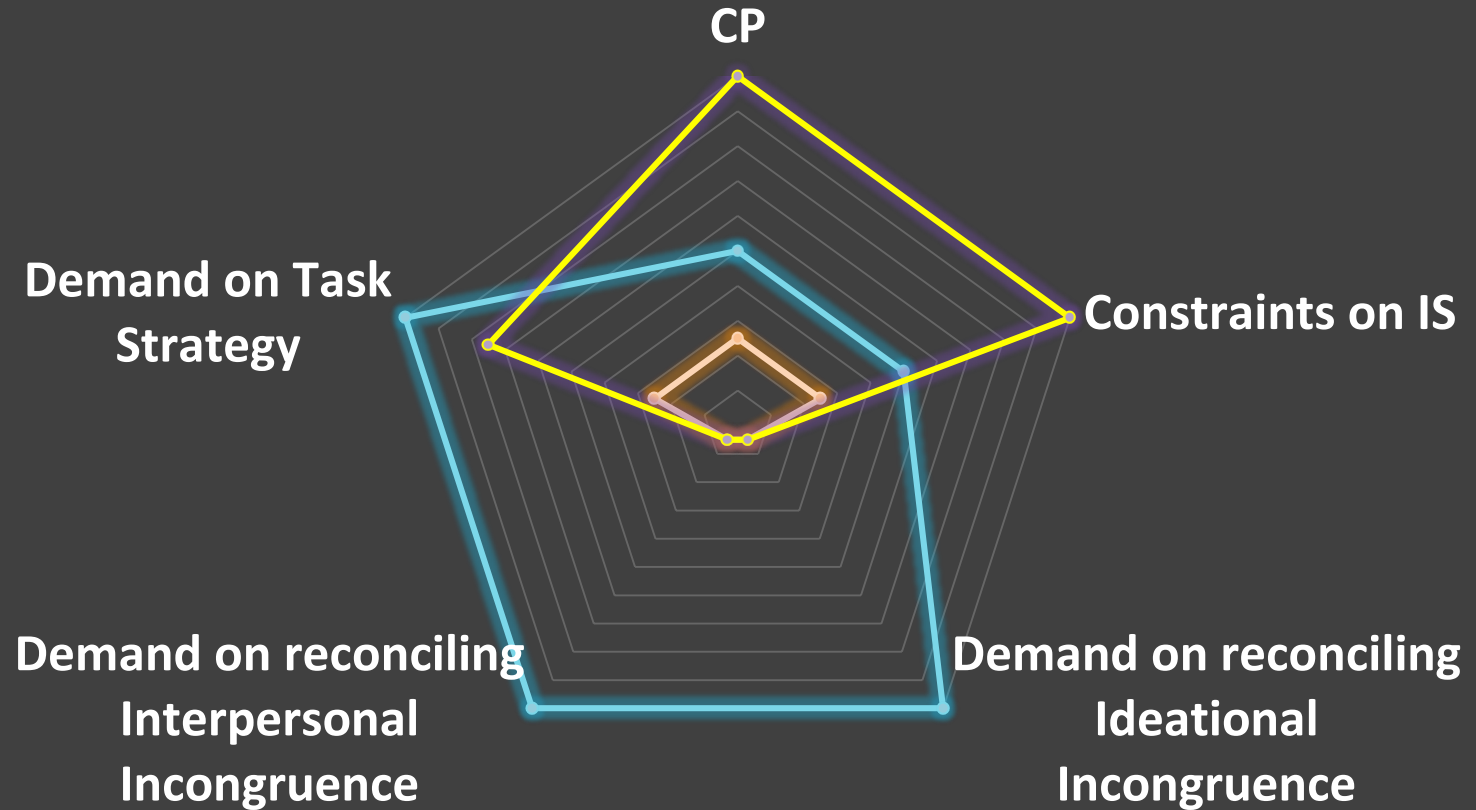
In Summary

1. Consider all factors holistically when estimating task demand
2. To ensure comparability of task demand across years, decide on and maintain across years the extent of:

   (i)   Task Strategy
   (ii) Contextualization Propensity (CP)
   (iii) Interpretative Space (IS)
   (iv) (In)Congruence in Ideational meaning between task and picture
   (v)   (In)Congruence in Interpersonal meaning between task and picture

References

1. Cheong Yin Yuen, 2004, "The Construal of Ideational Meaning in Print Advertisements", pp163-195 in <u>Multimodal Discourse Analysis</u>, edited by O'Halloran Kay, Continuum, UK.

2. Hughes, Sarah et all, 1998, <u>The Development of a Tool for Gauging the Demands of GCSE and A Level Exam Questions</u>. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Conference.

Thank You

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