

Examiners' Report January 2008

GCE

GCE Psychology (8555/9555)

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Unit Test 6761/01

1.1 General Comments

It is pleasing to note that candidates and centres are showing continual improvements for questions with specific requirements, and are responding well to issues raised on previous examiner reports. There are fewer instances of candidates using text language in answers, there is less confusion between key assumptions and key applications, and even rarer cases of any pre-prepared answers from candidates.

There were relatively few blank responses, although as would be expected, some questions were declined more often than others. It was also less common than in previous years to find candidates 'answering a different question' to that set. There was a marked improvement in many of the AO2-style questions, with candidates demonstrating a much better ability to evaluate than has previously been the case - particularly when asked to evaluate research methods. The essay question at the end of the paper was very accessible and was tackled by the vast majority of candidates.

It is clear that the multiple choice style questions (1a; 2a; 4aii) suit most candidates as they tend to do quite well on them. Hopefully this will continue to be the case in the new specification.

There was a wide range in the quality of candidates' written English. Some candidates were able to give succinct responses with remarkable clarity given the pressures of an examination. At the lower end, student's ability to communicate their answers was woeful given the level of study they have undertaken, with some unable to construct a legible sentence let alone extended prose. Some candidates' writing became very difficult to read although there were less 'out of clip' responses than in previous sessions.

The main distinction between more and less able candidates was and always has been the ability to elaborate. Higher scoring answers could back up a point with general and specific examples of research. Others find it difficult to provide relevant psychological research and instead rely on anecdotal information which is not creditworthy. There are continuing signs of a gradual improvement in this area but it still remains the main differentiator amongst all candidates.

There was an improvement in answers to research method questions which was pleasing considering the variety of these included in the paper. On the flip side some candidates really struggled with the contemporary issue and there were a number of below par responses. It did however prove to be an excellent discriminatory question giving the better candidates full opportunity to express themselves and gain marks.

1.2 Question 1

In (a) most candidates were able to identify the classic information processing flowchart commonly used. There were very few instances where the boxes were left blank, with the most commonly correct answers being input and output. Other answers such as 'information' or 'response' were credited, however a minority of candidates were confused and wrote in STM or LTM from the Multi store model of memory.

In part (b) candidates tended to provide relevant responses. A number of candidates failed to provide sufficient information to identify the study, particularly regarding

'Loftus' or 'leading questions'. Some of the weaker candidates confused Craik and Tulving with Craik and Lockhart, and then went on in (ii) to talk about Craik and Lockhart's studies of memory. Some candidates incorrectly identified studies that weren't from the Cognitive Approach but on the whole the most popular studies cited were Loftus and Palmer, Aggleton and Waskett, Craik and Tulving. A few candidates chose Yuille and Cutshall and EWT for the study, but these were in the minority. Some candidates gave one or more case studies from cognitive neuropsychology, most commonly Clive Wearing. There were practically no candidates who cited theories rather than a study which was pleasing as this had been the case during last summer.

The findings were generally answered well with most candidates understanding what was required although some did not understand how to convey enough for two marks and generally only gave results and not conclusions. For example, most candidates could describe the impact of the verb in the Loftus study but did not elaborate, i.e. did not use the figures to discuss the findings. Some candidates identified models of memory as a study and continued to write about Multi-store models and levels of processing.

Others who had made errors in their identification of studies elaborated findings about cognitive developmental studies, and a few also used Milgram and Hofling. Some candidates allocated studies to the wrong psychologists.

It was clear the candidates were assured in their knowledge, although they failed to fully explain it, for example stating 'remembering was best in the wet condition' with no expansion/explanation. Those candidates who had read the question carefully did very well and gained good marks.

In part (c) the evaluation, as with other evaluation questions, was weaker than descriptive questions, and showed an absence of understanding regarding applicability. Candidates appeared more able to evaluate the methods used in the various studies. For instance, many candidates were able to explain why lab experiments are replicable and reliable yet often lacking in ecological validity. There were others however who used appropriate terminology but did not develop their answers, e.g. 'Loftus lacked ecological validity' without any further elaboration. Not many candidates applied studies to real life applications this tended to be the higher achieving candidates. A few weaker answers concentrated on ethical issues or time and costs associated with lab experiments. There were still a few candidates that used bullet points, without explaining terminology and so gained very little if any credit.

The most common responses were Loftus and Palmer and Craik and Tulving. Candidates that mentioned the most popular studies picked up marks easily. Generally a lot of responses achieved 3 marks, with the stronger candidates criticising the strengths/weaknesses of the method and making the links. Candidates that cited the less popular studies such as Abernathy seemed to have less to write about and therefore did not get full marks on this question.

1.3 Question 2

In part (a) most candidates were able to score full marks. It seems that this type of tick box question is much preferred by candidates as they tend to do better on it as compared to more traditional three mark key assumption questions. This may prove useful in the new specification.

Part (b) was generally answered correctly and the majority of candidates were easily able to identify one cognitive developmental study. Again Piagets three mountains

and McGarrigle and Donaldson's naughty teddy were by far the most popular. There were still instances where it was difficult to identify the study for example when candidates just wrote 'conservation'.

In (c) very few answers gained full marks as they lacked reference to measuring behaviour in some way. When discussing what an observation entails, there was limited acknowledgement of how the details were to be recorded. Comments regarding Covert/overt studies, participant and non-participant and reference to the natural environment were common place and tended to be highlighted in detail. The stronger candidates were able to make the distinction between non-participant and participant observation. Some candidates gave rather general answers about observation and did not focus their answer on the main features. Some candidates brought in evaluative comments into their answer which were not creditable in this section.

In part (d) the lower scoring candidates were uninformed of the observation method, and tended to mix longitudinal with case study. Ecological validity was mentioned by most candidates and was described in detail. A lot of candidates made references to observations being unethical due to being covert. Whilst some candidates acknowledged not all studies are covert, the majority were quite concrete in this, indicating a view that all were covert and therefore unethical due to an absence of consent. Lots of candidates acknowledged the difficulty in controlling extraneous variables. There was an indication that some candidates for this question had confused lab experiments with observations. Others that identified observations are unethical didn't acknowledge that observations in public places are more ethical; most responses came from the controlled lab sense and therefore could be ethically problematic. Most candidates could comment on demand characteristics but most did not use the appropriate terminology, with the "screw you effect" arising on more than one occasion. Most identified that they are potentially time consuming and that it is important to have more than one observer so that the information gathered is accurate.

A lot of candidates were able to receive nearly full marks on this question. The reason why they didn't always obtain full marks was because they often failed to mention the lack of cause and effect in naturalistic observations, although when they had described observations in an experimental/lab setting they mentioned cause and effect.

1.4 Question 3

In part (a) most candidates highlighted the three components of SIT, though identification sometimes failed to acknowledge *adopting* the ideas of the group rather than just identifying with them. Reference to self esteem was commonplace. Reference to the presence of groups to be sufficient for conflict was typically put as an evaluation point in part (ii). A number of candidates used an example to demonstrate their point, typically football hooliganism. At times some candidates discussed competition therefore alluding to realistic conflict theory. Better candidates did very well and understood the three elements of Tajfel's theory, whilst others wrote about the stages but didn't use the categorisation/comparison/identification terms. The examples used focused mainly on football teams and different kits worn by opposing fans. However, not many of even these stronger candidates were able to gain all 5 marks on this question, mostly due to lack of elaboration. Some candidates were very confused and wrote answers based on the realistic conflict theory.

Students struggled with evaluation points on SIT, as getting full marks proved to be the exception to the rule. Reference was made to individual differences, though was not always in sufficient detail to gain a mark. Substantial reference was made to personality and specifically authoritarian personality but again without any real follow up. The evaluations were limited in terms of content; many wrote answers responding to realistic conflict theory but did not say why it is a (better) explanation of prejudice. Some candidates mentioned the authoritarian personality as a point about individual explanations but most focused on the idea that competition is a better explanation of a cause rather than just the existence of a group.

For part (b) the majority of candidates were able to get at least two out of the three marks available. Better answers could give an example of a field experiment such as Hofling or Sherif to add to earlier points about natural environments where the experimenter still has some control over the IV. Weaker answers tended to bring in comparisons to laboratory experiments or general evaluations of the field experiment.

In Part (c) nearly all candidates got full marks. The most common advantage cited was ecological validity with the correct elaboration about natural setting. Those who talked about demand characteristics were also able to access both marks but not all did as they found it difficult to elaborate for the second mark.

1.5 Question 4

Part (a) was easily the best answered section on the whole paper and virtually all candidates got at least four out the five possible marks available for both questions. It was the first time candidates had been asked to actually define EWT and it is evident that they were able to do this well. The same can be said for the next question on factors affecting eyewitness testimony which was also a first. The two red herrings clearly did not distract those candidates who knew their material. Once again this type of multiple choice question seems to bring out the best in candidates.

In part (b) the main issue was the tendency for candidates to refer to memory rather than forgetting. Particularly when discussing cue dependency, candidates often referred to recall being improved with cues. Those candidates who did talk about forgetting demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the theories.

Tracy decay was described the least well with most candidates lacking reference to the nature of the trace. The best described (and evaluated) theory was non-cognitive, i.e. repression.

Part (c) lacked findings from studies supporting/refuting theory. A lot of vague allusions were made to explaining forgetting (sometimes memory) without being specific enough.

When studies were used they were frequently superficial e.g. 'supported by Craik & Tulving's study', 'this theory is supported by extensive research'.

As with part (b) there was substantial reference to memory. The evaluation of repressed memories was probably the most successful and considered ethical, methodological and application issues. Stronger candidates appeared able to use studies to support their arguments, even those who discussed memory.

Consequently for the evaluation element the repression answers gained higher marks, however most that used cue dependency did look at how childhood environments can access memory traces and used examples of school reunions and old homes within their answers.

1.6 Question 5

Part (a) was poorly answered with an inordinate number left blank. Lots of candidates seemed to be answering part (a) as they should have answered part (b) then leaving (b) blank.

Contemporary issues still pose a problem for many candidates in that they are unsure as how to describe an issue. Many still do not pose a question but make a bland statement of fact. Many are also still describing research in this answer rather than outlining the issue.

Some novel answers were given that identified very contemporary issues such as Iraq and the treatment of soldiers etc. Some valid points were then raised in (b) and some of the explanations were rather interesting. The weaker candidates did not grasp the main issues/concepts in part (a) and lacked detail or explanation in part (b).

Common issues were: why do people commit genocide?, treatment of the prisoners at Abu Ghraib, and whether hypnotism actually works. Hypnotism responses were often detailed in part (a) but lacked psychological support in part (b). Genocide and the soldier issues resulted in similar responses in part (b). With these issues responses commonly referred to agentic state, authoritarian personality and charismatic leadership, all of which were detailed and demonstrated an ability to apply these theories to an issue. A number of candidates described each theory and then further explained how the individuals in the situation responded as a result, instead of just describing the theories.

Stronger candidates have understood the split of the question i.e. part (a) is a general introduction and then the psychological evidence and knowledge goes into part (b). Most candidates used the Holocaust or Rwanda as an example of genocide, a few candidates introduced the former Yugoslavia and Kenya into their answers but they were in the minority. Part (b) tested the candidates significantly - those who wrote about genocide discussed the agency theory within their answer and started to incorporate charismatic leadership and authoritarian personality, although some lacked enough detail to gain full marks. Very few candidates used the information from a key assumption to help organise their answer. This should be filtered down to centres that key assumptions, theories and studies can help gain credit, especially for the weaker candidates that found it difficult to get enough detail in their answer.

1.7 Question 6

Generally good attempts made by all candidates. The weak areas tended to be frequently lengthy descriptions of Piaget's theory before approaching how it has been applied to education, and the evaluation of applied concepts, quite often evaluation of theory.

Most candidates used ZPD and discovery learning within their answers but there were a number of candidates who described Piaget's stage theory in great depth and didn't answer the question relating to education. In the main candidates were much better at describing the elements as opposed to adding the application or AO2 points to their answers. Few candidates understood the implications of the Plowden report and didn't use this information in their answers. Some candidates used the Bruner information but generally answers came from Piaget and Vygotsky.

The main concern with this question was the AO2 marks. Many candidates tended to evaluate the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky rather than how they had been applied to education. Quite a number of candidates also discussed Piaget's stages of development in detail without making reference to education. Detail was typically

shown when discussing scaffolding and ZPD. When highlighting the issue of readiness a number of candidates failed to display sufficient detail. Many candidates were able to highlight studies which demonstrated the effectiveness of the educational techniques used. The stronger candidates grasped and were able to explain the terms.

Unit Test 6762/01

2.1 General Comments

Candidates tended to do better on the descriptive questions compared to the evaluation questions, some of which they seemed to find particularly hard this year. As in previous years there were some true/false questions and identification marks, which allowed easy access for the candidates. There were also similar questions to ones in previous years such as describing a study, where it is pleasing to see more candidates are doing better. However, frequently we see candidates not getting full marks on such questions as they don't put down enough detail to access the maximum marks. There was an application question this year about defence mechanisms, and it was good to see the majority of candidates relating their answer to the written stimulus.

The evaluation tended to be weaker, in some cases due to the candidates not answering the question that was asked, and instead writing down all known evaluation points whether relevant or not. Some candidates are still writing down descriptive points for their evaluations, which can't gain any marks. Another fairly common problem was candidates using psychological terminology as an evaluation point without explaining why that point is an issue for that particular study or theory, e.g. saying a study wasn't ecologically valid but not saying why.

There did not seem to be an issue with timing, as most candidates managed to attempt all of the questions. There were fewer scripts with extra pages attached to them, showing that candidates are using the blank pages in the answer booklet if they need extra space for their answers. Those candidates who needed extra space because they had written the wrong thing clearly directed us to where the answer could be found. There were fewer incidences of candidates writing in a faint pen which couldn't be read on the marking system.

2.2 Question 1

Q1a) The majority of candidates could correctly identify which questions were true and which were false. Those that got one wrong tended to cross true for the second statement.

Q1b) There were some good answers here, with the better candidates using evidence from sleep deprivation studies to support what they were saying. However, a large minority of candidates spent a lot of time describing what zeitgebers are rather than answering the question, which was about circadian rhythms.

Q1ci) The most common choice was the ecological/evolutionary theory of sleep. Comments made were typically about avoiding predators and not being able to hunt in the dark. A number of candidates did use examples of animals to further their point, especially lions versus cows. However many candidates didn't go into enough detail to gain the 4 marks available, and as a whole the question was often poorly answered. A minority of candidates did describe a theory of dreaming rather than a theory of sleep, however very few described the restoration theory of sleep which demonstrated full comprehension of the question.

Q1cii) Almost all candidates evaluated the same theory they described in part ci). Overall the evaluation points were weaker than the descriptive points. Many candidates continued to describe through further examples of animals, or stated 'it

does what it says it does'. Those who did gain credit used contradictory theories as alternative explanations, or pointed out the contradictory claims within the evolutionary theory. Unfortunately some candidates named a contradictory theory but failed to say how it contradicted and so couldn't gain the mark. Again a minority of candidates evaluated a theory of dreaming rather than a theory of sleep.

2.3 Question 2

Q2a) this question was generally well answered, with the vast majority of candidates being able to identify a key assumption and then go on to describe it. The main assumptions were the importance of early childhood experiences and the influence of the unconscious mind on motivation. Some candidates solely stated 'early childhood' without describing what in childhood is important. Some candidates tended to repeat themselves and so failed to gain the full 3 marks.

Q2b) This question tended to be answered well with the majority of candidates being able to get at least 3 marks for describing what each part of the personality does. Candidates consistently described the ID, but the weaker candidates sometimes confused the functions of the ego and superego. This confusion tended to come with several successive answers, which indicates a centre effect. Successful candidates could also illustrate the link that exists between elements of the personality rather than seeing them as isolated components.

Q2c) This question was also answered well, with the vast majority of candidates relating their answers to the stimulus material. Whilst some candidates did not fully grasp the distinctions between different defence mechanisms, they were able to describe the processes and relate them to the stimulus material and so gain the marks. The two most commonly confused were projection and reaction formation. Those candidates who used reaction formation could describe the defence mechanism, but they found it harder to relate to the stimulus material.

Q2d) Candidates seemed to find this question challenging and tended to give general evaluation points about Freud's theory rather than focusing on the research methods he used. Whilst they tended to get 1 or 2 marks, not fully answering the question that was asked did limit the number of marks the candidates could gain. Most candidates looked at issues of generalisability and the subjective nature of the methods used in the psychodynamic approach. However, a lot of candidates made basic, general evaluation points without relating them to Freud's theory, e.g. they didn't explain why his sample couldn't be generalised. Some candidates evaluated a study, especially Little Hans, rather than evaluating his methodology as a whole and so limiting their marks.

2.4 Question 3

Q3a) The vast majority of candidates were able to get the full 3 marks for this question. There were very few who drew more than one line from each type of learning.

Q3b) Answers tended to focus on the IV, DV and extraneous variables, and these were consistently well described by the majority of candidates. The stronger candidates went on to describe experimental design or talk about hypotheses. However many candidates went on to evaluate the method when they had run out of descriptive

comments. Evaluation points cannot get marks when the question asks the candidates to describe. Some candidates did name a lab experiment as an example, but failed to elaborate on it enough to gain the mark, e.g. stating what the IV and DV in that experiment were.

Q3c) This was one of the better evaluation questions. The majority of candidates were able to get at least one mark for the strength and one for the weakness. The candidates found it easier to gain the 2 marks for the weakness than the strength, with many citing ecological validity. The most popular strength was controlled conditions, but fewer candidates could elaborate on this to gain the next mark. There was a tendency for some candidates to talk about more than one strength and weakness when the question only required them to discuss one of each.

Q3d) Most candidates could correctly name a study. Those that didn't get the mark tended to not put down enough detail to enable identification of the study, e.g. just stating Bandura without stating which of his many studies they were identifying. A small minority of candidates identified a study from a different approach, some from this unit and some from unit 1.

2.5 Question 4

Q4a) The most common studies were Dement and Kleitman, Heston, Peter Tripp and Rechstaffen. Those candidates who organised their structure in aim, method, results and conclusion tended to gain higher marks, as they had a clear understanding of what the different sections required. Those with lower marks tended to spend too much time on the method section. Those that described Dement and Kleitman tended to mix several of their studies together, which limited the marks they could get. Candidates who described case studies of sleep deprivation sometimes gave vague answers possibly because they find it harder to focus their answers.

Q4b) Candidates struggled to evaluate the studies described in a) within the parameters of ethics and applications, suggesting they are better at methodological evaluations. Candidates tended to write a general evaluation and so did not gain marks. The ethical part of the question was generally answered better than the application part. When considering application the candidates often provided information about the number of participants, but then failed to link it to an application, although some did say Dement and Kleitman's study was done in a lab so there was difficulty in applying it. The candidates who did answer this question effectively showed a clear understanding of the material being covered, rather than rote learning evaluations of studies.

2.6 Question 5

Q5a) The most popular responses were the issue of multiple personality disorder and the appeal of horror films/Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Marks were lost because candidates did not state what the issue was, e.g. just stated horror films which aren't an issue as they exist, rather than saying why we like horror so much which is an issue. Others were able to name an issue but failed to add any more detail to their answer when trying to explain why it is an issue. A significant minority of candidates talked about a contemporary issue from the physiological approach. Some candidates described a study rather than a contemporary issue. A few candidates talked about the issue of developing in stages or attempted to argue between Erikson and Freud, but they often lacked the knowledge required about the issue to gain full marks.

Q5b) Little Hans was the most popular choice for this question, with Bowlby and Adams also being popular. Those who described Bowlby tended to have a clear discussion of the results, however, those who described Little Hans tended to group the findings together in one sentence, making each finding rather brief, which then impacted on the candidates' marks. At times candidates overlapped the results and conclusions. Weaker candidates tended to outline the aim and procedure, which then had an impact on the amount of detail they put into the results and conclusion.

Q5c) This evaluation question tended to be answered better than 4b). The candidates tended to evaluate the same study that they had described in part 5b). They mainly evaluated in terms of the scientific nature of the study and the generalisability of the study. Candidates with a good grasp of the terminology were able to link the terminology specifically with the study and so gain 2 marks for that point. Some candidates gave generic evaluation points, which couldn't gain credit. There is still a significant minority of candidates who write descriptive points for an evaluation question.

2.7 Question 6

This question showed a significant range of ability. The main techniques discussed were Token Economy, Systematic Desensitisation and Aversion Therapy. A number of candidates attempted to develop an answer based on modelling, but this tended to be less well done than the therapies above, mainly because they tended to describe social learning theory without applying it to changing human behaviour. The AO1 was answered better than the AO2 part of the question, however several candidates failed to write enough to gain the full 4 marks, despite seeming to have the knowledge. Better candidates tended to focus on one therapy, as the question specified, however several candidates discussed more than one therapy, which impacted on the amount of marks they gained. Several candidates still confuse the mechanisms of classical conditioning and operant conditioning. Weaker candidates sometimes described a theory of learning rather than a technique used to change human behaviour, and some described a study from the approach which may have gained some marks if it was a human study. This, however, impacted on their AO2 marks as they tended to evaluate the study rather than a technique.

The evaluation of the technique tended to be weaker. Strong candidates evaluated using ethical issues, methodology and applicability issues. Very few used studies to support the technique working, although it was encouraging to see some candidates (usually the stronger ones) doing this. Those candidates who described a theory rather than a technique found the evaluation more difficult. As with previous questions there was an issue with candidates being able to state an evaluation point but then failing to elaborate on the problems/strengths of the technique, e.g. stating there are ethical issues with the debate but failing to say what those ethical issues are. A significant number of candidates focused on AO1 and left little time for the AO2, which impacted on their marks as both have an equal weighting in the essays, and candidates should spend equal amounts of time on both sections if they want to access full marks .

6764 Unit 4 Test

3.1 General Comments

The majority of candidates showed a good level of knowledge and understanding, with evidence of evaluation skills at some degree. With few exceptions the questions on this paper proved to be reasonably accessible to the majority of the candidates, providing an opportunity for them to show both breadth and depth in their answers. As always there were a minority who had failed to prepare adequately and provided answers to the questions they had prepared for, rather than the ones set, and a few who failed to comprehend the majority of questions set. The "application" questions on each option proved very worthwhile, with many candidates accepting the challenge they posed and providing well considered answers. A minority seemed unable to respond to a question that required such thinking in an examination, but in general candidates were better able to deal with the application questions than in previous series.

The standard of evaluation is generally improving, with fewer throw-away comments than in previous years. However there is still a tendency for candidates to produce evaluation points that show little understanding.

Overall each of the options provided a set of questions which were very accessible and it was clear that the majority of candidates felt they could write a reasonable amount in response to the questions.

There were fewer candidates who answered both options in the same booklet than in previous years, which is pleasing. There were as ever a small number of candidates who once in the examination decided to answer a different pair of options from those they had been entered for. While once in the examination there is nothing that can be done about this it is worth pointing out to candidates that such forays into other options invariably produce very low marks.

3.2 Option A Clinical Psychology

Question 1

This continues to be a very popular option and, while many candidates find this a challenging topic to study, their performances in the examination continue to be very good. In general the questions were very accessible with many of the AO1 questions gaining full marks on many papers.

Q1a) The most popular disorder was schizophrenia, and this in particular was generally very well done. There are still a minority of answers that describe a class of disorders rather than a single disorder. Similarly a few answers also included features of a disorder when only symptoms were required. Candidates do need to be aware that marks cannot be gained for merely identifying a symptom, credit is only given once the symptom has been described. A list of symptoms will only gain a single mark.

Q1b) Many, though not all, candidates took the opportunity to use a different disorder in this question. A significant minority still produced an evaluation of physiological rather than psychological factors. A common problem was to spend a great deal of time and effort describing either the psychological factors or the evidence rather than getting to the point of evaluating the psychological explanations. The best responses evaluated a range of explanations including those from the learning, psychodynamic and cognitive approaches.

Question 2

Q2a) Most answers described either classical psychoanalysis or brief psychodynamic therapy, and many candidates were able to gain most, if not all the marks. A few candidates described one therapeutic approach from within psychoanalysis which was equally acceptable. A small number of responses described a therapy from a different approach.

Q2b) While most were able to access some marks in evaluating the effectiveness of psychodynamic therapy, few were able to develop arguments sufficiently to gain high marks. Many candidates merely evaluated without reference to effectiveness, and so limited their marks. Answers tended to either use points relating to studies into effectiveness, or to produce a critique of the practical aspects of the therapy.

Q2c) While some candidates did not attempt the application question, most did and a significant number did extremely well. Answers often focused on the frankness necessary in the therapy, its duration and cost.

Question 3

Q3) The essay question was very similar to previous questions on definitions of abnormality. The most popular definitions used were statistical infrequency, social norms and failure to function adequately. Consequently there were many extremely well prepared answers and resultant high marks, as well as a few common pitfalls. Firstly some answers seemed to assume that the mere mention of a definition was sufficient for a mark. Given the familiarity of this question it was necessary to describe reasonably accurately to gain marks. Thus those using a statistical infrequency definition, and an exemplar of IQ, who claimed that mental retardation was defined as 90 IQ points or less were not given credit for the evidence as they were expected to be nearer to the correct figure (the best answers described in

terms of standard deviations). It is important that candidates are aware that examples will only gain credit if they enhance the answer and are reasonably accurate, whilst throw-away or facile examples will not gain credit.

One evaluation point that caused considerable problems was the use of culture as an argument for the problems associated with whichever definition they were considering. Many candidates will feel sure that they have gained marks that examiners will not have credited. This is because the argument was not correctly or clearly made, examiners cannot credit what is not written as they cannot know whether the omission is due to lack of knowledge or carelessness. An assertion that a definition of abnormality is flawed, because the norm in one culture may not be the same as in another culture, only makes sense if the point is developed properly such as minority cultures within a society being assessed in terms of the host society rather than the minority cultural norms.

3.3 Option B Criminological psychology

This continues to be the most popular option on the paper. It is clear that as centres have become more familiar with the topics covered in this option the focus of the teaching and learning has improved and this is reflected in many of the answers. There is still a tendency to forget that the topic under assessment is criminological psychology, and so examples, studies and evaluations should be linked to criminal or anti-social behaviour. While there are times when material from other areas is used it should be acknowledged that it is not direct evidence and a suitable caveat should be given.

Question 1

Q1a) Most were able to produce a reasonable outline of zero tolerance, though there was a tendency to be somewhat repetitive.

Q1b) While most gained some credit here high marks were rare. Often assertions were not backed up with the evidence required by the question, or the evidence was very inaccurate. Weaker answers tended to describe the effects rather than assessing the effects of zero tolerance. Despite the wording of the question, some used material not related to crime.

Question 2

Q2a) Although this should have been a very straightforward question there were relatively few answers that gained full marks. Those candidates who described a Bandura study did not, in general, do well. Frequently the particular study was not accurately identified and many answers were an amalgam of points from several studies. This is not acceptable when one study is asked for and such answers are marked generically, with a maximum of 2 marks. Better answers were likely to describe Charlton et al, Parke et al, Leyens et al or Eron & Huesman. This is a perennial problem both for this area and for questions on eyewitness testimony. Centres should think very carefully about the choice of studies and remind candidates of the level of accuracy required to gain credit.

Q2b) Many answers relied too heavily on generic evaluation points to gain high marks. Those who had produced a generic Bandura study in part (a) had little hope of being able to gain high marks here. Often points were made that showed a lack of knowledge of the study they had described, such as Charlton manipulating the level of violence broadcast to St Helena.

Q2c) There were many excellent attempts at this application question, although as in Clinical there were a minority who did not attempt it. The best answers looked at the methodological pitfalls and explained them in a way that would be understandable to a lay person. Answers that relied too heavily on unexplained jargon did not gain as much credit as those where ordinary people would be able to follow the points made.

Question 3

Q3) There was a considerable improvement in the standard of answers provided for this question compared to the last time this topic was on the paper. As with the Clinical essay the marks were readily accessible to candidates who had learned the material and many provided excellent answers.

Most answers provided a competent description of the processes involved in self-fulfilling prophecy, though surprisingly few gained all four of the AO1 marks available. The evaluation was generally reasonable although there were two particularly frequent shortcomings. Firstly there is still an insistence in using non-criminological studies without thought so that the material can be seen to be evaluating the explanation of self-fulfilling prophecy as an explanation of anti-social behaviour. Secondly, though most candidates now correctly identify the Jahoda study on the Ashanti tribe as the most pertinent piece of research they tend to spend too long describing the study before giving the figures on the crime rates between Monday and Wednesday boys, gaining just 1 mark for the evidence. If the study is evaluated at all it is invariably done incorrectly. Answers that criticise the Jahoda findings because they are not applicable to other cultures are missing the essential point, as this is precisely why it supports the self fulfilling prophecy. Candidates need to appreciate that if the differential figures are present in the Ashanti but not in Britain it supports the idea that it is the prophecy that is creating the difference. (A nice parallel can be seen in deaths in Japanese Americans and other ethnic groups in the USA on the 4th of each month. The number 4 is unlucky in Japanese culture)

3.4 Option C Psychology of Education

General comments

There are now only a few centres taking this option. Clearly the decisions for the revised specification have influenced decisions on which topics are studied and Education has been affected by this. As with options A and B the questions were fairly accessible, allowing candidates to show what they did know rather than what they did not know.

Question 1

Q1a) It was surprising that a substantial number of answers failed to accurately identify a special educational need. Several candidates provided a very general answer such as "reading problems", which was not specific enough.

Q1b) Many described the process of calculating IQ, which was a perfectly acceptable strategy, but surprisingly few were able to make correct comments on either how IQ tests were administered or the nature of the content of such tests.

Q1c) In common with other times when reliability and validity have been the focus of a question, answers here tended to gain low marks. Many were limited to the two marks available for definitions of the terms. There was a general lack of evidence, with comments relying on a mixture of commonsense and general knowledge. Answers tended to suggest that candidates did not have a clear understanding of why reliability and validity of IQ measurement was important. Answers were somewhat mechanical in terms of for example how reliability might be measured and what the measure might be, but not why it was necessary or what the implications were.

Question 2

Q2a) While there were some excellent descriptions of discovery learning, few managed to gain all the marks available, usually because of tautologies or repetition.

Q2b) Good answers to this question evaluated the contributions of at least two different cognitive psychologists, most frequently Piaget and Ausubel, although there was a smattering of Vygotsky and Bruner. Too many answers focused on describing rather than evaluating, though often after a lengthy description of e.g. advanced organisers there was a brief evaluative comment. Nonetheless the lack of balance meant that many candidates who clearly knew the material well failed to gain high marks through not addressing the question asked.

Q2c) In general this application question was well done. Answers demonstrated both an awareness of what real infant classrooms are like as well as how theory could be translated into features in the classroom environment. A small number of answers failed to target their suggestions at the relevant age group.

Question 3

Q3) This was a very accessible essay title and was reflected in generally high marks. Although there were a small number of answers that erroneously answered in terms of teaching styles, most candidates were able to successfully describe at least two learning/cognitive styles and securing full marks for description was not uncommon. Evaluation was not so well done, and many points made were quite general. Even so

most answers that had shown good knowledge in gaining a high AO1 mark were able to access some marks on AO2.

3.5 Topic E Sports Psychology

General Comments

While papers submitted in this option continue to provide slightly less evidence of psychological knowledge than the other options, there is a better understanding of the application of psychology than in the other topics. There has been a general reduction of anecdotal information in the answers.

Question 1

Q1a) Many answers failed to focus effectively on Cattell's theory. Those that described the theory were often very brief, while many seemed to be unsure what the theory was about.

Q1b) This is a very similar question to one previously asked, consequently the better answers were well focused and accurate. There was a general lack of evidence from research studies, or when studies were used they were grossly inaccurate. Often lengthy descriptions of a point were made followed by an evaluation, almost as an afterthought. This meant that many long answers gained relatively few marks.

Question 2

Q2a) This was not always well done as few answers gave sufficient information to gain all four marks for the description. However most were able to correctly identify what team cohesion was and many were able to describe both task and social cohesion.

Q2b) Many answers cited Steiner's work on team cohesion and there were some good attempts to bring a range of evidence to bear. Unfortunately some answers in an attempt to include material on social loafing as an evaluation of team cohesion went off the mark, citing evidence from e.g. Ringleman to show that social loafing occurs, without tying it to the points on team cohesion.

Q2c) In general the application question was well done, with some pertinent and practical strategies for improving team cohesion. A small number of answers, having carefully explained the concepts of pulling together and team effort in parts (a) and (b) suddenly produced ideas to increase competitiveness in a team!

Question 3

Q3) This was a slightly more challenging essay than the others on the paper but most candidates made a reasonable attempt at describing Weiner's theory and were able to gain a reasonable number of AO1 marks. Many answers included a table which enabled the candidate to explain the relationship between locus of causality and stability more easily. The AO2 marks were more accessible as they asked candidates to apply their knowledge. There were some well made points, and the occasional piece of evidence was produced.

Grade Boundaries

Unit 6761-01

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	72	45	40	35	30	26
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 6762-01

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	72	50	45	40	35	30
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 6764-4A and 4B (option 1)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	72	47	42	37	33	29
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 6764-4A and 4C (option 2)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	72	48	43	38	34	30
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 6764-4A and 4E (option 4)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	72	49	44	39	34	29
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 6764-4B and 4C (option 5)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	72	47	42	37	33	29
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 6764-4B and 4E (option 7)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	72	48	43	38	33	28
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Notes

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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