



GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**PSYCHOLOGY
A LEVEL**

SUMMER 2017

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EDUQAS
GCE A LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY
Summer 2017
COMPONENT 1

General Comments

It was very pleasing to see that the majority of candidates attempted every question on this exam. Very often the questions that were not attempted were due to candidates misjudging time rather than not having the ability or information to hand. However, the most disappointing aspect of this exam was the constant centre effect where candidates had either learnt model answers or information straight from one particular textbook. At A Level, candidates should be able to use a range of resources to display their knowledge of psychology and this level of independence would be welcome. It is important for centres to note that learning model answers or memorising detail from the textbook does not lead to top band answers, mainly because the depth of knowledge required is missing and candidates do not fully engage with, or understand, essays that they have simply had to remember.

AO1 description skills were the strongest with AO2 application skills being the weakest answered questions. It is important for centres to note that in order to achieve AO2 marks, candidates must just simply answer the question. If the question requires reference to a statement then candidates must ensure that they do this in their answer to be able to access the full range of marks. It is also important for centres to ensure that candidates look at the allocation of marks and answer accordingly. Many candidates are spending too long on lower mark questions which does not allow them the time to focus on questions with a higher allocation of marks elsewhere in the exam.

Question 1

Answers more often than not received top band marks but those that did not often missed out on marks due to not linking the assumption to an example. The most successful assumption that was written about was psychosexual stages; mainly due to the fact that candidates described each stage well and used an example of behaviour from that stage e.g. overindulgence at the anal stage leads to an anal retentive personality. Candidates needed to use specific terminology to make a link to human behaviour. The assumption that received the lowest marks was the unconscious mind with many candidates not progressing past 2-3 marks. This was due to the fact that the unconscious mind was stated as the assumption but the answer would not focus on this, veering off into details of the conscious and preconscious more so than the unconscious mind. This was due to overreliance on a textbook. The tripartite personality was well described but very rarely linked to behaviour.

Question 2

This question varied greatly from centre to centre. Many candidates gained higher band marks and it was obvious that they had read the original article or used the summary sheets provided by Eduqas. Those centres where candidates gained lower marks did not make use of these resources. Some candidates used subheadings and/or bullet points for this question. Both are acceptable and a good time saver. It helped candidates to organise their answer and allowed them to go into depth for each part of the investigation as many candidates separated the procedures by the age of Little Albert during each part of the research. Some candidates displayed excellent knowledge of the joint stimulations made. Some candidates included information other than procedures which was not creditworthy.

Question 3

The best answers followed a structure of; naming the strength/weakness, providing an example of where that strength/weakness is evident in the cognitive approach, explaining why it is a strength/weakness. It was generally the last point mentioned that was missing from candidate answers. Some answers were superficial in their use of examples e.g. identifying Loftus and Palmer as scientific but not using specifics to demonstrate the point or stating that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is useful but not using any evidence. It was clear that when candidates used determinism as a strength or a weakness, they did not truly understand what determinism is. This is worth centres noting for future teaching of this issue.

Question 4

Unfortunately this question was not answered well across the board. It is an AO2 question where candidates fail to engage with the material and answer the question asked. Many candidates simply outlined the assumptions of the behaviourist approach and the links to human behaviour were basic or candidates linked to more than one human behaviour throughout their answer but only one could be accepted and awarded. More often than not candidates were not clear on which behaviour they were applying the behaviourist approach to and some used animal research inappropriately. One point to note is that there were many muddled answers on classical conditioning. Candidates muddled the terms e.g. stating an unconditioned stimulus that was actually a neutral stimulus whilst others omitted the formula altogether. Answers with the best depth for classical conditioning stated the behaviour they were writing about and put that behaviour into the formula. The use of the classical conditioning formula would be acceptable here.

Question 5a

There were many excellent responses for this question on both drug therapy and psychosurgery. Weaker answers named psychosurgery techniques with very little detail on how each technique worked and weaker drug therapy answers outlined the names of the drugs and the disorders they are used for but with little detail on how they actually work. Centres should note that the description of disorders does not attract marks for this question.

Question 5b

It was very disappointing to see answers with so many excellent points made and so much research evidence that would have achieved top band marks were it not for the fact that candidates did not refer to the statement given on the success of the therapy they were writing about. Many candidates did not make use of the quote so their answers became evaluative in nature rather than application. Centres need to train candidates to either identifying the skill being assessed or to just simply answer the question asked for AO2 questions. Those answers that did refer to the statement gave both sides of the argument on whether drug therapy or psychosurgery was successful and effective. Answers that gained the highest mark were those who were able to compare the biological approach to other therapies.

Question 6

This question was answered poorly, often seeming at times that candidates had not read the question, preferring to write about methodological issues, which were not creditworthy. Although many candidates displayed their knowledge of ethical issues, they did not seem to fully understand what social implications are so could not apply it to the classic evidence. Marks were also lost for generic answers that showed no link to Myers and Diener's research. Better answers were study specific and some candidates chose subheadings of 'ethics' and 'social implications' to support their organisation of the answer. This style is acceptable for such a question.

Question 7

This question did not attract many more than mid band 'basic' marks. This was due to lack of explanation and lack of using examples from each approach. Candidates often simply named the assumptions and therapies as differences which is not acceptable unless their similarities or differences are actually explained. Seemingly many candidates are unsure of how to write an effective compare and contrast paragraph because they often list the strengths/weaknesses of one approach and then the strengths/weaknesses of the other. This does not compare or contrast the approaches so receives no credit.

Question 8

It was pleasing to see that many candidates answered this question first with it carrying so many marks in this exam, however, the vast majority of answers were textbook led so did not attract top band marks due to restrictions on depth of knowledge. Some candidates had little understanding of what neuroscience is and some clearly did not know what TDCS is but they included it regardless. This is where overreliance on the textbook hinders candidates' understanding of what they are writing. Most answers had good structure but the better answers threaded the opposing arguments throughout and kept referring back to the quote throughout the essay. Some responses did little describing and were heavily AO3 focused and poorer answers failed to create arguments and depth by only having one point for it is ethical and one point for it isn't. Some conclusions were very basic. It is important to reiterate that conclusions can be written throughout the answer rather than just at the end.

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COMPONENT 2

General Comments

The examining team was impressed with the standard achieved by some candidates. Most candidates had a good appreciation of most of the research methods concepts covered in this examination. A minority of candidates are not applying their knowledge in questions that require it and as such are limiting their marks significantly. Some candidates are either misreading questions or are choosing to answer with inappropriate content, both of these situations cannot really receive credit. It was particularly pleasing to see how well and how thoroughly some candidates had completed the Personal Investigations, there has obviously been some impressive research being completed in many centres.

Question 1

Most candidates were able to identify a strength of conducting research on-line, but were mostly limited to 1-2 marks. Few candidates were able to attain all 3 marks for this answer, as only a few offered a reasonable enough explanation of their identified strength.

Question 2

A minority of candidates chose to omit an answer for this question, and generally it was not answered well by most. A minority of candidates offered description of a meta-analysis, which is obviously inappropriate here, whilst a few also gave descriptions of content validity. Some candidates offered a generic answer or tried a tautological response such as 'a content analysis is where you analyse content' – this strategy is one which is quite obviously not going to gain 4 marks. Some candidates were able to offer a basic definition, but few were able to offer more than this. Some candidates did give appropriately detailed answers and some used the strategy of describing the features of an actual content analysis that they had learned about – this received appropriate credit.

Question 3

Most candidates received credit for this question. Although weaker answers offered just a basic 'middle value in an ordered data set'. Top answers offered appropriate strategies for calculating the median when there was both an odd and even number of scores.

Question 4

- (a) This part question was answered reasonably well, with most candidates able to offer some form of description. Some candidates however confused the cross-sectional with cross-cultural and this obviously impacted their mark. It was not answered as well as 4 (b), perhaps because few candidates seemed to offer an example of a cross-sectional study, whereas in 4 (b) many candidates used their knowledge of Kohlberg's study.
- (b) As previously stated, 4 (b) attracted a better answer than 4 (a). Most were able to describe a couple of features of longitudinal studies, notably few seemed to describe the concept that longitudinal studies help psychologists examine changes as people age.

- (c) This question was answered reasonably well by most candidates. Candidates who gave the best answers tended to include a variety of strengths of cross-sectional studies and contrasted them with the weaknesses of longitudinal studies. Some candidates only offered strengths of cross-sectional and this limited their marks as the question required some contrast with longitudinal studies. Sadly a few candidates seemingly mis-read the question and offered strengths of longitudinal studies which was obviously inappropriate for this question.

Question 5

- (a) This question was answered well by many candidates. Some included details of Kohlberg's procedures and this didn't receive credit. Perhaps the best answers gave concise yet accurate description which picked up on key features such as longitudinal, interviews etc.
- (b) This again was answered well by most candidates. A significant minority did report that Kohlberg had two groups in his sample, one group of 10-16 year olds and another group of 22-28 year olds, this was obviously a frustrating mistake. Again the best answers reported concise accurate details.
- (c) Most candidates attempted this question and answered it reasonably well. Very few candidates only considered validity or ethical issues. Most candidates were able to identify validity issues such as problems with the sample group or using hypothetical moral dilemmas. The discussion of ethical issues was generally less well considered. Many candidates noted issues with the use of children, but better answers tended to link this more thoroughly to the actual content of the research discussing how the children may have become distressed because of the nature of the hypothetical moral dilemmas. Some candidates did little more than identify validity and ethical issues, and this limited them to 'superficial' discussion. Candidates achieving 'thorough' discussion typically identified an issue, then offered a critique for and against that issue. Although alternative evidence, such as the work of Gilligan, received credit it must be noted that the use of alternative evidence is not necessary. A conclusion was also expected as this was an extended answer.

Section B

Question 6

- (a) If candidates noted the co-variables were age and reaction time, this received no credit as they were stated in the question and were not operationalised. Some candidates operationalised age using a nominal scale, old and young, whilst operationalising reaction time with the ratio scale, milliseconds. This received some credit although it should be noted that correlational research can only really be used if both the co-variables are a similar level.
- (b) Most candidates answered this question really well, they had clearly applied the principles of good ethical practice. Some offered generic answers which had little or no application to their research, and as such was limited to the 3-4 mark band.
- (c) Nearly all candidates identified a Spearman's Rho test, although Pearson's Product Moment would also receive credit. Most candidates were able to justify the use of this test in terms of both a test of correlation and level of measurement (ordinal or above). Few candidates identified and explain related data in the context of their research.

Question 7

- (a) Most candidates received credit for this question, however it was quite surprising how few were able to provide a fully operationalised hypothesis for their own research.
- (b)
 - (i) This was answered inappropriately by most candidates. Instead of describing an observational sampling technique, many candidates described a sampling technique, such as opportunity sampling.
 - (ii) Again the question required justification of the observational sampling technique, and as such unless justification related to an observational sampling technique, it received no credit.
- (c) This question was answered well by most candidates. Candidates had clearly thought of how to ensure validity when designing their research and applied their research methods knowledge to their own research really well.
- (d) Candidates answered this question well. Most were able to explain two improvements and they again applied their ideas well to their research. Frustratingly, some candidates included more than two improvements; the examining team assessed all of the suggested improvements and credited the best two.

Section C

Question 8

- (a) Most candidates were able to explain one strength, but fewer were able to explain two. The production of quantitative and/or qualitative data was used by some candidates as a strength, however this did not receive credit as all methods produce quantitative or qualitative data and the 'strength' explained really tended to be of the nature of the data and not of the semi-structured interview.
- (b) Most candidates were able to offer an appropriate explanation of why the question would produce quantitative data.
- (c) Most candidates were able to construct a question that would produce qualitative data. Some candidates who constructed a question that could elicit an answer that could produce qualitative data or quantitative data received just 1 mark.
- (d) Most candidates who attempted this question correctly identified the mean as 4.5.
- (e) This was answered poorly by many candidates. Most who did receive credit explained that the mode isn't affected by outlying scores as the mean is. Very few candidates noted that it is the only measure of central tendency that definitely occurred in the data set.
- (f)
 - (i) A range of methods were offered by the candidates, one of the most popular methods noted was a questionnaire.
 - (ii) Most candidates justified their selected method with a couple of advantages. What made the difference was how well the method was explained and applied to the research.

Question 9

- (a) (i) There were a variety of answers offered for this term. Some candidates gave definitions which were better at describing the sample rather than the target population and thus received no credit.
- (ii) Most candidates correctly identified primary school children, although some did incorrectly identify the sample group used in the study.
- (b) A significant minority of candidates described systematic sampling instead of stratified sampling and therefore received no credit for their answer. Some candidates received partial credit for describing how they would divide the primary school children into groups based on age, gender etc.
- (c) (i) This question was answered poorly by most candidates. Many offered issues best described as internal validity or some offered external reliability issues, these received no credit. Most candidates who achieved full marks were able to spot the fact that two teachers had been asked to assess the children and that their assessments of reading confidence may not have been similar, however other issues of internal reliability were credited.
- (ii) This part question was answered poorly by most candidates. This question was linked to c (i), but most importantly was asking candidates to explain how the reliability could be assessed, not dealt with. Good answers linked to an appropriate answer in (c) (i) and identified appropriate techniques such as inter-rater or split-half techniques.
- (d) Most candidates attained some credit in this question, however some may have lost marks because they did not make reference to the critical value table. To achieve full marks candidates needed to identify that the hypothesis should be accepted and explain their selection of the critical value (1) from the table. Many candidates were able to spot that they should use 0.05 and that the hypothesis was one-tailed, but few spotted that $N=8$ and not $N=10$. In a Sign test N is not the number of participants but the number of participants where there is a difference in the two scores.
- (e) Most candidates achieved a good result on this part-question. Candidates selected a variety of ethical issues, however many focused on the use of children.

Advice to centres and candidates:

Advise candidates that they need to read each of the questions carefully; candidates will not receive credit if a question has not been answered appropriately.

Personal Investigations are a large proportion of the marks on this component and candidates can obviously practice answering exam-style questions before the actual exam.

EDUQAS
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COMPONENT 3

General Comments

In the inaugural year of this paper a total of 1410 candidates sat the Component 3 exam in England. It was very positive to see the level of preparation that candidates had received from centres in terms of the content delivery for this component. Indeed it was very clear candidates were able to demonstrate both depth and breadth in their responses.

The majority of candidates could accurately identify the requirement of command words particularly those relating the skills of AO1 and AO3.

Indeed where candidates commonly lost marks it was mainly due to skill rather than lack of knowledge. Notable points of exam skill needing clear communication back to candidates:

1. Timing - In this exam it was very commonly seen this year for candidates to not complete the paper / not complete questions adequately because they rushed at least one question / miss out selected questions. Some candidates clearly approached the controversies question first then behaviours. But lack of time for others was a factor in most cases. This raises an issue of how aware candidates were to the actual time limits for questions.

It would be very helpful if the following could be advised and practiced in centres:
10 Mark question - 13 minutes
15 Mark question - 20 minutes
25 Mark Question - 33 minutes

While these are clearly guides, it was very evident in the exam responses seen that some candidates had had very little experience of condensing description and argument down into set amounts of time.

2. Recognising requirement of question - While clearly not a problem for some candidates, for the larger majority, marks were easily lost by not recognising the requirements of the question. For example a question that asks for a description of explanation following a stimulus quote requires the candidates to select materials appropriately and respond back (make reference to) the quotation. For some candidates this was not recognised and a simple ignorance of the stimulus quote / scenario was seen. It might be a good exercise for centres to make use of the digital materials found on the Eduqas site. These interactive materials allow the candidates to recognise the needs of a question, and also learn how to make essential links back to the question / scenario.

3. Some centres have clearly recognised the integration of the conclusions into the AO3 Mark scheme. This has been really appreciated, with a good many candidates being able to show conclusion skill both by drawing "mini conclusions" throughout an essay response, as well as more formal end of response styles. Conclusion skill still varied though. The need for the conclusion to be "appropriate" suggests that it needs to reflect the nature content and direction of the main body of the response. In many cases this year conclusions drawn were often at odds with the content of the response, detracting from the quality and overall structure of the response. Centres may be best advised here to look at and build in activities of effective conclusion making into their provision. Eduqas have interactive activities on their psychology site that can help candidates recognise different styles of conclusions and help them to construct them.
4. Controversies - the quality of these questions varied greatly. Again an issue of skill, it is important for the candidates to relay to the examiner through their responses the essential skills needed to be shown the ability to be able to illustrate argument and the need to select appropriate evidence and link back to the title (AO3 and AO2). So being able to appropriately select material being able to make clear reference back to the question / materials is essential in addition to be able to convey clearly that candidates are debating the topic. Appropriate use of wording such as "however", "alternatively" "a counter argument of this is...." etc. is important.

Section A: applications

Addictive Behaviours

Question 1a)

A popular question with good attempts being made with the descriptions of social psychological explanations of addictive behaviours. Typical responses included choices of peer influence or the role of the media. Better descriptions of the role of the media embodied reference to and explanation of social learning theory and how media personalities can often encourage addictive behaviours through their very position. It could be noted here that very few responses successfully embedded theory into the responses, with more generic answers being given, lacking theoretical context or relevance. Again with peer influences, theoretical linkages to social learning theory were few and far between with more generic responses being made about how certain friends of parents could provide a means to encourage addictive behaviour with very little about how. Centres could encourage candidates to develop exam skills by ensuring that in providing descriptions of explanations for a behaviour, where appropriate and relevant reference to theory can add depth and range to a response.

Question 1b)

This question required candidates to be able to recognise the need for AO3 and AO2. Unfortunately it was very clear for this question and others like it that candidates either were not aware of the need to provide linkages to the stimulus statement or just plainly did not do so. This seems such a pity since in a good many cases, opportunity for credit was lost, often where good description of explanation was given. The choices of method of modification given by the specification included agonist / antagonist substitution or aversion therapy. The most preferred route for candidates was aversion therapy. Those candidates that gained marks here were able to link their evaluation of, for example, aversion therapy into the situation of Laurence. A point aside here, some candidates did not answer the question and provided a description of the modification not an evaluation. Careful reading of the question is essential to ensure that the correct skills can be identified and assessed to be able to

reward the candidates' true potential. Effective evaluation techniques would involve that evidence of effectiveness. While most evidence might relate to other forms of addiction such as drugs: alcohol, the principle underlying the process is exactly the same. Better candidates were able to state this in their evaluations. In addition a comment of linkage back to stimulus scenario was a recurrent problem, with a very real need for better linkages to be made. Candidates could gain marks in this question by appropriately selecting and linking in their evaluation points to the scenario of Laurence. For example Laurence may be best advised to follow the aversion therapy treatment offered, there is evidence to suggest its effectiveness, for example Jorgensen *et. al.* (2011) in their research on alcoholism found that compared to those without aversion therapy as a treatment those who were given aversion therapy benefited as measured by the number of days until relapse compared to non-aversion therapy individuals. This suggest that Laurence could benefit from treatment and reduce the impact of his persistent tool buying behaviour.

Autistic Spectrum Behaviours

Question 2a)

A question that was more unpopular with centres with few candidates answering this question. Possible techniques that could have been referred to were Picture Exchange Communication System (PECs) or Relationship Development Intervention (RDI). Candidates that answered this question correctly identified the appropriate techniques of modification, and provided on the whole good evaluations of the techniques. A small but significant point would be for candidates to appreciate the theoretical context (the approach that has largely informed the workings of the therapy). Effective evaluation was achieved here by looking at evidence of the effectiveness of the therapy for example the work of Charlotte-Christy *et. al.* (2002) with regard to PECs. Candidates that scored highly here were those that further explained the significance of the findings and why it shows effectiveness. For example here reference to the children studied and the significance differences / changes to their interpersonal and communicative behaviour. Balance is essential to effective evaluation, so negative evaluation would be an expectation, and could have come though comments referring to the small sample of Charlotte-Christy *et. al.* and the impact this had on the problem of generalising findings etc. Candidates also missed good opportunities to make comparisons between PECs and RDI.

Question 2b)

Good attempts were made on this question, and descriptions of either Refrigerator Mother or Empathising - Systemising explanations were pleasing. Better candidate responses illustrated depth by for example with reference to refrigerator mother explanation - referring to Kanner (1943) and his view of how the cold, distant, and overly intellectual parental figures especially, the mother brought up their children. Descriptions of this might also refer to the psychodynamic roots of the explanation as well as the important impetus given to this theory by the work of Bruno Bettelheim.

This question combined the skills of AO1 and AO2. A common mistake here as with other questions was the lack of application of the response to the scenario involving Caroline. Very detailed responses with good descriptions of a social psychological explanation of Autism were seen, but credit was limited by application to the scenario. Centres might consider giving candidates greater practice on questions involving application to the scenario. It is important for candidates to realise the necessity of making clear and effective links to the stimulus. Not only does this show knowledge of the topic, but also an ability to tailor written content to the stimulus given.

Bullying Behaviour

Question 3a)

Bullying was the least answered topic of all. Indeed less than 100 candidates nationally answered this question. The subject required skill of AO1 and AO2. Candidates could have referred to cultural differences or moral disengagement. The more common explanation chosen was moral disengagement. Better responses ingrained the explanation within social-cognitive theory. Descriptions outlined who created the explanation (Bandura) and the main aspects of the theory for example cognitive restructuring, minimising ones role, ignoring / distorting consequences and dehumanising / blaming the victim. Descriptions clearly show how moral disengagement is not an immediate process but rather something that takes place and develops over time. Better candidate responses here were able to integrate the scenario of Louise into answers. As with other questions assessing similar skills, excellent descriptions were often let down by either a total absence of or limited linkage to the stimulus in the question. Centres might be advised here to use valuable online material on the psychology pages of the Eduqas website to provide materials for practicing such application skill.

Question 3b)

The question was answered well with candidates correctly identifying the ranges of techniques available to modify bullying behaviour. Methods referred to were those in the specification - CAPSLE and OBPP. The methods candidates approached the evaluation was appropriate with reference to research studies to help evaluate the method of modification. Those candidates that scored highly here were able to show depth and range. Depth was achieved through explanation of the evaluation points made. For example candidates making the evaluation point that 'there is evidence to show the effectiveness of CAPSLE as a method of modifying bullying behaviour' added depth to their response by illustrating the point with reference to Peter Fonagy *et. al.* (2009) making the point that in this study when comparing the 'treatment as usual group' to the CALSLE group there was a significant decrease in disruptive bullying and aggressive behaviours which was also seen in a follow up study one year later. Range was achieved though the different evaluation points made. For example opportunities could have been followed to examine evidence against (showing that the technique is not effective) - for example Fonagy also showed that that the "benefits" of the modification were at best limited. Evaluation could also be achieved through reference to and comparison with alternative methods of modification. Centres have clearly worked hard with candidates to develop evaluation skills. It is important for centres to appreciate the need to show both depth and range in evaluation points made.

Criminal Behaviours

Question 4a)

A popular choice, and one that a great many centres chose. This question specifically asks for one of the named methods of modification for criminal behaviour, illustrating that questions can be asked relating to issues directly stated in the specification. The choices the specification directs are restorative justice and anger management. The vast majority of candidates chose anger management over restorative justice. Responses varied, with some very poor responses simply stating how at a superficial level anger management can reduce aggressive behaviour. Better answers were able to articulate clearly the processes involved in the technique. For example with anger management, stating the underlying processes, the ideas of Novaco, the inherent nature of SIT (stress inoculation training) and how the various key stages of conceptualisation, skills acquisition, application practice contribute towards a

reduction in aggressive behaviour. Centres might consider developing activities that can ensure that when candidates answer they can develop skills in 1) descriptive knowledge of topics - depth (amount of), 2) range (the multiple features) of what is described (e.g. Anger management). 3) making reference in descriptions to specific terminology related to the item being described (conceptualisation, skills acquisition, application practice).

Question 4b)

The question assesses both skills of AO2 and AO3. As has been a theme through much of this report, the ability of candidates to recognise the requirement of the question and successfully execute an appropriate response is limited especially where there is a need to link to a stimulus scenario. For this question several issues arose. Firstly some candidates described differential association or gender socialisation explanations rather than evaluated them gaining only marks for linkage to the scenario. Another issue related to candidates that provided relevant and well, structured evaluation responses which illustrated both depth and range, but did not relate the response back to and incorporate the stimulus scenario back into their answer. Better candidates selected correctly either the gender socialisation of differential association explanation as their social psychological explanations to evaluate before then structuring evaluations along lines of supporting evidence, evidence which refutes the explanation, alternative explanations with comparative comments being made showing the benefits of one over the other. The skill of AO2 being naturally built into the response by statements such as "the strength of evidence to support this explanation may help convince Emily that the differential association theory is a valid theory to help explain James' behaviour". Or "gender socialisation clearly provides explanations for aspect of behaviour which differential association ignores. To this extent Emily might be best advised to understand James' behaviour through this explanation". The point being made by both examples is that these follow evaluative comments being made rather than a single token gesture reference towards the end of the response, which also often occurred. Centres would be best advised to practice AO2 skills with candidates. Provide the teaching to a particular explanation, then provide a scenario to which candidates have to then illustrate descriptive or evaluator skills whilst linking back to the scenario. Furthermore the psychology pages of the Eduqas website have many relevant and helpful materials that can be used and adapted to help the development of such skills.

Schizophrenia

Question 5a)

As a topic, schizophrenia was one of the most popular questions answered by candidates. A very general question, allowing candidates to make a choice between treatments they have studied - anti-psychotics rather than CBT was by far the most popular choice to respond to. The description required the candidate to communicate the components of the therapy. Not surprisingly there were some wide ranging responses. Weaker candidates found it very difficult to give anything more than superficial comments about the therapy, whereas more able candidates could express with both range (as judged by the number of different components and aspects of the therapy they could describe) and depth (as assessed by the amount of detail both descriptive and use of illustrative examples used). Better responses were those that for example with reference to antipsychotics, made reference to the different types of antipsychotic drugs (conventional / atypical) described in detail including the function of them and how they work (e.g. their action upon dopamine receptor sites). Better responses using CBT introduced the therapy through its function, before then describing each successive stage of the therapy (e.g. Engagement strategies, psycho-education, cognitive strategies, behaviour skills training, relapse prevention strategies).

To improve responses, centres could:

- A) Develop opportunities to describe therapy to examination time. Some responses were distinctly short simply because it was apparent there was misjudgement of the time over the paper.
- B) Develop opportunities for candidates to be able, to recognise the skills of depth and range. Being able to describe a range of aspects of a therapy (e.g. the different types of antipsychotic drugs). Appreciate depth through the explanation of each type of drug, the different in function and how they work.

Question 5b)

This question required candidates to recognise that skills of both AO2 and AO3 were required here. As with question 5a candidates provided a full range of responses. Those that were significantly better and were awarded higher marks were those that recognised the demand of the question. The need to make evaluative comments (that could have ranged from effectiveness (thought use of research both positively and negatively) through to comparison points of biological versus social. Indeed those that achieved well on this question made evaluative comments then elaborated on the point made achieving depth - before then linking the issue that they made back to the quotation. This then achieved depth and range and essential linkage needs for the AO2 skill. Unfortunately it was very clear for this question and others like it that candidates either were not aware of the need to provide linkages to the stimulus statement. Centres might consider recommendations above to help with development of both timing and application skill.

Stress

Question 6a)

Stress remains a reasonably popular topic to respond to. Indeed this year nearly half of all candidates opted to answer stress questions. This question relied on candidates being able to recognise that two skills were being assessed AO2 and AO3. Again here the issue of not making reference back to the stimulus material was very apparent. Indeed examples of candidates achieving full marks for their descriptions but not being able to secure the further 5 AO2 marks due to lack of "application" of their descriptions back to the stimulus material. Centres might be advised to give candidates more opportunity to practice application skill. Centres might consider making use of materials found on the Eduqas psychology pages of the exam board website where there are materials which allows candidates to practice such application skills.

Question 6b)

The question in itself was demanding, requiring the candidate to be able to evaluate two social psychological explanations of stress for 10 marks. Daily hassles and life events were the explanations chosen. Some candidates failed to read the question correctly and provided good descriptions of these two explanations - but failed to gain any credit for their efforts. A common mistake that centres could work with candidates to ensure that they read the question careful and identify exactly what it requires. Those that identified the need to evaluate had responses that fell into two typical response types 1) candidates only evaluated one explanation (at the sacrifice of the other), or 2) candidates provided an evaluation of both, but where there was an uneven balance between the evaluation of one compared to the other. Those that answered this question well, ensured sufficient time was given to provide an evaluation that helped strengths and weaknesses of both explanations as noted before on other questions, as a point of skill, those that gained higher band marks for AO3 were those that made the evaluating point then explained the point that they made (they added depth). Range was achieved either through the different evaluation points raised and explained through the different social psychological explanations.

Section B - Controversies

Question 7

Of the two controversies questions this was the one chosen least by candidates. The question relates to an ongoing debate in psychology centring around the scientific nature of the subject. Those that answered this question well developed a structure whereby the major characteristics of science were introduced first (e.g. falsifiability, objectivity, replicability, control, empirical nature of study), followed then by a sequential examination of aspects of psychology that related to these statements. Responses were well informed by reference to research studies or explanations within psychology that illustrated these characteristics of science. Studies such as those by Loftus and Palmer, Raine, Watson and Raynor illustrated that candidates could take synoptic approach to their response, they could use materials taught in the first year and apply it to a response with a different purpose. Comparison to Freud's Psychodynamic approach was a popular and often very effective approach to illustrate lack of science. A pleasing try to this question noted.

Centres might consider ensuring that for the controversies question candidates are aware of the need for AO2 to be able to ensure that the material they select is appropriate and that they are ensuring that each point made is clearly and effectively related back to the stimulus. Practice in using language illustrative of debate would also be a suggested area for improvement. Ensuring that link words such as "however", "alternatively", "a counter view", "conversely", "on the other hand" etc. are used to illustrate debate and provide opportunity for a more effective structure in which debate on a topic can more naturally form.

Question 8

This question was by far the most popular of the two controversies questions. A great many candidates took this question as an opportunity to refer to classic studies in psychology such as Watson and Raynor, Milgram, Zimbardo, Raine etc. illustrating particular aspects of how ethical guidelines had been broken. Better candidates were able to recognise the assessment of AO2 in this question and thus also not only made appropriate choices of studies to illustrate the point, they also made clear and consistent references back to the stimulus statement. As a point of development centres might suggest to candidates that approaching such a question by first contextualising the statement with clear reference to what ethical guidelines are and how these contribute towards society and individuals - would be advisable before then examining and referring to studies in psychology more generally. The discussion is contextualised then, which adds not only depth, and range but also a clear and logical structure where the meaning is clear.

It was noted in a good number of candidate responses that animal studies were being used to illustrate ethical issues. Within the specification, animal studies constitute a separate controversy. Given that the clear nature of this title - focusing on "human participants", such reference to animal research / studies did not receive credit. Centres could help candidates here to recognise the scope of questions and help them appreciate the range of research that can be effectively referred to in such responses.

In conclusion, a very good attempt illustrated by candidates which clearly shows that centres are working very hard to ensure that content is delivered in a timely manner. Centres should now further develop exam skills such as those outlined in the report, to further develop and extend student understanding of the demands of the component three examination paper.



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