

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2012

GCE Health & Social Care (6938) Paper 01
Unit 1 - Human Growth & Development

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General comments

The paper was accessible to candidates of different abilities and questions requiring extended responses proved effective at differentiation. Handwriting and cancellations still pose difficulties for examiners and candidates are not taking enough care with questions which include assessment of the quality of written communication. Some candidates have very poor basic skills in writing and using appropriate terminology and examiners questioned whether they should be entered at their current stage.

Failure to accurately read and understand question stems are still common and result in considerable loss of credit. A general lack of evaluation giving strengths and weaknesses at the end of extended responses means that few candidates achieve full marks. Candidates should be encouraged to read a whole question before attempting the parts to avoid repetition.

It was pleasing to see that very few extended responses were structured in bullet points.

Question 1

Q1(a)(i) - Simple responses such as providing a balanced diet and emotional support were seen but many candidates provided more complex responses which may or may not have been accurate. A number of entrants gave answers based on the foster parents and significant numbers merely provided synonyms for "looking after" such as caring which gained no credit. Most candidates gained both marks.

Q1(a)(ii) - Nearly all candidates gained at least 2 marks on this question with many accruing full marks. All mark scheme answers were offered.

Q1(b) - This question should have covered general factors affecting language development but weaker candidates concentrated only on Kai which limited the number of marks gained. Many candidates were able to gain full marks by stating a factor and including an explanation. The majority of candidates gained at least 4 marks.

Q1(c) - Most candidates recognised that this question referred to motor skills and gained at least 4 marks with able candidates achieving full marks.

Q1(d) - Significant numbers of candidates misread the question and concentrated on how Marta had developed her skills which was not required. eg. She had been abused, a university student, a care worker and had looked after her own elderly parents. Others described what the children would need from foster care, however many did describe her skills and abilities and gave good reasons why these were necessary. PIES were used effectively in this question.

Question 2

Q2(a) - Many short term effects were listed by candidates gaining full marks. However a fair number of candidates gave long term effects which received no credit.

Q2(b)(i) - This question demanded that candidates could differentiate socialisation from socialising. Many answers were extremely good but others referred only to socialising with friends. Credit was given if responses included reference to a different set of friends or surroundings but overall candidates were not clear on this topic. Candidates who mentioned changes in norms and values between foster parents and biological parents and changes in secondary socialisation agents were rewarded with 3-4 marks.

Q2(b)(ii) - Candidates were required to link emotions to reasons for this question. Few students achieved full 6 marks and many were inclined to persist in using "upset" in their answers rather than angry, relieved, sad or unhappy. There were also very good responses showing a logical approach. PIES were used frequently and inappropriately.

Q2(c) - Generally answered well with reasoned explanations both positive and negative although responses were often long.

Q2(d) - Poorly answered and difficult to assess as candidates gave multiple weak examples of genetic and environmental factors tediously going through PIES and not answering the question. PIES were used frequently and inappropriately. Candidates seemed to have little or no knowledge of this part of the specification and there were a fair number of unanswered questions. Air, water and noise pollution featured strongly with cholera mentioned quite often.

Question 3

Q3(a)(i) - A majority of candidates could link "holistic" to "whole" gaining 1 mark but the remainder either repeated the question stem or guessed inaccurately. It was clear that understanding was limited.

Q3(a)(ii) - Candidates were invited to offer another definition of health from the specification and provide an example. Few candidates were able to do this and many were confused between health definitions and approaches used in health promotion.

Q3(b) - This was a straightforward question asking for the key points of two health promotion approaches of their own choosing. Generally this question was answered well with most candidates able to gain at least 4 marks although some weaker candidates covered balanced diets, exercise and similar thoughts.

Q3(c)(i)- Most candidates gained at least two marks but few gained the full quota. Many decided that the campaign had been successful.

Q3(c)(ii) - Peer pressure was credited and proved a popular response although there were some rather distorted views on the rest of Europe's teenagers. There appears to be a great deal of fertile material in alcohol as candidates assumed alcohol was to blame without explanation.

The second part was rarely thought about as everyone either responded with not enough sex education (the most popular) or too much demonstrating that this was not an appropriate response although interesting to note. More accurate responses would have been learning how to resist peer pressure, how to raise self esteem by educational achievement and aspirations.

Q3(d) - Candidates were asked to account for the lack of success in this campaign but many gave generic answers and could not apply their knowledge. However, this question discriminated really well and although Level 3 answers were in short supply, some candidates were able to score Level 2 marks by reasoning through in a satisfying way demonstrating independent thinking and use of initiative.

Overall, responses are improving slightly and it seems that previous reports, question papers and mark schemes are now being used to some extent. When candidates have knowledge they are not able to apply it satisfactorily and some candidates are not ready to take an AS paper as their ability to formulate responses or understand the questions is poor. Knowledge is often superficial and candidates are not always able to develop points they have identified.

Responses frequently reflect questions from recent papers and candidates should understand that they will not get the same questions that they have probably had in mock exam/s and must adapt their knowledge to the question that is asked.

On a positive note, there were some very good candidates who have the ability to formulate responses in a structured way and demonstrate the ability to take advantage of higher education programmes in the future.

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