

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCE in Health &
Social Care (6939/01)

Unit 2: Communication & Values

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General Introduction

In general, centres appear to have a clearer idea of the requirements for the unit specification this series. Centre assessments tended to be fair and generally accurate. A few centres awarded marks somewhat generously mainly because they do not take into account all the criteria for MB3, a very small number of centres marked harshly.

Most centres are now guiding learners to undertake 2 interactions however; there are still a few that are doing 4 or more interactions which makes the reports very descriptive and there is little or no analysis and evaluation. The majority of learners chose to carry out interactions in nursery schools and residential care homes.

In good centres, the learners set out their work with an introduction explaining where they were going to visit. This enabled them to focus on the task in hand. Where learners launched straight into 'communication and the transmission of values', without an introduction, they tended to lose focus when they had to apply their knowledge to the interactions. Indeed, there were some pieces of work where it was a long way in before it became apparent who the client was. Some learners combined all 4 assessment objectives in a narrative throughout which made it very difficult to see how much they had produced on each one. For example, there were odd evaluative comments here and there which made it difficult to gauge the mark band accurately - especially if there was not much annotation or if the annotation was inaccurate.

Assessment Objective 1

The amount of knowledge and understanding of communication and the transmission of values varied greatly. Many learners discussed the theory of communication at great length, usually at the expense of them describing their own communication skills used within the interactions. Some learners used specialist language but did not always demonstrate their understanding, so there was plenty of SOLER but no explanation of what it meant or why it was being used in the interaction. SOLER was frequently referred to as a 'theory of communication' with no understanding that this is a way to describe active listening. In fact, a number of learners described the principles of SOLER and then went on to describe active listening as something completely different! It was rare to find a communication 'sandwich' or any other diagram to indicate how effective communication worked. There tended to be little independent thought or research beyond what had been possibly taught in the classroom. It was similar with the care value base. This tended to be written out almost to a formula, again with little apparent independent thought. A general weakness in this section of the work is that learners did not make thorough comparisons with respect to the use of communication and the transmission of values in order to meet mark band

3. It is quite worrying that learners and centres think that the inclusion of a comparison provides automatic access to MB3.

Assessment Objective 2

The majority of learners achieved mark band 2 rather than mark band 3, this AO was generally over assessed. The learners were applying their skills to work related contexts, with this being seen in the sensitivity to apply communication skills and transmission of values to the particular client groups, however application to other work related contexts was weaker and in most instances appeared to be a token inclusion to target MB3. There was limited evidence of an understanding of transmission of values in different contexts seen with some misunderstanding of requirements. In several cases learners just described different contexts, i.e. the difference between an early years setting and a setting for the care of older adults, rather than discussing how they would alter the way they transmit values. Many did not refer to the transmission of values and so were unable to access the higher mark bands. Less strong learners did not always focus on applying their knowledge to the interactions. They would write at length about activities and the set-up of the room and so on. If transcripts were included, they were extremely brief with little real content to analyse.

Assessment Objective 3

Learners demonstrated good research skills and were able to draw from a range of information sources which included the Internet and books. The use of witness statements were varied, ranging from some centres that had provided detailed witness statements to other centres that had provided statements that did not cover enough detail. For the most part, learners that did include witness statements rarely made reference to it; nor acknowledged it as a source of information. Learners were able to correctly identify and describe barriers to communication. They tended to briefly describe how barriers to communication may be overcome, thereby meeting mark band 2 in this section of their work. Most learners did not meet mark band 3 as a consequence of not examining and explaining the possible barriers to communication and evaluate how they may be overcome. A particular weakness in the work seen for this assessment objective was that a number of learners addressed barriers to access rather than barriers to communication and only a very few addressed work-related issues and problems, clearly mixing up 6939 and 6940.

Assessment Objective 4

This AO was the best section of most portfolios seen, with learners managing to make some valid judgements about their own communication skills. Many had, for the first time, actually discussed the skills they used, evidence which should ideally have been in AO1. However, for a number of learners who had attempted to evaluate their work, it was mostly summaries of what had happened during the interactions rather than an evaluation of their own communication skills. These learners did not contribute enough information about their own performance, strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement. Furthermore, very few suggestions were contributed about how communication skills can realistically be

improved in the future. There were some witness testimonies. However, these tended to be lacking in detail, concentrating on the activities and not the communication skills. Where there were good witness testimonies, the learners did not refer to them in their work to give themselves another perspective. A few created ratings charts but these were often ignored or else they did not really help. For example, one had a rating scale of 0-5 but did not give any idea what each number represented.

Generally, the presentation of all learners' work was of a good standard. Some had excellent feedback from the assessor and very good annotation. A few had little of either.

The Quality of Written Communication tended to meet the criteria for the higher mark bands overall. Where SPAG tended to be reasonably accurate across the board, focus and organisation was a problem for some learners. If they did not provide a clear introduction to their clients, then they tended to be waylaid and not keeping to the point. Overall, they were able to use specialist terms with varying degrees of sophistication - obviously strong learners having the greater confidence.

Bibliographies were included in some work but not all. Some learners only included e.g. Moonie or other text books and a few internet sites. The referencing of sources was poor overall and it was difficult at times to tell if words were the learners own in some instances.

Grade Boundaries

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