

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCE in Health and
Social Care (6941)

Unit 4: Social Aspects & Life Choices

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This paper has not changed in format or context since its first sitting. It consists of three questions, each totalling 30 marks. The questions are set round a short case study which runs throughout the examination paper. The case study provides some direction for candidates and gives them the opportunity to focus their thoughts. The case study in this paper was based around a visually impaired student who was preparing to go off to university.

The questions around the case study assess the candidates' knowledge and understanding. In some instances students will be asked to recall facts, definitions etc, alternatively students may also be asked to apply their knowledge to parts of the case study or to discuss, analyse or evaluate key concepts or theories. The questions begin with shorter questions which focus on knowledge and understanding of the specification whilst remaining questions focus on application of knowledge. Candidates are rewarded for the quality of their written communication in the long questions where extended writing is required.

The external assessment paper covered the unit specification, which includes:

- Lifestyle choices and life course events
- Social factors affecting health and well-being
- Care professional/service user relationships

The examiners felt that the paper discriminated well, with a wide range of marks being seen in each question. They noted that the students' repeated previous mistakes seen in other series in that they failed to read the question stem correctly, confusing words in them and often repeating themselves. Many students paraphrase the question at the beginning of their response, thereby failing to gain any credit for their answer until half way down the page. The Quality of Written Communication was often poor and bullet points were frequently seen which limits the number of marks that a student can be awarded. A number of students appeared to become so engrossed with the scenario of the question that they were unable to look beyond it.

A holistic summation of the paper is that it was very fair and gave the students the opportunity to show what they have learnt throughout the course.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1

This question was based on Kristof a visually impaired young male who was preparing to go off to university. The candidates were asked to draw upon their knowledge of relationships and the feeling of empowerment that they may give to an individual such as Kristof.

(a) The type of support provided by the disabilities tutor at university proved to be a good start to this question. The majority of candidates gained full marks as they were able to describe the support that they may provide.

(b) This question was extremely well answered by the majority. Their understanding of the effects on an individual's self-esteem has improved to the point that 3 or 4 marks were the norm for this question. Some candidates were able to provide negative responses as well as the more traditional positive ones.

(c) Many candidates misread or misunderstood this question as it was poorly answered. The focus is Rani the care worker and how important it is for her to build positive relationships with her clients. The majority of candidates answered from Kristof's perspective and were either awarded low marks or no marks.

(d) Candidates appear to have a good understanding of empowerment and its impact on an individual. However in order to be awarded marks in level 3, they needed to assess the impact on more than one area of development.

(e) In the mark scheme it is written in bold 'Candidates answer must link to the impact of university on Kristof's intellectual development' because very few actually did. Many used PIES as the basis of their answer but were unable to write in any depth about the impact on intellectual development.

Question 2

This question continues to use the case study revolving around Kristof, this time focusing on support, both formal and informal available to him, alongside stereotyping and self-concept.

(a) This question was answered very well with the majority of candidates scoring 2 marks. However, where candidates wrote 'death of a close relative/partner' or 'car accident/accident' no marks were awarded. If they had written the premature death of a relative or a serious life changing accident then they would have been given the marks.

(b) Those candidates who were familiar with social development and how it may be affected by unpredictable life course events were awarded full marks for this question. However too many candidates identified the effect without describing the affect and only scored one or two marks.

(c) Lifestyle choices such as smoking and their long-term effects on an individual's physical health is taught well in centres. This question however was focused on the effects during adolescence and that was not answered well. The majority of candidates were unable to answer it so wrote about the long term effects instead and were not awarded any marks as they had not answered the question.

(d) The majority of candidates were awarded marks in level 2 as they were able to discuss how the positive effect of support on Kristof's self-concept. It was the link to self-concept that proved to be very challenging to the less able candidates.

(e) This question proved difficult for the less able candidates who were unable to distinguish between stereotyping and discrimination. Whilst the two are interlinked the candidates who focused on discrimination did not refer to labels but only treatment and therefore lost marks.

Question 3

This question consisted of five parts which were mainly related to the stimulus material presented. It required candidates to recall terms and concepts, apply knowledge through explanation and demonstrate understanding through their ability to discuss specific topics such as social factors affecting health and well-being and support provided by formal and informal carers.

(a) Very few candidates scored maximum marks on this question, the term social factors was one that they did not appear to know.

(b) As the majority of candidates were unable to identify two social factors in (a) they were unable in this question to describe how they may affect an individual's health and well-being.

(c) Candidates in the main were able to answer this question by explaining the challenges Kristof may face when trying to form new relationships. Some candidates did not see it as a disadvantage and explained how it may help him to develop relationships.

(d) This question focuses on the impact of support, whether it be formal or informal and how this support may lead an individual to have an independent life. More able candidates remembered that if the support is not adequate it can have a negative effect. The majority of candidates scored marks in level 2 as they were able to apply their knowledge of support but found it difficult to assess how this may enable a visually impaired individual to lead an independent life.

(e) This question was answered particularly well by the majority of candidates. They identified relevant social groups and made links to how these can impact on their health/illness. Candidates awarded marks in level 3 gave a range of factors from diet, exercise, stress at work and linked them to their social class, ethnicity or employment status.

Overall, the paper challenged the AS candidates, it gave them an opportunity to gain some good marks if they had had the subject knowledge. Centre staff appear to have done some work on the verb hierarchy of exam questions, in particular examine and discuss. Another noticeable area of improvement is the decrease in the number of blank pages seen which is a clear indication of candidates being more aware of

the time given to answer the examination paper in. However, too many marks are still lost because candidates do not either read the questions properly or digress when writing their response and fail to answer the question asked.

