

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

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 still poses difficulties for examiners and large numbers of entrants are not taking enough care with dual purpose questions which include assessment of the quality of written communication.

Failure to read and understand question stems accurately is still too common and results 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.

One feature that was very apparent this series was the lack of common sense and reasoning applied to questions and answers when learners are in "examination mode". For example, most candidates are and should be aware of major health issues in society such as obesity, diabetes, dementia etc. Albeit, candidates offered these conditions as examples of diseases that it was possible to immunise against without any logic.

Question 1 and 2 generated most marks and question 3 on health promotion the least. Candidates should be encouraged to read a whole question before attempting the parts to avoid repetition.

Question 1

Part 1(a) saw approximately half of all candidates not answering this question correctly. Incorrect answers ranged from same hair and eye colour and blood group must mean they were identical – again lack of logic when considering the millions of people who have these features. Candidates will not be expected to work out genetic problems but should have a basic knowledge and be aware of different DNA/sex chromosomes.

Part 1(b) saw many candidates unable to express thoughts coherently but on the whole well-answered.

Part 1(c) saw similar quality of responses as part 1(b) except that incorrect answers involved social norms.

In part 1(d) some candidates identified skills incorrectly and others were very inaccurate in their age range such as drawing and painting at 7 months or kicking a ball at 2 months.

Overall in part 1(e), it was a well-answered question although some candidates insisted on offering the negative side of social development as well. Good candidates mentioned bonding, role models and primary socialisation but few could develop these points further.

In part 1(f) once again, the ability to sort knowledge and then compare features was lacking. Candidates tended to list one set of features then the other gaining only a few marks. After slavishly following PIES, most realised that there were no significant differences in other areas than physical so made things up to fit stereotypes or stating both would be interested in the

opposite sex etc. Those who had been guided in writing differences scored highly.

Question 2

Part 2 (a)(i) was mainly answered correctly but there are still too many candidates using late adulthood, old age or elderly.

Part 2 (a)(ii) was a straightforward question which should be very familiar to candidates but only a minority scored the full 3 marks. Brittle bones, balding, grey hair etc are far too common and this year by consensus it was decided not to accept loss of sight, hearing, skin elasticity etc as all over 65's are not blind or deaf. Responses must include decline, reduce or deteriorate or other synonyms.

In part 2 (b) as the scenario is accessible, it is surprising how many candidates either muddled up the characters or misread the stem and gave the advantages to Kate rather than Cathy. Those who responded correctly scored 4 – 6 marks. Unless a question refers to income or directly to financial matters, answers required rarely include money matters yet candidates return to these issues time and time again. Similarly, candidates must appreciate that all over 65's do not belong in a care home and can lead normal and interesting lives. Stereotyping is rife when age is being considered by young people. Consequently, saving Cathy from care home fees and Kate providing money for Cathy's household was not accepted.

Part 2(c) was well answered although a minority of candidates cannot get further than making friends and gave both points on this theme.

Part 2(d) generated some gender stereotyping with lack of stability, no-one able to play with the babies etc completely disregarding the mother's role. However, the impact of having no male role model, interrupted bonding etc were credit-worthy. Fantasy appeared again, Tony was fighting in the military and everyone was afraid he would get injured or killed was a frequent theme although no evidence for this was provided.

In part 2(e) imagination was supreme for this question – the military, unemployment, lack of home-cooked meals and being unable to go to the gym all featured with the effects on Cathy alone being paramount. However, there were some good responses with answers discussing trust issues and being unable to share in family life. Few could understand the dynamics of relationships or that money would be shared with the family as finance loomed large again. A few good responses but many were unable to empathise or appreciate that this would have been a joint decision. A considerable number of candidates wrote mainly about the methods of keeping in touch such as texts, email etc.

Question 3

Part 3(a)(i) saw a good number of candidates who gained all four marks on offer here but far too many gave ridiculous answers such as Foot and Mouth disease, the plague, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, etc. Influenza was a common response.

Part 3(a)(ii) was straightforward question which the majority of candidates answered well.

Similarly 3(a)(ii) was well answered but candidates who wrote prevention were not credited. Other incorrect responses were mainly names of other approaches.

Part 3 (c) was quite well answered although few gained full marks. Some had clearly never heard of this and referred to cattle and farming despite a previous examination appearance.

In part 3(d) developing countries, leaflets, posters and TV advertising were frequent offerings although a few able candidates scored well. Candidates seem to know little about the biomedical approach other than it consists of screenings and immunisations, is expert-led and people trust the scientists with the addition of one or two advantages and disadvantages. Knowledge goes no deeper and few appreciate that unless there is a high level of immunity in a population (herd immunity), the approach will fail dramatically in preventing epidemics. This question tries to make candidates realise that with a mobile, multicultural society this is hard to achieve.

In part 3(e) although the questions had the same format as usual, a fair number of candidates ran out of time before they reached this question and others clearly could not understand the stem. Many thought that the question paper had introduced another word for models/approaches in the form of strategies and wrote about the different approaches. It was clear that most candidates did not understand the meaning of evaluation and could not provide even simple answers such as saves lives and is costly. There seems to be a tendency to write on anything if you do not understand what is required so many responses were for the health promotion question on last January or June's examination papers. It is a mystery why candidates believe this will gain credit or that they think the same question will reappear. Some candidates who clearly are able to reason and think independently did gain level 2 at least on this question.

In conclusion, responses were disappointing and it seems that previous reports, question papers and mark schemes are not being used to advantage. 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 able to develop points they have identified. More practice in understanding question stems and writing extended answers seems to be appropriate.

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