

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCE Health & Social Care (6949)
Paper 01 Unit 12 - Understanding
Human Behaviour

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General Comments

The paper was similar in format to previous series and it allowed candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of the specification well. The questions discriminated well, with a wide range of marks being seen in each question. In general, it was felt that candidates were prepared better for this paper. Centres are to be congratulated and for taking on board many of the comments in the previous reports. However, there are still some candidates who do not appear to pay enough attention to the case studies and to the command verbs, such as describe, explain, discuss and evaluate. Performance would be greatly enhanced if these issues were addressed.

Candidates are reminded that for explain questions they should be giving reasons for their answers and for discuss questions they should be giving both advantages and disadvantages. In addition, evaluation questions require a conclusion.

Question 1

This question was based on a social worker and single mothers. It allowed the candidates to demonstrate skills in comprehension. It also enabled them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a behavioural approach and also of family therapy in managing behaviour.

Part (a) tested candidates' understanding of self-concept and their ability to select relevant information from a case study. It was answered well by most candidates, the majority of whom gained at least two or three marks.

In part (b)(i) most candidates gained two or three marks for explaining why Famira has started to cry and wet the bed. The majority made appropriate references to her father leaving and to attention seeking. In part (b)(ii) candidates showed a good understanding of positive reinforcement and gained three or four marks. Some, however, did not make reference to the behaviour being repeated and thus lost a mark.

In part (c) most candidates gained at least four marks in the first part of the question about the use of token economy. However, a significant number did not give a full discussion, only considering the positive aspects. Candidates were required to consider possible negative aspects in order to gain marks in mark band 2. In part (c)(ii) candidates were asked to evaluate the advantages of the use of a behavioural approach compared to the use of a family-centred approach in the context of the case study. This was not answered particularly well. A significant number of candidates tried to consider the advantages of both approaches independently instead. Others did not relate their answer well enough to the case study of single mothers.

Question 2

This question was based on two elderly people, one who has a positive outlook on life and another who has some dysfunctional views. It tested candidates' comprehension skills and their knowledge and understanding of various aspects of a cognitive approach to modifying behaviour.

In the first part of (a), candidates were asked to extract appropriate material from the case study regarding positive outlook. This was answered very well with most candidates gaining full marks.

In part (b) candidates were asked to select information from the case study. This was to support an explanation of how behaviour could be affected by declining eyesight and hearing. Again, this was answered well, although some candidates lost marks as their answers were too generic and did not make full use of the material provided.

In the first part of question (c), many candidates gained at least three marks, showing a good understanding of dysfunctional beliefs. Some lost marks as they did not relate their answer clearly enough to the case study or because they did not elaborate their answers well enough. In the second part of the question many candidates gained marks in band 2 with some good discussion of the importance of showing respect with service users. However, marks were lost for not giving clear examples of respect.

Part (d) required candidates to evaluate the use of a cognitive approach with someone who has dysfunctional views. This discriminated well and produced a variety of marks. Numerous candidates scored within mark band two as they gave some appropriate advantages of the approach and also some disadvantages. Those candidates also showed a good understanding of the approach itself. Unfortunately, there are still some candidates who only give advantages of the approach and therefore limit their answer to mark band one. It should be noted that to gain more marks than this there should be both advantages and disadvantages given.

Question 3

This question was centred around eating disorders. It allowed candidates the opportunity to analyse data and it tested their knowledge and understanding of a humanistic (person centred approach) and a psychodynamic approach.

Part (a) asked the candidates to compare data for anorexia and bulimia over a number of years. It was answered well by many candidates, the majority of whom gained at least three marks. It was pleasing to see candidates use the quantitative data provided well.

Part (b) tested candidates about bullying resulting in eating disorders was answered well. Many candidates made appropriate references to peer pressure as one of the causes.

The first part of (c) required candidates to explain terms used in humanistic therapy. It was answered very well by many candidates who scored full marks. However, it was clear that other candidates did not fully understand the question. The second part of the question required candidates to discuss the use of a humanistic approach in helping someone to manage a behavioural problem such as an eating disorder. It elicited the full range of answers, with some candidates giving in-depth advantages and disadvantages, but others only giving advantages and thus restricting themselves to mark band 1.

In part (d) candidates were asked to evaluate the use of a psychodynamic approach in helping someone who has an eating disorder. It produced a variety of responses and a few candidates did not attempt the question at all. This is surprising as this type of question has been asked in previous papers. Some candidates did well gaining marks in mark band 2 or 3. Others restricted themselves to mark band 1 as they only gave advantages or showed a limited understanding of the approach. Only a very small minority of candidates gave a conclusion, despite previous reports indicating that they should be present in question with the command word 'evaluate'.

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