

# ResultsPlus

## Examiners' Report January 2010

### GCE Psychology 6PS03/01

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## Overview

Teachers of Edexcel centres will be familiar with many of the topics and key issues of unit 4 and 5 of Curriculum 2000, the most relevant and topical of which have been synthesised into this new Unit 3 Applications of Psychology. Familiarity yet fresh material has ensured a more up-to-date second year of the new Specification that presents challenges and encourages exploration of each application in depth. In addition to this familiar content, new content, such as autism and theories of criminality, has been introduced and research studies are now specified to develop depth of understanding. Despite much of the retained content, there is a noticeable shift to test application of knowledge under exam conditions as a measure of understanding rather than recall. This can be seen in many of the scenario-based questions and methodological questions relating to the application directly.

Teachers will also notice a more unified Specification showing continuity from AS to A2 level, mirroring 'defining the approach', 'methodology', 'content', 'key issue' and 'practical investigation'. Only two of the four applications on offer need to be covered in unit 3, each presenting a holistic account of the application ranging from an understanding of underlying principles, the research tools used, key research, to the topics and issues central to each application. For each of the two chosen applications, one practical must be selected, either a summary of two articles or content analysis. Some excellent teaching from Edexcel centres have encouraged students to further explore key issues independently to ensure understanding that has been obvious in exam conditions.

The most popular application is criminological psychology, with the majority of centres choosing child psychology as a second application. Health psychology is still a popular choice with a minority of centres selecting sport psychology as a second topic. These figures reflect the continued popularity of criminology and child related professions such as teaching and social care. Whichever of the two applications has been taught, candidates can be reassured that they will have sufficient knowledge, in addition to AS material, to cope with the synoptic demands of Unit 4. Themes such as the nature-nurture debate, psychology as a science, methodology, ethics and key issues have been addressed in both AS and each of the applications of Unit 3. To indicate their choice of application, candidates should be reminded to check the appropriate box at the beginning of both sections answered to ensure swift marking.

As was the case for the Curriculum 2000 Unit 4 and 5 examination papers, this exam also asked a series of short answer questions and an essay over three sections - sections A, B and C, now 1, 2 and 3 - for each individual application. Most short answer questions are point-marked, excluding practical investigations, and essays, which are marked according to levels. Candidates should be reminded of this as they are frequently providing lengthy answers to short answer questions leading to mini-essays extending beyond the answer space provided that may result in less time being spent on the actual essay question. Candidates should be mindful of the allocation of marks and answer space provided to keep within time constraints for each application. Candidates can use the additional 'white space' provided below the answer lines if their handwriting is particularly large, but additional answer sheets should not be necessary unless an error has been made and additional paper is necessary for an alternative answer.

Essay questions that require extended writing over three pages of answer space are now marked using levels. Unlike point-marking, this allows further creditable development to be taken into account and quality of written communication is assessed. This is an important development and although it is tempting to maintain the classroom delivery of point-marking for homework or tests to ensure content is covered, this can be unsatisfactory if candidates are encouraged

to use an under developed scattergun approach or bullet point method under exam condition. Candidates should read the essay question very carefully to ensure that the higher levels are accessible; if a question criterion is not satisfied a candidate may be restricted to lower levels. This January 2010 examination asked straightforward essay questions, however centres should be mindful that essays might **not** be as straightforward in future examinations. In addition to specific criterion, top level essay answers should show breadth and depth of psychological knowledge and understanding. The Topic A essay required the description and evaluation of a token economy programme (TEP) in Markdale prison. In this instance a description would show breadth by clearly describing how a token economy programme could be implemented in the prison and evaluate such a programme on a range of issues such as cost, effectiveness, appropriateness and generalisability. For the top level it would be expected that psychological research be explained. For depth it would be expected that an answer describe the learning principles on which TEPs are based, how the governor would implement such a programme in reality, and fully explain each evaluation comment.

Comments on individual questions

### Criminological Psychology

All of sections 1 and 2 were point marked, the essay was marked according to levels.

### Question A1

**A1** (a) Billy was arrested by police and given an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) to control his aggressive behaviour. When asked for an explanation for the behaviour, Billy blamed his parents for letting him watch too many violent programmes.

Describe how Social Learning Theory would explain aggressive behaviour.

(3)

Social learning theory suggests that we imitate others behaviours. This can be done through <sup>positive</sup> reinforcement, for example if a boy is seen bullying another child for his sweets, he is rewarded (sweets), therefore the observer is more likely to imitate this behaviour. Tv violent programmes can also increase aggression for example if a tv villain is aggressive and arousing, you are more likely to imitate this behaviour and if you are rewarded (popularity) you will continue with this behaviour. This is called identification. You are given a certain status and continue with this.

For part a) there was a helpful lead in for this question, the answer was open for a description of social learning theory and/or the influence of the media on aggressive behaviour via observational learning, covering two specific areas of the Specification. On the whole candidates seemed comfortable with describing social learning theory, possibly due to familiarity from AS. However, many answers were repetitive and under developed for the second year of study. Many candidates made only a notional link to aggression or Billy.

Part b) achieved many successful answers with well explained research that either supported or refuted social learning theory, notably Bandura, Ross and Ross, Charlton, Williams, Eron and Huesmann, Leyens. Evaluation of cited research is perfectly acceptable if it questions the credibility of the study in providing appropriate evidence for the theory, comments regarding ethics, for example, are not suitable. Candidates also made use of critique such as aggression in the absence of a role model, violence causing fear rather than imitation, catharsis and causation issues. Some candidates merely described the theory in more depth than part a), which was not transferable. When citing an alternative theory as evaluation it must be explained there is no credit for naming them without *explaining* them.

Many candidates failed to address the comparative nature part c). It was common for candidates to describe one theory, typically self-fulfilling prophecy, and then describe social learning theory. Development beyond this level was disappointingly infrequent. Stronger candidates compared in terms of the nature-nurture debate, methodology and ethical issues relating to the research for each theory. Full marks was rare on this question and candidates should be encouraged to develop their comparative skills for future examinations. When developing a comparison answer candidates should use terms to connect each point, such as 'however', 'similar to', 'different from', 'unlike'. This will help maintain focus on comparison and prevent a lengthy answer simply describing each theory. Remember that comparison can involve similarities as well as differences.



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#### Examiner Comments

This example answer for part a) does not address the question immediately, but then offers an appropriate description of vicarious reinforcement and then identification. A lengthy answer that spends time on two main descriptive comments but does not have the depth to access all marks.



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#### Examiner Tip

Try and ensure that an answer relates to the question by making reference to the scenario given in the question. More explicit links will gain greater credit. In this instance the answer should explain Social learning Theory in relation to aggressive behaviour, so generic descriptions, such as 'social learning involves modelling through watching' should be avoided and replaced with 'Billy may have watched a violent film and imitated this by displaying similar aggressive behaviour'. Only three marks were offered for this question, but there could be more in the future. It may be worthwhile giving real case examples or psychological research to help elaborate on your answer.

## Question A2

(b) Outline **one** weakness of the field experiment as it is used to investigate witness effectiveness.

(2)

There are no controls. This means many extraneous variables and situational variables can affect the result and a clear cause/effect relationship can not be determined.

The biggest hurdle for candidates in part a), it seems, was to describe a field experiment as it is used to investigate eyewitness testimony. Many candidates gave a simple description of a field experiment without such reference to eyewitness testimony. Inventive candidates offered an example by describing the procedure of a field experiment eg Yarmey, although many mistakenly described psychological research exclusively instead of focusing on the research method. The injunction 'outline' was clearly misunderstood by some as evaluative when it is clearly an AO1 assessment objective injunction. Stronger answers described the procedure of a typical EWT field experiment using examples of IV's, DV and types of location or set up.

Part b) was generally well answered, but similar to question A2a, candidates tended to offer generic evaluation comments relating to field experiments without reference to eyewitness testimony. This was disappointing, as so many evaluation comments could have been enriched by such application.

There were a significant number of well-described procedures in part c) demonstrating a sound understanding of a psychological research study. Typical answers described Yarmey or Yuille and Cutshall, however a minority described a Loftus laboratory experiment that did not receive credit. Care should be taken when selecting a field experiment to teach as some are clearly artificial situations (Krackow and Lynn is a laboratory based experiment). Maas and Kohnken was often described as occurring on the street, when it was actually conducted as part of a physical test in an examination room.



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Examiner Comments

In the example answer for part b) a generic evaluation has been made, and therefore full marks cannot be achieved. This answer also exemplifies an issue with candidate answers when evaluating research methods, using categorical statements such as 'no', 'never' and 'always' is far too clear cut for some methodological issues. Regarding field experiments it would be more appropriate to explain how it is difficult to control extraneous variables, but clearly many are controlled for.



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Examiner Tip

Avoid categorical answers when dealing with research methods. Research methods are a grey area, and acknowledging this can be sophisticated. If a categorical statement is made, you should be sure to qualify this in your answer by being specific about what situation you are referring to. If you are unsure, use the terms 'may' or 'could' rather than being definite.

**Question A3**

A token economy is where desired behaviour is rewarded by tokens. The tokens act as a secondary reinforcement which can be exchanged for primary reinforcements such as desired food. It works through operant conditioning. It was first introduced in 1965 by Aylton where the prisoners would get a token for desired behaviour but would have a limit in which to exchange it to make sure desired behaviour would remain, this is a method of using token economy which could work for workday prison. It's easy also to set up as staff would only have to be trained to know what ~~to~~ behaviour required a token and how many tokens should be given for each behaviour, also keeping it cost effective.

The benefits would be how cheap it would be to implement and the fact that all staff after training would be able to award tokens.

However this form of treating offenders would only have short term effects

as the scheme would only work in an institute environment, therefore couldn't be generalised to home life after release as reinforcements would be gone such as in the study of Milby. Follow up studies need to be made also to check the levels of recidivism after release to see if any effect was carried through.

Staff would also have to be motivated in making sure the correct tokens were given at the correct times to make sure prisoners keep the desired behaviours up therefore staff would have to be checked.

The scheme of using tokens also doesn't help resolve why these prisoners are angry and look at it on a deeper level so may go back to their old ways after release. Other methods such as anger management would have to be introduced to resolve these issues.

It's been found also that between 10-20% of prisoners or others in institute don't respond to token economy. So special programmes would have to be set up for those prisoners in Markdale to make sure everyone conforms to the desired behaviour - maybe costing more, to give the prisoners motivation.



Many candidates approached this question with a good understanding of TEPs, and stronger answers were able to demonstrate not only how to implement such a programme in a prison situation, but also the learning principles on which such a programme is based. However, the majority of candidates failed to articulate in their answer such learning principles as positive, secondary and primary reinforcement, and simply described prisoners receiving tokens and exchanging them for cigarettes. Evaluation contained a mixture of research studies and effectiveness, ethical and generalisability issues. This was a fairly straightforward question, more demanding essay questions can and will be asked in future examinations.



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### Examiner Comments

This example answer gives a good description, but could focus more on implementation by the governor to give the depth required for the higher level. Evaluation is good, including a range of issues, but the psychological research included needs to be explained in further depth for a higher level.



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### Examiner Tip

A good essay should be able to answer the question with breadth and depth. For this question balance between description and evaluation should be considered. Effective description would include the principles of operant conditioning applied to TEPs and the issues of effectiveness that the governor would have to consider when implementing the programme. Evaluation should include psychological research that is explained and not just cited.

## Child Psychology

All of sections 1 and 2 were point marked, the essay was marked according to levels.

### Question B1

(c) Using the findings of the case study of Genie (Curtiss, 1977), assess whether the effects of privation are reversible.

(4)

Genie was found to be very underweight, not potty trained and unable to use grammar. She could only say 'stopit' and 'nomore' and couldn't socialise with people. After she was given lots of love and care, she formed an attachment with a scientist, ~~as~~ she was able to dress herself and use the toilet and learnt lots

more words. Therefore the effects were reversed to some extent.

However, Genie did regress back to her privation state when she was hit for being sick. Therefore it shows the effects aren't totally reversible. This is also suggested because she still couldn't use grammar and say full sentences.

Also, Genie's parents believed she was retarded from birth so we can't be sure her behavior is due to privation. Koluchava's study also suggests privation can be reversed because twins who suffered from privation were able to make secure attachments with their adoptive parents.

(Total for Question B1 = 10 marks)

The majority of answers gained full credit for part a) by demonstrating knowledge of the living conditions and relationships that Genie experienced before she was found. This included her social isolation, abuse and lack of stimulation. A minority of candidates described her condition on being found and when she was rehabilitated, which did not gain credit.

It was hoped that part b) would open up a range of answers regarding methodological strengths, applications and ethical strengths. However, many candidates failed to achieve full credit, as answers were limited to one simplistic concept. The most common answers referred to the in depth nature of case studies or ability of the case to track progress. Many simply concluded the study without providing an adequate application for this study. A disappointing number of candidates described how useful therapy and rehabilitation was for Genie, which would have been conducted to some extent regardless of the psychological study. A few described the anonymity of Genie being maintained through the use of a pseudonym or describe how unique this case is in terms of being morally unconscionable to test experimentally.

Most candidates tackled part c) of this question with sound understanding of the findings of Genie's case. Many related the issue of reversibility to Genie's improvement as well as lack of improvement to discuss the issue. Stronger answers addressed the issue of Genie's retardation, her age and the critical period, quality of care and contrasted the findings with other research (Czech twins).



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Examiner Comments

This example answer is a good response and addresses the question well by using the findings of Genie and offers other research to assess the issue of reversibility.



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### Examiner Tip

'Assess' is a tricky injunction that involves weighing up evidence and argument. For this question it was necessary to use Genie's case to weigh up whether privation was reversible or not. It is fine to introduce new research and concepts to this answer, but always make sure that each comment is explained and explicitly linked back to the question. Some answers failed to do this and simply described the findings of Genie's case without referring to the issue of reversibility at all.

## Question B2

**B2** The strange situation procedure is an example of a structured observation used to record the behaviour of children.

(a) Outline the structured observation as a research method used in child psychology. (2)

It involves a researcher watching people do something that has already participants who have been told what to do. The participant has a set of procedures to follow.

Familiarity with the idea of being staged or artificial was common, however many candidates failed to show any real depth of understanding of a structured observation in part a). Often providing a more generic description of observational research (covert/overt, participant/non-participant, etc). Even fewer candidates described the research method in the context of child research, although a few rescued the situation by describing the procedure of the strange situation. Part b) did not ask for the research method to be evaluated in the context of child psychology, so generic evaluation was creditable, but many struggled with a strength compared to a weakness. Generic evaluation may not be the case for future examinations. Part c) was largely a well answered question with many explanation for cross cultural research, such as testing universality, comparing characteristics, nature-nurture debate, parenting styles. Many giving good examples of cross cultural research to elaborate their answer. Many candidates wrote more than required for this question.



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### Examiner Comments

This answer to part a) shows a basic understanding of a structured observation, but to achieve higher marks the response should always be related to child psychology if it is a requirement of the question.


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**Examiner Tip**

This answer could have described a child being placed in an artificial setting to be observed, and the child being given a series of staged events that an observer could record, to make it relevant to the question asked.

### Question B3

\*B3 Describe and evaluate Bowlby's theory of attachment.

(12)

John Bowlby's theory of attachment is that we have an 'innate tendency' to enable our survival. Evolution is a key part of his theory - he believes certain genes are passed on to enable us to survive, and genes that are not needed eventually die out. Adaptive is a key part, we make an attachment to provide us with a safe haven to enable us to explore the world. Social releasers can be physical - baby proportions, chubby cheeks, or they can be behavioural - crying and cooing. These are used to unlock the innate tendency of adults to make them care for us. Critical period - Bowlby believed if we didn't have an attachment made between birth and 2½ years then we would be affected emotionally, intellectually, socially and physically. Monotropy - we form one special attachment with our mother, if mother not present then we form an attachment with another care giver - a substitute. Internal working memory, this is a mental schema for future relationships. Future relationships are based on this. He believed if we didn't have an attachment

Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of many aspects of Bowlby's theory of attachment, notably the maternal deprivation hypothesis was described well and supported by the 44 juvenile thieves study. Strong answers included many aspects of the theory, including evolutionary basis for attachment, internal working model, social releasers, the critical period and monotropy. A notable minority failed to explain these aspects, which tended to read more as a list than an essay. Evaluation was broad and plenty of psychological research was cited.

Again under developed evaluation or simply citing research without results prevented the development of an essay. An encouraging number of candidates accurately placed the theory in historical and political context to aid effective evaluation. Candidates should be aware that this was a straightforward essay question, and that more complex and demanding questions may be asked in future examinations.



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### Examiner Comments

This answer achieved the top band with a range of aspects described and plenty of evaluation. However, reading the essay is difficult as it rarely elaborates or explains each comment and reads more as a list of things to cover. Regardless of breadth of content, this style will affect the judgement of quality of written communication.



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### Examiner Tip

Essays are judged on both content and on the quality of written communication, so try and make your comments worthwhile and fully developed.

## Health psychology

All of section 1 was point marked, part 2 and the essay was marked according to levels.

### Question C1

(b) Jane is a youth worker who has been asked to go to a school to talk to parents about substance misuse. She wants to explain why young people take drugs.

Describe **one** explanation from the Learning Approach that Jane might use in her talk.

(3)

Jane may use operant conditioning. This is when the young people would see people taking drugs and they are vicariously reinforced because they see that the person who's taking the drugs is getting something from it. They're getting a reward from it. The young person ~~who~~ would take the drugs thinking that they too would get rewards. They are positively reinforced by the rewards they get such as social acceptance or the high they might feel. Then they are negatively reinforced because they might end up taking the drugs only to stop the withdrawal symptoms, not because they necessarily want to.

Generally part a) was a well answered question with the majority of candidates achieving two out of the three available marks. The third mark tended to be gained by describing withdrawal symptoms of physical dependency. Psychological dependency was often the weaker description as candidates simply referred to pleasure without explaining the need/belief to maintain it. Lengthy answers often over described drug action before relating the biochemical changes that lead to physical dependency.

The hurdle for many candidates in part b) was achieving the third available mark. The most common answers described how Jane would explain drug misuse in terms of operant conditioning; positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement, but struggled to offer any more. More successful answers used social learning theory in terms of imitation, identification and vicarious reinforcement. However, there was a tendency for these answers to become a description of peer pressure and conformity rather than social learning. Once again, a key problem was a lack of any reference to the scenario given in the question, or descriptions of the learning theory without reference to substance misuse.

Most candidates attempted part c) and many were able to provide useful evaluation. Strong answers included research from Bandura, Ross and Ross, Sher, Leventhal, Hughes, which was explained in regards to a particular learning theory. However, weaker answers tended to describe the theory again or use obvious face validity comments.



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### Examiner Comments

This example answer for part b) is a mixture of two learning theories, operant conditioning and social learning theory. As the question asked for just one learning theory, a marking examiner will review everything written and credit the best explanation – the explanation worth most marks when point-marking. However, this can waste a significant amount of time for candidates who should instead ensure the question is read carefully to prevent this common mistake.

## Question C2

**C2 (a)** During your course you will have conducted a practical investigation on a topic in health psychology using **either** a content analysis **or** a summary of two article sources.

Describe how you carried out your practical investigation.

*we carried out the content analysis by using the UK Top 40 singles <sup>(3)</sup> on the radio in 2008. We went through every lyric of the Top 40 singles and then decided to find any drug references. As a group we then decided out of all the drug references which ones were pro-drug references, which were neutral drug references and which were anti-drug messages. We then created a table recording the lyrics of the drug messages and also worked out the percentages of how many of the singles contained*

drug messages and what kind of reference they were. The Top 40 singles ~~albums~~ were used as this is primary data and has therefore not be altered in anyway and so it can be replicated in the future and it is exactly the same as what millions of adolescents listen to every week.

(b) You will have gathered qualitative and/or quantitative data (information) for your practical investigation.

Describe how you analysed the data (information) you gathered.

(3)

Firstly we analysed the data to produce qualitative data. We split the data ~~into~~ <sup>three</sup> groups, either pro-drug reference, anti-drug reference or neutral drug reference. An example of an ~~an~~ pro-drug reference is 'Lets go way out spaced out' ~~and~~ and an anti-drug reference is 'Gonna smack him if he getting to drunk, drunk' we also recorded the name of the song, the artist, and where they were placed in the chart. We then produced quantitative data for our results. We worked out what percentages were pro-drug references and what percentages were anti-drug references. We also worked out how many drug references there were ~~in~~ in the Top 40.

(c) Outline the conclusion(s) you drew from your practical investigation.

(2)

We concluded that in the UK Top 40 singles there is many pro-drug references such as 'lets go way out spaced out'. These <sup>pro</sup> drug references could influence the young adolescents listening to the radio. Our results also supported the theory behind our research, Social Learning Theory as if ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> individual hears their role model singing pro-drug references then they will want to reproduce that behaviour. Therefore we need to provide more positive role models. (Total for Question C2 = 8 marks)

Other than the specification assessment material, this is the first experience of the practical investigation, and as expected, a range of quality was noted. In part a) candidates offered a full range of responses across the marking levels. Brief descriptions of a summary or content analysis tended to be restricted to a notional understanding of what was done. Better descriptions explained the sources used, and strong answer offered additional information about how the data was gathered and the data gathering decisions made.

Part b) involved how data/information was analysed, and the modal level was 2 for a basic understanding of how data was gathered, data recorded and comparisons made. The summary

of sources did not suffer in this question compared to the content analysis. It was pleasing to observe detailed conclusions and/or relationship to theories, concepts and studies in part c).

A small number of candidates offered a practical from a different application, but many responses demonstrated good understanding at least at the conclusion stage of the practical. Teachers should be reminded that one content analysis and one summary of two sources should be conducted across the two applications chosen, this can and will be assessed in future examinations.



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#### Examiner Comments

This answer demonstrates an imaginative and methodologically sound way of conducting a practical investigation for health psychology. The answer clearly details how the study was planned, conducted, design decisions were justified, data was analysed and conclusion drawn.



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#### Examiner Tip

For both practical investigations, the summary and content analysis, be prepared to be asked about planning, conducting, analysing and drawing conclusions. The greater the student input in these processes, the better the understanding shown.

### Question C3

This study had high ecological validity. Participants lived in normal environments whilst doing it and so results are very valid. This study also had high population validity as it was a large sample of extreme drug users and so the results can be generalised to other extreme drug users. However, it could also have low population validity as it only used extreme drug users, and so results cannot be generalised to typical drug users. This study had low reliability. As it was a unique experiment done in a



certain context and certain situation, it is very difficult to repeat and get similar results. As it was a field experiment, it was hard to see whether the DV was affected by the IV. Many extraneous variables could have affected the DV, so it has low experimental validity. Eg. we cannot be sure that of the 147 who reduced the cocaine use, was because of the IV or other factors (eg. family background). Some participants had no intention of giving up, they just wanted ~~as~~ free heroin. This explains why 15 had increased their usage. The <sup>98 of 151</sup> provision of heroin raises ethical issues. Is it right to provide heroin? This study was ~~not~~ beneficial to people's lives. More people were in legal employment at end of study so it was moral. People could sell their supply of heroin, so it ends up on the illegal drug market.

Candidates were prepared to respond to the demands of this study question, although candidates should be mindful that more demanding study questions can be anticipated in future examinations. The description of Blättler's study was very good, with most candidates describing the aim, method and findings of the study. Higher band candidates gave a full account of the sample, therapy and tests used on the drug addicts and offer detailed findings and conclusions (related to drug reduction, honesty of drug use and links with the sex industry). The discriminating factors for this essay were the depth of description and, more so, the evaluation comments made. Many candidates offered evaluation comments more pertinent to a laboratory experiment and only the stronger candidates were offering evaluation specific to the actual study. Successful evaluation included approval by the ethics committee, validation of urine tests, ecological validity, generalisability and motivations of participants. Well explained evaluation achieved top level marks, however, many candidates lost momentum to evaluate after a detailed description.



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### Examiner Comments

The evaluation of this essay indicates the degree of explanation required to achieve top levels in an essay. Other than the last remark, the issues of ecological validity, generalisability and validity are explained with enough depth to access the top marking levels within the time constraints of examination conditions.



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### Examiner Tip

Essays are judged on both content and on the quality of written communication, so try and make your comments worthwhile and fully developed.

### Sport psychology

All of sections 1 and 2 were point marked, the essay was marked according to levels.

### Question D1

One psychological technique used to improve sporting performance is goal setting. There are two main goals performance goals which is improving performance and Outcome goals which is to do well to get in competition rather than personal performance, in case of Sita she would use performance goals. Each goal must be SMART, Specific to the particular event, performer, Measurable the goal need to be measured to note improvement, Adjustable, if the goal is to intense you can adjust it to suit. Realistic, the goal must be realistic so safe. It's no good setting a goal that you would never achieve such as swim the channel if you physically can't swim finally the goal must be timed to allow optimum output & motivation

(ii) Evaluate the psychological technique used to improve performance that you described in (a)(i).

*Handwritten notes:* attribution, Feltz & Landers, Martin & Hall, Orlitzky et al., (4)

Boyd and Murray (2005) is a study that looked at the different use of imagery, between track athletes, and climbers. 38 track athletes, 13 female and 25 male, and 48 climbers, 28 female, 20 male and 18 novice and 30 advanced were used in this study. They were given questionnaires, SIO and CIA, these were tested so were very reliable, but were different, and the SIO's were done in group, but the CIA's were done individually, which reduces the validity of results, which were that there was no difference between genders, and skill levels, but track athletes used motivational imagery (MC, MS, MA) more than climbers.

Another study was Feltz and Landers, where a meta analysis was done to prove mental rehearsal (MR) works. Isaac also proved MR works.

Martin and Hall did a study which proved that imagery worked, as it was used to increase the golfer's technique, and it worked.

Orlitzky et al did a study, and showed that imagery improved table tennis skills for young children. All these studies support imagery, but it doesn't work for everyone, and is a hard concept to measure, as is all cognitive.

Sport psychology students were more applied in their responses to this application in general for obvious reasons. Part a) i) demonstrated this applied nature as virtually all the responses referred to the scenario given in the question. The most common psychological techniques to improve sporting performance were imagery and goal setting, with a minority using attribution retraining and some unsuccessful attempts to use the inverted U hypothesis. The depth of answer extended to a description of performance and outcome imagery, and detailed descriptions of SMART targets as they relate to sport. Overall a well answered question. Part a) ii) was less successful, often describing the technique again, although a minority did acknowledge the psychological convention of using research as evidence, notably Mellalieu, Wienberg, Feltz and Landers. Real life examples rarely gained credit as unsubstantiated evidence.

Part b) tested the ability to compare two techniques and candidates found this particularly demanding. Often responses stated the obvious, such as 'both improve performance' or 'both can be used by sports people', none of which gained credit. Creditable marks followed the markscheme, although candidates should be aware of similarities, particularly between goal setting and imagery, as well as differences. When developing a comparison answer candidates should use terms to connect each point, such as 'however', 'similar to', 'different from', 'unlike'. This will help maintain focus on comparison and prevent a lengthy answer simply describing each theory.


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Examiner Comments

The first example answer shows a good understanding of goal setting, in terms of the type of goal and a breakdown of what is a SMART target. Each comment relates directly to sport psychology and the use of sporting examples illustrate this application well. The second example answer evaluating imagery demonstrates how research can be used to good effect when providing evidence for a technique. This is a typical convention for psychology that should be encouraged across all applications.

### Question D2

**D2 (a)** Describe the questionnaire as a research method used in sport psychology. (3)

questionnaires are mostly used in sport psychology they use open or closed questions, open more to give qualitative data as they are looking for opinions or closed when they want quantitative data, questionnaires are easily analysed and can be used to show correlations or evidence about a topic. It is most used in sport such as BSRI and VIA which suggest that questionnaires have reliability and validity as they were used in numerous studies (Kouvalaas, Band & Brunner 2003)

Once again candidates were able to relate the research method of a questionnaire in part a) to sport psychology appropriately. Many candidates gained two of the three marks for describing open and closed questions and the gathering of qualitative and quantitative information. Very few gained the third mark, but those who did described the self report nature of questionnaires or used a well explained example to elaborate.

From the range of answers given for part b), it was clear that candidates could offer many strengths and weaknesses of using questionnaires; including reliability, generalisability and validity issues. Stronger evaluation included in depth evaluation of the ethics of postal questionnaires, social desirability, consistency of questionnaires used on the same participants, and strong candidates offered examples of specific questionnaires that have been used to measure a particular characteristic successfully.

**ResultsPlus****Examiner Tip****Examiner comments:**

This example answer demonstrates a sound ability to describe the specific questioning techniques used by questionnaires. The response refers to two particular types of questionnaires, but fails to elaborate on these for a further mark. The example answer then develops into evaluation, which is not credited for this question or transferable to the next answer space.

**ResultsPlus****Examiner Comments**

When using a specific example of a questionnaire, for example the BSRI, it is advisable to elaborate further on purpose of questionnaire to ensure it is credited as an elaboration – there is no credit for naming without explaining. The question injunctions are very important; familiarity with examination terms will ensure focus on the description, evaluation or application requirements of the question.

**Question D3**

This was a relatively straightforward theory question for the first examination, although it should be noted that more demanding and prescriptive questions might be asked in the future. Weak candidates seemed to misunderstand the inverted U as an inevitable consequence of exercise rather than a consequence of over arousal. Stronger answers did not make this elementary error and many described how the inverted U related to particular sports, personality types and expertise level with excellent detail. Many candidates evaluated the theory by comparing it to catastrophe theory, and strong answers used psychological research as evidence for the theory, such as Thelwen and Maynard, Klavara, and Lowe. If candidates find it difficult to recall researcher names in the exam, they should attempt to provide enough study detail to make certain it is identifiable. Description of the theory was much stronger than evaluation.

## Grade Boundaries

### 6PSO3

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Uniform boundary mark	80	64	56	48	40	32
Raw boundary mark	60	41	36	31	27	23



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