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Examiner's Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Psychology (WPS02) Paper 2
Biology Psychology and Learning

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1) This is an A01 question asking students to describe synaptic transmission.

Many students could offer some description of synaptic transmission. Some students did not describe it, and some wrote about hormones.

2a) This is an A02 question so points must relate to the scenario of Oti's experiment in terms of a directional hypothesis. Many students were able to write a directional hypothesis. To gain all the marks they had to operationalise the independent variable and the dependent variable. Those who wrote a directional hypothesis and did not gain all the marks often failed to operationalise either the independent or dependent variable or both.

2b) This is an A02 question that required students to interpret the data from the table. Students had to offer an interpretation of what the data showed, and use the data from the table to support their interpretation. Some students repeated the data from the table with no interpretation a trend or pattern shown by the data.

2c) This was an A02 question where students got the mark for accurately stating that Oti would use a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test on her data.

2d) This is an A02 and A03 question.

Students gained the A02 mark for identifying an improvement that could be made to the experiment, and required the improvement to be linked to the scenario of Oti's experiment. The most popular improvement was the use of an independent groups design.

The A03 mark was for justification or exemplification of the improvement. Students who got the A02 mark and did not get the A03 mark often explained what a weakness of Oti's experiment was rather than focus on the improvement.

3a) This is an A02 question so students gain marks for description in relation to Anastacia's fall. Students were able to link the areas of the brain that may have been damaged to Anastacia and her aggressive responses, and describe why they may have caused her aggression. Some students did not go beyond naming the areas of the brain that may have been damaged.

3b) This is an A02 and A03 question, where the A02 marks were gained through identifying a strength and a weakness in relation to the scenario. The A03 marks were for justification or exemplification of the strength and weakness. Centres are reminded that students should refer to the context given when identifying the strength and weakness. Students were often able to identify a strength and/or a weakness, but the justification/exemplification was often limited and not developed therefore limiting the marks they got.

4a) This question was an A02 mathematical skills question for correctly calculating the ratio. Most students gained this mark, however some failed to read the instruction to calculate it to the lowest form.

4b) This question tested the mathematical skill of drawing an appropriate graph. Most students were able to draw a bar chart that was titled, accurately labelled on the axes and plotted accurately. Some students drew a histogram

rather than a bar chart. Some students did not indicate that the y axis was not to scale.

4c) Students were required to identify a weakness of the mean as a measure of central tendency for an A01 mark and then justify or exemplify the weakness for an A03 mark. Most students could identify a weakness, with the most common one being that it was affected by extreme scores. However, many failed to justify or exemplify why this was a weakness.

5) This was an evaluate question that requires an equal emphasis between knowledge/understanding and evaluation/ conclusion in the answer. Students could describe the research in terms of methods used or in terms of studies. A lot of students misread the question and wrote about the role of hormones in aggression rather than research into the role of hormones. Those students who did write about research gave some A03 points, but in some cases these were underdeveloped often not going beyond giving terms.

6a) The requirements of this question were A02 and A03. The A02 mark was for identifying a reason why the father was a role model, the most common answer was that they were the same gender. The A03 mark was for justification or exemplification, this was often missing.

6b) The question required students to link their answer back to the context to gain A02 marks. Most students did link back to the context and state what the vicarious reinforcement was. Some went on to describe how this would motivate Ore.

6c) This question required students to link their answer to the context to gain the A02 marks. Most students did link back to the context. Some gave a definition of what positive reinforcement was, and then described it in relation to Ore.

7a) This was an A02 mathematical skills question where students had to calculate df . There were a lot of blank answers for this question. Some students who did attempt the question did not seem to understand what r and c meant in the formula.

7b) A lot of students attempted this mathematical skill question with a lot getting the correct answer, and rounding their final answer up to two decimal places as the question stated. Sometimes the minus sign was missing, and sometimes errors were made when rounding the numbers up before the final answer which meant the answer was incorrect.

7c) Students were required to describe the ethics of using animals according to the Scientific Procedures Act to gain the A01 marks, there were 2 marks for each description. A common error was ignoring the Scientific Procedures Act and writing that it was unethical as it harmed animals. Other students focussed on human ethics such as consent and right to withdraw.

7d) Students could gain an A01 mark for identifying a reason why the results from animal studies could not be generalised to humans, and most students

gained this mark, however not many went beyond this. The second mark was an A03 mark for justification or exemplification of their identification point.

When asked to explain students should add a justification/exemplification point.

8a) This was an A01 describe question for four marks. There were a lot of answers that showed an understanding of free association and how it was carried out in psychoanalysis. Students often did not write enough to gain all the available marks.

Students should look at the marks for each question and use that as a guide on how much to write.

8b) This question required students to describe transference as it is used in psychoanalysis, rather than a general definition, for two A01 marks. Some students answered the requirements of the question and could describe the process in terms of psychoanalysis. Students should read questions carefully to make sure they are answering the question asked.

8c) Students had to write about counter transference in relation to Tameka to gain the A02 marks. Some students failed to refer to the context, so limiting the number of marks they could gain. Some students repeated what was in the stem, without any further description showing their knowledge of counter transference.

Students should refer to the context if there is a scenario, as well as display their knowledge.

9) The assess essay required A01, knowledge and understanding and A03 assessment on the topic of the effectiveness of systematic desensitisation. Good answers did focus on the effectiveness of systematic desensitisation, offering accurate knowledge of the process as well as arguments that had coherent chains of reasoning that lead to assessment. The A03 assessment in good answers often focussed on studies that showed systematic desensitisation was or was not effective, as well as alternative therapies and how they may be more effective.

10) This essay was a to what extent essay that required A01, knowledge and understanding, as well as A03 judgement. Both should have been focussed on light therapy as a treatment for seasonal affective disorder, not focussed on what seasonal affective disorder was. Those who did not focus on the therapy often failed to gain the higher levels. Students should read the question carefully.

11) The emphasis of this essay was A01, knowledge and understanding, and A03 evaluation, with knowledge and understanding being capped at 6 marks. Students had to write about both studies, and most did. The better answers focussed on reliability and validity as asked in the question. Some answers gave a general evaluation rather than focus on reliability and validity.

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