



General Certificate of Education

Health and Social Care 8623

Advanced Subsidiary Double Award

HC04 Child Development

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - January series

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HC04 Child Development

General comments

The topic which was least well understood by candidates was maturation.

Relatively few candidates responded appropriately to 'Discuss' questions. The command word 'Discuss' implies that candidates should not only make appropriate judgements, but also consider counter-arguments. For example in section 2(b) it is appropriate to make a counter-argument suggesting that maturation is not a complete explanation, and in section 4(c) it is appropriate to point out that nurture is not the whole story.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a)(ii) A minority of candidates lost marks here, probably because they lacked knowledge of what gross motor development is.

(b) Answers were frequently unimaginative, such as the use of construction bricks to build things, or the use of a tricycle to pretend to be riding a bike. Better answers more closely reflected the reality of pretend play which (in infants) is often very inventive. A good example was the use of construction bricks to represent a herd of sheep.

Question 2

(a)(i) Most candidates recognised that this was a cross-sectional study, though not all of these were able to give a clear convincing explanation. Some explained it in terms of the contrast with a longitudinal study and gained credit for this. However, some mistakenly believed that the essential feature of a longitudinal study was that it takes place 'over a long time'. The essential point is whether or not the same group of participants is studied repeatedly over time, or whether participants of different ages are studied at around the same time.

(a)(ii) Many candidates did not score very well on this question. Rather than simply quoting figures from the table, candidates should produce accurate generalisations such as, "All the 13 to 14 month old children could stand without support."

(b) This question produced some very poor answers, often from all the candidates from a centre. Wrong answers included those which implied that maturation means the same as growth, or development, or simply maturing. Some candidates gave answers that were purely about environmental influences on motor development, and therefore completely wrong. A minority of candidates understood that maturation is a process that drives or controls development, and means genetically-programmed development. The best answers referred to similarities of timing across cultures and also followed the instruction to 'discuss' by pointing out that maturation is not a complete explanation for motor development, and that environmental factors also play a part.

Maturation is a topic that candidates find difficult to grasp, so clear explanation with examples is essential for their learning.

Question 3

(a) A minority of candidates recognised the lion as a British symbol relating to toy safety, and a minority were able to name the Lion Mark correctly.

(b)(i) Almost all candidates scored both marks here.

(b)(ii) Weaker answers sometimes failed to identify health and safety risks such as falls or cuts.

(c) Most candidates made good use of the scenario material, for example recognising that Gemma would soon be walking, and suggested risks caused by wooden floors. Among the best answers were those that recognised that wooden floors created both risks and benefits (such as being easier to clean).

Question 4

(a) Most candidates scored 1 mark here. Some mistakenly answered that cognitive development is 'development of the brain'. This is not correct. Development of the brain is mainly a growth process, and in any case does not relate exclusively to cognitive functions.

(b)(i) Most candidates showed knowledge of decentring, though fewer placed this in the context of the Mountains test, (e.g. by referring to the 'viewpoint' of the doll).

(b)(ii) Many candidates gave accurate descriptions, scoring full marks. Less accurate answers referred to one mountain only, or to the doll being placed among the mountains.

(c) Most candidates showed some understanding of what is meant by nurture, and some gave examples of environmental factors influencing cognitive development (such as parents reading to children). The most successful answers also referred to education and opportunities to play with educational toys, and a few gave the counter-argument that maturation also plays a role. Some candidates made the mistake of referring mainly to social rather than cognitive development.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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