



**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied
January 2011**

Health and Social Care

HC12

**(Specification
8621/8623/8626/8627/8629)**

**Unit 12: Human Development: Factors and
Theories**

Report on the Examination

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General comments

There was widespread evidence of candidates being adequately prepared for this examination. This tended to reveal itself in the range of marks obtained from individual centres. These often showed a wide range, indicating effective discrimination between the abilities of candidates. There was a tendency for weaker candidates to give answers that did not address the question very well – as if the candidate was expecting or hoping for a slightly different question – or a question that had appeared in a past paper.

The cognitive development question (Question 2) was answered well on the whole, probably better on average than the other questions.

The particular weaknesses evident in this series were as follows:

1. A tendency to accept discredited theories unquestioningly. This happened with Skinner's account of language development, and Freud's theories.
2. A tendency to misinterpret 'implications for child rearing' questions as 'evaluate the theory' questions.
3. A tendency not to evaluate theories when asked to do so.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

01 Most candidates correctly identified the parenting style in the scenario as permissive.

02 Many candidates were able to name the authoritarian and authoritative (or democratic) rearing styles, although some confused the two. A few candidates, instead of describing the parenting style – as the question required – added information about the child behaviour correlated with a style.

03 Most candidates correctly referred to observation and/or interview as research methods used by Baumrind. A few did not use the correct terms for these data collection methods, and instead referred to 'watching' and 'asking questions'. These alternatives were not regarded as equivalent to the systematic methods actually used.

04 Relatively few candidates understood that a key difficulty in drawing conclusions from Baumrind's data was the fact that these data were correlational and so did not reveal a cause-effect link.

05 This question asked for the implications for child rearing of Baumrind's study. As noted above, such 'implications' questions often attract irrelevant answers. However in this case the vast majority of answers addressed the question. Answers contained descriptions of the child behaviour findings, varying in detail and accuracy.

Question 2

06 A majority of candidates recognised that Anil was in the sensorimotor stage, and most of these gained two or three marks.

07 Almost all candidates gave an accurate definition of object permanence. Only a small number mistook object permanence for other cognitive abilities. Where this occurred, the candidate usually gained few marks for the following two sections.

08 Descriptions of Piaget's test of object permanence most frequently gained four marks.

09 Bower and Wishart's study was often described accurately and full-mark answers were common. Some candidates mistakenly criticised Piaget's version of the test as 'too complex'.

10 Asked to outline the implications for child rearing of Piaget's theory, some candidates referred appropriately to what parents and carers can do to aid cognitive development. However a large

number of candidates misinterpreted the question and instead gave irrelevant answers criticising the theory.

Question 3

11 A majority of candidates correctly referred to at least one of the actions of the parent described in the scenario. Some candidates were able to suggest how these actions might aid language development. A minority however, did not focus on the actions mentioned, but instead wrote about ways in which language is acquired. As a result these answers focussed on reinforcement, modelling and teaching – which were not well illustrated by the scenario.

12 This question about George's stage of language development was quite well answered.

13 Most candidates recognised that Oscar's mistake in pluralizing 'goose' as 'gooses' was not silly, though very few recognised it as an example of over-regularisation. Asked to refer to a relevant study of language development, most candidates gave accurate and concise accounts of the Berko study. As a result, a large number of candidates gained full marks on this section.

14 Asked for the limitations of the learning theory of language development, quite a lot of candidates tended to describe it instead. It seemed that many of these candidates thought learning theory was an accurate account of language development. Some confused the theory with social learning theory. A minority of candidates gave good answers, based on two or more limitations.

Question 4

15 This section discriminated well between candidates who could apply their knowledge to a new scenario and those who could merely describe what they knew. Some candidates were able to match the behaviour of the children described in the scenario with Freud's stages of psychosexual development and parts of the personality. Others outlined aspects of the theory without really connecting this with the scenario.

16 Asked to evaluate Freud's account of moral development in the phallic stage, most candidates gained some marks for description of the stage. However relatively few candidates followed the instruction to evaluate. Some tended to assume that Freud's account was correct.

17 Asked for criticisms of Freud's research, many candidates instead criticised Freud's theory – some of them making points that would have been relevant to the previous section. There were very few general criticisms. Instead many candidates focussed only on the Little Hans study, which was not typical of Freud's research. Some candidates suggested mistakenly that Freud did not do any research, and others made the unreasonable criticism that he did his research too long ago.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.