

Psychology

Advanced GCE A2 7876

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS 3876

Report on the Units

January 2008

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2540 Core Studies 1

General Comments

Overall, this paper was successful in eliciting a full range of marks. Most candidates showed good preparation for the exam demonstrating a high level of knowledge and understanding, giving full answers to all questions. However there were a few candidates leaving gaps instead of offering any answer and/or muddling studies. This led to good differentiation, and showed up centre effects.

Candidates must be aware of the difference between questions which require an 'identification' and questions that contain the injunction 'outline' or 'describe' etc. and which require a more detailed explanation.

There were some candidates who did not attempt questions 17-20! Centres need to re-inforce the fact that there are ALWAYS 20 questions, prior to the exam.

Comments on individual questions.

- 1 This question was generally well answered with most candidates identifying a limitation and gave an outline relating to the study to show their understanding.
- 2 (a) The two groups were identified correctly, by most candidates, only a few giving answers such as 'Dyslexic children' or 'control group'.
(b) Good answers related the explanation of a comparison/baseline with a control for intelligence between the groups.
- 3 This question required the identification of an ethical issue, which was linked to Washoe as an animal alienated from her species, and the consequences arising. Weak answers concentrated on the ethics of teaching sign language to chimpanzees.
- 4 The question was well answered, most candidates giving a comprehensive outline of the procedure. Some candidates mistakenly described 'finding/outcomes'.
- 5 The question asked for two I.V.'s (NOT D.V.s') giving gender of the child; gender of the model and aggressive/non aggressive model as the correct answers.
- 6 A common mistake in this question was to give differences between restored and adopted participants, and not between ex-institutional v control groups as the question asked.
- 7 A well answered question. Candidates showed knowledge and understanding in their answers.
- 8 This was not a well answered question, but showed good discrimination. Candidates were required to use the table rather than give pre-prepared answers. The question carried 4 marks and required 2 different conclusions.
- 9 A well answered question, though candidates lost marks by giving vague answers such as 'time spent sleeping'

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- 10 (a)** Candidates are continuing to show good understanding of the physiological studies and answered this question well, however there were a few candidates who referred to the 'right eye' instead of the 'right visual field'
- (b)** Some excellent answers showing understanding of Sperry's difficulties, and describing the problems of eye/head movements causing information being shown to both hemispheres.
- 11** Good answers contained 2 or more facts about the working of PET scans. Weak answers merely referred to measuring brain activity or confused PET scans with EEG's.
- 12** This question required the identification of a way the study lacked ecological validity eg set in a lab; unusual tasks which were then related to the procedure used by Schachter and Singer in their study. There were 4 marks awarded for the question which required 2 examples in the answer.
- 13** A well answered question. Candidates referred to the fact that the participants needed to know/believe that the set-up was real.
- 14 (a)** Most candidates answered correctly showing a good understanding of helping behaviour and included a comparison of behaviour between the different models. A common error was a belief that there was 'the same race helping for the ill condition'.
- (b)** Candidates could offer good examples of extraneous variables eg ethics etc, but need to link their answers to the study for 2 marks.
- 15** This question was not well answered; definitions of reductionism needed to be related to the study for 2 marks,
- 16** There were some good answers well described.
- 17** Answers to this question demonstrated candidates using pre-prepared answers or had a lack of understanding of the aim of this study. Good answers correctly identified 'positions/ranks were given according to intelligence, or gave references to Yerkes wanting to collect data to support his research, or to establish psychology as a 'hard' science.
- 18 (a)** This required the identification of 2 characteristics of the sample used by Hraba and Grant. Marks were lost through lack of precision in answers 'they used children from one school (incorrect) or one area'. Good answers provided a good identification ie they used children aged between 4-8 years from 5 (different) schools in Lincoln or the answers provided other equally well defined characteristics.
- (b)** Difficulties with generalisation were well identified and where they were linked to the study gained full marks. Some candidates believe that the sample was all girls though Hraba and Grant only refer to 'children'.
- 19 (a)** Most candidates could identify either qualitative or quantitative data but only the better answers went on to give an example from the study.
- (b)** Good answers described an advantage of their answer in the context of the study.
- 20** This question was well answered with a variety of different methods chosen. It was thought that answers giving self report together with interviews would not score full marks.

2541 Core Studies 2

General Comments

There were a number of candidates resitting this exam, those who had thoroughly revised the Core Studies scored adequately in most parts of the paper, but some candidates had still not developed competent or appropriate examination techniques.

The following suggestions should help candidates reduce common errors and improve future performance:

- 1 Many candidates 'ran out of time', demonstrating either a lack of examination practice and/or the inability to organise their time effectively. The 'rule of thumb' time allocation remains as follows: 30 minutes for Section A and 30 minutes for Section B
- 2 Candidates should ensure they correctly apply the paper rubric. Too many candidates attempted to answer all four questions with the result that no question was answered in adequate depth. Few, if any, marks were therefore gained.
- 3 Candidates are reminded that for part (b) of all questions they should structure their answers following the requirements of the mark scheme and answer in the point / example / comment format.
- 4 It was noticeable that in part (b) questions, candidates drew on stock phrases such as 'validity', 'reliability', 'demand characteristics' etc, whether or not they were actually appropriate for the question requirements. Candidates should be advised to read questions carefully and to make certain they address the question in a more considered way.
- 5 Candidates also continue to give insufficient detail in part (b) answers. Writing 'one strength is ecological validity' cannot score any marks as this does not indicate what the problem is in relation to ecological validity and could in fact relate to any question. If the candidate adds a little more detail e.g. 'A strength of case studies is that they are usually high in ecological validity because they are conducted in the participant's natural environment', not only identifies a strength but also clearly identifies which question is being referred to.
- 6 Candidates often failed to answer both parts of Section A part (c). The first part of the question asks them to suggest one other way data could be collected. Most candidates managed to answer this reasonably well. The second part of this question asks them to say 'how you think this might change the results'. Most candidates state that the study may be more ethical or ecologically valid and that the results may be more reliable and valid. This is considering the implications of their suggested change not the effect on the results so is a continuation of the first part of the question. Candidates therefore need to consider much more explicitly the effect their change would have on their results – if any. An example could be: In the Freud study, having an independent researcher observe Little Hans may mean that Little Hans was found to be a normal five-year-old boy who, because he was naturally of a nervous disposition, just had a greater than average fear of horses and that there was not in fact suffering from the Oedipus complex at all.

- 7 Again candidates need to be reminded to read the whole question for Section A before selecting their Core Study. A favourite study may not automatically lead to good answers, especially in parts (b) and (c). The same goes for Section B questions.
- 8 Candidates should be advised to make their writing legible at all times. There were several scripts that were almost impossible to read. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that their answers can be read easily.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: Question 1

This question was more popular than Question 2. Candidates were asked to select *ONE* of three Core Studies (not all three), those of Freud, Thigpen and Cleckley, and Gardner and Gardner.

Although Freud and Thigpen and Cleckley were extremely popular, there was minimal difference in the range of marks achieved by candidates across all three studies.

Most candidates answered part (a) well, though some concentrated on *what* data was gathered rather than *how* data was gathered.

Part (b) required candidates to provide two general strengths and two general weaknesses of the case study method supported by evidence from the study considered in part (a). Typical responses for strengths included: having high ecological validity, the ability to gather rich and detailed in-depth data, the ability to get to know the participant well so the participant will disclose information they may withhold from a stranger.

Weaknesses included: the inability to generalise findings, the possibility of researcher bias caused by emotional involvement with the participant. Few candidates scored maximum marks as they failed to show full understanding and / or were unable to identify implications or highlight evaluation points. In addition, some candidates considered specific advantages and disadvantages of the case study as used in their chosen study. Such answers scored few marks. It continues to be recommended that candidates follow the requirements of the mark scheme and answer in the point / example /comment format.

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Part (c) required candidates to suggest *ONE* alternative way in which data could have been gathered.

Most candidates were able to offer suitable alternatives though it could be argued that asking Little Hans at the age of 5 to complete a questionnaire containing open and closed questions is not really an appropriate method! Yet again, many candidates failed to address the second half of the question. They were required to consider and discuss any effects their alternative method may have on the results i.e. how findings may be different and why.

Section A: Question 2

Here candidates were asked to select *ONE* of the Core Studies from Zimbardo, Milgram and Tajfel. A minority of candidates chose Tajfel and an almost equal number chose Zimbardo and Milgram.

Many answers for part (a) were excellent though some candidates simply described the study rather than the sample and how it was selected.

Part (b) required candidates to discuss two general advantages and two general disadvantages of using restricted samples supported by evidence from the study chosen in part (a). Frequently cited advantages were: a limited sample makes replication easier, if limited in size and / or type the study can be used as a pilot study before generalising. Disadvantages included: lack of generalisability, because participants are volunteers they may be more likely to show demand characteristics. As with Question 1, few candidates scored maximum marks as they failed to show full understanding. Again some candidates considered specific advantages and disadvantages of their chosen study and so gained few marks. Reference to the mark scheme is again advised as some candidates failed to follow its requirements.

Comments for part (c) are the same as for Question 1 part (c) with many candidates scoring few marks on the second half of the question.

Section B: Question 3

This question was more popular than Question 4. In part (a) candidates were required to describe how the situation affected behaviour in *EACH* of the four named studies. However, yet again, a small number of candidates wrote about only one study (and so scored a maximum of 3 out of the 12 available marks), and many candidates wrote about three studies (many choosing to ignore Gould).

Comments about the Piliavin study were generally sound though many candidates said the situation led to diffusion of responsibility. Many candidates showed confusion when describing how behaviour was influenced in Rosenhan's study because they thought the pseudopatients were the participants.

Likewise with Hodges and Tizard, candidates were confused over the terms ex-institutional / restored / adopted and so gave incorrect answers. Answers for the Gould study were generally poor, with few candidates actually describing how behaviour was affected i.e. poor performance levels in the tests and why.

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Answers to part (b) were equivalent to the part (b) section of Questions 1 and 2. Typically, problems suggested included: how to make the study ethical, if in a laboratory ecological validity is low, if in a natural setting there is low control over extraneous variables. As for Questions 1 and 2, candidates were required to follow the mark scheme and answer in the point / example / comment format. Although candidates tried to follow this formula, few managed to provide appropriate comments. Again some candidates were study-focussed and discussed four problems relating to one or all of the named studies rather than considering general problems connected with studying the effect of situations on behaviour, supported by evidence from any of the named studies.

Section B: Question 4

Very few candidates chose this question. Performance was either good or very poor.

In part (a) few candidates were able to describe the 'processes' investigated.

Comments for part (b) mirror those for Question 3 though the main strengths identified related to: objectivity, generalisability, the ability to investigate behaviour that can not be studied any other way; while weaknesses included: reductionism, objective data gives no qualitative information, and the use of technical equipment does not always produce reliable findings.

2542 Psychological Investigations

General Comments

The overall standard of the scripts was good with only a small number of candidates appearing not to have been prepared for this examination. However candidates still do not read questions carefully enough and often lose marks for failing to give their answers in the context of their own investigation. No major ethical issues were reported although several examiners commented on the number of activities with no psychological content.

Activity A

- 1 Although many candidates achieved three of the possible four marks on this question, it was rare to award full marks. Very few candidates gave enough information here to allow for easy replication of their activity. Many candidates failed to give any information about the questions or even the topic of the questionnaire and those answered achieved a maximum of 2 marks as it would not have been possible to replicate this activity. It is worth reminding centres that there is slightly over one minute available for every mark on this paper. For this question, candidates could have been writing for around 5 minutes. However the typical length of answers would suggest a much shorter time than this.
- 2 There were 2 marks available for each improvement offered by candidates. Examiners awarded 1 mark for a general or vague improvement such as 'ask more people' and 2 marks for a more detailed answer. A large number of candidates offered the general improvements and a large number also went on to suggest the effect that this improvement might have. This information was ignored if it appeared in question 2 as it was not asked for. A small number of candidates suggested, often in detail, what the problems were with the activity that they had conducted and although the improvements were sometimes implied if they were not stated they could not attract any marks. This would suggest that candidates are not focussing explicitly enough on the exact demands of each question. It is also worth considering the time available for this question. Again this question is worth 4 marks and candidates could be spending 5 minutes on this. Many candidates wrote a few words only.
- 3 There were some good answers to this question and stronger candidates were able to consider how their suggested improvements would affect their results. If this was done clearly within the context of their own investigation then they were awarded 3 marks (for the effect of each improvement). Many candidates gave very general answers here that did not mention their own activity and were awarded a maximum of 2 marks out of a possible 3. It was also noted that candidates use terms such as reliability and validity almost interchangeably with many saying that their improvement would increase reliability, despite the question explicitly asking them to consider validity.

Section B

- 4 Most candidates were able to achieve 2 marks here. The only exceptions were the candidates who simply wrote that they were going to observe 'behaviour' without any further information, or those whose aim was written in such a way that the meaning was extremely unclear.
- 5 Most candidates were able to achieve 4 marks here although some gave the same finding twice and a small number gave comments on the way that the observation had been conducted rather than findings from the observation.

- 6 (a)** Candidates struggle with this. In terms of an observation, reliability is best defined as the consistency of the observer (s). In other words, the extent to which two or more observers agree in their use of an observation schedule. Many candidates gave definitions of experimental reliability, even using the word 'experiment' in their definition. Definitions which suggested 'getting the same results again' were awarded 1 mark and anything suggesting consistency or agreement between observers was awarded 2 marks.
- (b)** Very few candidates achieved full marks here. The appropriate answers included piloting the coding scheme, training observers or using video to train / check coding. Checking for inter-rater reliability does not actually improve reliability – it allows you to measure reliability. Candidates were awarded 1 mark for suggesting the use of other observers although a maximum of 2 marks was awarded to answers that made no reference to the candidate's own observation. Full mark answers generally suggested alternative categories which would have led to greater agreement or used examples from the categories to illustrate answers on training / piloting the categories.

Activity C

- 7** Most candidates are able to state a null hypothesis although several candidates offered alternate hypotheses and a few offered null hypotheses stating 'no relationship'. Once again, candidates who had used the Stroop Test for their activity found writing a clear null hypothesis almost impossible. The IV in a Stroop test is not colour.
- 8** Many candidates offered tables of raw data for this question and achieved 0 marks. The data had to be summarised in some form; totals, means, medians etc were all appropriate but if there was nothing but raw data candidates were not awarded any marks. Many who drew appropriate graphs or tables were let down by their labelling. Many candidates drew graphs without labels or simply labelled bars as Condition A or Condition B.
- 9 (a)** Candidates need to draw a conclusion in relation to their null and their alternate hypotheses. The best answers stated a conclusion such as 'Participants recalled more words in a quiet condition than in a noisy condition' and then went on to say what the implications of this were for the acceptance / rejection of each hypothesis. Some candidates failed to give a clear conclusion and simply said which hypothesis was accepted and these answers were awarded a maximum of 1 mark. It was evident that candidates struggle with appropriate language here with many saying that their null hypothesis was 'right' or 'wrong' and this is to be discouraged. Others simply used the term 'hypothesis' with no indication of whether they were discussing the alternate or the null. Many candidates included statistical results here and then had to copy this information out again for section b.
- (b)** There were some very good answers to this question with many candidates showing good understanding of the use of statistics. Others simply named the test they had used. Full mark answers demonstrated some understanding of the process of reaching a conclusion; 'because my calculated value is higher than my critical value this means that'

Activity D

- 10** Surprisingly many candidates achieved only 1 mark for this question. They were awarded 1 mark for simply naming a sampling method. Many candidates named opportunity sampling but then gave no further information about how opportunity sampling was used to select the participants for their activity. Better answers gave details such as where the opportunity sampling took place.
- 11** There were some good answers to this question although many candidates went no further than 'quick and easy' for the strength of opportunity sampling. Some gave strengths and weaknesses of the sample rather than the sampling method and these answers attracted no marks.
- 12 (a)** Many candidates achieved only 1 mark here as they gave very brief suggestions. For two marks a specific answer was required such as 'all males from an office environment'.
- (b)** Many candidates gave quite general answers here with only a small number of very strong answers. These strong answers considered the effect of using this alternative sample on the results of the specific activity. Weaker answers made general comments with no reference to the specific activity.

2544 Psychology and Education

General Comments

There was a good spread of marks on this paper from a small entry of 553 candidates. This suggests that the level of difficulty of the paper was appropriate and in fact very few candidates misunderstood the questions or made rubric errors. Most candidates balanced their time between part A and B in line with the weighting of the marks. However, there were a few candidates who spent too long answering Section A, leaving themselves insufficient time for Section B. Some of these candidates may have been unprepared for the depth and detail required in the Section B essay and therefore dwelt on the aspect of Educational Psychology they could answer best. However, the fluency and accuracy of the responses was good.

Most of the candidates entered for this module had sufficient knowledge and understanding of topics in psychology and education. They had learned a wide range of evidence to include in their answers and applied it appropriately in their responses. It is impressive the way candidates are able to relate psychological theory to educational settings using a variety of different examples, but candidates must not forget that psychological evidence is of paramount importance in providing a well argued response. In section A, part b some candidates failed to evaluate with a range of points and drifted into description of alternative psychological research.

In Section B candidates had most difficulty with part b. Some candidates used this section to describe further research instead of focusing on evaluation in relation to issues. There is no prescribed way of answering this part, but better candidates take three or four issues in turn and evaluate two or three pieces of evidence in relation to that issue, often using comparisons and contrasts. The candidates who evaluate different pieces of research in turn often do not present their argument so coherently.

Comments on individual questions

- 1 (a) This was a popular question and although credit was given to responses that focused on psychometric tests a more appropriate assessment to describe would have been SATS or examinations so that candidates could then display their knowledge of formative and summative assessment making reference to criterion and norm referenced assessment. A good answer used a variety of terms and gave an in depth description of an assessment.
 - (b) This part of the question was answered well by many candidates who could discuss a good range of points about the usefulness of performance assessment at different ages. Many of the points raised were supported by relevant evidence with terminology such as self-efficacy and self-fulfilling prophecy used appropriately. Some candidates were rather extreme in their views tending not to consider other causative factors, for example teacher effectiveness; candidates here tended to equate low test scores with teacher incompetence, ignoring other factors such as such as social background of pupils, earlier educational experience of pupils or general lack of motivation to learn.
- 2 (a) Candidates who answered the question as intended did well and described two learning styles or teaching styles and emphasised the difference. A good answer would also have emphasised the difference in learning styles between genders or cultures although this was not essential to gain full marks. Several candidates made the mistake of describing one learning style without comparing it to another in order to give the difference that the question asked for.

- (b)** This part of the question was not well answered. It is important that candidates read the questions carefully so that they are not making assumptions about what is being asked. In this case the question required a discussion of the difficulty of investigating learning and teaching styles and so an emphasis on methodological issues would be appropriate. However, many candidates missed the point and many discussed the difficulties of meeting the needs of each individual pupil's learning style. Those who answered the question appropriately did not seem to be able to make many different points or back them up with evidence.
- 3 (a)** This was probably the more popular of the two section B questions and many candidates gave good, accurate, detailed answers. To get full marks in this part of the question candidates need to describe a wide range of psychological evidence which might include strategies to prevent or correct disruptive behaviour. Many candidates gave accurate accounts of the causes and effects of ADHD and surveys of bullying but failed to include prevention or correction in their description of disruptive behaviour.
- (b)** Some candidates carried on describing more details of disruptive behaviour rather than evaluating the material they had described in part a. However, most candidates made a reasonable attempt at evaluating the research using evaluation issues such as individual differences, reductionism, generalisability and validity.
- (c)** This was answered adequately with a number of candidates answering very well. Many candidates made use of the principles of operant conditioning but I would like to have seen more specific reference to Friday afternoon and the age group as some suggestions were very general.
- 4 (a)** Although this question was less popular than question 3, some candidates answered this very well and could accurately recall DfES statistical data on gender and cultural differences in educational performance. Very few candidates achieve 4 marks for evidence as their responses either lack sufficient depth or breadth. Candidates need to describe about four pieces of evidence across the range of topics, to include strategies to improve performance, in order to get full credit.
- (b)** There were some good answers to this question, but like 3b, some candidates followed on from 4a with more description of research rather than evaluation.
- (c)** This part of the question was well answered by many candidates who had some useful suggestions for the 16year old student which focused on his age and gender particularly in relation to learning styles.

2545 Psychology and Health

General Comments

Overall this paper was successful in eliciting the full range of marks; it allowed for knowledgeable and well prepared candidates to demonstrate what they had learned about Psychology and Health whilst also distinguishing between these candidates and those who were less knowledgeable or prepared. There was a reasonably equal split between the candidates choice of questions: 1 (measuring stress) and 2 (health promotion) and questions 3 (patient/practitioner) and 4 (adherence). There were some clear general patterns noted by examiners which are worthy of mention here. Questions 1 and 2 parts (b) clearly discriminate between candidates with only the very strongest candidates showing the ability to engage with the question, raising and applying relevant points. The majority of candidates managed to identify some points but failed to make them truly relevant to the question. Similarly in questions 3 and 4 part (b) the majority of candidates could identify relevant issues with which to evaluate the research and theory described in part (a) but fewer were able to address all aspects of the evaluation to warrant top marks on each of the mark-scheme criteria. In a similar vein answers to questions 3 and 4 part (c) tended to be polarised: Many candidates were well prepared for the demands of these questions and clearly offered their suggestions which they backed up with evidence and well explained psychological rationale. Weaker candidates tended to mis-interpret the question or offer answers which were purely descriptive and often anecdotal.

Comments on the Individual Questions

Question 1

Part (a) required candidates to describe one way in which stress has been measured. Some poor responses to this question were seen by examiners where candidates failed to even identify one way in which stress has been measured, however some excellent answers were also seen. Essentially good answers offered a detailed, accurate and well organised description of a measure of stress. Some excellent answers to this demanding question were seen where the candidates gave a clear description of a measure of stress from a psychological perspective, demonstrating a clear understanding.

Part (b) required candidates to discuss the validity of ways in which stress has been measured. It was encouraging to note a number of candidates who were able to answer this question by addressing a number of key points such as the challenge of obtaining valid data by considering the various methods available to psychologists. Good answers explored the issues relating to the validity of various methods of measuring stress such self reports, observations and physiological. Weaker answers either completely failed to address the question or only did so by default as they used the Section B part b approach to evaluating evidence which failed to attract many marks. The very best answers were supported with examples and used psychological terminology. Weaker answers tended to list points and attempt to apply them to evidence which may or may not have been presented in part (a). This attracted little credit from the mark scheme as it essentially failed to answer the question.

Question 2

Part (a) A range of different studies of health promotion in a school or worksite were seen. Weaker answers tended to either describe a relevant study but failed to give appropriate detail or described a study or more likely a campaign which was not explicitly conducted in a school or worksite, or failed to describe a study at all: candidates who did this limited themselves to the lower mark band. Regardless of study presented the credit given to an answer was determined by the clarity and detail of the description and the extent to which the description was from a

psychological perspective. Those answers receiving the highest marks were detailed, well organised and showed clear understanding.

Part (b) Candidates were required to discuss the difficulties of making health promotion effective. Candidates who considered a number of difficulties and discussed how they affected health promotion tended to construct effective answers. Some of the significant issues raised related to peoples reluctance to attend to messages, the cost, how to communicate the message and how individual differences affect the way that promotion is received. Weaker answers tended to consider only one difficulty and/or fail to address the issue of how it made effective health promotion difficult to achieve. The very best answers offered a good range of points relating to the difficulty of achieving effective health promotion with confident use of psychological terms and concepts. A coherent, thorough and clearly explained answer which clearly demonstrated a considered understanding in the given context received the higher band marks. The worst answers seen by examiners offered a section B part b style answer which simply evaluated studies of health promotion using a series of issues. This approach essentially failed to answer the question and attracted few marks.

Question 3

The majority of candidates selecting this question were able to offer relevant concepts, terminology and evidence to the area of the patient/ practitioner relationship. Many different combinations of evidence were successfully presented to achieve full marks in section (a). It was not necessary to cover all three sub-sections of the specification in order to provide a suitable answer due to the openness of the question. Nonetheless those candidates who did present evidence covering the three areas frequently did so very effectively.

The answers to part (b) of this question which required candidates to evaluate what psychologists have discovered about the patient/ practitioner relationship produced in general one of two responses: by far the most common response was to consider a range of issues such as validity, ethics, usefulness and so on, and how these impinged on the research presented in section (a). A less common approach was to take a less structured strategy to analysing and evaluating the research. In both instances however the most credit went to answers which clearly identified, explained and made relevant the issues in the context of the patient/ practitioner relationship and the research carried out in this area.

Sadly, as in previous sessions, there were a significant number of candidates who failed to appreciate the demands of this section of the question by simply offering more description. A number of candidates/ centres still appear to be unaware of the requirements of this section which is of concern as poor performance in this section had severe consequences for some otherwise strong candidates.

Part (c) was on the whole answered extremely well with the majority of candidates able to offer appropriate techniques to reduce mis-use of the health services. The very strongest answers supported their suggestions with appropriate evidence and explained the reasons for their suggestions using clear psychological rationale. This part of the question offered candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to apply psychology to a situation. An impressive number of candidates demonstrated the ability to do this effectively.

A number of candidates failed to access the higher marks either because they failed to tailor their suggestion to what a practitioner could do or they failed to support their suggestions with any psychological evidence or rationale. Essentially these weaker responses were anecdotal.

Question 4

The open nature of the question allowed for a wide range of evidence and pieces of research to be offered and indeed an impressive range of theories, explanations and appropriate studies of adherence to medical advice were presented by the majority of candidates. There were some weak answers to this question which tended to offer predominantly anecdotal evidence.

The points outlined in relation to question 3 part (b) are again relevant here. The strongest answers raised, explained and made relevant a number of issues which they went on to evaluate in relation to the evidence presented in part (a). Only the very strongest candidates demonstrated the ability to offer analysis in the form of comparisons and contrasts between the issues as applied to the evidence presented. Equally only the very best answers contextualised their analysis and evaluation within the context of adherence to medical advice thus making the answer truly meaningful, relevant and impressive. In some cases argument structure was weak, often as a result of candidates failing to present a meaningful answer to the question.

Many appropriate answers to part (c) were seen by examiners. The majority of candidates offered good suggestions of ways in which psychology could be applied to encourage patients to complete a course of treatment. The answers attracting the most credit were those which supported their suggestions with appropriate evidence and explained it using psychological rationale and terminology. Once again it was pleasing to note a number of candidates who demonstrated an impressive ability to apply psychology in a given situation. The very best answers had considered the specific ten day course of medication and tailored their suggestions accordingly. Weak answers were essentially anecdotal and not supported by psychological evidence or rationale.

2546 Psychology and Organisations

General Comments

The performance of the candidates in this section showed a good understanding of psychology as applied to organisations. However many candidates did not always relate general psychological theory to the specific topic of organisations.

Candidates showed an equal tendency to answer all four questions, and there was little to choose between the candidates' general performance on each of the four questions

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1

This question asked for one interview technique and was the most popular choice on Section A of the paper. Candidates understood the different types of interview, structured, unstructured and situational and the features of each of these. Some candidates used panel or face to face interviews successfully incorporating structured and unstructured interviews. This question was answered well by most candidates. The use of psychometric testing was not a valid answer as this would not be done in an interview situation.

Evaluating the weaknesses of the interview in Part B gave scope for many points, and in general candidates addressed these effectively. Points such as low predictive validity, bias, halo effect, social desirability in interviewee's answers, should have been explained and some examples given from the world of work.

Question 2

This question was chosen less often, but still a considerable number of candidates answered this question. Section A on stress response lent itself to a description of burnout, or the GAS, but this should have been related to the specific area of work stress to gain full credit.

The question on the usefulness of researching stress was primarily concerned with the employer's ability to reduce stress, help employees cope with stress, but the usefulness of the methodologies was also credit worthy. However a general evaluation of research into stress was only serendipitously creditable.

Question 3

Part A: The question on human resource practices was primarily concerned with job analysis, appraisal and the instigation of reward systems in the workplace. One problem was the detailed description of behaviourist theories of reinforcement with little or no mention of the work place. Thorndike, Watson and Skinner were written about, in detail, but could not attract full marks as they were not related to token economy in the work place. Some mention of workplace appraisal such as WH Smiths was used, but this was not really psychological in its approach. Just because WH Smith use it doesn't make it evidence. Many candidates used studies from other areas of the specification such as Fox's work with token economies from the Health Module, and this was entirely appropriate and therefore creditworthy. Sometimes candidates would mention job analysis techniques such as PAQ but gave little description of what it actually entailed.

Part B: The evaluation tended to fall down on evidence as there was often little in part (a) which lent itself to the formulaic approach of issue, evidence and analytical comment.

Part C. This required the candidates to state how a job analysis would be undertaken and the stronger candidates identified various job analysis techniques such as critical incident identification. A significant number answered this question with an answer on appraisal which tended to attract very little if any credit.

Question 4

Part A. This question was on Leadership, and tended to be very focussed on Lewin Lippert and White. Some other research was described, but essays tended to wander into the realms of communication networks with no reference to the role of the leader arising from these networks.

Part B. These answers generally adopted the formulaic Point Example Comment approach and were generally answered effectively although focused on Lewin et al's research with little other research for comparison.

Part C. This required the candidates to suggest a leadership style for staff at a children's camp and this was usually well focussed on the children's camp, with the democratic style most often being suggested and justified in terms of Lewin et al's research, and often in relation to the fact that the leaders would be working with children. This application to the specific client group (leaders of children) illustrated a good understanding, or it may have been fortunate that the research lent itself to this application.

2547 Psychology and Environment

General Comments

The standard of entry for Environment was again generally good especially considering the majority of the candidates had only been studying A2 since September. However, there were a small number of rubric errors and a significant number of candidates ran out of time usually failing to answer Section B part (c)

Section A part (a) was generally answered well although weaker answers tended to give only brief details of research evidence. Section A part (b) was more variable. Stronger answers put forward three or four points and these were discussed in relation to research or evidence from the topic area. Weaker answers tended to make a number of points but without discussion or elaboration.

Section B - candidates were in the main well prepared for Section B part (a) with most candidates citing a range of research/theory/evidence from the topic area. There was more of a centre-effect for part (b) with some excellent detailed and evaluative answers from some centres but also candidates from other centres sometimes failing to meet the requirements of the markscheme. Weaker candidates often failed to make a study relevant to the question or tended to rely heavily on anecdotal or peripherally relevant evidence. For Section B part (c), candidates were usually able to put forward good suggestions but then failed to relate them to psychological theory or research or failed to give a rationale for the application.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question No

Section A

- 1 (a) **Describe one animal study investigating crowding** – easily the most popular of the two Section A part (a) questions with the majority of candidates choosing to describe the Calhoun 'behavioural sink' study. This was generally answered competently with most candidates describing the rats' behaviour in good detail.
- (b) **Discuss difficulties in investigating crowding in animals** – generally answered well. A good range of difficulties were addressed (usually linked back to Calhoun) but better answers drew on a range of different animal studies. Ethics was one of the most commonly discussed difficulties with weaker answers citing lack of consent and no debrief whereas better answers discussed harm and the moral question of use of animals in experiments. Weaker answers typically either only discussed one difficulty or failed to link a point back to the topic area.
- 2 (a) **Describe one study of urban renewal or building design** - This question was rarely answered but when it was, it was usually well done. Most popular answers were the Pruitt-Igoe research or the Newman (1972) study on the Van Dyke and Brownsville housing estates.
- (b) **Assess the extent to which architecture determines behaviour** – Although rarely answered, more able candidates answered this question very well with thoughtful discussion on architectural determinism/ possibilism/ probabilism related to research. However a significant number of candidates seemed to have learnt prepared answers and discussed a number of issues e.g. ethics, E.V., generalisability without relating points to architectural determinism.

Section B

- 3 (a) **(Climate and weather)** – These two Section B topics were equally popular with candidates usually citing a range of studies with better answers describing four detailed or three very detailed studies. Most popular were Pepler or Wyon (school studies), Cunningham (sunlight), Griffitt, Baron & Bell, Goranson and King, Kenrick & MacFarlane (horn honking), Rosenthal (SAD).
- (b) Some Centres were very well prepared for Section B part (b) answers with a good range of issues, selecting appropriate evidence for discussion and comparing and contrasting within each issue. Weaker answers merely listed points, for example, 'X had a small sample and in contrast Y has a bigger sample' – without developing an argument or discussing what effect this might have on the research evidence. A number of candidates evaluated each study individually making it more difficult to gain marks for analysis.
- (c) **Suggest the best time of year to hold school examinations** – some very lively and well argued suggestions based on relevant psychological research with most candidates suggesting Spring or Autumn in order to avoid SAD in the winter months (Rosenthal) and when it is not too hot for them to become frustrated (Kendrick & McFarlane) - unless air-conditioning is installed in the exam room (Pepler) and they are happier because its usually sunny (Cunningham).
- 4 (a) **(Natural disasters and technological catastrophe)** – Most candidates were able to describe a range of natural disasters and technological catastrophe and there were very few answers this year which merely described anecdotal evidence of recent events in the news.
- (b) As 3(b)
- (c) **Suggest how to advise the disaster committee to help people after the event** – most candidates were prepared for this and suggestions such as support groups, counselling/therapy for PTSD were usually described well and effectively linked to psychological research or theory. A few candidates gave suggestions of how to help *before* an event rather than after and so failed to gain credit for their suggestion.
- In both 3 (c) and 4 (c) candidates sometimes failed to discuss their suggestion in relation to the research/evidence/theory and therefore lost marks on the 'Application Interpretation: Reasons' section of the markscheme.

2548 Psychology and Sport

General Comments

The paper appeared to be appropriate and accessible to all candidates. There were few rubric errors and candidates were generally able to answer all questions within the time allocation. There was a good range of answers across the markscheme.

In section A the Leadership question was more popular than the Arousal question and tended to be better answered; in section B the Social Influence and the Motivation/Self-Confidence questions were both popular.

The quality of responses appeared similar to previous sessions. There appeared to be some better scripts at the top end, but possibly more poorer scripts fell below a pass standard.

Most candidates referred to psychological theory, evidence and concepts, but to varying degrees of detail. The evaluation (part b in both section A and section B) was the greatest means of differentiation. Weaker candidates offered little or no evaluation, preferring to stick to extended narrative at best. Better candidates made evaluative observations. Best candidates were able to extend and elaborate on their evaluations, maybe with examples and/or reference to psychological research. Reading and responding directly to the requirements of the question was another means of differentiating, such as weaker candidates failing to locate psychological knowledge in a sporting context. Many centres had prepared their candidates well. In some cases, however, candidates used the same studies in every case, demonstrating little more than rote learning. *Understanding*, such as in the form of "this shows that....." or "this suggests that....." type statements was too often lacking. The section B, part C responses continue to improve markedly. The wrong side of the E/U boundary was typified by anecdotal responses and the wrong Psychology. The right side of the A/B boundary was typified by a well structured and clearly stated answer rooted in psychological research, which was appropriate to the question and the demands of the mark scheme.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question No

- 1 (a) Mostly psychometric measures were provided, especially CSAI-2. Better candidates offered more detail and knew of the content/construction of the measure. Others offered physiological measures
- (b) Better candidates showed knowledge of other measures to contrast, especially in terms of issues such as validity, reliability etc. Weaker candidates gave general, catch-all (pre-prepared) evaluations which were not specifically linked.
- 2 (a) This was the most popular section A question, especially Lewin et al. Knowledge of all aspects typified the better candidate response. Weaker candidate' descriptions were confused. Note the link to sport.
- (b) Candidates appeared to struggle to provide top band answers, unlike 1b. Answers were often limited to the study in 2a and did not broaden the response. Coaching was often overlooked.

- 3 & 4 (a)** Many students were comfortable outlining 3+ pieces of evidence. They demonstrated good, competent psychology related to sport. Common weaknesses included students who presented list like responses with little expansion, superficial responses, and often only one or two pieces of research. It may be that candidates took the January sitting before they were ready in terms of i) not enough knowledge; ii) lack of practice of essay writing. Sometimes it was clear that candidates were not thinking, such as 'referring to Schwartz and Barskey, he.....'.
- (b)** Better answers were well structured and coherent, thorough responses. Sometimes evaluation points were very general and/or were not referenced. A new phenomenon seems to be centres providing alternatives as an evaluation and then evaluating their alternative. (eg an alternative to using questionnaires is observation.... – then candidates evaluate observation). This is contrived and does not respond to the question asked, it brings the notion of pre-prepared answers to a new level! Also note that 'reductionism' is a process whereby the level of explanation is reduced. 'Reducing to one factor or point' is an overstatement.
- (c)** Candidates appeared to respond well to these questions, even those who had done poorly in earlier responses. In some cases candidates gained better marks than in other parts of the question. Better answers contained psychology apparent in the suggestions, with a clear rationale.

2549 Psychology and Crime

General Comments

The examiners felt the paper was appropriate and accessible. There were the usual centre effects where standards vary widely. There were a few rubric errors. Some weaker centres had few passes and weak candidates who had not learned very much material and hoped they could get away with anecdotal responses, whereas others seem to have prepared students well and have the calibre of student who is motivated to do the best they can.

In Section A, the quality of description of research seemed to have improved this time and we had far less inappropriate content although offender profiling did appear with Zimbardo's prison simulation research cited as evidence for the police personality. There was often confusion between treatment programmes and punishment. It was decided that where a link had been made to changing the offender in some way for the better then it could attract a low band mark.

In Section B both questions seemed equally popular. The British Crime Survey appeared in almost every answer to the crime victim question but frequently in an out of date form. Centres are advised to update their materials on this. In future, descriptions will be marked as incorrect if they still refer to sample sizes and faults which were true in early editions of the report but which are now fully addressed. Free copies of the report can be obtained by request for educational purposes. Visit this link for information.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs1.html>

The question on morality and crime produced many responses including Kohlberg's theory of moral development. This is fine but he never applied it to criminals although in later variants he did use samples of delinquents and girls. It was a longitudinal study and he later expanded it to several countries including the UK and Mexico and the Yukatan Peninsula and found similar patterns. If candidates quote it, they need to be aware that it can be applied to understanding lower levels of morality but that other researchers have applied it to criminal populations, not Kohlberg himself. See the following link for an informed account.

<http://faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/kohlberg.htm>

Finally the part C's worked well and for the first time weak candidates were scoring higher marks in this part of the paper than in any other. It was not uncommon to read two full sides of material. Strong candidates had much knowledge to draw upon which helped explain the two scenarios.

Question 1 – police personality

- (a) This question was the most popular and the best answered. A relevant study was usually described very well and most candidates scored in the top band. Some candidates cited ability to detect liars as police personality and see comments about Zimbardo above.
- (b) In part B the question on validity differentiated well. Many students were able to raise a couple of issues about demand characteristics, concurrent validity, ecological validity - all centred around the use of psychometrics as a measure of the police personality. Unfortunately a common mistake as in previous sessions was to evaluate the research described in part A. As mentioned earlier, the catastrophic responses were to quote Zimbardo in part A and then evaluate it in part B.

Question 2 - Offender treatments

- (a) This question was less popular and less well answered where centres had not taught an offender treatment programme specifically. Many candidates gave anecdotal answers, or did not outline the psychology behind the treatment (or punishment!!).
- (b) The effectiveness question again differentiated well. Weak candidates centred their answers around one point - that it reduced recidivism rates but not all the time - and just repeated this over and over. Only a few candidates stated how the lack of longitudinal research, lack of control groups, type of offender... had an affect on the effectiveness. However at the other end of the spectrum some stunningly good responses were seen. Again can centres be aware that much good material is available freely on line from the Home Office research papers.

Question 3 - Criminal thinking patterns

- (a) A range of answers seen, but generally good descriptions of relevant studies of criminal thinking patterns. Some students described 'non-relevant' research such as Milgram and Sheldon, but most had a good range of relevant evidence.
- (b) Good issues were used in part b and this was usually well answered, apart from those who went through each study and gave a sentence of evaluation, without development, then went on to the next study. This is sometimes an easier response to achieve from a weak candidate and it will get some credit but they should be encouraged to develop some kind of argument.
- (c) Part c produced a complete range of responses- some had no psychology or didn't address the question at all, whereas others were full of ideas about morality, locus of control, fundamental attribution error etc. and applied these to the scenario in the question.

Question 4 - Crime Victim interaction

- (a) This was better answered than question 3 with a range of evidence used of relevant studies of crime victim interaction. Studies were more specific to the topic than in 3(a) and seem to be easier for students to remember in detail.
- (b) Again, evaluation used a range of reasonable and relevant issues.
- (c) Part c showed a complete range - some students discussed what happens to victims of crime, rather than answer the question and suggest what they could do to help them cope with their loss using psychology.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE (Subject) (Aggregation Code(s))
January 2008 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
2540	Raw		46	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2541	Raw		32	27	23	19	15	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2542	Raw		37	33	29	26	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2544	Raw		40	35	31	27	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2545	Raw		40	36	32	28	24	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2546	Raw		38	33	28	24	20	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2547	Raw		40	36	32	28	24	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2548	Raw		40	34	29	24	19	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2549	Raw		39	34	29	24	20	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
3876	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
7876	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3876	9.5	33.7	61.7	83.4	95.9	100	695
7876	8.5	35.4	72.0	95.1	100.0	100	88

XXXX candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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