

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

TDIP

Level 2 in Principal Learning
Environmental and
Land-Based Studies

Plants and Animals and their Role
in Society

ES205 01

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Summer 2012

Publications Code DP032184

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Introduction

This is a work-related subject with a strong applied approach, and the external examination will seek to assess candidates in similar situations. It is therefore important that centres stress the need for candidates to read the stimulus information carefully before they answer questions and then be prepared to use the information within their responses. In order to ensure that the 'applied' part of the assessment has prominence, 'generic' material will only gain limited credit compared to specific, detailed, case study material.

Deliverers should ensure that candidates are aware of the requirements of the full range of command words that might be used at this level. The paper will tend to have simpler command words at the beginning with an incline of difficulty to more challenging requirements towards the end of the paper.

In most cases the questions that require shorter responses will be 'point marked' and the longer ones will be 'levels marked'. For the latter, centres need to fully and critically use all the information in the exam paper, including the resources and details within the question stem. Levels marking rewards candidates who can show their ability to use higher level skills in their responses - not just offer more points at the same level. It will be the ability to both apply their responses and offer a correct interpretation of the command words that will allow them to rise to the top levels of the mark scheme. This will require candidates to plan their answers before writing. Candidates who produce material that is of a generic nature will usually be limited to Level 1 as a key requirement of Level 2 will be to apply their learning.

Deliverers should ensure that all the parts of the 'What you need to learn' has been covered before candidates are entered for the external assessment.

Report on individual questions

The whole paper appeared to be accessible to the candidates and they were able to complete the paper in the time available. The incline of difficulty through the exam worked well. The statistics show a consistent trend from high scoring at the start, an even distribution in the middle questions, and greater discrimination towards the end. There was a "starter" item for each question which helped structure and direct candidates' responses. Also there was an attempt to provide a sequence through the questions leading the candidate through a series of ELBS processes. This year the levels marked questions worked better - nearly all candidates made a decent attempt at answering but it was much clearer how to discriminate between candidates, and as a result the mark scheme was much less open to interpretation. The statistics showed that there was some score on the highest marks and very few 0's at the lowest reflecting a good level of accessibility.

Question 1(a)

This question was intended as a simple introduction to the exam paper that was accessible to all. It met its objective with over 90% of candidates scoring on the first two items.

Question 1(b)

There were more 1 and 0 marks than expected because the wording of the question was perhaps unclear to candidates. Most candidates did not answer exactly as anticipated although most still did score.

Question 2

This was a straightforward question but most candidates made a rubric error and wrote on all 3 instead of choosing 1. Candidates need to be better prepared in this area because they are losing marks to simple errors.

Question 3(a)i-iv

A very straightforward question answered well by nearly all candidates.

Question 3(b)

A straightforward question that most candidates were able to answer. It was pleasing that from the variety of answers that candidates even if they did not have pre-learned responses they still had the confidence to make a reasonable and therefore creditworthy response - there were no “no response” cases.

Question 4 (a)i-iii

Candidates were able to use the resource at a superficial level, but were less successful in using it as a springboard to stimulate broader understandings and knowledge. This is reflected in the statistics which shows decreasing candidate success through i to iii as the links become less clear.

Question 4(b)

This was a good question in that although quite demanding candidates were able to use the source productively and produced a variety of credit worthy answers. It was a good discriminator between abilities reflected in a normal distribution curve of marks.

Question 5(a)

This worked very well as a question. Candidates were clearly being made to look critically at the source and apply their thinking. As a result even if candidates got the site wrong they could still get marks from the quality of their reasoning.

Question 5(b)

This on the other hand was not a good follow-on as reflected in the large number of 0 or minimum score responses (94%). The two variables (one reason/one environmental factor) was difficult for candidates. Structured guidance would have produced better answers from candidates, but on the other hand at this level there must be the expectation that candidates are able to respond to more complex demands.

Question 5(c)

A question that worked very well. It was a good discriminator producing the full range of marks with little bunching. It was straightforward to mark with little ambiguity and areas of interpretation. However it is disappointing that so many scored 0 since this is clearly stated in the specifications. Centres should have at least ensured some coverage.

Question 6(a)i

A straightforward skills question that few candidates had problems with. As a stimulus it worked well and clearly had an impact on the next question.

Question 6(a)ii

Although candidates failed to focus on “activities” the stimulus worked well making candidates apply and modify their knowledge to answer the question. It

discriminated well for a question towards the end of a paper with candidates scoring at the higher end producing work of quality. Even at this point few candidates scored 0 reflecting a good level of accessibility.

Question 6(b)

A good question that it produced thoughtful, good quality answers. On the other hand 22% scored 0 and it is important for candidates to realise that where the mark allocation is low they need to concentrate on picking up basic marks.

Question 6(c)

Candidate responses were very pleasing. Most candidates focused on the question, concentrating on “Aims”, and extracted the relevant information from the source. It was an effective discriminator with higher level candidates clearly making recommendations not just regurgitating information. Candidates handled the amount of information well, even though it was at the end of the exam.

Summary

The responses to this paper were encouraging. Centres had correctly entered candidates, candidates had improved in knowledge-based questions through better preparation by centres, and the quality of the coloured resource booklet allowed to candidates to both show their knowledge but also to respond in a problem-solving way. Accessibility to all levels of candidate throughout the paper was also pleasing as well as a few decent discriminators that provided a challenge to the best candidates.

Centres can improve preparation of candidates in keeping to the rubric and knowledge of survey techniques.

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