



General Certificate of Secondary Education

Psychology 4180

Unit 1 (41801)

Making Sense of Other People

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

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Unit 1 Making Sense of Other People (41801)

General comments

This was the first Unit 1 examination under the new specification and the evidence indicates that candidates responded well to its demands. Marks ranged from 0 to 77 out of 80 marks and the mean mark was above 50%, indicating that the paper discriminated well. Candidates seemed well prepared for each section of the examination paper, as performance across the five questions was quite balanced.

During the period leading up to the new examination, centres were requested to advise their candidates to answer all questions in the spaces provided and not to write outside the box around each page or on blank pages. This is very important for efficient online marking, as examiners are not able to see anything that is written outside these boxes. This instruction was also contained on the front page of the question paper. Although the majority of candidates adhered to the instruction, a significant number did not. This did create delays in the marking process for these candidates. Centres are requested to remind candidates of this instruction for future examinations.

Comments relating to candidates' performance on specific questions can be found below.

Section A Memory

Question 1

- (a) This item was well answered.
- (b) This was very well answered also. Some candidates did not refer to the article in their answers, which limited the number of marks they could earn to a maximum of 2 marks.
- (c) Many candidates found this question difficult. Those who failed to identify a practical application earned no marks for their answers. There were many who thought that levels of processing required rehearsal for information to be transferred to LTM; a feature of the multi-store explanation. Candidates should be encouraged to read the question carefully before writing their answers.
- (d) (i) There were some excellent answers to this item. Many described the work of Bartlett, whilst others described the work of Loftus. Where candidates were awarded no marks they provided descriptions of investigations that could not be regarded as studies of reconstructive memory. Many described Baddeley's study of the effect of context on memory. Others described studies relating to STM. These studies were not relevant to the question.
- (d) (ii) Evaluations tended to be weak. It is clear in the specification where evaluations of studies are required. It is recommended that more attention should be given to this in schemes of work. Candidates who simply say 'The study lacks ecological validity' will not earn any marks. For any credit, they must also give a valid reason why the study lacks ecological validity.

Section B Non-verbal communication

Question 2

- (a) This question was well answered. Many candidates who failed to earn maximum marks used the word 'communicate' within their definition. Candidates should be reminded that words other than the term given in the question itself must be used when providing definitions or elaboration of terminology.
- (b) Candidates' performance for this item was very good. A large number of candidates gave textbook definitions of the term paralinguistics.
- (c) This multiple-choice question was very well answered with many candidates obtaining maximum marks.
- (d) Most of the candidates who earned no marks described studies which were not of personal space; the most common being of posture echo or eye contact. Inaccurate descriptions were limited to a maximum of 2 marks. Many of these descriptions tended to be combinations of different studies.
- (e) This proved to be the most difficult item in the question paper with a large majority of candidates earning no marks. The vast majority of answers outlined applications rather than implications of studies. If implications are required, the question that a candidate should bear in mind is 'How do these studies help us to explain everyday behaviour?', rather than 'How can we change behaviour?' The latter would be an application.

Section C Development of Personality

Question 3

- (a) This multiple-choice question was well answered.
- (b) This proved to be a demanding question which discriminated well at the top end of the ability range. The majority of candidates knew which studies were relevant here but many descriptions were inaccurate, often combining the details of more than one study or adding false information. Candidates who earned no marks for this item, usually described an irrelevant study; for example, Eysenck's study of servicemen or other studies of introversion and extraversion. Quality of Written Communication was also assessed in answers to this item. Answers that were not well-structured with ineffective use of sentences could not access the top band of marks.
- (c) Many candidates were able to identify at least one characteristic of APD. Other candidates invented characteristics that were not mentioned in the article.
- (d) (i) This was well answered.
- (d) (ii) Many candidates found the role of the amygdala difficult to explain. Those who simply copied the sentence contained in the box received no credit. This is clearly an area of the specification that requires further attention by candidates.

Section D Stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination

Question 4

4(a), 4(b)(i), 4(b)(ii) and 4(b)(iii) were well answered.

- (c) Candidates found this item more difficult than the other 6 mark item in the question paper. A large number of candidates did not seem to know about Aronson's research and described the work of other psychologists; the most common was that of Sherif. No marks could be awarded for these answers. Candidates should be reminded that any psychologist's named in the specification could also appear by name in the question paper. However, they should also be reassured that no other psychologist's names can be used in questions. Quality of Written Communication was also assessed in answers to this item. Answers that were not well-structured with ineffective use of sentences could not access the top band of marks.
- (d) This proved to be the second most difficult item in the question paper with a majority of candidates earning no marks. As in item 2(e), the vast majority of answers explained applications rather than implications of studies. If implications are required, the question that a candidate should bear in mind is 'How do these studies help us to explain everyday behaviour?', not 'How can we change behaviour?' Again, this would be an application.

Section E Research methods

Question 5

- (a) For 1 mark, the hypothesis statement must contain a sense of both the independent and dependent variables. For the second mark, the statement must be operational. It was disappointing to find that many candidates were awarded no marks for this item and very few earned 2 marks for this basic research methods skill. Many statements were too vague and did not refer to both variables. The majority of statements were not operational, using vague terms such as 'will do better in the test'. A significant number of candidates stated an aim rather than a hypothesis and were awarded no marks.
- (b) A large number of candidates named ethical issues that were not contained in the description of the study and therefore were awarded no marks. Candidates are advised to read both the stem and the question carefully before committing to an answer.

5(c), 5(d) and 5(e) were all answered well.

- (f) There were many misconceptions about random sampling and its advantages. For example, many said it is quick and easy; no mark was awarded for this answer, which does not relate to random sampling.
- (g) A large number of candidates gave the response, 'to make it fair'. This is a response that is too vague. Candidates need to address why they believe there is a lack of fairness.

5(h)(i), 5(h)(ii) and 5(i)(i) were answered well.

- (i) (ii) A majority of candidates gained some credit. Many of the candidates who were awarded no marks incorrectly stated that the results would be inaccurate and that the anomalous result should be disregarded.

5(j)(i), 5(j)(ii) and 5(j)(iii) Candidates again performed well on these questions.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html>