



MARKSCHEME

MAY 2006

PSYCHOLOGY

Higher Level

Paper 3

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1. “Verbal protocols are a record of what people say when they are asked to think aloud as they perform a task.”

(a) Explain why a verbal protocol is used. [2 marks]

A verbal protocol is used to gather data about the thought processes taking place during the performance of a task. The thought processes are spoken aloud. Responses may be illustrated with an example, *e.g.* defusing a bomb, performing a surgical operation. Verbal protocols may also be used to verify a theory of problem solving by comparing the data obtained with simulations developed from the theory.

Award **[0 marks]** for a definition of a verbal protocol – this information is given in the stem of the question. Award **[0 marks]** for an example of a verbal protocol without a reason for the use of the method.

Award **[1 mark]** for an appropriate reason for using a verbal protocol lacking in precision.

Award **[2 marks]** for an appropriate reason for using a verbal protocol clearly explained or illustrated.

(b) Identify an example of a task for which a verbal protocol would be appropriate. [1 mark]

The identified example should be relevant for use by a verbal protocol method, *i.e.* a process that involves the participant in action and thinking aloud. Examples could include driving a rescue or pursuit vehicle, defusing a mine, piloting a helicopter, or performing a surgical operation.

Award **[0 marks]** for an inappropriate example.

Award **[1 mark]** for an appropriate example.

(c) Discuss how the transcript of a verbal protocol could be analysed. [7 marks]

Analysis should focus on what statements are crucial for the action. Very few marks should be awarded for statements such as “count the number of times that a word or statements are mentioned,”

Award upto **[3 marks]** for answers of this kind.

Where answers explicitly justify the use of quantitative analysis the full range of marks is available. Analysis can also be done by identifying themes using inductive content analysis – that is the themes emerge from what the participant says. This approach also has the full range of marks available.

If the answer to part (c) focuses entirely on non-verbal aspects of the transcript then a maximum of **[3 marks]** should be awarded.

Part (c) focuses on *how* the transcript could be analysed and examiners should not award marks for *why* a particular analysis is used.

2. **Explain the processes involved in a small scale survey that could be used to investigate a psychological question.** **[10 marks]**

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when answering this question.

The psychological question selected should be amenable to investigation by a small scale survey. Small scale may be reckoned to be fewer than 1,000 people, although this number is flexible. It is not the psychological question itself that is small but rather the number of respondents involved. Better examples may relate to customer choice in purchasing goods, choice of schooling where this is feasible, attitudes to local policies, sports, or entertainment.

The answer should identify the target population and the sampling method used. It should also indicate the method involved in conducting the survey such as the use of mail, e-mail, telephone or face to face questioning. Since the command term used requires explanation then the means of gathering data and its analysis should be addressed. Answers to the questions themselves should be easily coded, ready to be used for statistical treatment. Most survey data are subjected to descriptive statistical treatment and/or inferential statistics.

The lowest mark band **[0 to 3 marks]** should be used where the candidate's knowledge of survey research is limited.

Answers that are mainly descriptive and offer limited explanation should be awarded **[4 to 6 marks]**.

Answers that consider most of the points above, or others that are relevant, should earn **[7 to 10 marks]**.

3. **Discuss how you would conduct a case study of a small group of people who are to work together as a team over a period of a few weeks.** **[10 marks]**

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when marking this question.

A case study is not a method in itself but usually a combination of more than one method that focuses on a single entity, and is completed over a time span of several days, weeks or months. Given this approach it is acceptable that several methods can contribute to investigation of the case, including those involving statistics.

Some answers may still insist that all case studies are conducted on a one to one basis, but this question deliberately makes clear that this is not the case. No marks should be awarded to answers that focus on just one individual.

Many answers are likely to involve interviews and observations. These are clearly appropriate but they should involve explanation of why these methods are considered appropriate. They could indicate that long term case studies, by using in-depth methods, are likely to reveal information that could not be obtained by other means, and particularly not by the snapshot approach used by other methods. They could also mention how the data is to be analysed. Triangulation could be used most effectively in answering this question.

Lowest band marks **[0 to 3 marks]** should be reserved for limited knowledge of case studies.

Answers that attract mid range scores **[4 to 6 marks]** may be limited in the methods that they apply even though these are well elaborated.

Higher band marks **[7 to 10 marks]** should be awarded where relevant discussion is informed and offers an evaluation of the methods used, including explicit use of triangulation and reasons for its use.
