



General Certificate of Education

Sociology 1191

**SCLY2 Education with Research Methods;
Health with Research Methods**

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - January series

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SCLY2

General

There appeared to be fewer rubric infringements of the kind seen in the first two examination series for the new specification. Similarly, fewer candidates than last year seemed to have time management problems. There was still some suggestion of over-writing in response to questions 1(c)/4(c) and 1(d)/4(d) which caused some candidates difficulties by the time they reached question 3/6.

Question 2/5 – the ‘method in context’ question – continues to be the most challenging part of the paper. Many candidates seemed to view this as a straight ‘methods’ question and attempted little application to the specified research issue. This is clearly an area for teachers to continue to develop students’ learning.

Section A – Education with Research Methods

The overwhelming majority of candidates attempted this section of the paper.

Question 1

- (a) Some candidates were able to offer a sound explanation of the term ‘ethnocentric curriculum’, usually expressed in some notion of cultural bias in what is taught in schools. Some candidates cited the former but not the latter aspect. A common error was to present some notion of culture but to identify the ethnocentric curriculum as multi-cultural. A minority, but nonetheless a substantial minority, of candidates offered no answer.
- (b) Most successful answers were based on examples taken from Bowles and Gintis’ correspondence principle, usually punctuality, acceptance of hierarchy, extrinsic rewards or fragmentation of work tasks. Brief, accurate statements of these examples scored well.

A common error was to stray into Marxist views of the functions of education and, although these sometimes scored as a result of the explanation offered relating to similarities between work and education, this was a less successful strategy.

- (c) Most candidates had at least some understanding of labelling and few answers scored in the bottom mark band. Sometimes this understanding was limited to a simple basic description of the labelling process and such answers scored in the bottom of the middle mark band. Stronger responses linked labelling to streaming, teacher expectations, educational triage and pupil subcultures. Research examples mentioned included the Oak School study and Becker and Hargreaves. A number of candidates wrongly presented Willis as an example of a labelling study.

The very best answers, which scored in the top mark band, explicitly addressed the link between labelling and educational under-achievement.

- (d) This question was generally answered quite well. Most candidates were able to present a number of reasons for gender differences in educational achievement. Some candidates did not differentiate between external and internal factors or offered mainly

descriptive accounts. Stronger responses drew on a wider range of reasons, dealt with both male and female achievement patterns, and/or categorised reasons accurately into external and internal factors.

Sharpe, McRobbie and Mistos and Browne figured in many accounts. A few candidates relied primarily on dated materials which point erroneously towards female under-achievement.

Question 2

Many candidates found this a challenging question. Virtually all candidates however, recognised that this was a 'methods in context' question and very few offered no more than an account of the effect of material deprivation on educational achievement. Those that did remained, for the most part, in the bottom mark band.

Many candidates offered an answer that was 'context-free'. Responses of this nature made no attempt to apply knowledge of the selected method to the study of education in general or to the specific issue of the effect of material deprivation on educational achievement. This form of response scored in the lower part of the middle mark band and even the best of such answers did not get past half marks. To get to this point required appropriate use of concepts and some understanding of relevant methodological issues.

Better-prepared candidates were able to link their chosen method to the study of education in general. Usually this took the form of identifying some of the particular research characteristics of teachers and, less often, of pupils and classrooms/schools. More successful versions of this type of response applied the strengths and limitations of the chosen method to these characteristics.

The most successful responses were able to take this one step further and relate some of the selected method's strengths and weaknesses to the study of the particular issue of the effect of material deprivation on educational achievement. For example, some candidates discussed the difficulties of defining and measuring material deprivation, especially in terms of using official statistics/free school meals as indicators. A commonly-presented aspect was the sensitivity of the issue, especially to low-income families.

Some candidates 'lifted' points from the item but failed to develop these. Teachers should continue to stress to candidates the need to not simply repeat item statements but to offer some development.

Although more candidates and centres appear to be developing a clearer understanding of the demands of this question, the range of types of responses highlights the urgent need for centres to develop candidates' application skills.

A few candidates offered a discussion of both methods, sometimes as two separate answers. In these cases, marks were awarded for the better of the discussions.

Question 3

- (a) Some candidates offered a satisfactory explanation, usually in terms of a hypothesis being a statement to be tested. Some outlined just one of these characteristics, in most cases, a statement/claim. A few candidates had little or no idea of the meaning of the term.

- (b) This was generally answered well. Most candidates could give two clear advantages of official statistics, usually drawn from their reliability and representativeness, or from their being large-scale, cheap or not time-consuming.
- (c) Most candidates gained full marks on this question, usually by reference to increased danger, ethical problems of consent, going native, or researcher influence on the behaviour of those being studied.
- (d) Despite this type of question having been asked in various forms in (legacy specification) SC3W, many candidates appeared unprepared for this question.

Some candidates were unclear about what practical issues are, often confusing them with theoretical and ethical factors. Other candidates listed some strengths and weaknesses of various methods rather than clearly identifying issues such as time, cost, funding, safety, personal characteristics of researchers etc. This 'methods approach' often had potentially relevant material buried within the answer but the lack of explicit reference to practical issues limited the marks that could be awarded.

Many candidates failed to spot the reference to choice of research topic and made no reference to this aspect of the question. Those that did so often simply made passing reference to issues affecting choice of topic.

Well-prepared candidates found few difficulties in presenting a focused and accurate response to both aspects of the question.

Section B – Health with Research Methods

Few candidates attempted this section of the paper.

Question 4

- (a) Some candidates presented a clear explanation of self-fulfilling prophecy by indicating that the predicted behaviour comes to pass because of the prediction itself. A few candidates seemed to have some idea of this but found it difficult to articulate it in a way that could be rewarded. Some did not attempt an answer.
- (b) This question was generally answered well with most candidates scoring 4 or 6 marks. Reasons cited were usually drawn from women having greater childcare responsibilities, fewer work commitments, greater health needs related to pregnancy, or being more able to talk about their feelings/health. Where marks were missed it seemed to be more as a result of presenting overlapping points rather than a lack of subject knowledge.
- (c) Most candidates had at least some understanding of criticisms of the biomedical model of health and consequently few answers scored in the bottom mark band. Criticisms commonly offered included an over-emphasis on medical efficacy, specific aetiology, or the idea of a 'march of medical progress'. Other criticisms offered included the biomedicalisation of childbirth, treating patients as passive objects, and underestimating the impact of social factors.

Answers scoring in the top mark band explicitly linked the criticisms offered to specific aspects of the biomedical model of health.

- (d) This question was generally answered quite well. Most candidates were able to present a range of explanations of social class differences in health chances. Most contrasted materialist and cultural/behavioural explanations, sometimes supplemented with reference to the artefact explanation. Few candidates went beyond this and there were few references to psycho-social pathways, layers of influence or life course explanations.

The Black Report, Tudor Hart and Wilkinson figured in many accounts.

Question 5

Many candidates found this a challenging question. Virtually all candidates however, recognised that this was a 'methods in context' question and very few offered no more than an account of sociological explanations of stigma in health care. Those that did scored, for the most part, in the bottom mark band.

Many candidates offered an answer that was 'context-free'. Responses of this nature made no attempt to apply knowledge of the selected method to the study of health in general or the specific issue of stigma in health care. This form of response scored in the lower part of the middle mark band and even the best of such answers did not get past half marks. To get to this point required appropriate use of concepts and some understanding of relevant methodological issues.

Better-prepared candidates were able to link their chosen method to the study of health in general. Usually this took the form of identifying some of the particular research characteristics

of doctors and patients. More successful versions of this type of response applied the strengths and limitations of the chosen method to these characteristics.

The best responses were able to take this one step further and connect some of the selected method's strengths and weaknesses to the study of the particular issue of stigma in health care. For example, some candidates discussed the difficulties of accessing medical settings and problems of obtaining consent, especially in terms of attempting participant observation. A commonly-presented aspect was the sensitivity of the issue especially for patients or for the maintenance of medical ethics.

Some candidates 'lifted' points from the **Item** but failed to develop these. Teachers should continue to stress to students the need to not simply repeat item statements but to offer some development.

Although more candidates and centres appear to be developing a clearer understanding of the demands of this question, the range of types of responses highlights the need for centres to develop candidates' application skills.

Question 6

- (a) Some candidates offered a satisfactory explanation, usually in terms of a hypothesis being a statement to be tested. Some outlined just one of these characteristics, in most cases, a statement/claim. A few candidates had little or no idea of the meaning of the term.
- (b) This was generally answered well. Most candidates could give two clear advantages of official statistics, usually drawn from their reliability and representativeness or from their being large-scale, cheap or not time-consuming.
- (c) Most candidates gained full marks on this question, usually by reference to questionnaire layout, financial incentives, or keeping questions short and simple.
- (d) Despite this type of question having been asked in various forms in (legacy specification) SC3W, many candidates appeared unprepared for this question.

Some candidates were unclear about what practical issues are, often confusing them with theoretical and ethical factors. Other candidates listed some strengths and weaknesses of various methods rather than clearly identifying issues such as time, cost, funding, safety, personal characteristics of researchers etc. This 'methods approach' often had potentially relevant material buried within the answer but the lack of explicit reference to practical issues limited the marks that could be awarded.

Many candidates failed to spot the reference to choice of research topic and made no reference to this aspect of the question. Those that did so often simply made passing reference to issues affecting choice of topic.

Well-prepared candidates found few difficulties in presenting a focused and accurate response to both aspects of the question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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