2021 ASSESSMENT REPORT

BHP315116 - PSYCHOLOGY

Feedback for Students and Teachers

It is recommended this report be read in conjunction with previous examination reports for BHP315116 and the 2021 examination paper, available on the TASC website as these provide valuable information regarding the criteria and elements assessed.

General Comments

Students who sat the 2021 written examination are to be commended on their skilful handling of the exam paper. There were some excellent responses.

The purpose of the Psychology exam is to assess what students know about topic content, and to assess how well they can think, plan and adapt what they know, under time constraints, to a specific question. This exam is challenging and demands a number of skills from students. Students who redraft a pre-prepared response are demonstrating an ability to recall and reproduce rather than an ability to think and respond, and the former is not enough to secure a result in the A range for content criterion. Therefore, students must read the questions carefully and respond accordingly to the question asked, drawing on the stimuli presented and expanding into psychological explanations of theory. Better answers were able to explicitly identify the nuances in questions and understood the whole question asked needed to be answered full, utilising the stimulus material to their greatest effect. It is insufficient to paraphrase the stimuli and some students avoided the stimulus pieces altogether, rather than using them as springboards for discussion. Critical evaluation was lacking in many responses.

Some students leave the left-hand page blank providing a very effective way to include additional paragraphs/points when reviewing their answer. Such inclusions had their own space and are easy to read and understand.

Section A - Psychobiological Processes

Question 1: Visual Perception

Better responses provided a clear structure to their answers – whether a/b combined or separate, although, there is a need to be mindful of relying on a too formulaic response. Some students created structure around organisation and interpretation which is a sound way of tackling the question, if they were able to incorporate the essential concepts from (b).

Most were able to incorporate visual sensation in a meaningful way, such as in the explanation of the initial process of reception, transduction, transmission – as well as integrating sensory information when discussing Bottom Up theory (direct perception - Gibson). However, some responses over emphasised sensation.

Students are reminded of requirements of this aspect of the visual perception unit. Of concern was the incorrect knowledge repeated in many scripts – especially in in relation to what was a perceptual principle and what was deemed organisation and interpretation.

Criterion 2

Generally, terms were explained well, with concept confusion for some between what are perceptual principles and their role in organisation. i.e., Somes who discussed Gestalt principles referred it to perceptual set rather than perceptual principles (and organisation). This also occurred if students discussed visual constancies.

Effective use of Bottom Up and Top Down theories, encouraged a number of responses to discuss Neisser as well, especially as an evaluation tool. Although, if Neisser's Theory is used it should not be a token "it uses both theories". Stronger responses applied the theory and discussed the role of schema, the environment and the interaction of both Bottom Up and Top Down. Many students were able to point out the limitations of theories of perception, however, relied too heavily on the 'hollow-mask' and infant studies examples to do this. Stronger responses used Neisser's perceptual cycle in critically evaluating Top-down and Bottom-up processes.

Illusions overall were defined well with better responses providing a detailed definition of not only illusions in general but also ambiguous figures (found in stim 1) and extended it beyond the stimulus material.

Criterion 7

Evidence was broad; from the theories BU and TD and Neisser; as well as empirical evidence. Students are encouraged to work on using a wide range of empirical evidence for this section. Most relied heavily upon perceptual set research area, which for most was very sound. Better responses were able to incorporate evidence from Navon (Gestalts), Perceptual Set (Bruner Minturn, Postman), Illusion examples (Stimulus 1) and studies from the organisation area of the course i.e., Depth Cues.

Strong answers used the stimulus material and were able to connect it to other evidences; for example, Stimulus 1 illusions and other illusion examples. Both stimuli seemed to be understood by students although weaker responses seemed to apply the stimuli to all concepts and the question. Students should be cautioned regarding the overuse of the stimulus and be made aware of using it where it fits.

Everyday textual evidences were used effectively but students need to understand that for B - A ratings there needs to be links to empirical evidence and research findings.

Question 2: Consciousness

Most students answered this question reasonably well and there was clear evidence of sound preparation. Even though the course guide places an emphasis on the difference between NWC and ASC and the exam specifications state that "Wording from the syllabus document will also be used in the wording of the question e.g. How is normal waking consciousness (NWC) distinguished from altered states of consciousness (ASC)", this was not the case and many students were challenged in structuring their responses. Those students who differentiated between NWC and ASC early on were better able to define the key concepts and discuss the theories of dreams.

Criterion 2

Strong responses to part a) were provided by those students who defined and discussed the differences between Normal Waking and Altered States of Consciousness. Some students focussed a significant portion of their response on normal waking consciousness, which was not a requirement of the question. Sleep was defined as naturally occurring and stronger responses comprehensively discussed the stages of sleep and added the brainwave patterns shown in stimulus 1. When discussing sleep, stronger responses could describe the physiological and psychological changes experienced by an organism during each stage of the sleep cycle. Stronger responses specifically addressed the EEG as a measure of brainwave activity and included the brain waves in their discussion of stages of sleep. Weaker responses simply repeated the brainwaves patterns from the stimulus material.

Stronger responses on sleep deprivation referred to total and partial sleep deprivation referencing physiological and psychological effects and supported this with empirical evidence. Weaker responses limited discussion to complete deprivation with references to the effects of sleep deprivation studies of rats.

Many students were well prepared for part b) of the question and were able to discuss at least 3 theories of dreams and provide some analysis with strengths and limitations. Weaker responses concluded with a short paragraph describing the 'gist' of the key dream theories put forward by Freud, Hobson & McCarley, Cartwright and Crick and Mitchison; however, these responses lacked analysis in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of each theory.

Criterion 7

Stronger responses drew upon a wide range of empirical evidence and could clearly link this evidence to the stimulus pieces as well as key parts of the question. Stronger responses clearly incorporated both stimuli into their discussion, meaningfully linking theories to Stimulus 2, adding further empirical evidence and a well-considered evaluation.

Weaker responses failed to utilise any empirical evidence and only mentioned the stimulus pieces in passing. Weaker responses simply repeated the brainwave patterns provided in stimulus 1 without extending their discussion in any way. Some students struggled to include stimulus 2 with weaker responses simply paraphrasing or quoting the information and a number not referring to it at all.

Several students referred only to evidence involving animals (i.e., the fact that lions get several hours of sleep being used to support the survival theory of sleep).

Section B – Human Learning

Question 3: Conditioning

Overall, students showed a good understanding of conditioning (particularly classical). It was good to see that the focus was very much on human applications of conditioning, rather than relying on animal studies. Most students were able to make links to real life applications, such as treating phobias through flooding and graduated exposure, systematic desensitisation and modifying behaviour through shaping and token economies.

While students are encouraged to outline Thorndike, Skinner, and Pavlov, rather than expand on them, some did not refer to this classic research at all. Better responses linked theories to theorists briefly, then moved on to analysing the stimulus items and discussing human applications.

Criterion 3

Concepts were well understood, explained well, and quite often applied to stimulus 1 (classical conditioning), with stronger responses explaining how the phobia could be treated. Stronger responses were clear that graduated exposure and flooding are phobia treatments, whereas aversion therapy is used to treat other unwanted behaviours. Many responses did not differentiate.

Some responses focused on the three concepts in the question, but often did not respond to stimulus 2. The question asks for connections to other concepts and empirical evidence that is relevant. This is an opportunity for students to link to a range of these that they know about.
Schedules of reinforcement presented a challenge as a concept, but students did well to use it. It was typically placed after an explanation of reinforcement. This was often well done, but some students got confused with positive and negative reinforcement and punishment. Applications were also described accurately, with reference made to shaping and token economies.

Criterion 7

Stronger responses evaluated the two theories, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and/or making a comparison between classical and operant conditioning. Some positioned conditioning in relation to theories of learning, and critiqued behaviourist approaches. Weaker responses often had no evaluation.

Empirical evidence was a feature of stronger responses. Little Albert as a stimulus item made it harder for some students, as this would have been one of their key pieces of empirical evidence. Many responses were quite short.

Question 4: Observational / Cognition Learning

Only a small number of candidates chose to answer the cognitive learning theories question but there were some exceptionally strong responses which demonstrated that students had prepared carefully for this question. Conversely, those students who chose this question without adequate preparation consequently struggled to adequately define and explain the key concepts or the theories. The stimulus directed students towards explaining two key cognitive learning theories namely Social Learning Theory and Latent Learning and the formation of cognitive maps.

Criterion 3

Most students were able to describe Bandura's study(s) and the key findings of these studies. Weaker responses tended to include an overly detailed retelling of the Bobo doll studies whereas stronger responses used these as a launching point to explain key concepts such as the significance or real-life and symbolic models as well as the characteristics of a model that increase the likelihood of human learning.

Stronger responses highlighted the fact that via observation people not only acquire novel responses but also learn whether to display those responses i.e., the impact of vicarious conditioning on learning.

Some very strong responses framed their argument by comparing the behavioural and cognitive approaches to the study of learning. This led to a sophisticated evaluation of the extent to which each cognitive learning theory attempted to counter the behaviourist argument that observable behaviour and reinforcement was central to the learning process.

Other students chose an alternative approach and evaluated each cognitive theory independently, focussing on the criticisms posed of the research methodology engaged by the researchers and the validity of making generalisations from animal studies to human applications. Weaker responses did not attempt to discuss or evaluate this theory at all.

Students are encouraged not to attempt to explain all the cognitive learning theories in their response as this tends to result in an answer that demonstrates breadth but a lack of depth. Strongest responses were those that focused on explaining and evaluating two, or three learning theories.

Criterion 7

Students who included a range of empirical and real-life examples and evidence that went beyond the animal studies were rewarded.

Almost all students were able to use Stimulus 1 to assist in their explanation of observational learning. Better responses linked their analysis of the stimulus to Bandura's four elements that account for learning via observation.

Extensive and descriptive recounting of Bandura's experiments without making connections of the relevance of these findings to other real-life examples and studies detracted from the strength of some responses. Weaker responses merely gave a descriptive recounting of the role of the model in learning the response.

Some students tended to merely describe the stimulus without making any links to either Tolman and Honzik's study(s) or alternative situations where people create cognitive maps which only become apparent when the need arises.

Section C Remembering

Question 5: Memory

This question was answered well overall with most students choosing to respond to all elements in a longer format as opposed to dealing with each element of the question separately. Better responses included all 3 concepts and explained them in relation to organisation and processes in Memory. Students are reminded that good evaluation involves both theory and evidence.

Criterion 4

The focus of this part of the module is on how encoding, storage and retrieval work in the different theories and models of memory.

Most students were able to discuss the processes of encoding, storage and retrieval **in at least 2** memory models. Some very strong responses also critically analysed and evaluated 2 models as required by the question and then added other models, using the same amount of depth and

analysis. The strongest answers showed a deep understanding of the course content by synthesising, comparing and contrasting points raised / theories discussed and making links with the stimuli.

Students had the opportunity to show their understanding that encoding involves a conversion of information for storage and how it relates – or doesn't – to SM, STM/WM and LTM.

Most students were able to outline the required concepts. Stronger responses gave accurate psychological definitions, with in-depth explanations, of both concepts and memory processes. Students who could also explain *related* concepts were rewarded.

Weaker responses skimmed over the Encoding concept or neglected to refer to it entirely. It was often 'defined' by paraphrasing from Stimulus 2. This led weaker responses to equate encoding with recall, with storage and rehearsal and with processing. Stronger responses included automatic and effortful encoding as well as its function in various models of memory.

Students across the whole spectrum had a strong understanding of the key features and differences between the MSM, WMM, and for most students, LOP. Stronger responses limited the number of theories addressed and discussed these to a greater depth than responses that introduced 4-5 theories on memory.

Strong responses were able to use Stimulus 1 to accurately explained the Semantic Network Theory as it was first presented, as well as later adaptations made regarding spreading activation, and described this clearly. The best responses explained the role of Long-Term Memory in the Multi-store Model and also the organisation of LTM into declarative and non-declarative types.
A number of students wrote what appeared to be pre-prepared responses evaluating MSM and WMM and assumed that was sufficient to cover encoding and LTM without elaborating on types of encoding or types of LTM. Weaker responses tended to evaluate the models based simply on whether or not the model discussed encoding, storage, or retrieval, rather than present a deeper evaluation around the broader contributions and supporting or contrasting evidence.

Criterion 7

Most students provided a substantial range of empirical evidence. This was demonstrated in the discussion of MSM and the duration and capacity of each store, followed by use of the serial position effect as evidence for separate STM and LTM. Stronger responses were able to explain why the evidence was demonstrative of separate stores.

Stronger responses were able to use both the stimulus pieces a few times throughout their response in a sophisticated way to fully illustrate the point they were making. These responses also offered relevant real-life human examples and empirical evidence, demonstrating comprehensive understanding.

Weaker responses tended to directly quote, transcribe, or poorly re-phrase stimulus 2 rather than build on the ideas expressed to demonstrate understanding beyond what was given. Some seemed unfamiliar with semantic network theory beyond what was given in the stimulus, defining it according to the caption given on the stimulus and naming specific animals shown in the stimulus as examples.

Misnaming of the theories was common where a detailed explanation of a theory was presented but attributed to other theorists. The point in Stimulus 2 that encoding is "selective" led some

students to discuss the process of selective attention. Self- referencing effect was then dealt with, making information personal, leading to encoding.

Question 6: Forgetting

The definition of memory was often a starting point for answers together with a lengthy explanation as to the various facets of memory to the detriment of the actual topic – forgetting. An examination answer requires precise theories, concepts, explanations, and examples with little time for non-essential material. Time spent planning an answer would enable some students to gain a higher mark, as they could have assembled all the appropriate theories and supporting evidence and related their material to corresponding stimuli.

A number of students opted to answer 4(a) or 4(b) thus addressing only one part of the question asked.

The question appeared to shoe-horn some students into a very restricted answer with hardly any empirical evidence.

Students who did well on this question not only answered from the perspectives of organic/non-organic causes of forgetting but were also able to explain the difference between these psychological and physiological causes and evaluate other theories.

Criterion 3

Students who did well addressed the question directly, clearly demonstrating understanding of causes of forgetting or their relationship to the 2 stimulus pieces. Better responses were able to evaluate by commenting on organic causes in comparison to non-organic causes.

Some students addressed only the concepts cited in the question and did not expand their answers to include additional theories of forgetting or empirical evidence. The measurement of retention was often discussed in detail which was not necessary unless students were discussing Stimulus 2. Students accounted for retrieval failure and decay as well as mnemonic devices but the terms 'organic' and 'non-organic' were misinterpreted by some students.

Although students referred to retrieval failure as directed in the question many did not identify Stimulus 2 as retrieval failure (pseudo forgetting or encoding failure) and did not cite Stimulus 2 as part of their explanation.

Attention was omitted by many students; however, a few went down the path of divided and selective attention. Both selective and divided attention, together with the cocktail party effect were mentioned but this was not linked to forgetting. Those who did talk about the importance of attention when encoding information used it to explain strategies when discussing mnemonic devices.

Students would have benefited from an attempt to provide and evaluate the evidence, either from the stimulus items or something provided by the student. Students confused acronyms with acrostics when explaining Stimulus 1 and many confused Stimulus 1 as narrative chaining or acronym.

Many students did not link retrieval, cue dependent and tip-of-the-tongue but addressed them as separate concepts.

Criterion 7

Some responses were able to use the stimuli to illustrate the meaning of a particular concept or cause of forgetting. Students would have benefited from using evidence (beyond the stimulus items) to support the different explanations of forgetting. Stronger responses were able to provide a range and combination of appropriate real-life examples and empirical evidence in support of theories.

General analysis of the stimuli was good but often that was as far as students went with their answers. A few students confused the stimuli when answering the question.

Some students provided a general analysis of the theories, but many, although giving detailed explanations of the theories, did not include an evaluation or address the limitations of the forgetting theories.

Displacement and decay were cited as reasons for forgetting while others used accessibility and availability as a springboard as to why forgetting occurs.

A surprising number of answers cited few if any theories especially Interference. When referring to organic theories, students mentioned amnesia in the form of antegrade and retrograde as being the cause rather than the effect of forgetting.

Ebbinghaus' forgetting curve was often referred to as a theory; a few students described the physical graph of his results rather than the actual data.

Investigation Project: Individual Differences

General comment

This year the unit for assessment in the Investigation Project was Individual Differences.

Overall, the standard of the reports was high. Most reports were well researched, referenced and the overall presentation met the requirements as described in the guidelines. The majority of students reached the word count and it was clear that much effort had gone into the undertaken investigation.

Topic selection from the Individual Differences areas of Gender, Intelligence or Personality was very pleasing with topics selected clearly specifically linked to individual differences. Gender was the most popular topic chosen. Some students, however, neglected to acknowledge and make links to nature/nurture/interactionist perspectives.

More successful projects included in their discussion and analysis section a good overview of their findings which were linked skilfully to similar findings in other secondary research. However, many students then did little evaluation of these findings in the context of psychological theory or did so in a superficial way. Additionally, it was not always explained how the research findings contributed to the specific research undertaken.

Teachers and students are reminded that the guidelines give very specific advice regarding the presentation of the folio, including suggestions regarding font, size and spacing of text. Students are also reminded that a formal style of writing should be used. The majority of reports were structured to fit the IP guidelines and included all the appropriate material. Referencing was inconsistent in many IPs.

Criterion 1: Analyse theories about Individual Differences.

There were many interesting, diverse topics thoughtfully chosen this year. Stronger students made more informed choices in terms of topic and were able to analyse and discuss their research findings by drawing appropriate inferences from their primary data. Stronger responses provided clear connections to other research evidence and theoretical perspectives with a definite effort to refer to either nature or nurture in framing their introduction.

For those stronger in their topic selection, the link to the nature vs nurture theory, particularly one side of this debate, was more evident. A clear and explicit link to this aspect was made in the introduction. For those where this link was not explicit, (at times it could be implied), great success would come from being very clear. Some students, however, neglected to acknowledge or make links to nature / nurture / interactionist perspectives.

Students are reminded that the report requires a psychological focus, particularly so in the case of gender. Although some students in this area connected on the nature /nurture debate they sometimes drifted into the realms of a sociological debate rather than one that relied on psychological concepts to aid their debate.

Strong students for this criterion had clearly undertaken extensive secondary research on the topic – and those who were able to capture and synthesise multiple perspectives were very successful at demonstrating this effort. If the student was able to connect these perspectives in the introduction and again in the discussion, this was especially successful. When students have particularly extensive detailed discussions about the facts of another piece of research, this is unlikely to demonstrate wider research as effectively as synthesising the main ideas that emerged from the study and aligning this with other research/theories.

Stronger folios generally did attempt to explain how their primary investigation would be beneficial in the real-world context. Weaker responses primarily summarised the theories associated with the topic with minimal (if any) reference to research.

Stronger folios started their Introduction by placing their topic in the broader area of Individual Differences, often in relation to influences of nature versus nurture. This was made more specific with some explanation of relevant theories. A basis in research was provided by exploring some relevant (and sometimes conflicting) experiments in the area. The aim / hypothesis was then stated at the end of the Introduction. When combining two sections, such as gender and intelligence, stronger responses clearly defined their primary focus and this was consistent throughout the entire report.

Criterion 6: Use ethical psychological research methods

This criterion was generally well addressed by students who demonstrated a sound understanding of research methodology and addressed key aspects of criterion 6. The link between hypothesis and research design was important, and strong responses were able to show this.

Having formulated an appropriate hypothesis, selected an appropriate research method, that the IV and DV were identified and accurate, the method was clear, and research ethics was addressed produces ethically strong research projects. Some students did not make the most of the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of ethics in this section of the report, and the use of an Appendix. Appendices in general were lacking. Many did not include one or more of; the ethics statement, instructions, the instrument used (including all items where relevant), or raw data.

Students who adopted a structured format in their method by way of headings (i.e., Research Design, Independent Variable/ Dependent Variable etc) clearly outlined the processes adopted in their research. Students lacking a clear structure often omitted key elements such as IV / DV when discussing experimental research.

Some students stated their research design incorrectly. Repeated measures design was often mentioned when it was clearly independent groups design.

IVs and DVs were broadly identified in most folios, but stronger responses were more specific with the information provided here. For example, stronger responses stated things like: 'the DV was the average score for each trait on the Big Five Personality Test', rather than just the 'scores on the test'. Students are reminded that the IV and DV need to be accurately identified in any experiment. Stronger reports also operationalised these fully.

When addressing the Method section of their IP, students need to be very specific as to how their set up their experiment, the apparatus they use, how the participates were chosen and the conditions under which they were tested. A wide range of participants were often selected without any explanation as to why they were chosen, and no reference was made in the results as to how the differing ages impacted on the final results which could have added another dimension to the students' research.

Students need to realize that their questionnaire, survey or experiment is an important component of their IP and therefore needs to be explained in as much detail as possible. For those who elect to utilise a survey as their research tool, an explanation in the methodology of the origins of the research tool would be beneficial. A number of students utilised pre-existing research instruments sourced on the Internet but failed to adequately acknowledge this in their research methodology. It is important that all apparatus utilised in the design and conduct of the research be clearly outlined and able to be viewed as part of the report. Students need to consider the validity and/or reliability of many of these research instruments in measuring the particular attribute under investigation (e.g., personality trait or IQ). The validity of drawing conclusions based on online IQ tests was problematic. This should be at acknowledged or at least mentioned when discussing the limitations of the research.

It remains important for students to demonstrate how ethical considerations were addressed when conducting research. Ethics were sound in most folios although still token in some cases. The better folios were able to discuss ethics in relation to their research rather than an obligatory "cut and paste" of what ethical guidelines are. Weaker responses opted to briefly mention the use of a disclaimer included in their Appendix or claimed that consent had been given by participants. In satisfying this criterion, students should clearly explain ethics as well as justify their chosen research design. Stronger responses clearly linked the ethical considerations underlying psychological research to their own research, providing a thorough explanation as to how each of the ethical considerations pertained to their own research specifically.

For those who collected data digitally, an explanation in the privacy/confidentiality of this data would have been beneficial – especially for those who collected identifiable data such as names/emails. There were some breaches of privacy and confidentiality with school and student names still being included in the submitted Ips.

Where younger children were involved in research, the ethical requirements needed to be more adequately explained and unpacked. It is important to note that for many of the students who completed testing on young children, the need for this was not apparent and the same hypothesis and theory could have been explored using older participants.

Some students over-stretched their interpretation of data or appeared to contradict themselves in that interpretation; taking very small differences as evidence to support the hypothesis.

Many students appeared to have thoughtfully considered the limitations of their research in terms of validity and reliability and the small opportunistic sample, suggest improvements in future research. Successful students also cautiously evaluated the strengths and limitations of their research design in the discussion, which was very effective in demonstrating understanding of the entire research process. However, limitations should NOT account for a large part of the discussion section.

Criterion 8: Communicate psychological ideas, information, opinions, arguments and conclusions

It was pleasing to see students produce projects with a good balance in each of the sections especially the length and content depth of their discussion in the Introduction and Analysis/ Discussion sections. Strong projects were able to discuss the role of genetics and environment in relation to theory and research in their Introduction and build on this in the Discussion by discussing these ideas in relation to their own findings specifically and secondary research. Often however, some very polished writing demonstrated in the Introduction was not replicated in the Analysis and Discussion. These students were unable to analyse their findings and link these to their secondary research or return to any discussion of either nature or nurture.

The Introduction should not be longer than the Analysis and Discussion section of the report. Stronger responses provided some good secondary research, often an excellent range of sources including journal articles which added support for their topic and enabled comparison with their primary findings. These students provided a comprehensive analysis and discussion devoid of excess detail on limitations. Weaker responses chose to summarise large chunks of information from a range of online sources, without relevant studies. These students then had difficulty linking their data to secondary research and tended to write at length on the limitations of their project. The majority of students appropriately wrote their reports in third person, utilised past tense in the method section, and were, for the most part, grammatically correct. Students are reminded to refrain from using incorrect terminology in the report such as *random sampling* and *proved.* Instead, the IP results may 'support' or 'reject ' or 'be consistent with' the hypothesis and/or other research findings for example. There is also a preference for the use of more scientific language such as 'females' instead of 'women'.

Quantitative data in most cases should be converted to percentages to best interpret the patterns existing in the responses. Some students had made sure to do raw data computation. The results figures descriptor should demonstrate an understanding of the patterns revealed in the graph, i.e., the main trend, rather than being a summary of the figures.

Weaker folios contained either graphed raw data or tabulated data in their results which then affected the quality of their analysis and discussion thereafter. A reminder that raw data belongs in the Appendices section and only if referred to in the body of the report. Stronger responses contained a graph that clearly reflected the hypothesis, with the IV and DV clearly labelled on the appropriate axis and was manipulated in some way. Graphs require a full explanation as to what they are showing, by incorporating this information the students can ensure that the information on the graph has the potential to be correct.

Students should ensure graphs and tables are appropriated titled and that they only include those most relevant to their analysis/discussion. An increasing number of students failed to present a statement of results beneath graphs and tables, leaving it to the examiner to interpret the data before considering the analysis/discussion.

Ensure conclusions are consistent with data and consider how the participants included in the study may impact your results.

Label axes on graphs clearly and make sure scales are comparable between graphs if necessary. Use colour graphs where possible to show contrast between the control and the experimental conditions. Be consistent. If you have two graphs, then use the same colours for the same conditions.

It is not advisable to include graphs that are not relevant to the hypothesis and are not going to be discussed in the Discussion.

Once again referencing was not always to the standard expected, and many students did not acknowledge important sources, such as the test instrument they used. Stronger responses used a range of sources and integrated them into the report. These students were able to include their sources in the Introduction, relate their results to them, and revisit previous research again in their Discussion.

Many students incorporated many more pieces of research than the minimum requirement of 3 different types of sources, which was pleasing. Most remembered to also reference their primary research (i.e.: experiment, survey etc).

Most references were relevant to the topic at hand. However, too many students did not have a reference list which coincided with those authors used in-text. Students are reminded to refrain from using references sourced from Wikipedia and unsubstantiated sites such as freelance blogs or Crystalinks. Stronger responses included a range of sources including psychology texts, science magazines, APA website, podcasts and academic peer reviewed journal articles.

The quality of referencing remains problematic with many reports not utilising consistent and accurate formatting. This is a crucial skill that students should have developed by the end of a TCE Psychology course.

Appendices are an area for students to give some attention. Some folios did not include all relevant materials. The Appendices should include all materials used in the investigation; for example, the ethics script read or presented to participants, instructions for the task, the instrument used (e.g., questionnaire, experiment stimulus etc), recording sheet, de-briefing statement, and raw data. Students are reminded that attaching a blank proforma of the ethics consent form is not required unless this proforma has been edited in a tangible manner.