

PAPER 3: PRACTICAL INVESTIGATION

The Practical Investigation should focus on an area of the syllabus e.g. antenatal care or as a comparative study of relevant consumer items e.g. baby foods. It should take the form of an investigation e.g. surveys, questionnaires, research etc. and should not be treated as a project where candidates merely copy from textbooks. Most areas of the syllabus are suitable for this Coursework, although Centres are advised to avoid areas e.g. child abuse, divorce, abortion which are sensitive areas and may encourage candidates to produce material of a graphic or confidential nature that is not required and is unnecessary.

In the Practical Investigation **the title** should be appropriate to an area of the syllabus (see suggested topics) and one in which the student has a particular interest. It should be carefully formulated to enable the candidate to include a wide range of investigative methods.

It is important that there is **no overlap of work from the Child Study**, as development is not a suitable subject for a Practical Investigation. In addition, it would severely limit the learning opportunities of the student. In the Practical Investigation the title should be appropriate to an area of the syllabus (see suggested topics) and one in which the student has a particular interest. It should be carefully formulated to enable the candidate to include a wide range of investigative methods.

The choice of Investigation is of paramount importance. It must give the students the opportunity to use a wide variety of investigative procedures:

- surveys/questionnaires
- interviews
- practical experiments
- research of products/amenities etc.
- research from books, newspapers, leaflets, TV documentaries, internet etc.

These offer a guideline only as to a possible range of procedures. The choice will depend on the chosen subject. From there it will be possible to gather information including some original findings and important facts **to produce a leaflet or poster etc. as required in the Application.**

Assessment criteria for the Practical Investigation

Introduction

(a) A clear selection of study should be explained. The reasons for the choice made may arise from:

- a particular interest of the student
- an experience during the carrying out of the child study
- a local topical issue

Three to four detailed and explained reasons would be acceptable.

(b) A 'thought shower' (where candidates identify a list of possible topics and how they can be investigated) followed by an outline of the methods suggested would be expected for this section.

(c) To show that the work has been thoroughly organised a full plan is required. The plan would show:

- the techniques to be used
- the equipment required to carry them out
- the steps to be followed to complete the investigation

Application

(a) To gain the marks available for this section, it would be expected that candidates would have included at least **four** varied investigative procedures. If fewer are used, all the available marks could not be achieved.

- (b) As a result of a limited range of procedures, the resulting observations, recordings and conclusions will also be limited. The conclusions will be used as part of the information required in (c).
- (c) The target for this leaflet/poster will be the group who will most benefit from the area of study e.g. baby foods/nappies etc. aimed at new parents, provision of local pre-school education facilities aimed at parents of toddlers. The leaflet/poster will be presented in a way to catch the interest of the target group, and will contain the findings from the conclusions in Application (b) (in a suitable form) during the investigation in the form of comparative costs/test results, relevant photographs etc. again presented in a 'user friendly' form. However, this is expected to be a leaflet or poster, not a long piece of work. A leaflet should be concise, to the point, eye-catching and useful.

Analysis and Evaluation

- (a) The students will have some insight as to the effectiveness of the procedures used when they have been drawing conclusions from their investigation. This will enable them to comment on their appropriateness and effectiveness.
- (b) Students will be expected to comment on what have been the particular strengths of their investigation, how improvements could have been made with particular emphasis on any identified weakness. The words 'strengths and weaknesses' should be used.
- (c) During the investigation time constraints may have limited students from investigating other aspects of their chosen subject. This awareness should be explained here.

Examples of Investigatory Assignments

1. Investigate the provision of pre-school education for the under 5s in your area.
2. Compare convenience baby food products with home-made equivalents.
3. Investigate the postnatal facilities that are available in your area.
4. Compare disposable nappies with the washable variety.
5. Investigate the use of baby lotions and bath time products.
6. Investigate the availability of products to make the home safe for toddler