Introduction

In the development of level descriptor for LS in NSS HKDSE, we first decide the assessment criteria concerned. Next, we study the answer scripts of various grades sampled from those taking ASL LS examination. Descriptions on various assessment criteria for different attainment levels are thus developed.

Concerning the assessment criteria, we have referred to Bloom’s cognitive scale (as recommended in the guideline mentioned above), practices of some international organizations practices in related subjects, and the current marking rubric of LS. The following main aspects of assessment criteria on students’ capabilities are focused in this study.

a) Understand the questions’ focus and data provided/ relevant knowledge of subject matter;
b) Analytical/ critical thinking; and
c) Communication.

The adoption of these aspects is largely in line with Bloom’s cognitive scale, which is listed below for reference:

a) Knowledge: Recall data or information.
b) Comprehension: Understand the meaning, translation and interpretation of instructions and problems.
c) Application: Use a concept or unprompted use of an abstraction in a new situation.
d) Analysis: Distinguish various components concerned and understand their relationships.
e) Synthesis: Consider various parts as a whole and formulate viewpoints and opinions.
f) Evaluate: Make reasoned judgment about various alternatives and
perspectives.

We group “Application”, “Analysis”, “Synthesis”, & “Evaluate” into the criterion, “Analytical/ critical thinking”, and group “Knowledge” & “Comprehension” into the criterion, “Understand the question’s focus and data provided/ relevant knowledge of subject matter”. Moreover, we also consider the assessment criterion, “Communication”. It is because:

a) **Current practice**: The examination of ASL Liberal Studies does assess the effective communication of a response.

b) **Practices of other international organizations:**
   i. **Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) Behavioral Science Course Framework (2004) at the Senior Secondary Level**: This framework is for the development and accreditation of courses in Behavioral Sciences and related disciplines (such as Psychology, Sociology and Community Services, including childcare, aged care, disability care etc.) at the senior secondary level. The essential skills for assessment include: (i) acquisition and investigation of knowledge; (ii) application and analysis; (iii) synthesis and evaluation; and (iv) communication, including written, oral and other means.
   ii. **AQA GCE Mark Scheme for Social Science – Citizenship 5101 (2005 June Series)**: The question-specific marking rubric is divided into 3 criteria, namely: (i) knowledge and understanding; (ii) analysis and evaluation and (iii) communication.
   iii. **Board of Studies of NSW Course Performance Descriptors for School Certificate in Science (2005)**: The areas for assessment include (i) knowing and understanding; (ii) planning and conducting investigations; (iii) problem-solving; and (iv) communicating.
   iv. **Board of Studies of NSW Society and Culture of Higher School Certificate**: The assessment criteria include: (i) knowledge and understanding of a number of topics in the course such as personal, social and cultural identity; (ii) skills of application and evaluation of social and cultural research; (iii) skills of investigation, evaluation, analysis and synthesis of information from various sources; and (iv) skills of communication of ideas and issues in appropriate forms.
   v. **Edexcel Advanced GCE in General Studies (Nov 2003)**: Grade descriptions include the following: (i) knowledge and understanding of issues; (ii) skills of analysis for interrelating these issues, (iii) skills of
evaluation and synthesis; and (iv) skills of communication.

The practices of these international organizations are summarized in Table 2 below. It can be observed that most of them are in line with the Bloom’s cognitive scale and in addition, communication skill is one of the assessment criteria.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Course/ Curriculum</th>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Number of performance level</th>
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| ACT BSSS      | Behavioral Science Course Framework for Senior Secondary Level | - Acquisition & investigation of knowledge  
- Application & analysis  
- Synthesis & evaluation  
- Communication | 5-Level  
(from grade A to grade E) |
| AQA           | Citizenship 5101/ GCE for Social Science (Question-specific marking scheme) | - Knowledge & understanding  
- Analysis & evaluation  
- Communication | 3-Level |
| Edexcel       | General Studies/ Advanced GCE              | - Knowledge & understanding of issues  
- Skills of analysis for interrelating issues  
- Skills of evaluation & synthesis  
- Skills of communication | Only grade descriptions for grade A, C, E are provided. The performance, say grade B is supposed to in between that of grade A and grade C |
| Board of Studies NSW | Science/ School Certificate | - Knowing & understanding  
- Planning & conducting investigations  
- Problem-solving  
- Communicating | 5-Level  
(from grade A to grade E) |
| Board of Studies NSW | Society and Culture/ Higher School Certificate | - Knowledge & understanding of a number of topics in the course  
- Skills of application & evaluation of social and cultural research  
- Skills of investigation, evaluation, analysis & synthesis of information from various sources  
- Skills of communication of ideas & issues in appropriate forms | Performance description is provided from Band 2 to Band 6; while there is no description for Band 1 |

The corresponding grade descriptions for Edexcel Advanced GCE in General Studies are provided in *Annex I* for reference.
The details of the other arrangements for the study are summarized as follows:

a) To have the scope of the study being manageable, only Human Relationships (HR) module, which is currently taken by the largest portion of candidates, is focused. For the sake of uniformity and simplicity, only the compulsory part, Section A, was studied. Since the nature of questions in Section A and Section B are largely in line with each other, such an arrangement should not affect the generality of the study results.

b) To avoid the interference of candidates’ language ability in the study on their performances, only those papers in Chinese version were studied.

c) Scripts with grades equal to A, C, E for HR were sampled. The number of scripts was 20 for each grade; i.e. totally amounting to 60.

d) Questions were selected from scripts for each grade.
   i. For the sample of grade A, questions with excellent performances were studied.
   ii. For the sample of grade C, questions with moderate performances were studied.
   iii. For the sample of grade E, questions, which are in need of improvement, were studied.

The experienced external assessors had to study the scripts assigned and attend discussion meetings as scheduled. A number of discussion meetings had been held. In the discussion meetings, the external assessors provided descriptions of candidates' performances against various assessment criteria concerned for each of these grades.

Development of Level Descriptor

For reference, the corresponding examination questions (English version) are provided in Annex II.

Development of Level Descriptor for Grade A

The characteristics related to the assessment criteria concerned, namely: (i) understand the question’s focus and data provided/ relevant knowledge and concepts of subject matters; (ii) communication; and (iii) analytical/ critical thinking, are extracted from those grade A answer scripts which are found to be excellent.

In general, candidates who obtained Grade A had above average performances in all aspects related to assessment criteria.
a) Understand the question’s focus and data provided/ relevant knowledge and concepts of subject matters:

i. Address most of the requirements of a question when answering.
   (For example: Script 1-2
   Q. 1(b) How might the student’s diet suggested in Source B affect his/her relationships with both family and peers? The candidate addressed the impact of adopting the weight loss diet in source B respectively on family and peers when answering the question.)

ii. Confine the scope of discussion according to the requirements of a question.
   (For example: Script 7-5
   Q. 2 (b) How can a warm family atmosphere help young people to mature? : The candidate confined the discussion only to the positive impact of a warm family atmosphere to the growth of a young people when answering the question.)

iii. Understand the information and data in a highly accurate manner.
   (For example: Script 14-1
   Q. 1(a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys’ and girls’ weight? Discuss the reasons that may lie behind their attitudes. : The candidate could correctly interpret the data provided as those who are with normal weight but dissatisfied with their weighting. The candidate also realized that the number of male respondents and that of female respondents are not the same and thus compared the differences in attitude between boys and girls using respective percentages when answering the question.)

iv. Demonstrate highly relevant concepts and knowledge with respect to the issue concerned.
   (For example: Script 2-9, 8-9
   Q. 3(a) Effect of adding words of warning to a credit card: The candidate could associate such a measure with adding words of warning to a cigarette box and discuss the impact.
   Q.3 (b) Could adolescents learn to manage their finances better if they do have a credit card? : The candidate could quote the slogan used in an advertisement of credit card and current promotion strategies.)

b) Analytical/ Critical Thinking:

i. Establish the linkages of relevant concepts and knowledge with the issue concerned in a convincing manner.
   (For example: Script 4-5
   Q. 2(a) Which two suggestions from the list above can best help young people get along with others? : When answering this question, the candidate could establish his
arguments by considering the growth of an adolescent and the need of self-esteem, family support and peer acceptance.

ii. Synthesize one’s own viewpoints and argument with appropriate assumptions, and/or evidence.
(For example: Script 1-2
Q. 1(b) How might the student’s diet suggested in Source B affect his/her relationships with both family and peers: When arguing that the diet suggested in Source B would have a negative impact to the relationships with both family and peers, the candidate employed all the figures and information provided to support his/her arguments. The corresponding assumptions; e.g. cereals could hard to be found in a fast food restaurant, were well stated. Related subject knowledge was also mentioned, such as the quest for autonomy during adolescence and interpersonal conflict.)

iii. Discern and evaluate various perspectives and/or aspects when addressing the issue concerned.
(For example: Script 2-9, 4-5, 8-9, 15-9
Q. 3(a) Effect of adding words of warning to a credit card: The candidate raised a number of considerations: the size of wording related to a credit card; the content of the wording itself.
Q.3 (b) Could adolescents learn to manage their finances better if they do have a credit card? : The candidate could consider both pros and cons of having a credit card and also mention the interest calculation when using credit card. The other candidate used a number of styles of fiancé management: ‘Spend according to what you’ve earned’, ‘expenditure plan – fixed deposit’, ‘free use of future money’.
Q. 2(a): Which two suggestions from the list above can best help young people get along with others? When answering this question, the candidate raised two important factors and also compared them with other factors in the list to argue for their importance.)

iv. Discern various features from information and data provided, and fully assess the corresponding implications and significance.
(For example: Script 1-2
Q.1 (b) How might the student’s diet suggested in Source B affect his/her relationships with both family and peers: The candidate was able to extract various general features on food content and time element from the data provided; e.g. there is no breakfast at all suggested in the schedule and was able to assess the impact of such a phenomenon to the relationships with family.)

c) Communication:

i. Stand out the points using a very appropriate word structure and/or
paragraphs.

(For example: Script 11-1, 11-2, 11-3, 1-1, 1-2, 1-3)

Both of these scripts obtained very high marks in the aspect of effective communication. These candidates used a number of word patterns/ phrases: “It is because (因為)”, “Therefore (所以)”, “First…second… (第一…第二…”), “Besides… (另外)”, “In addition to… (而且)”, “From the abovementioned, it can be observed/ concluded…” (從以上可見)

ii. Stand out the points using very appropriate wording/ phrase.

(For example: Script 1-1)

Q. 1(a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys’ and girls’ weight? Discuss the reasons that may lie behind their attitudes. : A sentence using appropriate wording “由於傳媒經常的渲染, 以致男女都會受這些資訊薰陶。”

iii. Present in a very coherent and concise manner.

(For example: Script 1-1, 1-2, 1-3)

The candidate obtained full marks in the aspect of effective communication from Q.1. All members found that his/her writing style was very outstanding. Arguments supported with data were well presented.)

Development of Level Descriptor for Grade C

Similarly, the characteristics on the aspects, namely: (i) understand the question’s focus and data provided/ relevant knowledge and concepts of subject matters; (ii) communication; and (iii) analytical/ critical thinking, are extracted from grade C answer scripts which are found to be moderate.

Besides, it is noted that in general candidates who obtained grade C usually had better performances in subpart (a) rather than (b) within a question. It might be due to that the subpart (a) required more basic skills and provided leading information/ data for discussion. Candidates could more easily follow. On the other hand, the subpart (b) required higher level thinking skills and was a kind of open-ended discussion. This increased difficulties to those candidates with average abilities.

a) Understand the question’s focus and data provided/ relevant knowledge and concepts of subject matters:

i. Address partial (or some) requirements of a question when answering.

(For example: Script 8-5)

Q. 2(a) Which two suggestions from the list above can best help young people get along with others? Explaining your reasoning. : The candidate chose two from the list provided and described their importance; but without attempting to explain these two are the best ones amongst all the 8 characteristics. As a contrast, the script 11-5
ii. Discuss the issue with some diversification to other non-essential aspects.

(For example: Script 8-7

Q. 3(a) In the light of the above extract and your own knowledge, explain whether you think that adding words of warning to credit cards would help university students to use them wisely. : Besides, discussing the possible impact of adding words of warning, the candidate also mentioned that the bank should not issue credit cards in an uncontrolled manner. Such an aspect does not closely relate with the question.)

iii. Understand the information and/or data in a largely accurate manner, with minor mistakes committed.

(For example: Script 8-1

Q. 1(a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys’ and girls’ weight? Discuss the reasons that may lie behind their attitudes. : The candidate could interpret the data provided as those who are with normal weight but dissatisfied with their weighting. However, the candidate supposed that the number of male respondents and that of female respondents are the same and compared the differences in attitude between boys and girls using actual figures (instead of percentages) when answering the question.)

iv. Demonstrate largely relevant concepts and knowledge with respect to the issue concerned.

(For example: Script 13-3

Q. 2(a) Which two suggestions from the list above can best help young people get along with others? Explaining your reasoning. : The candidate pointed out the importance of ‘Admit your faults’ when answering. In supporting his argument, the notion, ‘sense of guilty’ occurred in common people is quoted which is related to the question although not specific to the youth. While other related concepts about adolescent development such as self-identification, self-understanding and self-acceptance are omitted.)

b) Analytical/ Critical Thinking:

i. Establish the linkages of relevant concepts and knowledge with the issue concerned in a general manner.

(For example: Script 8-5, 2-1

Q. 2(a) Which two suggestions from the list above can best help young people get along with others? Explaining your reasoning: When answering the question, the candidate mentioned the concepts, respect and confidence, and emphasized their importance in establishing relationships with others. However, the linkage of these concepts with the characteristics of the growth of an adolescent is not well stated.}
Q.1 (a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys’ and girls’ weight? Discuss the reason that may lie behind their attitudes: When answering the question, the candidate employed the theory of a psychologist (艾力克森) and claimed that an adolescent is in the stage of “self-identification and lost”. However, why an adolescent would get lost and then try to be on diet is not clearly explained.

ii. Put forth one’s own viewpoints and argument with less appropriate assumptions and/or evidence.

(For example: 11-11
Q.3 (b) Could adolescents learn to manage their finances better if they do have a credit card? :

The candidate quoted that according to survey result provided by Consumer Council in 2004, it is showed that a portion of those cases about the financial problems of students is due to the misuse of credit cards. Then the candidate arrived at the conclusion that based on the result, possession of credit card could not help the youth to manage their finances. Such an argument may not be sound. The survey result could not exclude there may be some positive cases of correctly using credit cards, which help students manage their finances better.

iii. Consider some perspectives and/or aspects when addressing the issue concerned.

(For example: Script 1-11
Q. 3(a) In the light of the above extract and your own knowledge, explain whether you think that adding words of warning to credit cards would help university students to use them wisely. : In discussing this question, the candidate classified the arguments into two main aspects: (i) immature emotion and cognitive state; (ii) lack of enough coaching. However, such a classification limits the discussion into personal or family factors. Other factors such as social culture and banking promotion policy may be ignored.

iv. Discern some features from information and data provided, and/or partially assess the corresponding implications and significance.

(For example: Script 1-3
Q. 1(b) How might the student’s diet suggested in Source B affect his/her relationships with family and peers? : In discussing the question, the candidate could roughly employ the information provided in Source B and mentioned the food content and no breakfast taken at all. However, the candidate only assessed the impact to the physical health and could not discern the possibility of lacking of communication with family members due to the absence of breakfast.

c) Communication:

i. Bring out the points using a less appropriate word structure and/or
Q. 3(b) Could adolescents learn to manage their finances better if they do have a credit card? Explain your reasoning. The candidate used the following word structure: "An adolescent doesn’t understand where the source of income is and he even supposes that his parents can indefinitely support him financially. Therefore an adolescent lacks of training in money management. Some members pointed out that the causal linkage of this sentence is not clear at all.

Q. 1(a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys' and girls' weight? Discuss the reason that may lie behind their attitudes. The candidate used paragraphs with the following subtitles to structure his arguments: "Peer-group influence", "Effect of Pop-star", "Poor self-image". Some members pointed out that the conclusion of "poor self-image" is not well supported from the survey results provided.

ii. Bring out the points using less appropriate wording/phrases.

Q. 1(b) How might the student’s diet suggested in Source B affect his/her relationships with family and peers? The candidate used the following sentence in the discussion: "The quantity of in-take would be decreased. Thus there may not be enough energy. Parents would worry such a situation. If it continues, the student would get sick due to a lack of energy...". The wording, "energy" may not be appropriate here.

iii. Present in a long-winding and repetitive manner.

Q. 1(a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys’ and girls’ weight? Discuss the reason that may lie behind their attitudes: When answering the question, the candidate the following sentences: “These students have poor self-image... it is because they establish their own values from their outlook and neglect the inner beauty....if they understand what the ‘true’ beauty is, they won’t only emphasize their outlook. Because these students neglect the inner beauty and only emphasize their outlook ... poor self-image...and thus on diet to improve...". These sentences mainly concern only a simple notion, “inner beauty”. However, the wording is too long-winding."

paragraphs.

(For example: Script 1-11, 1-1)
Development of Level Descriptor for Grade E

Similarly, the characteristics on the aspects, namely: (i) understand the question’s focus and data provided/ relevant knowledge and concepts of subject matters; (ii) communication; and (iii) analytical/ critical thinking, are extracted from grade C answer scripts which are found to be in need of improvement.

Besides, it is noted that in the module HR, a number of concepts such as self-esteem and influence of peer-group, may be related with and applied to various issues. Those candidates obtaining not so satisfactory results intended to apply various concepts at the same time and tried to make up the connections with the question on hand. Since they did not equip with strong communication skills and failed to digest relevant concepts, the resultant organization of an answer was unstructured, the connections of the concepts with the issue concerned was loose, and the strength of their arguments was overall quite weak.

a) Understand the question’s focus and data provided/ relevant knowledge and concepts of subject matters:
   i. Address limited requirements of a question when answering.
      (For example: Script 1-1, 2-1

      Q.1 (a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys’ and girls’ weight? Discuss the reason that may lie behind their attitudes: The first candidate (Script 1-1) only elaborated the negative attitudes uphold by girls; while the second candidate (Script 2-1) discussed the issue by treating boys and girls as a whole group. It is expected that a candidate should discuss the issue separately for boys and girls, and point out the difference in attitudes between them.)

   ii. Discuss the issue with prominent diversification to unrelated aspects.
      (For example: Script 10-1

      Q. 1 (a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys’ and girls’ weight? Discuss the reason that may lie behind their attitudes: When answering the question, the candidate also mentioned the Chinese’s traditional value treasuring ‘a fat and white child’, which seem to be unrelated with the attitude of an adolescent, who has normal weight, towards his/her own weighting.)

   iii. Understand some information and data in an inaccurate manner, with significant mistakes committed.
      (For example: Script 8-1

      Q. 1(a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys’ and girls’ weight? Discuss the reasons that may lie behind their attitudes. : The candidate wrongly interpreted the data provided as those who are with abnormal weight.)
iv. Demonstrate marginally relevant concepts and knowledge with respect to the issue concerned.

(For example: Script 10-1, 10-2)

Q.1 (a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys’ and girls’ weight? Discuss the reason that may lie behind their attitudes: The candidate wrote “in Hong Kong, the problem of having over-weighted school children is very serious and is ranked in the upper tier amongst those developed countries.”. Note that the question has clearly indicated that all those boys and girls concerned in Source A have normal weights.

Q. 1(b) How might the student’s diet suggested in Source B affect his/her relationships with family and peers? : The candidate pointed out that the schedule lacks of the recommendation of eating chocolate. The candidate pointed out the fact that a substance would be released to make one feel happy when eating chocolate. Then he jumped to the conclusion that the schedule would make one easier to have negative emotion. Members pointed out that the occurrence of negative emotion is dependent on a number of social, psychological and physical factors. Whether eating chocolate should not be treated as a major factor for arousing negative emotion.

b) Analytical/ Critical Thinking:

i. Outline the linkages of relevant concepts and knowledge with the issue concerned.

(For example: Script 2-2, 2-6)

Q.1 (a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys’ and girls’ weight? Discuss the reason that may lie behind their attitudes: When answering the question, the candidate tried to apply the concept of influence due to peer-group. However, the linkage of this concept with the issue concerned is hardly explained.

Q. 2(a) Which two suggestions from the list above can best help young people get along with others? Explaining your reasoning: The candidate simply selected two suggestions from the list, namely: admit your faults and always offer praise and briefly mentioned their merits (with unjustified reasons). Without employing any characteristics or knowledge concerning the growth of an adolescent, the candidate stated that a person with these characteristics must be warmly welcome by others.

ii. State one’s own viewpoints and argument without appropriate assumptions and/or evidence so that the conclusion arrived at is hardly substantiated.

(For example: Script 2-6)

Q. 2(a) Which two suggestions from the list above can best help young people get along with others? Explaining your reasoning: The candidate stated that a person who frequently accepts the commission of faults is equivalent to he is willing to
change... he would improve... Thus he would never commit faults again. However, the members pointed out that acceptance of faults does not directly imply the willing to change.

iii. Consider limited perspectives and/or aspects when addressing the issue concerned.

(For example: Script 8-8
Q. 3(b) Could adolescents learn to manage their finances better if they do have a credit card? Explain your reasoning. : The candidate considered the cons of using credit card without elaborating the possible positive effects. Concerning the cons, the impact of the bank’s promotion strategy is also neglected.)

iv. Discern limited features from information and data provided, and/or partially assess the corresponding implications and significance.

(For example: Script 1-1
Q. 1(b) How might the student’s diet suggested in Source B affect his/her relationships with family and peers? : The candidate only mentioned the food content of the schedule in Source B while totally ignored the time element in the schedule. Thus the candidate could not pointed out the possible impact of taking no breakfast at all to the relationships with family members.)

c) Communication:

i. Bring out the points using an inappropriate word structure and/or paragraphs.

(For example: Script 3-5, 2-10
Q. 2(a) Which two suggestions from the list above can best help young people get along with others? Explaining your reasoning. : When answering the question, the candidate wrote, “...But the young people is hard to speak out their own feeling to express their support of their friends, Therefore they use praise (甚至要告訴朋友，如果有不快樂的事情時，可以找自己傾訴。)....even they have to tell their friends. If there are any unhappy events, they can share with each other (甚至要告訴朋友，如果有不快樂的事情時，可以找自己傾訴。).”

Q. 3(a) In the light of the above extract and your own knowledge, explain whether you think that adding words of warning to credit cards would help university students to use them wisely. : The candidate used a paragraph with the following subtitle: “university students believe their own future (大學相信自己的前途)”. Such a subtitle reflects a certain degree of confusion.)

ii. Bring out the points using inappropriate wording/phrase (which may be too strongly definite referring to an unsubstantiated conclusion).

(For example: Script 8-2, 8-7, 14-1, 2-10, 2-11, 10-2
Q. 1(b) How might the student’s diet suggested in Source B affect his/her
relationships with family and peers? : The candidate (Script 8-2) mentioned that the weight of a girl could be easily lengthened (體重可能會易高). Another candidate (Script 10-2) mentioned that there is some chance to have conflicts with family members when adversely affecting schooling results. (跟這餐單的學生，成績會受影響，有幸機會與家人產生問題。)

Q. 3(a) In the light of the above extract and your own knowledge, explain whether you think that adding words of warning to credit cards would help university students to use them wisely. : The candidate (Script 8-7) mentioned that words of warning would help in a certain extent (一定程度上的幫助)... Besides, the candidate mentioned: Sometimes, some university students would (有時有些大學生)...

Q. 1(a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys’ and girls’ weight? Discuss the reason that may lie behind their attitudes. : The candidate wrote, “First, girls are lacking of self-confidence, as compared with boys. Most of them build up their confidence based on their outlook. (首先，女性較男性缺乏自信，大部份女性的自信是建基於外貌)”. Such a statement is lacking of any arguments or supportive data.

Q. 3(a) In the light of the above extract and your own knowledge, explain whether you think that adding words of warning to credit cards would help university students to use them wisely. : The candidate wrote “From survey information provided in the question, it is pointed out that many persons used credit cards only for obtaining those gifts provided. If this is really a fact... (資料指出, 有很多人使用信用卡都是為了換取贈品，若事實是如此,...)”. Such a wording, “If this is really a fact (若事實是如此) seems to propose that the survey information quoted at the beginning may not be reliable.

Q. 1(b) How might the student’s diet suggested in Source B affect his/her relationships with family and peers? : The candidate wrote: “Because according to a certain survey (因爲某調查), Hong Kong’s family problem is mainly due to the school results of children.”. Such a wording, “according to a certain survey (按照調查)” really could not strengthen the argument.

iii. Present in a fragmented and ineffective manner.

(For example: from Script 2-1 to 2-13)
This candidate consistently obtained below-average marks in the area of effective communication. All members agreed that the presentation of this student is fragmented and clumsy. As an illustration, the following is some sentences:

Q. 2(a) Which two suggestions from the list above can best help young people get along with others? Explaining your reasoning. The candidate wrote: “Everyone knows that a person would commit errors. Especially, amongst a number of friends, a person always commits errors. But in fact, friends rarely care the errors committed. (每個人都明白人會犯錯，尤其在朋友之間，常會有錯，但其實朋友都很少認真)
介意。）” It is somehow clumsy and the reason why friends rarely care the errors committed is really not clear at all. Forgiveness may have to be conditional on the seriousness of the matter concerned and the acceptance of errors.

Q. 3(a) In the light of the above extract and your own knowledge, explain whether you think that adding words of warning to credit cards would help university students to use them wisely.

The first sentence in the script for this question: “Wisely use of credit card instructs university students to spend money according to what has been earned. It won’t cause any financial problems. But I think adding words of warning will have insignificant effect. (善於運用信用卡指令大學生懂得量入為出，不會因無力償還卡數而破產。但我認爲加上警告字眼的效用不太大)”. The first two sentences seem to be odd and not directly related with the question asked.

**Overall Picture of Level Descriptors for Grades A, C, E**

For the sake of having an overall picture, the level descriptors for Grades A, C, E with respect to the concerned aspects are presented in Table 3 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Understand question’s focus and data provided/relevant knowledge and concepts</th>
<th>Analytical / Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Communication</th>
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</table>
| Grade A | ● Address most of the requirements  
● Confine the scope of discussion according to the requirements  
● Understand the information and data in a highly accurate manner  
● Demonstrate highly relevant concepts and knowledge | ● Establish linkages of relevant concepts and knowledge with the issue concerned in a convincing manner  
● Synthesize one’s own viewpoints and argument with appropriate assumptions and/or evidence  
● Discern and evaluate various perspectives and/or aspects of the issue  
● Discern various features from information and data and fully assess corresponding implications and significance | ● Stand out the points using a very appropriate word structure and/or paragraphs  
● Stand out the points using very appropriate wording/phrases  
● Present in a very coherent and concise manner |
| Grade C | ● Address partial (or some) requirements  
● Discuss the issue with some diversification to other non-essential aspects  
● Understand the information and data in a largely accurate manner  
● Demonstrate largely relevant concepts and knowledge | ● Establish linkages of relevant concepts and knowledge with the issue concerned in a general manner  
● Put forth one’s own viewpoints and argument with less appropriate assumptions and/or evidence  
● Consider some perspectives and/or aspects of the issue  
● Discern some features from information and data, and/or partially assess corresponding implications and significance | ● Bring out the points using a less appropriate word structure and/or paragraphs  
● Bring out the points using less appropriate wording/phrases  
● Present in a long-winding and repetitive manner |
| Grade E | ● Address limited requirements  
● Discuss the issue with prominent diversification to unrelated aspects  
● Understand some information and data in an inaccurate manner  
● Demonstrate marginally relevant concepts and knowledge | ● Outline linkages of relevant concepts and knowledge with the issue concerned  
● State one’s own viewpoints and argument without appropriate assumptions and/or evidence  
● Consider limited perspectives and/or aspects of the issue  
● Discern limited features from information and data, and/or partially assess corresponding implications and significance | ● Bring out the points using an inappropriate word structure and/or paragraphs  
● Bring out the points using inappropriate wording/phrases  
● Present in a fragmented and ineffective manner |
Summary of Findings and Future Work

In this study, a set of level descriptors is developed based on previous student performance, Bloom’s cognitive scale and international practices. Three aspects of assessment are proposed, namely: (i) understand the questions’ focus and data provided/ relevant knowledge of subject matter, (ii) analytical/ critical thinking; and (iii) communication. With respect to each of these aspects, corresponding descriptions for various attainment levels are developed.

It is noted that the level descriptors developed have to rely on some generic terms/ phrases. This is a general characteristic of an authentic assessment, which allows multiple paths for students to demonstrate their capabilities and flexibility in marking. To ensure the reliability of marking, certain measures would be undertaken in NSS HKDSE LS examination, which are briefly outlined below.

- Trial sample marking would be conducted to review student performance and revise marking guidelines so as to arrive at a consensus on standards;
- Checkmarking would be conducted to ensure quality of marking;
- Double marking of all answer scripts would be used to impose fairness and reduce subjectivity; and
- Appeal arrangements would be available.

As a next step, a number of sample papers, together with question-specific marking guidelines would be devised with reference to the study results here as a blueprint. The sample questions would be tried out by students in a number of selected secondary schools to check the feasibility of the proposed framework.

21 August 2007
Annex I

Grade descriptions of Grades A, C and E for Edexcel Advanced GCE in General Studies

The following grade descriptions indicate the level of attainment characteristic of grades A, C and E at Advanced GCE. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at specified grades. The descriptions should be interpreted in relation to the content of the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded will depend in practice on the extent to which the student has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performances in others.

Grade A

Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a wide range of issues, drawing on different disciplines. There is evidence of a clear ability to interrelate these issues in different contexts. They use their knowledge and understanding to interpret and evaluate information, communicating clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way. They are clearly able to reason, demonstrating skills of analysis, interpretation, evaluation and synthesis. They are able to appreciate different types of knowledge, the relationship between its different forms and their limitations.

Grade C

Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of issues, drawing on different disciplines. There is a clear attempt to interrelate these in different contexts. They use their knowledge and understanding to interpret and evaluate information, communicating clearly. They use skills of reasoning to analyse, interpret, evaluate and synthesise. They recognise that there are different types of knowledge, clearly distinguishing between examples of fact and opinion.

Grade E

Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of issues, drawing on different disciplines. They use this knowledge and understanding to begin to interpret and evaluate information. They will distinguish between some examples of fact and opinion. They demonstrate some skills in organising and presenting information.
Section A of the Examination Paper for Liberal Studies (Human Relationships) of Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination 2005

Answer all the questions in this section.

1. Consider the following sources and then answer the questions:

Source A: A survey on self-image, with a sample of 200 students ranging from S3 to S7 in the same school, was conducted by a student of Liberal Studies. The following findings were how students having normal weight viewed themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Responses from girls</th>
<th>Responses from boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy with the present weight</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upset with the present weight and starting weight loss program</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source B: A weight loss diet for a S7 student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time to eat</th>
<th>Types of food and number of servings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast (7:30)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning Tea (10:00)</td>
<td>Milk: 1, Meat: 1, Fruits: 1, Vegetables: 2, Cereals: 0, Others: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch (12:00)</td>
<td>Milk: 3, Meat: 2, Fruits: 2, Vegetables: 0, Cereals: 0, Others: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon Tea (15:00)</td>
<td>Milk: 1, Meat: 1, Fruits: 0, Vegetables: 1, Cereals: 2, Others: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner (18:00)</td>
<td>Milk: 3, Meat: 2, Fruits: 0, Vegetables: 1, Cereals: 0, Others: 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of Food | Suggested size of a single serving | Foods to be avoided
---|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
Milk | Skimmed milk, Hi-calcium soy milk (225ml) | Chocolate milk, Puddings |
Meat | Lean pork (30g), An egg | Sausages, Chicken Wings |
Fruits | Grapefruit (1/2), 6 cherries | Canned fruits, Sugared juice drinks |
Vegetables | One large tomato, 1/2 cup of fresh vegetable juice | — |
Cereals | 1/3 bowl of rice, Whole grain cereal (25g) | Fried rice, Fried potato chips |

(a) What attitudes are reflected in Source A, relating to the boys’ and girls’ weight? Discuss the reasons that may lie behind their attitudes. (10 marks)

(b) How might the student’s diet suggested in Source B affect his/her relationships with both family and peers? (10 marks)
2. An author shared his views on happiness.

1. Never criticize others.
2. Always think about your own good fortune.
3. Always offer praise to others and try to make them feel that they are important. However, you should not be insincere.
4. Admit your faults because those who apologize win respect.
5. Reserve some solitary time for yourself every day.
6. Accept changes willingly, but never forsake your own values.
7. Value your family life, since a warm family atmosphere is the foundation of life.
8. Silence sometimes is the best answer.

(a) Which **two** suggestions from the list above can best help young people get along with others? Explain your reasoning. (10 marks)

(b) How can a warm family atmosphere help young people to mature? Describe some personal experiences or those of friends or classmates in order to explain your ideas. (10 marks)

3. Consider the following extract and answer the questions.

A university survey has revealed that about 11% of university students said they had a credit card debt of $3,600 on average. Among the interviewees, about 67% said they used a credit card for daily expenditure and shopping, while about 49% wanted to get the credit card gifts. The associate professor at the Polytechnic University leading the survey said most university students believed that they could get high salaries after graduation, and were willing to spend with credit cards. Many banks and card issuing bodies, taking advantage of their attitude, promote credit cards keenly among them. University students can obtain credit cards without difficulty since no examination of their financial ability is required. The professor thought that under the recent economic depression in Hong Kong, it would take a longer time for graduates to find a job and they could earn less than expected. He was worried about the severe financial problems likely to be faced by them. He asked banks to be prudent, and avoid issuing credit cards indiscriminately to university students who are not financially independent. In addition, words of warning should be printed on credit cards, reminding cardholders of the interest rates and risks of debt.

Figures from the Student Financial Assistance Agency showed the number of bankrupt university students who could not repay loans was rising every year, quite an alarming fact. The Consumer Council calls for students to manage their budgets properly, as some bankruptcy cases had resulted from credit card debts. The revised Code of Banking Practice, which took effect in December 2001, stipulates that card issuers should act responsibly when issuing credit cards, in particular to persons who do not have independent financial means.


(a) In the light of the above extract and your own knowledge, explain whether you think that adding words of warning to credit cards would help university students to use them wisely. (10 marks)

(b) Could adolescents learn to manage their finances better if they do have a credit card? Explain your reasoning. (10 marks)