

Social and Cultural Anthropology

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 14	15 - 29	30 - 38	39 - 50	51 - 63	64 - 75	76 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 9	10 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Slightly more than half of reports moderated this session presented appropriate and well-focused topics, which represents some improvement over past November sessions. Inappropriate topics were very rare this session.

As has been the case in most recent sessions (but in marked contrast to last November), issue-based research projects greatly outnumbered context-based research projects, and again in contrast to last year, the three most successful reports were context-based. These included a report examining dichotomous self-identification among football fans in one stadium; a report exploring the relation between “social capital” and social hierarchy in a single-sex student hostel, and a report studying how teachers may reinforce gender identity formation in a kindergarten classroom. The two most successful issue-based reports included an examination of changing notions of ethnic identity with regard to aesthetics as expressed in Chinese calligraphy, and an application of the concept of “weapons of the weak” to an understanding of the relation between domestic workers and their employers.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Identification of an issue or question

Half of the candidates moderated presented appropriate and well-focused research questions, which is a slightly better result than in recent sessions. As has been the case in all recent sessions, results varied markedly between centres.

Criterion B: Research techniques

Almost all candidates received at least two marks for this criterion, and only two candidates presented inappropriate research techniques, a moderate improvement over recent sessions. However, it remains the case that a majority of candidates do not fully describe and justify the context of their research, that is, discussion of selection criteria for choosing informants, numbers of informants, and the circumstances under which research instruments were administered was incomplete or missing.

Criterion C: Presentation of data

Almost all candidates received at least two marks for this criterion, although none received full marks. On the other hand, very few candidates presented data in an inappropriate manner. Lack of detail in presenting data remains the most common shortcoming here. This lack is related to the broader problem candidates face of finding the right balance in the research report between data presentation and treatment of methodological and theoretical issues, referring to the expectations for this component set forth in criteria B, C, and D. It is not surprising that candidates should find this balance difficult to realize in a 2000 word report. Again, centres characteristically vary a great deal in candidate performance in this respect. It often happens that some of the most theoretically sophisticated reports appear “top-heavy,” devoting much more space to methodological and/or theoretical considerations than to the convincing, detailed presentation of data. It was satisfying to note that only one candidate mistakenly presented data in appendices.

Criterion D: Interpretation and analysis of data

Performance in this criterion was considerably improved over the November 2014 session, with almost two-thirds of candidates presenting appropriate analytical frameworks. Still, this criterion remains the criterion candidates have the most difficulty fulfilling. As is true in regard to overall performance, centres varied greatly among themselves with respect to candidate performance under this criterion. Candidates from all centres were able to demonstrate concern with framing ethnographic data in theory, but all too often concepts and theory were simplistically defined and superficially applied in analysing data. In one centre, nearly all candidates reviewed had the mistaken understanding that “theoretical perspectives,” as defined by the subject guide, have explanatory power in themselves. These candidates typically cited the theoretical perspective they chose to follow in analysing data, but never presented theories appropriate to their chosen perspectives. However, in contrast to the November 2014 session when no candidate received full marks for this criterion, a few candidates achieved the maximum mark this session.

Criterion E: Ethical issues

Improvement was also seen this session in regard to candidates' treatment of ethical issues arising in the course of field research. This session a slight majority of candidates provided substantial discussions of ethical issues (achieving at least two of a possible three marks). To receive full marks, candidates needed to go beyond describing issues of informant privacy to discuss, for example, issues concerning representation of subjects and groups, positionality, and reflexivity.

Criterion F: Anthropological insight and imagination

As was the case with other criteria, this criterion, representing a global evaluation of reports, reflected modest improvements over recent sessions, with almost half of candidates receiving at least two marks of a possible three. Unfortunately, as usual there were several candidates whose work lacked any anthropological insight.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Choosing topics and defining research questions: While it was gratifying to find a majority of candidates presenting appropriate and well-focused research questions, it should still be repeated that the most important task teachers face in guiding candidates with their internal assessment (IA) lies in dialoguing with them, determining why they are interested in particular topics, helping them articulate research questions, and—the most difficult of all, perhaps—helping them delimit the scope of their research sufficiently. The Teacher Support Material (TSM), accessible on the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC), may help in this regard, offering as it does ideas on how to progressively delimit research interests.
- Data presentation and analysis: As in recent examination sessions, only a minority of candidates provided detailed and well organized presentations of data. Given the difficulties inherent in accomplishing this given the 2000 word limit, it is very important that teachers and candidates work carefully through the marked and annotated sample reports presented in the TSM. As the candidates' research and writing progress, teachers should devote regular class time to preparing candidates for this component, as well as scheduling individual conferences. Guides to field research are available to introduce candidates to the full range of techniques, and a number of these are identified and reviewed on the Teacher Resource Exchange on the OCC site.
- Application of concepts and theory: The TSM will also be useful in helping teachers and candidates appreciate how theory can be made relevant to data analysis, even in a brief research report. Certainly, teachers in higher level (HL) classes should be making use of a brief but well-written introduction to anthropological theory. Several likely choices will be found listed and annotated on the OCC site. It was disappointing to see that not all centres have found reasonable approaches to integrating theoretical perspectives and theory in the interpretation and analysis of data.
- Treatment of ethical issues: Improvement was seen in candidates' treatment of ethical issues. However, there is still much room for improvement. Only a slight majority of candidates this session substantially discussed ethical issues. Teachers should discuss with candidates the various points concerning ethical practice covered in the subject guide, and in the TSM. Also, time should be devoted to those areas of ethical

concern which have become increasingly important to anthropology over the last 40 years, namely issues dealing with positionality, reflexivity and representation of individual subjects and groups. Moreover, it is impossible to critically read contemporary ethnography without taking these issues into account.

- Organization and format of the report: While there is no specific format for the HL IA report, it is advisable for teachers to produce a suggested format for their students in order to raise awareness of the requirement as reflected in the criteria, and to encourage clear organization. Inclusion of a table of contents, subheadings (often neglected), and a bibliography (often omitted) should be encouraged. Also, teachers should take care that candidates understand that appendices are for the presentation of ancillary material only, and should not be used for the presentation of essential data.
- The size of discrepancies between teachers' and the moderator's marks appear little changed, with marked contrasts appearing between centres, as is usual. These discrepancies almost always have the teacher marking too leniently, but also sometimes suggest misunderstanding of the criteria on the part of the teacher.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7	8 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

General comments

Most candidates offered sound responses, and some were exceptionally good. The recommendations are intended to help improve the responses of lower achieving candidates in future examinations, and are not indicative of any general problems.

Overall there has been a steady improvement in the quality of responses in this component in the past few years, and this must be due to the IB Social and Cultural Anthropology teachers working to bring about this improvement and prepare their students for the challenge of the examinations, which should be commended.

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

The examination did not expose any areas of the programme which appeared difficult for the candidates. The overwhelming majority of responses indicated that candidates were well-prepared for the examination and were able to tackle all three questions.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most candidates were able to offer at least one theoretical perspective through which to analyse the material in the examination paper. Similarly, almost all candidates had knowledge of an ethnography with which to offer comparisons with the material in the examination paper.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

The better responses were framed in the candidates' own words, with only the occasional quotation from the text provided in the examination paper. They were also able to draw on explicitly named concepts upon which to base generalizations (eg "globalization").

Lower achieving responses tended to be patchworks of text from the examination paper, with no real evidence of having studied Social and Cultural Anthropology.

Question 2

Higher achieving responses were able to offer two or more theoretical perspectives and apply them convincingly, as well as explicitly offering a viewpoint of the anthropologist.

Many lower achieving responses still offered theoretical perspectives, but the relevance was tenuous and poorly argued.

Question 3

The assessment criteria in the subject guide are very useful when answering this question; higher achieving responses had fully identified, relevant, ethnographies to use for comparative purposes, were well-developed and offered both similarities and differences on a conceptual rather than a superficial basis.

Lower achieving responses appeared to have learned only one ethnography and to have found rather contrived ways of claiming its relevance, and/or only offered a similarity or a difference and a superficial one at that.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates need to show evidence of studying Social and Cultural Anthropology; this is most clearly achieved in this examination paper through the correct use of terminology, which demonstrates an understanding of relevant concepts.
- When responding to question 3 it is better if candidates have a number of ethnographies to draw upon so that they can select the most appropriate one for comparative purposes. This must be fully identified as per the assessment criteria, otherwise the response is, effectively, capped at 4 marks. Likewise, if only similarities or differences are discussed then the mark is similarly capped in the 5/6 mark band. There were many instances where lower achieving responses could obtain an extra mark in question 3 if they had a fully identified comparative ethnography and/or offered both similarities and differences.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 31	32 - 44

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

In terms of questions not chosen, several topics seemed to be less familiar to candidates: these included symbols, sexuality and modern media – at least in relation to political organization and systems of consumption, the relation between illness and inequality and conformity and nonconformity. There was also rather little effective use of theory and/or theoretical perspectives, with the majority of responses including no theoretical references, which is disappointing after the improvement in this area noted last year. In too many cases candidates appear to have learnt set paragraphs on one or two theoretical perspectives and these are reproduced at the start of each essay irrespective of whether or not they are relevant to the question or the ethnographic materials used in the answer.

As noted last year, some candidates continue to be limited by their texts and/or ethnographic materials; for example, at least one centre appeared to be using mostly secondary sources - from Harris' general text and/or *Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches*, and some other materials are very dated.

In terms of the examination, answering the question set seemed to be more of a problem for many candidates this year: one term in the question was quite often ignored, or the response lacked any clear focus, or candidates did not follow the instructions in terms of “**one**” or “**two**” societies, as in question 7 and question 10. As noted last year, there was some evidence that too many candidates are answering using “learned materials” quite mechanically, and sometimes following a template that does not serve them well. Some candidates did not understand how to use or apply theoretical perspectives and in this regard ‘universalistic’ was often misapplied.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Some responses continue to be very strong with clear focus, effective reference to theory and/or theoretical perspectives, and relevant and very well detailed ethnography. This was most evident in responses to question 3 (colonialism/inequality), question 4 (power relations in terms of kinship), question 5 (social relations in terms of tourism), question 7 (the social and cultural consequences of globalization) and question 9 (reciprocity and morality/family), suggesting that some candidates are well prepared in terms of these areas of the programme. In terms of theory, there was some informed and very effective use of symbolic theory and globalization theory (eg Appadurai and Hannerz), and sometimes of political economy and cultural ecology, although knowledge of these was not always as successful in terms of application.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

Candidates did not answer on legal systems and those who answered on sexuality mostly treated this as synonymous with gender. When authority was well defined, often in contrast to power, the responses were stronger and more focused. Kuper's work on the Swazi was used well to answer on symbols and authority.

Question 2

This was a fairly popular question with gender relations as the most popular of the options. Lower achieving scripts simply ignored 'modern media' and wrote primarily about gender relations, which often meant no more than a description of the division of labour (as if gender roles were synonymous with gender relations) in one or more societies, or systems of consumption which were too often simply a list of modes of subsistence. These responses did not therefore fully answer the question. Higher achieving responses both defined modern media and then linked this to one of the options. Some relatively lower achieving responses mentioned media and then wrote on technology in general often at an entirely descriptive level (about how the Inuit, for example, are now sedentary and use refrigerators to store shop bought food). Some interesting responses used Scheper-Hughes' work on organ trafficking to consider how modern media have shaped systems of consumption.

Question 3

This was also a popular question and in this case the main weakness in answers was the failure to discuss the interaction between societies but rather to focus on interactions within societies. This was a pity as some very good essays, particularly using Nakamura's ethnography on deafness in Japan in terms of inequalities did not, therefore, strictly answer the question. Students mostly described the deaf in Japan as a community, as Japanese, as a marginalized group, etc. but not as a distinct society interacting with the majority Japanese population. Other strong responses used Bourgois' *In Search of Respect* to discuss the social production of inequality between US and Puerto Rican societies. Other responses, most often on colonialism,

were sometimes quite well developed in terms of ethnographic knowledge (for example using ethnohistorical materials on the Guarani, Lee's accounts of the Ju'hoansi, and/or Weiner's Trobriand Islanders) but these tended to lack theoretical reference.

Question 4

When students were able to appropriately define both power relations and either kinship or religion (though kinship was the most popular option on the examination) and to link the two, the responses were generally sound. Lower achieving responses assumed that power relations were self-evident and did not need to be discussed. In terms of kinship a popular ethnography was Weiner's work on the Trobrianders. Students, however, were not always clear about how matrilineages worked and several assumed that the 'workers' belonged to a patrilineage (which, of course, is not possible for Trobrianders where descent is always matrilineal). Further, many students tended to assume that descent and power were always connected so that a patrilineal descent system gave all power to men and a matrilineal descent system meant that women were all powerful. Higher achieving responses were able to distinguish between different forms or modes of power and understood that official power did not leave some groups in the society totally powerless. These students were able to use the work of Foucault in order to discuss power relations in more nuanced and sophisticated ways in relation to their chosen ethnographies. Some students did not seem to realize that while descent may be unilineal kinship is bilateral.

Question 5

Students were often able to describe migration or tourism but less able to discuss this with an explicit focus on social relations. On occasion terms were used in a rather casual manner so that any population movement was, for example, described as a 'diaspora'. Too many students misrepresented ethnographic materials most often in the case of the lipplates worn by Mursi women but also in one instance where the Kula was described as a migration. Higher achieving responses were more ethnographically detailed but the answers to this question tended to be lacking in terms of concepts and theory clearly related to the anthropology of tourism or migration. Exceptions to this included scripts which made good use of Miller's work on Facebook and linked this to migration.

Question 6

Students who chose this question produced sound responses. Most answers were focused on ritual in relation to space or time. While all presented some relevant description of specific ritual, its relation to space was rarely effective. The exception was when students made thoughtful use of the Maring Kaiko ritual (Rappaport) or Japanese tea ceremony (Chiba). However theory was almost entirely missing, thus limiting analysis. Time was not understood in a conceptual or an anthropological fashion and so responses on time were usually limited.

Question 7

This was one of the most popular questions on the examination paper. Higher achieving responses were clear about what globalization meant and many were able to cite the work of Appadurai or Hannerz to provide anthropological concepts relevant to the question. The highest

achieving responses were also able to distinguish clearly between cultural and social consequences of globalization and to give examples of each in relation to appropriate ethnographic materials. Some students failed to read the question carefully and so wrote on more than one society or social group. Lower achieving responses struggled to recognize globalization as in anyway different from modernization or even colonialism, and thus were much less convincing in terms of the relevance of their ethnographic materials.

Question 8

This was not a very popular question and so statements of general student strengths and weaknesses in relation to this question are not possible. Paul Farmer's work on structural violence and the health impacts of this on the poor produced relevant responses.

Question 9

The responses to this question were evenly divided between the relation of morality or family to reciprocity. Most candidates were able to demonstrate at least a general understanding of reciprocity as a system of exchange that created some kind of obligation and relation to others, frequently working with accounts of the Ju'hoansi and Trobrianders. The key term 'family' was mostly taken for granted and ethnography was largely descriptive in terms of different forms of exchange, leaving the responses incomplete. Those working with reciprocity and morality – perhaps the more unusual choice – were a little more effective in making explicit how morality might be evident here. The most interesting and effective response made a useful comparison between Piot's materials on the Kabre of Togo (Remotely Global) and Kuper's Swazi.

Question 10

This question was chosen by relatively few students and those who did choose it sometimes wrote on both social conformity and nonconformity when the question required only one of these to be discussed. In other instances students wrote on one society and not two. However, when students answered the question the responses were usually sound with Bourgois' In Search of Respect a popular choice for ethnography.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- In practical terms, teachers need to emphasize the critical importance of reading questions carefully, to make sure that responses address the terms of the question as asked, which was much too often not the case this examination session.
- In terms of knowledge, teachers need to continue to work with students to help them find effective ways to incorporate their knowledge of theory and theoretical perspectives in this paper, and to make this relevant to the question. As noted previously, where students remembered to include some theoretical reference, too often this seemed isolated and unconnected to the rest of the response, and seemed to represent something learned by rote rather than something understood.
- While most students are usually able to present some descriptive ethnographic materials, quite often these lack sufficient detail and/or the details are not made explicitly relevant to the question; again, as with theory, this seems to be a key

issue – how to help students learn to think both with and about the materials, to address a range of different kinds of questions that require them to do something more than simply reproduce what has been learned, often it seems, somewhat mechanically.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 20

General comments

It is encouraging to also see that more candidates are able to demonstrate the quality of critical thinking and writing about theory and theoretical perspectives in relation to ethnography that can be achieved at the top level. However, more candidates found it difficult to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of relevant connections and comparisons between theoretical perspectives, schools of thought and relevant ethnography than in past examination sessions. While this certainly reflects some apparent limitations in terms of knowledge and understanding of the three key components for this paper, it was also evident that many candidates found it difficult to focus in terms of the question, often seeming to ignore specific requirements, such as to discuss **one** perspective or **one** school of thought. For example, where many chose to write about theoretical perspectives in terms of oppositional pairs which can be useful, more often than not they gave equal weight to both when the question required a specific focus on one. While this may allow them to demonstrate some knowledge that is generally relevant, it misses the kind of detailed knowledge and understanding expected at higher level.

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

As has been the case in previous examination sessions, the ability to develop relevant connections and comparisons between theoretical perspectives, schools of thought and relevant ethnography continues to be a challenge for many candidates. While most candidates seem to have some knowledge and understanding of each of these three critical components, rather often this appears to be isolated, and limited to 'learned' materials that candidates struggle to apply effectively beyond the specific context in which it has been taught, or in response to new questions in terms of a genuine inquiry. Consequently, more often than not, relevance to the question is only weakly established, limiting achievement, especially in criteria D and E. And in some cases, even the "learned knowledge" is in itself quite limited to one or two schools of thought that are in themselves outdated and do not serve candidates well (this is also the case for some of the ethnography still in use). These kinds of limitations mean that

candidates often ignore the requirement to focus on **one** perspective or **one** school of thought, and write what they know with little apparent consideration of focus and/or relevance.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

It was encouraging again this year to see the quality of some of the thinking and writing candidates are able to produce about ethnography in relation to both perspectives and schools of thought: this examination session all five questions produced an encouraging number of anthropologically informed and closely argued responses, demonstrating most effectively the kind of critical work that can be done at this level. It was also encouraging that some candidates were able to use their knowledge and understanding of the same ethnographic and sometimes theoretical materials to respond thoughtfully to different questions. Almost all candidates were able to demonstrate some knowledge of different perspectives and of some mostly relevant ethnography; and several schools of thought seem quite well understood, including Structural Functionalism, Symbolic Theory, Cultural Ecology, Cultural Materialism, Political Economy, Postmodernism and some aspects of Practice Theory, although this knowledge and understanding is quite uneven between centres. Some of the most successful responses used some quite current materials, including Nakamura's *Deaf in Japan* (2006), Piot's *Remotely Global* (1999) and Bourgois' *In Search of Respect* (1996, 2nd ed. 2003).

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

This question was not often chosen but produced several very high achieving responses and others that were more limited. While most candidates seemed at least familiar with both idealist and materialist perspectives, the ability to develop an extended discussion clearly focused on either the work of **one** anthropologist **or one** school of thought as required by the question, was a critical distinction between successful and more limited responses. The most effective responses were those that discussed feminist theory in relation to Patel's work on women in Indian call centres, all of which were theoretically informed and closely argued. Responses that were on track but not quite complete included discussion of Archetti's work in Ecuador, referencing Symbolic Theory, Clastres' work with the Guayaki (Paraguay), referencing Ruth Benedict and Cultural Materialism and Lee's work with the Ju'hoansi (Botswana, Namibia), referencing Marxism. Other responses referencing Cultural Materialism and brief examples from Harris' "Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches" or the Kuna (Swain), or Structural Functionalism and the Yanomamo (Chagnon), Guarani (Ministry of 'Education, Argentina) or Trobrianders (more often Malinowski than Weiner) were usually less effective.

Question 2

This question was chosen by slightly more candidates and produced a larger group of strong and middle range responses. Most were able to demonstrate at least some knowledge of the strengths and limitations of either conflict-centred or agency-centred perspectives, often developed in terms of their opposing perspectives of either cohesion- or structure-centred

perspectives respectively. However the ability to apply this effectively in relation to relevant ethnography and in particular to relevant theory was more problematic (at the lower end of the range, some responses made no reference to theory and one included no ethnography). In the most successful responses most candidates examined a conflict-centred perspective and symbolic theory, contrasting the work of Turner and Geertz in relation to Fadiman's journalistic account of the Hmong in California (while most recognized that this is not an ethnographic account, which was good to see, the discussion did not always reflect this). Others were also successful in linking conflict- or agency-centred perspectives in relation to Appadurai's theory of disjunctures, Bourdieu's discussion of different forms of capital, and feminist theory. In the middle range, responses were mostly focused on an agency-centred perspective but sometimes struggled to clarify the relevance of this to either the chosen theory (for example political economy or psychological functionalism) or ethnography such as the Kuna (Swain) or Australian Aborigines. More effective responses in this middle range worked with Piot's *Remotely Global* (Togo) and/or *The Swazi* (Kuper) with reference to either Postmodernism or Structural Functionalism respectively.

Question 3

This was a more popular question, and produced a very wide range of responses. There were several informed and very thoughtful responses, most often evaluating a structure-centred approach to understanding power or inequality and referencing relevant theory including Marxism, feminism, Bourdieu and symbolic theory, as well as ethnography such as Bourgois' *In Search of Respect*, Nakamura's *Deaf in Japan* and Fadiman's account of the Hmong in California. There was a solid middle range, more often examining approaches to ritual, which was usually quite well described in relation to either structure- or cohesion-centred perspectives, although knowledge of relevant theory was more limited. However more than half of the responses fell in the lower range where it seemed many candidates found it difficult to focus effectively, or to demonstrate relevant links between perspectives, theory and ethnography which is the key requirement of paper 3.

Question 4

Although this question was chosen by very few candidates, it was often well done. Most, although not all, of these responses demonstrated quite a detailed knowledge and understanding of relevant aspects of symbolic theory and contrasted the approaches of Turner and Geertz in terms of universalistic and particularistic perspectives respectively, usually in relation to relevant aspects of Fadiman's account of the Hmong in California. Others who chose to focus on either cultural ecology or postmodernism demonstrated some knowledge of relevant theory in relation to universalistic and particularistic perspectives, but were less successful in linking this to relevant ethnographic materials.

Question 5

This was the most popular question and produced one response at the top of the mark range, but also a very large group in the lower range. All candidates clearly had at least some descriptive knowledge of both synchronic and diachronic perspectives, however almost all focused on a diachronic perspective and most chose to examine this in terms of evolutionary theory, uncritically, which is where the problem for many began. While some candidates were

able to demonstrate some limited descriptive knowledge of evolutionary theory in anthropology, they were mostly unable to make any relevant links to ethnography, and if they did risked doing this in very problematic terms such as 'progress', 'advance', and even 'primitive' and 'civilized' which was very troubling to read in the early 21st century. Others sometimes had a little more success when they tried to examine historical particularism, but again this was usually presented with little understanding of the school of thought itself, or of ways in which it continues to have some relevance for more current approaches to ethnographic thought or practice. The very occasional discussions of a synchronic perspective, usually in relation to structural functionalism, were a little more effective but limited in terms of the knowledge and understanding demonstrated.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Understanding of theoretical perspectives, and selected schools of thought and ethnography, to be able to think and write with and about these components in response to unseen questions to demonstrate understanding of some of the ways in which perspectives and schools of thought shape ethnographic accounts. As noted above, this is made more difficult when knowledge of these components is limited in range or context or perhaps outdated; thus teachers are encouraged to review their own programme and materials to make sure that they are as current and relevant as is possible.
- The other challenge for teachers is to develop classroom strategies that encourage students to become more confident in their knowledge and understanding of perspectives, and especially current schools of thought, through frequent discussion, debate and application/writing, to help candidates develop more critical, analytical and comparative skills to ensure that answers are clearly focused and relevant to the question, rather than simply "learned" materials more or less mechanically reproduced.
- Finally, it is important to emphasize that at this level, ethnographic materials studied need to be more than just short cases described or re-examined in a general or larger text.