

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2009

THEATRE ARTS

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The CSEC examination in Theatre Arts consists of three papers.

Paper 01 consists of six essay questions measuring the profile Analyzing and Appreciating. Each question is worth a maximum of 10 marks for a total of 60 marks.

Paper 02 consists of three options, each measuring the profile Creating and Performing in different ways. Candidates are required to choose one option for study. Each option of Paper 02 is worth 100 marks. Comments on candidates' performance on Paper 02 were provided by the External Examiners but are not presented in this report as External Examiners and teachers would have already discussed them.

Paper 03 requires the candidates to prepare two projects, one being a critique and the other a research paper. Paper 03 is worth 40 marks.

Approximately 761 candidates from seven of the participating territories wrote the Theatre Arts examination in 2009. Sixty-seven SBA samples were received.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Essay Questions

Paper 01 comprises six questions.

Question 1

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of roles in a theatre production (General Objective (i), Specific Objective (v)). The question was attempted by 717 (94.2%) of the candidates. The mean mark for the question was 4.06. Responses were generally good, but could have been improved had candidates:

- a) distinguished between technical and artistic roles in theatre (the question placed emphasis on the technical)
- b) been exposed to theatre practitioners as guests in the classroom
- c) gained practice through proper role allocation in school productions.

Question 2

This question tested candidates' observation, conceptualization, knowledge of elements of theatre and creative imagination. These are identified as General Objective (i) and Specific Objectives (iii) and (iv) in the syllabus.

The 688 (90.4%) responses to this question were generally good. The mean mark for the question was 4.91. The most challenging parts of this question were Part (b), where candidates were asked to justify their answers, and Part (c), where weaker candidates had difficulty with the terms 'characterization' and 'style'.

Candidates need to know all the elements of theatre. These are defined in the syllabus for use by teachers. Candidates should also practise answering questions on past papers to get a better understanding of the links between different parts of a question.

Question 3

This question tested candidates' understanding of the purpose behind preparatory activities for a theatre class. (General Objective (i) and (iv) and Specific Objectives (ii) and (iv)).

Seven hundred and five (92.6%) candidates responded to this question. Responses were fairly good, and the mean mark for the question was 4.82. However, many candidates failed to relate activities specifically to 'preparation' and instead stated any activity that would be done in a dance or drama class.

Candidates should practise reading and understanding what a question requires and be guided in this by the teacher.

Question 4

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of cultural forms (General Objectives (ii) and (iii) and Specific Objective (vii)). Candidates were also asked to link the traditional and contemporary use of the form. This question was attempted by 721 (94.7%) of the candidates. The mean mark for this question was 3.64. Some candidates experienced difficulty in comprehending the term "territory" used in the question. Some interpreted the term 'territory' as local region or parish where cultural form is found; others referred to places outside the Caribbean. Teachers need to assist students in understanding relevant or key words and linking traditional and contemporary use of cultural forms.

Question 5

This question tested candidates' ability to reflect on their process of learning in Theatre Arts and to articulate what they learnt, as well as their knowledge of elements of theatre (General Objectives (i) and (iv) and Specific Objectives (ii), (iii), and (iv)). There were 683 (89.8%) responses to this question. The mean mark for this question was 3.58.

Candidates need to be more familiar with the elements of theatre and should be able to discuss and analyse these critically. Journalising as a medium for reflection helps in this process. Again, candidates are advised to practice interpreting and answering questions.

Question 6

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to transfer their knowledge and understanding of Theatre Arts to an extra-theatrical, but relatively common social situation. General Objectives (i) and (iii) and Specific Objectives (ii) were tested in this question. The majority of candidates found this question very challenging. Similar questions have been set in the past, but with reference to other contexts. Many answers simply referred to the benefits of Theatre Arts generally. The mark scheme allowed one mark each for such general answers. There were 671 (88.2%) responses and the mean mark for the question was 3.66. Candidates could be better prepared for this type of question by exploring the social and emotional aspects of theatre, apart from its aesthetic elements. Teachers could help in this process by illustrating theatre as a mechanism not only for entertainment, but social action.

Paper 03 - School-Based Assessment

There were two assignments comprising Paper 03: Critique of a dance or drama production and a research paper on a theatre personality or cultural practitioner. Sixty-seven samples were submitted and moderated by the Examining Team. The following are the observations and recommendations of the Examining Committee.

Research Paper

1. Candidates need to be reminded that the value of the subject of research is the practitioner's contribution to culture and the arts. While there can be no stipulation regarding age, practitioners with years of experience in the arts may have a great deal more to offer from which the researcher can learn, than the less experienced.
2. In several cases, interviews were not conducted by the candidate but simply plagiarized from the Internet. Teachers should seriously caution their students against plagiarism, that is, presenting work which does not belong to them as their own. This is intellectual theft. It is always unethical and in some cases, illegal. Copying of work among students is also plagiarism. All parties involved should be penalised by the teacher and this penalty should be reflected in the teacher's comments and marking of the paper.
3. The syllabus allows for interviews with secondary sources where the candidate may not have direct access to the practitioner.
4. Interview questions should seek information relevant to the work of the practitioner, as against incidental information.
5. Information gathered from the interview and other research sources should be presented in essay form as the body of the paper. Interview questions are attached as an appendix and not included in the body of the essay.
6. Candidates should be reminded to offer their personal reflections on and impressions of the practitioner in concluding the essay.
7. Supporting materials add to the value of the paper by providing evidence of the actual interview and supporting the candidate's conclusions about the subject (practitioner).
8. Teachers must ensure that their marking and corrections are clearly presented on the paper.

Critique

1. The critiquing of video-productions is a secondary option where no live theatre may be available. In reality, there is no substitute for live theatre. This experience can have immeasurable learning value and students must be given every opportunity to benefit from it. Both written and classroom discussion of live theatre will help build students' critical skills (APAN).
2. This material is to be presented in the essay form, not necessarily listing the elements of theatre as distinct sub-headings.
3. Teachers are advised to follow the guidelines clearly stated in the syllabus.

In general, candidates did not respond well to the interpretive and applied aspects of the written examination. The appreciation that theatre reflects life could serve as a useful teaching guideline in integrating the subject with students' personal and public life experiences.