

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2010

HOME ECONOMICS: MANAGEMENT

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GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

JUNE 2010

STRUCTURE OF THE EXAMINATION

The Caribbean Examinations Council Administered its 29th examination of the Caribbean Secondary Certificate of Home Economics in May 2010. The General Proficiency included three components: Paper 01 – Multiple Choice, Paper 02 – Structured Essay and Paper 03 – School-Based Assessment.

Paper 01 comprised 60 multiple choice items, each worth one mark.

Paper 02 consisted of two parts. Part A comprised three compulsory questions while Part B comprised four questions from which candidates were required to choose two. Each question was awarded a total of 16 marks, 6 marks awarded for the Knowledge Profile and 10 marks for Use of Knowledge Profile.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The compulsory questions on Paper 02 have historically revolved around Modules 5, 7 and 10. Despite this known fact the questions continue to be poorly understood by the candidates and the responses were shallow and parochial. There was a lack of proper usage of language, both grammatical and technical and the appropriate knowledge relating to the content inherent to these objectives. Most often candidates reverted to their personal or family experiences and very often street parlance and superstition as against the use of the taught verifiable content required of candidates. There needs to be greater evidence of the subject mastery and at least reasonable exposure to the standard knowledge by the majority of the candidates across the region. It is desirable that regions and schools take note of this tendency, do more to improve the greater understanding of the content and the need for mastery of these important areas of the curriculum, and to seek to revise and update the texts and other resources used in the teaching of the topics.

Concepts pertaining to the critical objectives seemed misunderstood and poorly reported on by the candidates. Candidates often failed to determine differences in meanings of important concepts like *definitions, characteristics, factors, benefit, effects, reasons/explanations and examples*. Many incorrect responses or responses that earned only partial marks for the candidates were due to their inability to demonstrate their mastery of the critical language of organising and understanding the course content.

Candidates often demonstrated lack of knowledge in answering questions and the inability to follow instructions by the way they wrote two or three lines of information on a single page of the answer booklet, often with incorrect responses and as a result wasted the entire manuscript.

There must be concerted efforts for teachers to help the students learn how to read and interpret the essay questions and provide reasonable responses that will earn the assigned marks. The low scores of some candidates who took this examination suggest that some candidates did not study the subject or were just not at the readiness level. The latter inference was based on the incoherent, illegible, nonsensical responses of some candidates.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Candidate performance on this paper declined significantly in 2010. The topics which proved to be challenging to the candidates were:

- The least reliable method of family planning
- The type of glassware used for serving wine
- The alkali used for removing heavy grease stains
- Factors that contribute to safety in the kitchen
- Ingredients for preparing a home-made furniture polish for wooden furniture
- Characteristics of heat resistant glass
- ‘Open stock’ with reference to tableware

Section A

Question 1

Mean: 6.11 Std. Dev.: 3.74

In Part (a) (i), candidates were required to:

State two benefits to be derived from family members working cooperatively in the kitchen garden, the key phrase being, “family members working cooperatively.”

A number of candidates were able to write the correct responses to include:

- Building family bonds
- Younger family members developing responsibility
- Building a spirit of cooperation
- Work would be done quicker and easier
- Team work and togetherness in getting work done.

Other candidates gave incorrect responses, which are indicative of a lack of knowledge and their being unprepared for the examination and/or their misinterpretation of the question.

Part (a) (ii) asked for the benefits of an individual having a job.

This was answered correctly by most of the candidates.

Some popular correct responses were:

- Gain work experience
- To get an income
- To confer status
- Will be able to achieve goals
- Develop independence
- Can improve standard of living.

In Part (b) (i), candidates were asked to state one characteristic of good mental health.

Most candidates misinterpreted the question and provided responses that referred to activities to be done in maintaining good mental health instead of providing responses on the “characteristics” (features, attributes, quality) of good mental health.

Some correct responses included:

- Having good relationship with co-workers
- Being able to interpret and make right decisions
- Alertness
- Being focused
- Having good memory
- Sense of personal well-being.

Part (b) (ii) asked for one characteristic of physical fitness.

Again some candidates misinterpreted this question and failed to state the “*characteristic*” of physical fitness.

Some correctly stated responses were:

- The ability to carry out daily activities without feeling tired easily
- Energetic and active
- Good posture
- Being physically alert.

Incorrect responses given often included:

- Exercising regularly
- Keeping the body fit
- Eating a lot of fruits and vegetables
- Eating from the six food groups
- Free from sickness.

Part (b) (iii) required candidates to briefly discuss effects of good mental health on the work performance of teachers preparing students for an examination.

Some candidates answered the question very poorly; some did not even attempt to respond to this part of the question. In many instances, candidates referred to the effects of good mental health for the “students” preparing and going into an examination instead of the effects of good mental health on the teacher’s work performance in preparing students for the examination. Additionally some candidates stated points instead of **briefly discussing** the points in their responses.

Where candidates provided the correct responses, some popular correct responses were:

- Teachers should be alert and focus on preparing students for the examination so that more work can be done.
- Teachers should be patient with the weaker students and help them in understanding more in those areas in which they are weak.
- The teacher will remain calm even when it becomes very stressful preparing students for the examination and will not curse them.

- The teacher will have extra classes, go through past papers and ensure the syllabus is completed before the examination.
- The teachers will encourage and motivate students to study and work hard so that they can pass the examination with very good grades.

Part (b) (iv) asked candidates to briefly discuss effects of poor physical fitness.

Some candidates gave satisfactory responses. However, other responses spoke to students' physical fitness and also activities that the teacher could engage in to maintain physical fitness.

Some of the correct responses written by the candidates were:

- Teachers will be absent from school and do not get to cover the syllabus before the examination.
- Teacher is always tired and cannot move around the class to help students.
- Teachers will lack energy and motivation to assist students.

Question 2

Mean: 6.21 Std. Dev.: 3.37

The question tested candidates' knowledge of budgeting. Part (a) tested candidates' ability to recall valid reasons for preparing a budget. Part (b) required candidates to state one important task that may be performed regularly to ensure budgeting is an effective way of managing their money. Part (c) required candidates to name factors other than expenditure that should be considered when making a budget.

Part (a) in particular was fairly well done, as most candidates were able to state at least two of the three valid reasons for preparing a budget.

Some of the correct responses included:

- To keep spending under control
- To reduce impulse buying
- To provide a plan for saving.

Part (b) was poorly done; most candidates gave reasons for preparing a budget instead of stating the important task or what must be done to manage a budget after it is prepared. Even in instances when the reason was named in Part (a), it was repeated in Part (b).

Some of the expected responses were:

- Keep a record of all spending
- Stick to the budget as much as is possible
- Review the budget regularly
- Adjust expenditures and savings to meet priorities
- Identify ways to increase income
- Keep one's job.

For (c), many candidates could not name 'net income' and 'savings' as factors to consider in making a budget.

Part (d) tested candidates' understanding of how to analyse the information given in the scenario provided, prepare a budget, name items to be included in the budget, and give reasons for their inclusion.

Part (d) (i), which required candidates to prepare a monthly budget, was poorly done. Most candidates encountered difficulty with the calculations. It was also revealed that, in a number of cases the incorrect calculations were given for all the car payment areas, except maintenance. Many candidates also gave the same figures from the table given and budgeted as if the car was already purchased. The question required candidates to simply divide the expenses in the table by twelve to get the monthly allocation. For example, Down payment given was US\$1,200.00. $1,200 \text{ divided by } 12 = \text{US}\100 .

Part (d) (ii) was generally well done. However, most items to be included in the budget were related to the car, for example, license, types of car, cleaning of the car, toll fee and alarm.

Some other expected responses were:

- Contribution to home, since it was mentioned in the scenario
- Savings
- Entertainment
- Transport.

In Part (d) (iii), it was noticed that some good reasons were given but were not connected to the items named in (d) (ii). Many gave reasons for the monthly car payment in the **table**. Since it was stated that John lives at home and contributes \$200 to the home, allocations for food and utilities were not accepted. Part (d) tested understanding and was worth a large portion of the marks. However, candidates found it difficult to group ideas and thoughts in order to maximize on the allotted marks.

Question 3

Mean: 9.22 Std. Dev.: 3.12

This question tested candidates' knowledge of possible accidents and causes when using household equipment and safety precautions during and after a storm.

Part (a) was not well done. Most candidates were unable to select a suitable accident for the electric steam iron. They gave responses such as *"The iron was left unplugged"*, or *"iron was left unattended"*.

The stronger candidates gave correct responses such as:

- *"Too much water in steam iron causing the iron to spill and burn oneself"*
- *Burn from poor handling*
- *"Iron was too hot for the fabric, therefore burning fabric"*

On the matter of an accident using the microwave, most candidates spoke about burning of food items, and not a personal accident. A number of candidates had no idea what is a microwave oven. Those who understood gave the response that, when metals are placed in the microwave there is either a fire or explosion and shock from poor handling.

Part (b) (i) of the question required candidates to state one safety measure that should be taken in the home to prevent accidents from flying objects.

Some candidates were able to answer correctly by saying:

- Board up windows and doors using plywood or zinc
- Trim tree branches close to the house
- Take down pictures and place in boxes on the floor or in a safe place.

Many candidates misinterpreted the phrase “flying objects” to mean “flying insects”, since many candidates gave responses such as “spray with Baygon” or “use a fly catcher”. Some even gave responses such as “do not fly anything in the house during a hurricane” and “put away flying object so it won’t be able to fly around the house”.

Part (b) (ii) asked candidates to describe the first three steps in applying first aid treatment to a household member who gets a cut from a rotten tree limb.

Examples of good responses included:

- Apply pressure to stop bleeding
- Clean the cut with hydrogen peroxide or antiseptic
- Applying gauze or band aide.

Many candidates responded incorrectly by saying that *the tree limb* should be removed from the foot. Also, many of them said they would administer antibiotic to the person and use a pair of scissors or needle to remove the splinter. It is important to note that responses must reflect the sequence when given *steps*.

Part (b) (iii) solicited responses on two strategies that households should employ to reduce the incidents of water-borne illnesses after a hurricane.

Good responses included:

- Household should boil water before using or add bleach
- Empty cans, containers which may contain stagnant water
- Remove dead animals and debris which may contaminate the water.

Many candidates misread the question to mean “during or before a flood” instead of **after** the hurricane. Therefore, responses included:

- Moving to higher ground
- Building your house on a hill
- Using sand bags to keep out flood waters.

Section B comprised four optional questions from which candidates were required to answer two.

Question 4

Mean: 3.55 Std. Dev.: 2.47

In Part (a), many candidates gave satisfactory definitions for the term family life cycle, for example, the different stages or changes through which family grows, then proceeded to name the stages: beginning, expanding and contracting.

Many candidates gave the definition of the “family” instead of the “family life cycle”, while other candidates incorrectly gave the developmental stages of the child.

For Part (b) (i), candidates were able to give the correct reasons for personal adjustment in the beginning stage, such as adjusting to each other, getting to know each other's likes and dislikes, having different goals. However, many candidates did not focus on the beginning stage but spoke about the challenges that may occur in the expanding stage with the birth of the child. Generally, responses were shallow and parochial and did not demonstrate good understanding.

In Part (b) (ii), some responses correctly stated that each partner may have different goals or may be inexperienced in goal setting. Some candidates defined the term goal and gave examples of the different types of goals but did not give reasons for challenges involved in goal setting.

Part (c) (i) was based on a scenario and most candidates were able to identify the two factors that caused the change in the couple's goal. However, some candidates fabricated factors or gave explanations for actions instead of giving factors, for example, financial constraints, taking care of the baby and taking a year off from university as a factor that caused the change in the couple's goal.

Part (c) (ii) of the question was poorly done. Very few candidates were able to describe the decision-making steps. Some candidates listed the decision-making steps without referring to the scenario. Many candidates gave the management process and others gave lengthy answers referring to ways in which the couple could have avoided the pregnancy but failed to mention the decision-making process. The question required candidates to apply the steps in decision making to the scenario, not to simply list the steps. Example of part of an expected response:

Step 1: Josh and Jassy should have determined precisely what was their problem – was it just being pregnant? Her illness? Her inability to be pregnant and cope with studies?

Step 2: They should have examined all their options: continue in spite of the illness; get medical treatment and continue; take a shorter time off.

Question 5

Mean: 8.08 Std. Dev.: 3.58

This was the least popular among the optional questions. It tested candidates' ability to formulate responses to questions related to working with the elderly.

Part (a) (i) required candidates to identify two factors to be considered when caring for the elderly. Candidates were expected to list factors such as *nutritional, physical, emotional, social and personal*.

Very few candidates identified the factors; they instead provided explanations of what should be done to the elderly, for example, *provide a balanced meal or diet, regular medical examinations and exercise*.

Part (a) (ii) required that candidates give examples to show how family members can ensure the factors identified in (i) are achieved. Most gave appropriate responses. However, responses were a repeat of the responses given in (i) above. Examples of expected responses were: *Nutritional – example of how each may be achieved by the family is - provide regular balanced meals*.

In Part (b), candidates were asked to explain the term "aging population." Few responses were correct. Many responded that the *community/country consisted of old people with no comparison to young people*. They were expected to compare the increase of elderly persons and adults with the decrease of children and adolescents - (comparison between old and young population).

In Part (c) (i), candidates were expected to name a community-based programme where both the elderly and youth can exchange community values and traditions.

This was fairly well done as the majority of the candidates were able to formulate an appropriate name for the programme. A few candidates wrote the exact words given in the scenario to name the programme. Here was an opportunity for creativity since nearly any title would have been accepted.

Part (c) (ii), required candidates to briefly describe two activities that would form part of the programme and explain why each activity was chosen.

Candidates were able for the most part, to suggest suitable activities but were unable to clearly describe them. For example, with responses like, *Story telling and games* where descriptions were given, reasons were not given and vice versa. As a result, they were unable to score maximum marks.

Part (c) (iii) required candidates to state three benefits that can be derived from the programme.

Most candidates were able to state at least two benefits. However, most benefits given were interchangeable with the reasons why the activities were chosen at (c) (ii).

Candidates who scored highly on this question displayed the ability to:

- Give clear explanations for key terms
- Describe activities chosen as well as give reasons for choice.
- Link activities chosen to benefits to be derived.

Question 6

Mean: 8.37 Std. Dev.: 4.02

This was a popular optional question. For Part (a) (i), the majority of candidates gave inaccurate or incorrect meanings for the term 'Management'.

The accepted responses were:

- The efficient way of using resources to achieve goals.
- The wise use of available resources to achieve goals.

In Part (a) (ii), candidates were asked to state one responsibility of a host and guest.

The majority of responses showed the candidates' confusion of meaning and application of the words host and guest, and the context of the question. This means they drew on popular usage and colloquialism rather than content. Some thought that the term host for a party meant the *host of television or stage shows, airplane host/hostess or persons taking food orders at a restaurant*. Guest was confused with *persons giving orders, guest speaker, persons who were asked to help at a function*. In addition, candidates gave definition in those contexts.

Some appropriate answers received:

- Host – greet guest
- Be attentive to the needs of the guests
- Introduce guests to each other.

Part (b) (i) was well answered by candidates. This aspect tested the candidates' understanding of formulating the wording for a formal invitation. A number of candidates wrote letters using salutations which are not used in formal invitations such as, 'Dear sir' and 'Yours truly'. The components of the invitation were, however, found to be 'scattered' throughout the response. Some candidates also just listed the headings, for example, *Date, Venue, Dress code, Time without writing the invitation*. The acronym RSVP was written in different forms, for example, *RIP, RVPS, RVSP*. Overall this part was well answered.

For Part (b) (ii) candidates gave definitions for planning and organizing but did not apply the knowledge to the given situation.

For the correct response, candidates were expected to indicate:

(i) Planning:

- Make a list of invited guest
- Calculate catering details accurately
- Identify persons to collect invitations and seat guest.

(ii) Organizing:

- Labelling tables
- Calling invitees to determine who is coming
- Selecting and briefing ushers
- Sending invitations to identify persons.

Questions 7

Mean: 7.91 Std. Dev.: 2.97

Candidates' knowledge of consumerism with emphasis on *advertisement, housing and money management was being assessed*. They were required to use their knowledge to identify information relating to advertisements. Candidates' knowledge about the credit union was also tested.

The question was the most popular of the four optional questions.

Part (a) required the meaning of consumer-related terms and was generally well done. However, most of the candidates failed to give examples for the terms. At least 70 per cent of the candidates, who chose this question, wrote that consumer credit is credit used by a consumer for personal needs rather than business. The expected response should have included delayed payment plans for the goods and services bought, for example, loans, hire purchase and charge accounts.

Part (b) (i) focused on the candidates' ability to identify missing information from an advertisement.

Most candidates were able to answer this correctly. However, some candidates seemed to have misinterpreted the word 'omitted' in the question and as a result they repeated the information from the advertisement in their responses.

Part (b) (ii) required candidates to suggest three questions that they need to ask before purchasing a house based on the advertisement and give a reason for each question.

This part was done well by most candidates. Some correctly identified areas to be questioned, but failed to pose them as questions. It was noted that some candidates used terms like *'environment'*, *'neighbourhood'* and *'location'* as three different questions to ask of the realtor, although they referred to the same concept. Expected responses should have included:

- What is the cost of the house?
- When was the house built?

Some of the reasons given, however, were not aligned with the questions asked. Part (c) of the question required candidates to: Give two reasons why the credit union may be a better source of financing to purchase the home than a mortgage company.

This part of the question posed a great deal of difficulty for the majority of the candidates. They were unable to negotiate the reasons why the credit union may be better than the mortgage company and as a result gave responses such as:

- The credit union will not take away your house if you do not pay
- You can take as long as you want to pay back the credit union
- The credit union does not add interest to the loan.

They should have given:

- Interest rates are usually lower
- Interests is calculated on the reducing balance
- Less administrative hassle in receiving a loan.

Most candidates demonstrated limited knowledge about credit unions. The quality of the candidates' responses were reasonable in some instances but mediocre to weak in too many areas critical to the core knowledge of the subject area.

The following recommendations are intended to address the pedagogical imperatives of the discipline in the schools, inclusive of teacher competence and relevance of course material.

Recommendations

1. The syllabus specifically outlines that this Module – Work and Work Ethics - is mandatory in Part A of Paper 02. Hence in preparation, teachers are to pay close attention to providing students with adequate knowledge and practice to ensure they are able to respond to the questions appropriately, based on this module.
2. Strategic measures need to be taken by the teachers, in preparation for examination, to provide the candidates with guidelines that will allow them to be more knowledgeable of the terminologies used in the questions such as “*discuss*”, “*describe*”, “*list*”, “*state*”, “*benefits*”, “*effects*”, “*characteristics*”, among others.
3. Adequate time should also be used for practice in answering essay-type questions.
4. More hands-on experiences required by the students so that they can have “tangible” knowledge of particular areas of the syllabus. This includes taking the students on field trips, use of resource persons, DVDs and reliable internet sources as references in the learning experience.
5. More attention could be paid to the objectives on financial institutions such as the credit union.

6. There is the need to ensure students move from cultural (colloquial) terms to the more general terms in the subject area, for example, use of the term 'rooms' to describe the rooms in a house instead of the term 'apartments'.
7. Candidates need to build competencies in the fundamentals of expressing themselves in basic English Language, including using non-slang or street language in answering examination questions.
8. Candidates need to learn the basics of answering questions after carefully reading and interpreting the sought after task.
9. Finally, students need to be encouraged to broaden their knowledge and scope by reading and engaging in meaningful study and practice so that they can perform at a higher standard on these examinations.