

**C A R I B B E A N   E X A M I N A T I O N S   C O U N C I L**

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

**MAY/JUNE 2011**

**THEATRE ARTS  
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The Theatre Arts examination consists of three components. Paper 01, an essay paper, consists of six compulsory questions each worth 10 marks. Paper 02, the practical examination, is examined externally by the Theatre Arts teacher and a specialist in the field. Paper 03, the School-Based Assessment (SBA), consists of two projects — a research paper and a critique. The research paper is based on a Theatre Arts or cultural practitioner and the critique on a dance or drama production.

In 2011, 1,275 candidates registered for the Theatre Arts examination from the following territories: Antigua and Barbuda (1 centre), Barbados (10 centres), British Virgin Islands (1 centre), Grenada (2 centres), Guyana (5 centres), Jamaica (47 centres), St Lucia (7 centres), St Vincent and the Grenadines (1 centre) and Trinidad and Tobago (40 centres). The total number of candidates registered in 2011 increased by 27 per cent compared with 2010. Two countries, Grenada and St Vincent and the Grenadines registered candidates for the first time in 2011.

In October of 2009 and January of 2010, the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) organized training workshops in the assessment of Paper 02 for teachers and specialists engaged in the Theatre Arts examination. This training was conducted in Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados and teachers from all the participating countries were invited to attend. These workshops were expected to positively impact the 2010 examination and those in the near future. The improved performance on the Paper 02 examination in 2011 can be credited to the training workshops for teachers and specialists.

The steady and very positive growth in the number of candidates registering for the Theatre Arts examination presents the challenge of ensuring that the supporting systems of information, workshops as well as materials are in place to sustain and improve quality in the examination. It is noted, however, that some teachers are networking with their colleagues at other centres in their countries and even outside of their countries. This is commendable.

In general, while the overall performance of candidates was good, instances of outright plagiarism and copying in the SBA's, weak requisite skills, shoddiness in the presentation of work, and teachers' failure to detect or discern these faults remain nothing short of alarming. These cases do not relate to first-time schools necessarily, but include those with considerable experience in which a higher standard is expected.

## **DETAILED COMMENTS**

### **Paper 01 – Essay Questions**

Paper 01 is designed to test core objectives of the syllabus. These include knowledge of cultural forms, knowledge of types of theatre spaces, the function of theatre personnel and theatrical action as elements of theatre and knowledge of the personal and social value of theatre processes.

This paper engages candidates in the recalling of facts, describing, observing, analyzing, imagining and reflecting.

This basic structure of the Paper 01 examination is as follows:

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| • Question 1 | Functions of theatre personnel                                    |
| • Question 2 | Cultural Forms  |
| • Question 3 | Stimulus (This could be text or a visual, for example, a picture) |

- Question 4 Elements of theatre
- Question 5 Reinforcement of work done for Paper 02 and 03
- Question 6 Reflection /social functions of theatre/Reinforcement of work done for Papers 02 and 03

Overall, performance on this paper was fair. There were refreshing examples of candidates referencing cultural forms beyond their own territories and providing persuasive testimony to the impact of Theatre Arts on their lives. On the other hand, some candidates seemed unable to apply knowledge or factual information learnt in the classroom to a new or given situation.

### Question 1

This question tested candidates' knowledge of Caribbean cultural forms.

This question specifically assessed Caribbean cultural forms in terms of origins, influences, elements and functions. So, while most of the responses to this question scored half of the total marks or lower, candidates should have been able to perform even better on this question. The question was clearly phrased, but underlying it was a complex cultural process (creolization) in which influences could be observable both in form (elements) as well as social evolution (development). Weaker candidates had difficulty answering Part (a) which required them to name a cultural form with both European and African elements and Part (b) which required them to identify two European and two African elements in the cultural form. Candidates had difficulty particularly in identifying European elements. Weaker candidates also had difficulty answering Part (c) which was worth one mark because they did not understand the meaning of the terms *element* and *occasion or event*. On the other hand, those candidates who gained full marks for this question were able to competently and succinctly describe the European and African elements in the Caribbean cultural form they identified.

The mean for this question was 4.17 out of 10.

Teachers need to approach the teaching of Caribbean cultural forms in terms of their origins, history, development, functions and elements as guided by the syllabus. It is also suggested that information on cultural forms be sought by networking among teachers and the production of supporting tests and resource material.

### Question 2

This question tested candidates' knowledge of a fundamental pre-performance process — physical preparation and invited reflection on its value.

For this question, candidates needed to draw on knowledge gained in the classroom as well as the experience of performance activity for their Paper 02 examination. Responses to this question were good. The majority of candidates gained over 50 percent of the marks for this question. Part (a), which required candidates to describe two activities used to prepare the body for performance, was generally well handled. A response which gained full marks for Part (a) identified warm-ups and short improvised scenes as the two activities used to prepare the body for performance. The candidate further indicated that *the warm ups include walking around in the space and stretching the body in preparation for lots of movement. The short improvised scenes basically allow us to open up our imaginations and assume different characters on the spot.* Weaker responses, however failed to elaborate on the activity as required by the use of the verb *describe*. Hence, candidates in such instances were only able to score two out of the four marks. A similar performance was noted for Part (b).

The mean for this question was 5.43 out of 10.

Candidates must be given practice in answering questions for Paper 01. They should be quite clear about the requirements of the common behavioural verbs used in the examination such as *describe* and *explain*. Discussion and journaling are also critical to building reflection and understanding of activities undertaken in and outside of the classroom.

### Question 3

This question tested candidates' analysis and creative interpretation of dramatic action as well as their knowledge of folk forms.

An extract from the text *Old Story Time* by Trevor Rhone was used for this question. Candidates needed to visualize and identify significant details in the extract. Part (a) required candidates to explain what the scene was about. Most candidates were able to gain one out of the two marks for this part of the question. A response that would have earned full mark should have indicated that *the two characters are remembering the life and death of Pa Zaccy, or that Pa Ben is trying to make Mama forget her boy by singing a song and getting her to prepare for Pa Zaccy's nine nights*. Candidates who simply indicated that Pa Ben and Mama are talking to each other would have earned only one mark. Candidates who were able to score either one or two marks in Part (a) of the question also did well on Part (b). It was recognized that there was some ambiguity in Part (c) in the use of the term *appropriate movement* as some candidates interpreted this as relating both to a cultural form and the song itself. The mark scheme was adjusted accordingly. Candidates' responses were good, the majority being at the middle to the upper range of scores. However, the less prepared candidates had difficulty describing movements appropriate to either context in Part (b).

Part (c) required candidates to identify three actions related to the Caribbean folk customs. Many candidates were able to identify traditional elements in the scene. Any of the following would have been awarded a mark: *libation, singing, dancing, telling of jokes, and holding of nine nights*.

The mean for this question was 5.55 out of 10.

All candidates irrespective of their option, should be involved in improvisational movement and dance activity and explore the dance patterns of traditional forms.

### Question 4

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the roles and function of theatre personnel.

This is a core objective of the syllabus. The question allowed candidates to draw on knowledge that they would have gained in doing their Paper 03 — SBA projects. The word *managing* was highlighted in Part (a) to delimit the scope of the functions requested. The question asked for roles required specifically for managing a theatre. The less prepared candidates failed to recognize the word *managing* in the question and so identified jobs unrelated to managing the theatre. Therefore, they did not earn marks for their response. The following are some of the jobs for which marks were awarded: *producer, director, artistic, director, stage manager, technical director, front of house manager and public relations manager*.

Part (b) required a description of two of the jobs identified. Responses were generally good. A full answer indicated the activities, which the job involved. For example,

*The stage manager is the individual who is present at all rehearsals in order to record the activities in the prompt book. Activities that could be recorded in the prompt book are the cues for the scene changes as well as the blockings for each actor in the production. The stage manager would also direct a rehearsal if the director was absent, since he would have all the information in the prompt book.*

This response earned full marks.

Part (c) was done fairly well, especially by those candidates who were able to perform well on Parts (a) and (b). Candidates were able to use the name of the Theatre Arts practitioner in their submission for the name of the theatre space and give an appropriate reason for their choice as required in the question.

The mean for this question was 4.71 out of 10.

Teachers need to address the roles of Theatre Arts personnel more clearly and specifically, both in relation to their own local circumstances and as practised in professional theatre. Students must also be given practice in preparing for the Paper 01 examination through the use of past papers and in so doing, learn to apply their knowledge of the syllabus to different contexts.

#### Question 5

This question was a reinforcement of the interviewing skills developed in the research paper for the School-Based Assessment. The question required knowledge of a dance or theatre company and its artistic director and skill in developing interview questions. In this question, the interview questions were supposed to focus on eliciting information about the company's accomplishments. Candidates' performance was less than expected. Many candidates failed to recognize the term *artistic director*, or to identify a dance or theatre company. They used, instead, music bands and carnival bands, for example, for which no marks were awarded. Some candidates also failed to focus questions on *accomplishments* and instead developed questions for general bio data.

The mean for this question was 3.10 out of 10.

Teachers are reminded that any student preparing for the Theatre Arts examination must be acquainted with the names, roles, functions and contributions of Theatre Arts practitioners in their countries, first of all, and the wider region. Contemporary music bands, carnival bands and popular singers are outside the scope of the syllabus. Further, it is clear that students needed to develop skills in formulating appropriate interview questions as required for the research paper.

#### Question 6

This question tested candidates' ability to reflect on their own progress and personal growth through the study of Theatre Arts. It assessed candidates' ability to link value-based outcomes of the course to particular components or activities. In this instance, how the study of Theatre Arts can build self-esteem.

Responses to this question were generally good. Candidates seemed to enjoy this question and many wrote persuasively on the impact of Theatre Arts on their own development. Exemplary responses were insightful and detailed. Weaker response failed to make the link between the values and course activities.

The mean for this question was 4.85 out of 10.

Teachers are encouraged to continue emphasizing the values and objectives of classroom activity and coursework in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.

### **Paper 02 — Practical Examination**

The only evidence of school-based performance available to the examining committee is the external examiners' report. The examining committee advises the following:

- Teachers and examiners are to mark the exercise *separately*. Their marks are to be recorded in the appropriate column and an *agreed mark* also entered.
- Examiners are expected to enter comments for each school's performance in the report. Reports devoid of comments are of no help to teachers, students, the school or the examining body.
- Drama and dance teachers are encouraged to work together in conducting 'mock' marking exercises in order to discuss the issue of the work which students present and the methods of assessment.

### **Paper 03 — School-Based Assessment (SBA)**

There were some schools which began to use the 2012 marking scheme. Adjustments were made to accommodate this and in most cases the marks were not significantly different. However, with the examination of the new syllabus in 2012, it is important that teachers apprise themselves of the new marking criteria, cultural forms, texts to be studied and all matters relating to the teaching of the revised CSEC Theatre Arts syllabus.

#### **The Research Paper**

There was a number of instances where students chose musicians, calypsonians and visual artists as the practitioner to be interviewed for the research paper. This is to be discouraged. Unless the individuals have made significant contributions to dance, drama or a cultural form identified in the syllabus, students *must not* choose these individuals. Additionally, some students choose to present published interviews of practitioners from the Internet or other texts. Students are to conduct their own interviews. There were also students who 'interviewed' individuals who are deceased and therefore fabricated responses. This is quite unacceptable and marks will not be awarded in these instances. There were a number of instances where SBA assignments were submitted and in which students had copied each other's work and clearly plagiarized. It is a concern to the examining committee that some teachers fail to recognize these instances of copying and plagiarism. Marks cannot be awarded for copying or plagiarism.

Teachers must be mindful of the following:

- All students' work must be clearly marked and presented as marked.
- All students' work must have either on the front or on the back the CSEC marking criteria with their marks clearly written for the SBA moderation process.

- All students' must present the critique and the researcher paper as two separate typed documents with all the necessary information — school name, student name, registration number — on the front of each assignment.
- Marks must be awarded according to CSEC marking criteria. There were instances where marks were awarded for specific areas that were not evidenced by the students' work.
- The interview and the full responses are to be included as an appendix. Some students included their interview as a cassette or DVD and this is commendable. The outstanding students provided support material which was clearly typed and labelled and used the material to support the various facts and work of the practitioner,

It is therefore important that teachers guide students in selecting practitioners who have contributed to the country or the regions in the area of dance, drama and a cultural form. While this problem is declining, once again we remind teachers that the research paper is to be presented as an *essay*. Students must be given the opportunity to develop the skills of formulating their *own* questions. In some instances, there was a collective approach to the interview and all students asked the same questions of the practitioner. This is to be discouraged so that students' work is original; this also encourages a personal voice.

### The Critique

Students were generally able to discuss the summary/plot of the play but were generally weak in their discussion of the theatrical elements of the production. They do not appear to be particularly clear about the social impact or the impact of the production on the audience. This area of discussion was lacking. The dance critiques are of particular concern since students did not describe the dances seen with any clarity. For example, they did not refer to the choreography or dance-making elements. Nor were students clear about why, for example, costume or lighting impacts on a dance whether negatively or positively. Attention must be paid to the theatrical elements of both the dance and drama critique. Students must be encouraged to use the appropriate theatrical and/or dance terminology. However, there was evidence of a better handling of the drama critiques. The centres in the countries that recently registered candidates must be commended, as it is evident that teachers guided their students and applied the CSEC marking criteria.

## **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The CSEC Theatre Arts syllabus has had a 27 per cent increase in candidates for 2011 including candidates from new countries and schools. A new syllabus is to be examined in 2012. As a result of these factors the examining committee wishes to make the following recommendations:

1. Workshops should be conducted to cover:
  - cultural forms both practical and theoretical:
  - critique writing:
  - interviewing skills and applying methods of assessment for Paper 02.
2. Field trips — Teachers should where possible, expose students to activities such as CARIFESTA; CEAF 2012; Carnival and other cultural festivals.
3. There is a need for greater networking and exchange of information among schools and countries.