

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
MAY/JUNE 2007**

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates' performance in 2007 was generally fairly good. The performance in Module 1 and Module 3 remained on par with that of 2006 but there was a decline in the performance in Module 2, especially observable in Paper 01 A.

Comprehension, both aural and written, remains a critical area. Candidates appear unable to critically analyze passages and respond to the questions asked. There continues to be the tendency for candidates to use jargon indiscriminately, while unable to identify simple literary devices.

There is also the continued absence of proof-reading by candidates of their own work, which could lead to an improvement in written pieces.

DETAILED COMMENTS

PAPER 01 A

SECTION A

Module 1

This section was fairly well done as demonstrated by a mean of 4.69 for Question 1 and a mean of 4.68 for Question 2. Most candidates were able to correctly identify the various methods of data collection and their strengths and weaknesses. Candidates were also able to correctly name sources of data and possible findings as required by Questions 2(a) and 2(b). Several candidates however, had difficulties with Questions 1(c) and 2(c). The term "pieces of data" in Question 1(c) caused confusion for some candidates who quoted **sources** of data in response. There is still some confusion in the minds of candidates regarding the difference between "data" and "source".

Although the type of question asked in Question 2(c) is not new to the examination, many candidates had problems saying why the findings could not be generalized. This is an area of the syllabus that teachers need to address.

SECTION B

Module 2

Question 3

This question posed a challenge to candidates and the mean for this question was 2.57. It is important to note, however, that there were candidates who scored full marks for this question. Many candidates seemed to have had difficulty understanding the question, particularly Part (a), which required them to identify vocabulary or grammar items. Many had difficulty correctly identifying the origins of the items. A suggested text for addressing this area of the syllabus is **The Dictionary of Caribbean English** – Allsopp and Allsopp, Oxford. This dictionary gives examples and sources of Caribbean Creoles. The syllabus does require that candidates be familiar with their own Creole and the origin of their language.

Question 4

This question was handled fairly well by the candidates as demonstrated by the mean of 4.19.

Question 5

This question posed a challenge to some candidates. In Part (b) candidates generally mentioned many advantages of the computer, but most failed to say how they specifically affected language.

Question 6

This question was very well done. The mean for this question was 5.23. Some candidates were somewhat imprecise in merely stating “vocabulary”, “grammar”.

SECTION C

Module 3

Candidates did quite well on Question 7 and the mean for this question was 5.27.

Question 8

Part (b) posed some challenges to candidates. The word “means” caused comprehension difficulties as many did not interpret it to have reference to Communication Studies terminology. The mean for this question was 3.34

Question 9

This question was well done by candidates. The mean for this question was 5.25.

Question 10

Candidates did not perform well on this question. The terms “oral and written forms” seemed to have caused some confusion for candidates in answering Part (a). The term “language competencies” seemed unfamiliar to them. Many did not answer Part (b) of the question and where answers were offered, they were generally references to language strategies and figures of speech rather than language **competencies**. Examples of competencies would include correct grammar structures/effective use of linkages.

PAPER 01 B

There is some concern about the fact that for the first time a number of candidates from different centres/territories had the listening comprehension passage written verbatim on their scripts. Since this paper is supposed to test the candidate’s ability to listen and then recall information, the reading of the passage must be at an appropriate speed. The Ministries in the various territories have been informed of this irregularity and it is hoped that this action will not occur again.

PAPER 02

Generally this paper was well done. The means for the three Modules are as follows:

Module 1-15.24

Module 2-14.92

Module 3 15.42

Module 1Question 1

Although candidates handled the question well, there were problems with the structuring of the responses for Parts (a) and (b). Candidates appeared uncertain about where to commence their essay response and in some cases wrote as many as three introductions. However, the question clearly indicates that the essay should begin in Part (b). Candidates need to be encouraged to read the instructions carefully. Also, practice in writing examination-type questions would allow for students’ comfort with this type of response.

A weakness in candidates’ responses was that some continued to summarize the passage instead of analyzing the writer’s craft. Too many of the candidates’ responses sought to describe what the writer said and did, and whether they thought it was a good idea, rather than analyzing the **effect** of what the writer did. There were many cases in which they erroneously launched into a discussion of the research process and commented on whether the writer had followed the procedure appropriately. Candidates need to be properly instructed on what it means to “comment on”.

Another worrying weakness is the tendency of candidates to spend the entire essay discussing the writer's use of mechanics, page layout, font size etc. This is compounded by the inappropriate use of technical terms. Many essays were littered with the buzz words "ethos", "pathos", "mythos" and "logos" as strategies used by the writer.

There are still candidates who demonstrate an inability to differentiate the main point from the writer's purpose and often attempt to state either or both by saying what the passage is about.

The lack of basic essay writing skills is still a concern. Many essays lacked introductions and conclusions, logical linkages and internal unity. In some cases points were bulleted and lines were skipped between paragraphs, or paragraphs were noticeably absent.

Module 2

Question 2

Candidates' mean performance in this section was lower than in 2006. However, more candidates scored in the top of the range, between 20 – 24. There was also improvement in the structure of candidates' essays with more having introductions, conclusions, paragraphs and transitional devices. The superior candidates tended to earn high marks for organization and expression even though they may not have scored full marks for content. Very often though, the paragraphs did not necessarily enhance the fluency, coherence or cogency of the discourse. Candidates used arbitrary arrangements of sentences without demonstrating the basic rules of paragraphing. Some essays were not written in the essay format but were sectionalized - a, b, c. This type of response should be discouraged by teachers.

Many candidates incorrectly used the essay as an opportunity to discuss the functions of language (that is to direct, inform, persuade, elicit information) while giving scant regard to the given task.

Candidates continue to find Section C quite challenging. The responses included videographic/cinematic approaches (lighting, sound effects, flashback), and a list of non-verbal elements (chronemics, proxemics, artifacts). Some candidates even suggested that Tantie should have been shown a video-taped presentation of the proposed development!

Teachers should encourage students to pay attention to the rubric of the questions and to ensure that they satisfy all the requirements regarding content, organization and expression.

Module 3

Question 3

The majority of candidates scored between 13 – 19 marks for this question. Some weaknesses were evident. Candidates were confused about whether the presentation should be made to the public or to the proposer's teammates. A careful reading of the question would have clarified that question, as the question does refer to the fact that "you will present to your teammates". Students need to be encouraged to read the rubric carefully before they begin to respond.

There still appears to be some confusion among candidates regarding the meanings and use of the following terms: language code, register, medium, channel and jargon.

The question very clearly indicated that the candidate should use the essay format and this was disregarded by too many candidates. Also, even though Part (c) asked that candidates pay attention to the visual presentation of the Product, this was totally disregarded by some candidates. Reinforcement of examination strategies could aid candidates in avoiding these pitfalls.

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The Portfolio

The moderation of the Internal Assessment samples continues to reveal a marked disparity between the requirements of the syllabus and what the candidates produce. While most candidates are able to create pieces of at least two different literary genres, many are unable to relate these to the rationale they provide for producing them. It is therefore suggested that more attention be paid to helping candidates write rationales specific to the situation.

In many instances, situation was interpreted to mean the situation or context in which the action takes place rather than the situation/context in which the production/creation would be shared, for example, a magazine.

The literary pieces were often lacking in the elements of the genre selected and in some cases where attempts were made to be artistic there was very little link between the artwork and the written piece. The portfolios could be improved if there is an introduction to the portfolio which gives an overview of the theme selected.

The reflective section of the portfolio could be improved if:

- There is an introduction giving an overview of the selected theme;
- There are varying approaches to the theme in each literary work;
- Themes selected are given a topic/title (very often they read like a research);
- News articles, speeches, letters to the editors contain the elements or devices that make them literary and
- Diary entries contain more than one entry.

The Language Analysis

Many candidates demonstrated an ability to produce a superior analysis but far too many continue to display a lack of analytical skills. Some are only able to define the elements for analysis but are unable to comment on their effect in the language sample. What is dismaying is that teachers awarded very generous marks for such efforts. Teachers must be reminded that passages to be used for analysis should contain the relevant elements: language registers, dialectal variations, communicative behaviours and attitudes to language. Candidates often penalize themselves by creating pieces that do not contain the relevant elements! In some cases, where passages selected did possess the relevant elements for

analysis, the analysis was often not related to the overall theme of the portfolios. Candidates need to be guided in their selections.

The Expository Segment

Many schools continue to submit the expository segment in the portfolios. This is not moderated at the marking center, so it is unnecessary.

Recommendation

Schools are encouraged to ensure that teachers are using the current syllabus. It seems some new teachers are not fully cognizant of the requirements of the course.

Since some territories, or schools in some territories, are just starting to participate in the examination, a seminar explaining and giving practical guidelines is recommended. This seminar could be done by those teachers who are au fait with the requirements of the syllabus.

Paper 3 B – Alternative Paper

Candidates still appear somewhat unprepared to meet the requirements of this paper.

Module 1

Question 1 (a), asked candidates to produce a summary of 60 words. The word limit was often ignored and candidates attempted to write the complete extract or some of the extract without paying attention to finding the main points.

Question 1 (b) was also not well done. This question demanded that candidates understand the concepts reliability and validity of a document. Candidates needed to address for instance, the issues of bias, source, and research in analyzing the credibility of the information.

Module 2

Question 2 was badly done by most candidates. There appeared to be little understanding of the terms detailed in the question: dialectal variation, communicative behaviours, attitudes to language and use of register. Some candidates either summarized the extract or tried to explain what they thought was taking place in the scene.

Private Candidates should use the Communication Studies study guide which explains the terms used in this type of question.

Module 3

This question performed fairly well. Candidates were able to address most of the areas detailed. However, they did experience some difficulty in differentiating between the “writer’s concern” and the “purpose of the piece”.

CONCLUSION

Sharing of skills and ideas remains the one sure way to improve the teaching and learning in Communication Studies. The recommended activities listed in the syllabus often ask for group work; teachers need to see that team teaching or sharing of ideas would achieve the same effect as group work, that is, a sharing and pooling of ideas. In some cases, the problems observed in the performance in this subject can be improved by teacher knowledge and thus the onus is on teachers to research the content of the syllabus and become more familiar, especially in the area of Creole language and its sources.