

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE  
ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

**MAY/JUNE 2011**

**SOCIOLOGY**

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The Sociology Syllabus comprises two units, Unit 1–Sociology, Society and Culture, and Unit 2–Development and Social Change. Each unit is further subdivided into three modules. Assessment of both Units 1 and 2 is based on three papers: Paper 01 (30 per cent), Paper 02 (50 per cent), and Paper 03 (20 per cent). All three modules of the syllabus are tested in each paper.

Paper 01 for Units 1 and 2 consisted of 45 compulsory multiple-choice items based on each of the three modules in the respective units. Each item was worth 2 marks, for a maximum of 90 marks.

Paper 02 for Units 1 and 2 consisted of three sections, with two essay questions each. Candidates were required to answer three questions, one from each section. The maximum mark awarded for each question was 25.

The overall quality standards by which candidate responses were assessed for the Paper 02 essay questions were as follows:

Level 1 response – one judged to be outstanding or exemplary; such responses earned a total of 23–25 marks.

Level 2 response – one judged to be excellent; such responses earned a total of 20–22 marks.

Level 3 response – one judged to be very good; such responses earned a total of 17–19 marks.

Level 4 response – one judged to be good; such responses earned a total of 14–16 marks.

Level 5 response – one judged to be satisfactory; such responses earned a total of 11–13 marks.

Level 6 response – one judged to be limited; such responses earned a total of 6–10 marks.

Level 7 response – one judged to be unsatisfactory; such responses earned a total of 0–5 marks.

In Paper 031, the School-Based Assessment (SBA), candidates were required to undertake a research project for both Units 1 and 2. Candidates were allowed to carry forward their SBA marks from Unit 1 to Unit 2 and vice versa. The SBA reports were marked by the subject teacher and samples forwarded to CXC for moderation.

## **DETAILED COMMENTS**

### **UNIT 1**

#### **Paper 01 – Multiple-Choice Questions**

Performance on Paper 01 was generally satisfactory.

Weaknesses in performance on this paper related mainly to candidates' understanding of research methods and sociological theories.

#### **Paper 02 – Essay Questions**

Candidates were required to write three essays (one from each module) in two and a half hours. These questions were designed to test candidates' knowledge and comprehension, their ability to apply and analyse as well as to synthesize and evaluate their views from a sociological perspective. While most candidates exhibited a general understanding and knowledge of some of the requirements for the questions, there continued to be challenges with application of knowledge and understanding and the process of evaluation and synthesis. Candidates also failed to incorporate relevant theories and sociological concepts in their sociological discourse. There was also evidence of inadequate knowledge of social development and change in Caribbean societies which undoubtedly contributed

to some difficulty in applying the relevant sociological theories to an understanding of Caribbean societies.

## **Module 1: Sociology, Culture and Identity**

### Question 1

This question sought to test candidates' knowledge and understanding of research methods. In order to focus the candidates, the question identified the research methods and linked them to the issue of *increasing involvement of youths in serious crimes*. Candidates were required to choose a method and discuss two advantages and two disadvantages of the selected method.

Candidates were expected to address the practical, theoretical and ethical issues associated with the chosen method. The weaker responses mainly focused on the practical (time and cost, accessibility of information, security and fear) while the better responses addressed the issues of reliability and validity (theoretical) and privacy and confidentiality (ethical) concerns. Candidates must be reminded that practical, theoretical and ethical concerns must always be addressed when engaging in any discussion on the usefulness of research methods.

Of the approximately 31 per cent of the candidates who attempted this question, 47 per cent recorded levels of performance ranging from good to exemplary, approximately 24 per cent of which were excellent and exemplary.

Most candidates chose to discuss the qualitative approach. However, the weak responses mainly addressed the advantages of the research method with little mention of disadvantages.

The average responses merely identified and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the method with little reference to sociological perspectives or studies.

Notably, a small proportion of candidates discussed both research methods (triangulation) as appropriate. This was an outstanding approach.

The outstanding responses not only linked the use of the method to *youth in serious crimes* but correctly explained and discussed the advantages and disadvantages with reference to sociological studies and/or appropriate sociological perspectives. These responses were able to show that the weaknesses (disadvantages) of one method were the strengths of the other.

Candidates should note the following points:

- Always link discussions to a sociological perspective/study when answering questions on sociological methods; for example, positivists for quantitative and interpretivists for qualitative.
- Always explain concepts, for example, validity and reliability.
- Elaborate on sociological studies, historical facts and other factual data to support positions/views.
- Link the experience of the SBA viz. methodology so that issues like research design, sampling, research instruments and analysis of data can be used as a guide to craft a sociologically sound essay.
- Responses must demonstrate clarity and coherence and be logically conclusive.

### Question 2

In this question, candidates were expected to demonstrate understanding of culture and its contribution to the development of individual identity in society. They were required to refer to two agents of socialization in discussing the process by which individuals learn the norms and values of the society and were also to present arguments that focused on how identity can be shaped by involvement in a particular cultural setting within the family as the main agent of primary socialization, and later in the school, among peer groups, the church, religion or the media. They were also to demonstrate how identity is not only influenced by upbringing in a particular cultural setting but can also be influenced by other cultural settings and aspects of social structure that a person encounters over his/her lifetime.

Of the 69 per cent of candidates who attempted this question, 36.4 per cent recorded levels of performance ranging from good to exemplary, 18 per cent of which were excellent and exemplary.

Weak responses merely identified the agents of socialization and defined the concepts with little or no elaboration as required by the question.

The average responses provided a limited discussion of the process of cultural transmission with references to one agent of socialization.

The higher level responses provided a full, coherent and clear discussion of cultural transmission and the shaping of identity as required by the question.

Candidates should note the following points:

- Always link discussions to a sociological perspective/study when answering questions on culture and identity, for example, E. Braithwaite's Creole society theory and theories of socialization.
- Always explain concepts, for example, culture, identity and agents of socialization.
- Elaborate on sociological studies when arguing positions regarding how culture shapes or does not shape identity.
- Link views with reference to the socialization process and two of its agents.
- Responses must demonstrate clarity and coherence and be logically conclusive.

## **Module 2: Social Institutions – Family, Religion, Education**

### Question 3

Candidates were expected to discuss three social factors that related to the single-parent family as an accepted reality in the Caribbean. They were expected to demonstrate knowledge of the single parent family, its prevalence and reasons for its acceptance or non-acceptance in the Caribbean.

Candidates' responses were also expected to demonstrate understanding of the family forms that have resulted from the historical, cultural and economic realities of Caribbean society over time. While candidates were expected to arrive at the conclusion that single-parent families have been accepted as a form of the family in the Caribbean, they were also expected to acknowledge the other forms of the family that were evident and examine the developments that have led to acceptance of the single-parent family in the society.

This was the most popular question on the paper, and 95 per cent of candidates attempted it with 24 per cent recording levels of performance ranging from good to exemplary, approximately 13 per cent of which were excellent and exemplary. This was a generally unsatisfactory performance for such a popular question.

The weak responses merely discussed the issues surrounding the formation of the single-parent family and some of the effects of this family type on society.

The average responses focused on the social factors with little reference to a sociological study or perspective as it related to the single parent family as an *accepted reality*.

The higher-level performances provided a sociological basis for their discourse of the appropriate social factors as well as demonstrated the social context and social change which have made this family form as effective as other forms.

Candidates should note the following points:

- The focal point of this sociological discourse was the sociological perspective or sociological study of the family in Caribbean society.
- Always explain concepts, for example, family, the single-parent family.
- Identify social factors, for example, the changing role of women, legal reforms, secularization or the pertinent social dimensions of historical facts, for example, African retentions.
- Demonstrate conclusively and clearly why you agree or disagree with the statement with reference to the three relevant social factors.

#### Question 4

Candidates were expected to apply Braithwaite's Creolization thesis to the issue of religious syncretism. The question required candidates to specifically identify two Caribbean faiths (forms of religion) and to show, through the processes of acculturation and interculturalization, how these religious organizations experienced syncretism.

A mere 5 per cent of candidates attempted this question of which 45 per cent recorded levels of performance ranging from good to exemplary; approximately 28 per cent of the responses were excellent and exemplary.

The weak responses generally focused only on historical factors to explain the emergence of Caribbean religions, sometimes identifying one religious faith, and confused Beckford's Plantation Society approach with Braithwaite's Creole Society approach.

The average responses identified two faiths but, in many instances, did not fully show how acculturation and interculturalization contributed to syncretism. Generally, most responses focused on acculturation but said very little about interculturalization with the key concepts poorly explained.

The higher-level responses clearly and correctly explained the key concepts in the Creole Society approach and appropriately and fully applied the approach to religious syncretism.

Candidates should note the following points:

- Beckford's Plantation Society approach must not be confused with Braithwaite's Creolization approach. The latter approach must be outlined.
- Key concepts in the approach should always be identified and explained, for example, religion, acculturation, interculturalization, syncretism, and Creole Society approach.
- The emergence of acculturation and interculturalization and their contribution to syncretism should be discussed.
- There should be focus on both acculturation and interculturalization in a conclusive discourse on the Creole Society approach.
- Responses must demonstrate clarity, coherence and be logically conclusive.

### Module 3: Social Stratification and Social Mobility

#### Question 5

Candidates were expected to examine how two factors (colour, ethnicity or gender) influenced the stratification system in the Caribbean.

Of the 69 per cent of candidates who attempted this question, approximately 50 per cent performed at levels ranging from good to exemplary, approximately 17 per cent of them excellent and exemplary.

The weak responses used personal and other experiences to explain social stratification in society which did not demonstrate an understanding and use of the sociological imagination. There was also lack of clarity in explaining *ethnicity*.

Average responses focused on historical and contemporary data on social stratification and lacked theoretical depth and clarity.

The higher-level responses demonstrated good use of stratification theories applicable to Caribbean society in combination with arguments offered by the functionalist, conflict (Marxist, Weberian) or feminist perspectives. They demonstrated that class, status and power contributed to the way in which contemporary Caribbean society was structured.

Candidates should note the following points:

- The building blocks of theoretical perspectives are concepts which can only be adequately understood with reference to the perspective/s as in the case of colour and gender with respect to social stratification perspectives.
- The concepts of colour, ethnicity or gender should be explained against the backdrop of social stratification. The concept *ethnicity* has a cultural rather than biological basis as in *race*.
- The appropriate theoretical perspective should always be used. Beckford's Plantation Society approach should not be confused with M.G. Smith's Plural Society approach or Ryan's study of social stratification in Trinidad.
- Any conclusive discourse on social stratification in the Caribbean must demonstrate an understanding of the above mentioned approaches.
- Responses must demonstrate clarity, coherence and be logically conclusive.

#### Question 6

This question required candidates to examine the issue of gender and inequality in Caribbean society. Candidates were expected to demonstrate how inequality affected gender as far as class position and opportunities for social mobility, with a focus on education as a purveyor of gender inequality in a named Caribbean society.

Of the 31 per cent of candidates who attempted this question, 32 per cent performed at levels ranging from good to exemplary, and approximately 19 per cent of these were excellent and exemplary.

The weaker responses elaborated on gender equality with little or no focus on the education system as required. These responses focused on the workplace and the home with inadequate explanations of the concepts *gender* and *inequality*.

The average responses did not address the historical data as well as that of social change in Caribbean society; hence the issues of social reforms in education and gender-based rights and opportunities in the post-independence era were disregarded.

Outstanding responses attempted to show that gender inequality was more evident in some Caribbean societies than others; elaborated on government reforms (legislative), following agitation by feminist groups; feminization of the teaching profession and male underachievement and other socio-economic factors. They also focused on sociological studies, albeit from non-Caribbean societies.

Candidates should note the following points:

- Familiarity with appropriate and adequate information on social development and related studies and/or theoretical perspectives in the Caribbean is important.
- Focus should first be placed on the education system.
- Key concepts should be explained clearly and correctly, for example, gender inequality. Note that gender inequality is not only based on inequalities relating to females (Errol Miller's feminization argument re the teaching profession).
- Responses must demonstrate clarity, coherence and be logically conclusive.

## UNIT 2

### Paper 01 – Multiple Choice Questions

Performance on Paper 01 was generally satisfactory. Weaknesses in performance on this paper related mainly to candidates' understanding of concepts related to population and development.

### Paper 02 – Essay Questions

As in Unit 1, candidates were required to write three essays (one from each module), in two and a half hours. Similar challenges were noted as with Unit 1 in regard to using a sociological approach as a focal point for responses viz. sociological perspectives or studies, as well as focusing on patterns/trends/regularities rather than individual events.

#### **Module 1: Population Studies**

##### Question 1

This question was based on population and development trends in the context of size, distribution and structure of the Caribbean region.

Candidates were expected to choose from either cultural or economic factors and apply them to trends in population size, distribution and structure in a named Caribbean society.

This question was distinctly challenging for candidates, accounting for 12 per cent of the responses for the two questions in the module. Of those, 36 per cent performed at levels ranging from good to exemplary, with none being excellent and exemplary.

Generally, this question demanded that candidates be familiar with concepts associated with population. Many candidates did not deal with the issues of size, distribution and structure separately. They treated them as if they were all the same and made a very weak effort at discussing culture relative to size, distribution and structure of population, mainly focusing on culture as religious beliefs and the use of contraceptives. They did a slightly better job discussing economic factors relative to the three issues in population trends.

The weaker candidates simply ignored the concepts.

The better candidates attempted to explain the concepts and incorporated them in their responses. Also, some of the candidates argued that both cultural and economic factors contributed to these

population trends and not necessarily one or the other since they were interconnected. Some argued that economic factors tended to determine how well one was able to sustain cultural traditions.

Candidates should note the following points:

- The prevailing views on population trends should be known so that they can be elaborated and/or critiqued.
- It is important to be familiar with the key concepts associated with population/population trends, for example, fertility, mortality, life expectancy, ageing population, population density, migration, and to be able to explain them.
- Cultural factors must also include lifestyle, gender, viz. the role of women, religious beliefs, customs and traditions as well as prevailing values.
- Economic factors include access to resources, employment rates, migration and access to education.
- Responses must demonstrate clarity, coherence and be logically conclusive.

### Question 2

This question required candidates to discuss the statement *Poor people would be better off if they had fewer children to feed and clothe*.

Candidates were expected to use the statement and relate it to the Malthusian theory and development issues facing Caribbean society. They were to exhibit a good understanding of the Malthusian theory as it pertained to issues of Caribbean development.

This was the most popular question on the paper with 88 per cent of candidates responding to it. Of those, 51 per cent performed at levels ranging from good to exemplary, with approximately 22 per cent of them being excellent and exemplary.

The weaker responses made fleeting references to the Malthusian theory and mainly focused on how poor people always have large families. Others gave a general discussion of the Malthusian theory with no attempt to apply it to development issues.

The average responses attempted to link the Malthusian theory to issues like access to education, proper health care, availability of social services and gender discrimination.

The outstanding responses not only confined their discussion to the Malthusian theory but included other population theorists like the Neo-Malthusian and Marxists as they identified issues in the Malthusian theory like famine, population control and food supply, and showed how these were challenges faced in the Caribbean.

Candidates should note the following points:

- The statement given should be interpreted and restated—*Poor people would be better off if they had fewer children to feed and clothe*—it should be stated that poor people with many children will be worse off *or* rich people will have no problem having many or fewer children.
- It is important to be informed about population trends, population policies and population and development issues and programmes in the Caribbean, for example, brain drain, high unemployment, crime and poverty reduction programmes.
- Key concepts in the question, for example, poverty, population trends and development should be explained.
- Key propositions in Malthus' theory of population should be outlined and incorporated critically in the assessment of the statement.

- At the outset, taking a position on the relevance of the statement should be avoided unless facts can be marshalled to support the position.
- Responses must demonstrate clarity, coherence and be logically conclusive.

## **Module 2: Social Order, Social Control and Deviance**

### Question 3

This question was intended to test candidates on one of the most important topics in the module—the labelling theory.

Candidates were expected to engage in a discussion of the theory in order to determine if labelling an individual as deviant would necessarily lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Of the 64 per cent of candidates who responded to this question, 56 per cent performed at levels ranging from good to exemplary, with approximately 16 per cent providing excellent and exemplary responses.

The weak responses mainly used a range of illustrations (some appropriate and some inappropriate) to support the claim that labelling an individual leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy. They focused on one concept, for example, deviance, and went into great detail on Merton's theory and the sub-cultural theories without attempting to establish a link with labelling theory.

The average responses mainly linked the stimulus/statement to both Howard Becker and the interpretivist approach. These candidates were quite comfortable providing an overview of the theory but were unable to establish a link between labelling, deviance and the self-fulfilling prophecy in their analysis.

The higher-level responses attempted a critique of the theory using the works of Young, Stuart Hall, Taylor and Walton.

Candidates should note the following points:

- The statement given—*Labelling an individual as deviant leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy*—should be interpreted and restated, that is, it should be said that labelling an individual as non-deviant leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy *or* not labelling them as deviant will not lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Key concepts in the question, for example, labelling, deviance and self-fulfilling prophecy should be explained.
- Key propositions of labelling theory should be outlined and incorporated critically in the assessment of the statement. Other theoretical approaches may be used in critiques and in support of positions.
- Taking a position should be avoided at the outset on the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement unless facts can be marshalled to support the position.
- Responses must demonstrate clarity, coherence and be logically conclusive.

### Question 4

Candidates were required to use two elements of the social distribution of crime (SoDoC) to elaborate on their understanding of the importance of official crime statistics (OCS) relative to a named Caribbean society.

Candidates were expected to demonstrate a general understanding of official crime statistics (OCS) and to determine their importance relative to two elements of social distribution of crime in Caribbean society.

Of the 36 per cent of candidates who responded to this question, 47 per cent performed at levels ranging from good to exemplary, with approximately 25 per cent of the responses being excellent and exemplary. This was one of the better performing questions on the paper.

The weak responses merely gave a commonsense perspective on the issue which lacked sociologically-grounded evidence to support their position.

The average responses outlined the importance of OCS to the social distribution of crime (SoDoC) with inadequate references to sociological studies or approaches.

The higher-level responses demonstrated clear knowledge of OCS and supported or critiqued their position with reference to the social characteristics of offenders.

Candidates should note the following points:

- Key concepts in the question, for example, OCS, SoDoC and the social characteristics or elements of SoDoC, for example, age, class, ethnicity, gender and locality should be explained.
- The relevant sociological studies or approaches should be outlined and utilized to elaborate on or critique the relationship between OCS and SoDoC, for example, Marxists and Feminists, with respect to class or gender.
- At the outset taking a position on the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement should be avoided unless facts can be marshalled to support the position.
- Responses must demonstrate clarity, coherence and be logically conclusive.

### **Module 3: Social Development and Poverty**

#### Question 5

Candidates were required to demonstrate knowledge of employment, aid and investment issues and strategies in the contemporary Caribbean in assessing the relevance of Arthur Lewis' Investment by Invitation Model (IbIM).

Candidates were expected to demonstrate familiarity with the model developed by Sir Arthur Lewis and the region's economy at the time it was introduced and compare it to the realities of the contemporary period in order to assess the IbIM's relevance.

Of the 26 per cent of candidates who responded to this question, the second lowest response rate in the entire paper, 44 per cent performed at levels ranging from good to exemplary, with approximately 14 per cent of the responses being excellent and exemplary.

The weak responses merely focused on the increase in unemployment and underemployment in the agricultural sector with little reference to Arthur Lewis' Model (IbIM).

The average responses focused on the propositions of the model with little reference to two of the strategies but touched on bits and pieces of all.

The higher-level responses provided adequate knowledge of the model and circumstances of its evolution as well as an evaluation of the model against the contemporary realities of the region.

Candidates should note the following points:

- It is important to be familiar with the IbIM, appropriate and adequate information on economic and social development issues and related strategies and theoretical perspectives that are useful to the Caribbean, for example, Beckford's Plantation Society model and dependency models.
- The main propositions of the IbIM should be outlined and there should be focus on two strategies when assessing the relevance of the IbIM in the contemporary period.
- Key concepts should be explained clearly and correctly, for example, industrialization, employment, aid and investment.
- Another theoretical perspective may also be incorporated in an assessment of the IbIM.
- Responses must demonstrate clarity, coherence and be logically conclusive.

### Question 6

Candidates were required to demonstrate an understanding of development and the related indicators of development.

Candidates were expected to apply their understanding of two indicators of development to the development process in Caribbean society.

Of the 74 per cent of candidates who responded to this question, 41 per cent performed at levels ranging from good to exemplary, approximately 17 per cent of the responses were deemed excellent and exemplary.

The weak responses focused on the relationship between the Caribbean and external states or agencies. These candidates clearly lacked knowledge of indicators.

The average responses focused on discussing the indicators with little knowledge of the relevant criteria.

The higher-level responses focused on whether or not the indicators were relevant to development in Caribbean society.

Candidates should note the following points:

- There should be familiarity with information on economic and social development issues and the various indicators and criteria with reference to Caribbean society.
- Key concepts should be explained clearly and correctly, for example, development, health, education and social services as indicators of development.
- It should be determined whether or not two of the three indicators are relevant to Caribbean society.
- Responses must demonstrate clarity, coherence and be logically conclusive.

### **Paper 031 – School-Based Assessment**

Generally, the School-Based Assessment (SBA) was poorly executed. In some cases, the marks assigned by teachers were lenient, although consistent from one submission to another. Award of marks was, in some cases, above the maximum allotted for elements in each section. There was also evidence of inadequate supervision of the SBAs.

A few of the samples submitted provided evidence of students' attempts to incorporate a sociological framework in their study, albeit in the literature review. Some students were able to have this understanding reflected in the data collection method used, analysis of data and conclusion. This

approach should be encouraged by all teachers beginning with the formulation of the specific objectives of the study.

The major weaknesses in the samples were in the topics chosen, the introduction, statement of the problem, the aims and objectives of the study, the literature review, questionnaire/instrument design, analysis of data and the content and structure of the bibliography.

It is important to pay attention to detail when marking SBAs. The approved marking scheme found in the syllabus needs to be closely followed. There were cases where some teachers submitted samples without the allocation of marks for all sections or parts of sections on the score sheet. In some instances, assigned marks to students were not indicated in the body of the research projects, which would allow for easier moderation.

Students need to be guided at each stage/component in the development of their projects. Some of the samples appeared to be first drafts rather than one seen and guided by the teacher before progressing toward a final submission.

### The Topic

Students tended to state very broad topics that were sometimes unrelated to the actual content of the SBA. The topic should provide the reader with a clear guide to the issue/area being investigated. In a number of cases, topics were inappropriate, some topics presented for Unit 1 were more suitable for Unit 2 and vice versa, while in others, there was a clear indication that the topic would be difficult to research, and variables and concepts would be difficult to operationalize.

Teachers are reminded of the topics in the syllabus. Note that the SBA is not a large-scale study, therefore a topic title that speaks to the investigation of an issue/matter in a country or wide geographic location cannot be feasible. The syllabus is specific on this and on the topics allowed as stated on page 28: *Students are asked to conduct a research project on any issue affecting development in his or her community.* Teachers should guide students accordingly.

*The syllabus must be used as a guide and topics chosen must be in keeping with those explicitly stated in the syllabus. Indeed the issue identified must be properly approved for an acceptable SBA based on the relevant unit.*

### **Introduction**

Students must provide a short background to the problem/issue under investigation. This can be done in two to three paragraphs that focus on providing general information on the problem/issue. Some of the main areas of focus for the introduction should be as follows:

- The rationale for the study/project
- General information to promote clarity of the topic for the reader
- The current state of knowledge on the topic
- Some historical background to the study

Most students simply restated the topic in a sentence or two and did not provide adequate background to the study. In addition, most of the samples were devoid of any theoretical considerations or an appropriate sociological framework that would place the study in context.

Students need to be encouraged to use the introduction to highlight the scope or background of the problem and thus give direction to their work.

### Statement of the Problem

The introduction should be followed by the statement of the problem, which feeds from the introduction having clearly identified the rationale for the study and the parameters of the project. This statement should be presented in one or two paragraphs which state the research problem or research issue under consideration, and identify what the student proposes to do in the study as an extension of the background to the study and the theoretical or conceptual framework. The statement of the problem is not the topic restated in one line or as a question.

The topic and introduction to the study should be used as a guide to the student in determining which aspect of the study can be reasonably developed into the statement of the problem.

### Aims and Objectives

Student submissions should clearly state the aims and objectives. The aims are broad in scope and identify the general aspects of the problem/issue that the study is seeking to determine, understand, explain or explore. On the other hand, the objectives are specific and usually incorporate the variables that are to be discussed in the study. Most students did not have clearly stated aims and objectives and therefore it was difficult to obtain an understanding of the specific nature of the study and what it was expected to achieve. This is a direct outcome of the lack of depth noted in the introduction of most of the submissions and the lack of a clear theoretical or conceptual direction.

Although most students were assigned good scores on this aspect of the submissions, in most cases, there was no distinction between the aims and the objectives. The majority of students presented clearly defined objectives while others simply posed some questions.

### The Literature Review

The literature review was another weak aspect of the SBA and this is particularly troubling as it signals that students are undertaking their projects with limited knowledge of their topic. In some cases, no summaries of studies, books or articles were cited in the literature review, instead anecdotal evidence put forward based on experiences. In other cases, students referred to studies, books and articles; however, they were improperly cited, and/or not listed at all in the bibliography.

The purpose and overall importance of the literature review must be underscored for students. The literature review is an important summary of studies, books or articles which serve as a repository of the information that will guide how the study is approached, the methods of data collection to be used and the understandings that will inform the conclusions students expect to reach. The literature review also assists with the analysis of data and presentation of the findings, given that the student has properly reviewed the work of authorities in the area of study, including studies conducted in the Caribbean.

Those students who presented good literature reviews cited three or more sources and were able to show a relationship between the research and the topic, statement of the problem and the aims and objectives of the study.

### Research Design

This component of the SBA needs to be better developed. Some students misinterpreted the intention of this component and instead of presenting an *overview of how their research would be conducted*, gave timelines as to when different aspects of the project would be done. In other cases, students used this component to provide a description of their research instrument.

### The Sample

Discussion of the sample needs significant improvement and was a problem noted across the samples, irrespective of geographic location or type of school. Some students omitted discussion of the sample while others wrote a brief sentence or two in addressing the overall research design.

The characteristics of the sample must be clearly stated and reviewed in the context of the problem under study, the types of questions to be asked and the expected outcomes of the study.

### Questionnaire/Instrument Design

Fairly well constructed instruments were presented in most cases. The items generally related to the topics. There were instances, however, where the instruments were missing and students were awarded marks by the teacher.

### Presentation of Data

Most students were able to present their data well. In some cases, however, students presented their information by using less than the three different methods expected, or there was no attempt to describe the chart, graphs or tables which were presented.

Microsoft Excel is a user friendly choice with defaults that will assist students in addressing some of the problems relating to labelling and scaling which were evident in several of the samples moderated.

### Analysis of Data

Most students focused on a description of the data and very few were able to show relationships between variables, either through cross tabulations or basic correlations.

Microsoft Excel tools can be used to help reduce data to manageable outputs that would allow for simple analyses beyond basic percentages.

### Findings, Discussion and Conclusions

This is the section that brings the entire study together. However, because many of the samples included very poor literature reviews, weak data analyses and poorly structured aims and objectives, students rambled through this section. Students made very few references to their data and were unable to use sources that could be related to their findings.

Conclusions were unsupported and/or not stated in most of the submissions moderated.

### Bibliography

The bibliographies were generally not well done. Sources were mentioned in the bibliography which were not otherwise mentioned in the literature review. Elements of a bibliography were sometimes given but not in the correct order. Some students also listed search engines in their presentation (e.g. [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) rather than actual websites and neglected to include the date of retrieval.

Students are to be introduced to bibliographic styles to assist in proffering a better prepared report for assessment. Examples of styles are available online and can be downloaded as a guide to students. An appendix that provides examples drawn from the *Chicago Manual of Style* is available at the end of this report. Teachers may find it useful.

The SBA was for the most part poorly executed. In some cases, the marks assigned by teachers appeared high, although consistent from one submission to another.

### **Paper 032 – Alternative to School-Based Assessment (SBA)**

The alternative paper for private candidates was generally poorly done. The responses to the questions suggest that candidates did not attempt an actual project nor did they seek guidance in doing so. Candidates seldom focused on the study they had identified and thus provided many general, often unclear and inadequate responses to the questions asked. Also, they did not demonstrate the knowledge and understanding required at this level. In addition, the responses reflected limited/lack of understanding of the basic components of research design, including the need for reliance on sociological theory/framework to guide research and facilitate analysis of data. The responses appeared more akin to Social Studies projects given their lack of depth or demonstration of an understanding of the fundamental guiding concepts associated with social research.

Private candidates must be encouraged to conduct an actual study as stated in the syllabus as a prerequisite to taking the written examination. Alternatively, there should be an attempt to review empirical studies such as those provided in academic journals available as e-copies for download via the Internet. This is necessary in order to obtain the required hands-on experience and/or knowledge. Alternatively, they should seek proper guidance either from established texts/guiding documents prepared as a complement to the syllabus or via class sessions with a tutor.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations arise from the comments noted earlier and are meant to assist with improvements in candidate performance on the examinations.

#### **Essay Questions**

1. There has been a general improvement in applying knowledge of Caribbean societies. Teachers now need to focus more efforts at engaging with the literature available on studies of the Caribbean and infuse the findings in their classroom discussions, thus ensuring familiarity with the tenets of the main studies and improving the students' sociological vocabulary. Debating competitions or group research projects may be useful mechanisms for developing these abilities in the context of the school environment.
2. Teachers need to assist students in essay writing styles that focus on evaluation and synthesis of ideas. This is a major area of weakness noted in the examination responses to questions and which accounts for a significant proportion of the marks to be awarded. Teachers should focus on assisting students to attend to the overall clarity, coherence and logical conclusiveness of essays. They must be encouraged to use supporting studies, facts, or references to authorities *throughout* their responses to questions.
3. Candidates should be coached in identifying key words in a question and the focus of the range of command words such as *assess*, *examine*, *evaluate* and *support your response with*, when answering essay questions.
4. The topics covered in the syllabus allow for integration of ideas across the specific modules.
5. Candidates should be mindful of the interrelated nature of the discipline and the cross fertilization of ideas across topics. Sociology is the study of human behavior in groups and thus any number of variables impact on behaviour.

**School-Based Assessment**

1. The samples submitted for moderation show evidence of disparity in understanding of the requirements. Conduct of workshops for subject teachers that provide hands-on practical experience of the elements to be incorporated should be encouraged and actively pursued.
2. Subject teachers should be encouraged to prepare students by requiring submission of the SBA in parts for guidance, prior to the final submission for marking.
3. If students are to be adequately prepared for undergraduate degree programmes as a natural progression from the CAPE stream, there must be some attempt in the SBAs to incorporate sociological theories/conceptual framework in their work beginning with the formulation of objectives for their studies.
4. Greater emphasis by subject teachers as well as more appropriate guidance to students in the review of literature and appropriate citing of sources is required. Too many of the submissions available for moderation appeared not to have been reviewed by the teacher.
5. The objective of SBAs must be the development of an evidenced-based problem-solving culture as well as an ethically sound research culture.

## REFERENCE GUIDE

<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmosfaq/tools.html> (The Chicago Manual of Style 15 Edition)

**Examples of Chicago-Style Documentation**

*The Chicago Manual of Style* presents two basic documentation systems. The more concise **author-date system** has long been used by those in the physical, natural, and social sciences. In this system, sources are briefly cited in the text, usually in parentheses, by author's last name and date of publication. The short citations are amplified in a list of references, where full bibliographic information is provided.

Below are some common examples of citations of the author-date style (an in-text citation followed by a reference-list entry). For numerous specific examples, see chapters 16 and 17 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, fifteenth edition.

**Book with one author**

Doniger, Wendy. 1999. *Splitting the difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**Book with two authors**

Cowlshaw, Guy, and Robin Dunbar. 2000. *Primate conservation biology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**Book with more than three authors**

Laumann, Edward O., John H. Gagnon, Robert T. Michael, and Stuart Michaels. 1994. *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**Editor, translator, or compiler**

Lattimore, Richmond, trans. 1951. *The Iliad of Homer*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**Chapter or other part of a book**

Twaddell, W. Freeman. 1957. A note on Old High German umlaut. In *Readings in linguistics I: The development of descriptive linguistics in America, 1925–1956*. 4th ed. Edited by Martin Joos. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**Chapter of an edited volume originally published elsewhere (common for primary sources)**

Cicero, Quintus Tullius. 1986. Handbook on canvassing for the consulship. In *Rome: Late republic and principate*, edited by Walter Emil Kaegi Jr. and Peter White. Vol. 2 of *University of Chicago readings in western civilization*, edited by John Boyer and Julius Kirshner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Originally published in Evelyn S. Shuckburgh, trans., *The letters of Cicero*, vol. 1 (London: George Bell & Sons, 1908).

**Preface, foreword, introduction, and similar parts of a book**

Rieger, James. 1974. Introduction to *Frankenstein, or The modern Prometheus*, by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**Book published in both printed and electronic forms (N.B.: be sure that it is clear which form was consulted; however, there is no need to indicate “paper” in a citation to a traditional bound book)**

Kurland, Philip B., and Ralph Lerner, eds. 1987. *The Founders' Constitution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Also available online at <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/> and as a CD-ROM.

**Journal article**

Smith, John Maynard. 1998. The origin of altruism. *Nature* 393: 639–40.

**Article in an electronic journal**

Hlatky, Mark A., Derek Boothroyd, Eric Vittinghoff, Penny Sharp, and Mary A. Whooley. 2002. Quality-of-life and depressive symptoms in postmenopausal women after receiving hormone therapy: Results from the Heart and Estrogen/Progestin Replacement Study (HERS) trial. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 287, no. 5 (February 6), <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v287n5/rfull/joc10108.html#aainfo> (accessed January 7, 2002).

**Popular magazine article**

Martin, Steve. 2002. Sports-interview shocker. *New Yorker*, May 6, 84.

**Newspaper article**

As William Niederkorn noted in a *New York Times* article on June 20, 2002 . . .

*If the article is cited in the reference list, it would look like this:*

Niederkorn, William S. 2002. A scholar recants on his “Shakespeare” discovery. *New York Times*, June 20, Midwest edition.

**Theses and dissertations**

Amundin, M. 1991. Click repetition rate patterns in communicative sounds from the harbour porpoise, *Phocoena phocoena*. Ph.D. diss., Stockholm University.

**Paper presented at a meeting or conference**

Doyle, Brian. 2002. Howling like dogs: Metaphorical language in Psalm 59. Paper presented at the annual international meeting for the Society of Biblical Literature, June 19–22, in Berlin, Germany.

*E-mail messages, letters, and the like are rarely listed in a bibliography or reference list. Note that individuals' e-mail addresses should be omitted.*

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