

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

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COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Communication Studies is a three-module, five-paper subject. The three modules are: Gathering and Processing of Information (Module 1), Language and Community (Module 2), and Speaking and Writing (Module 3). The five papers are: Short Answers (Paper 01A), Aural Comprehension (Paper 01B), Essays (Paper 02), School-Based Assessment (Paper 031), and Alternative to School-Based Assessment (Paper 032).

Overall, candidates' performance in the 2013 Communications Studies examination was comparable to performance in 2012, with approximately 97 per cent of the candidates achieving Grades I–V, 49 per cent achieving Grades I–II, and 22 per cent Grade I.

With respect to module performance for Grades I–V, Modules 1 and 2 were comparable as well — 92.45 per cent and 95.23 per cent in 2012 versus 94.60 per cent and 95.01 per cent in 2013 respectively — but performance on Module 3 improved noticeably from 93 per cent to 98 per cent. Module 3 was clearly the star performer, with roughly 45 per cent of the candidates achieving Grade I, compared with roughly 12 per cent and 24 per cent for Modules 1 and 2 respectively. When Grades I and II are combined, the approximate percentages are 31 for Module 1, 48 for Module 2, and 70 for Module 3. Module 1 therefore continued to do relatively poorly.

All the papers except Paper 02 showed very modest improvements in performance.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01A – Short Answers

This paper consisted of ten questions distributed among three modules as follows: two on Module 1 and four each on Modules 2 and 3.

Section A – Module 1

Module 1 consisted of Questions 1 and 2, which were concerned with the research process. It presented the candidates with a situation on which they were required to answer questions relating to data gathering methods, strengths and weaknesses of such methods, the value of secondary data, sources of data, and possible research findings.

Question 1

Questions 1 and 2 were based on a situation in which a group of sixth-form students decided to investigate the increasing use of alcohol and cigarettes among students aged 13 to 18 at their school; they were particularly interested in finding out which gender was affected more. Question 1 came in three parts, with Part (a) asking them to identify two methods the researcher could use to gather data, Part (b) to state one strength and one weakness of each of the methods identified, and Part (c) to suggest a reason why they could use a related article found on the Internet.

There were 14, 236 responses and the mean score was 6.59 (out of 8). Eighty-two per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

Candidates generally did not have a problem with the question. However, the following observations must be made.

- For Part (a), weaker candidates provided types of research rather than the appropriate data collection methods.
- In Part (b), weaker candidates provided clearly memorized advantages and disadvantages without paying attention to their appropriateness vis-à-vis the given scenario.
- Part (c) presented the greatest challenge to candidates. There was a clear tendency to regurgitate notes rather than apply knowledge. Many candidates did not score full marks because they could not say why the information in a secondary source could be useful.

Teachers are encouraged to focus more on teaching their students how to apply and explain their knowledge.

Question 2

The question had two parts. Part (a) asked candidates to name three sources, other than the students, from whom the researchers could elicit information about the increasing use of alcohol and cigarettes, while Part (b) asked them to suggest two possible findings from their research.

There were 14, 226 responses and the mean score was 4.79 (out of 7). Sixty-seven per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

Many candidates had a problem with giving specific answers. For example, they offered the very general sources such as ‘Internet’ when the question was seeking something more specific, such as ‘website’. Further, for possible findings, they offered general answers such as “the reason why students smoke” instead of more specific answers such as *Students smoked because they were stressed* and *14-year-old male students drank the most alcohol at school in the target group*. Specificity is preferable to generalization where these kinds of questions are concerned.

Section B – Module 2

This module consisted of Questions 3–6. Questions 3–4 tested candidates’ knowledge of issues related to the use of Creole and Standard Caribbean English; Question 5 tested their knowledge of attitudes to language and their ability to evaluate language; and Question 6 tested their knowledge of, and ability to evaluate different forms of communication.

Question 3

This question had three parts and was based on a scenario in which two vagrants were discussing voting in an upcoming election. Part (a) asked candidates to identify the language spoken in the dialogue, Part (b) to give two linguistic features in the language of the dialogue that

differentiated it from Standard English, and Part (c) to state two reasons why the language used in the scenario might not be considered acceptable in a lecture on “The Rights of the Voter”.

There were 14, 236 responses and the mean score was 3.55 (out of 7). Fifty-one per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

Too many candidates performed poorly on Parts (b) and (c). For Part (b), they lost marks for failing to characterize the linguistic features or, alternatively, link an example of a structure from the scenario with a characterization of the linguistic feature. They preferred to merely provide examples of features. A large number of them also provided two examples of the same linguistic feature or general examples rather than those available in the scenario.

In Part (c), a number of candidates also lost marks for answers that claimed that Creole was (uniquely) associated with the lower class and would not be understood. Many candidates also misunderstood the question and gave answers that spoke to the vagrants themselves, who some of them thought should be given the right to vote.

Students need to become more familiar with both the jargon/terminology associated with the module and ways of reasoning about language use.

Question 4

This question had three parts, with Part (a) asking candidates to state three features of a language, Part (b) to list two purposes of language besides directing, and Part (c) to give the Creole language of a named Caribbean territory.

There were 14, 230 responses and the mean score was 5.29 (out of 8). Sixty-six per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

Performance on the question was below expectations. For Part (a), many candidates confused ‘feature’ with ‘purpose’. In Part (b), too many candidates could not provide purposes or could not state them properly or clearly. For Part (c), many candidates could not name the Creole language of their territory, giving answers like ‘Standard Creole English’, ‘English Lexicon’, ‘Basilect’, ‘Mesolect’, ‘slang’, and ‘jargon’; indeed, some of them could not spell ‘Creole’ and ‘Patwa/Patois’. In Part (c) (ii) (which sought a factor that influenced the evolution of the Creole), too many answers were inadequate or partial or too general.

There is need for the sustained engagement of students with a theme such as “the Language Situation in the Caribbean” and, particularly, the local and unofficial varieties, what led to the varieties being spoken in these territories, and their contribution to the language situation. There is also a need for candidates to read the questions carefully before providing answers.

Question 5

This question was based on a comic strip in which a passer-by had opinions on the conversation of two different groups of people. It had two parts, with Part (a) requiring candidates to state the

passer-by's attitude to the first group of people and give two reasons that might explain the attitude, and Part (b) asking them to explain what the passer-by meant by the adjectives he used to describe the two groups.

There were 14, 233 responses and the mean score was 3.29 (out of 7). Forty-seven per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

Performance on the question was below what was expected. For Part (a), too many candidates offered answers, such as 'negative attitude,' which were too vague and earned them no mark, as well as irrelevant or inaccurate reasons such as "He may not understand the language" or "They were making fun of the passer-by," which earned them no mark either. Some of the expected responses are: *He considers his values (moral, social) to be better than theirs; He is of a different generation than theirs; His culture is different from theirs.*

Many candidates handled Part (b) very well. Those candidates who chose 'dirty' as their adjective got full marks for their explanation, for the most part. However, many candidates who chose 'clean' only scored half the marks because they only explained one of the possible meanings to the word ('baldheaded') and not another possible meaning 'morally clean'.

Question 6

This question was based on an illustration in which a scale was fleeing from an overweight person. It had two parts, with Part (a) asking candidates to give two reasons why the message in the illustration might successfully reach the public, and Part (b) asking them both to suggest two technological devices that could be used to sensitize teenagers about obesity in the society and to explain how they would use one of the devices to convey the message of the illustration.

There were 14, 220 responses and the mean score was 5.87 (out of 8). Seven-three per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

Candidates did much better on this question than on the previous one. For the most part, they showed that they understood what the question required. However, there were instances where they failed to come up with the answers required for full marks.

For Parts (a) (i) and (ii), some candidates were unable to formulate possible *reasons why the illustration might successfully reach the public*. Many candidates gave non-reasons such as "*If the scale is running it is time to lose weight*". Expected answers include: *The message is straightforward and simple; Perspective and humour are used to convey the message.*

Part (b) was very well done. Most candidates were able to score full marks for both parts of question. However, for Part (b), those who did not know the answer, either tried to explain an incorrect device or did not explain how they would use a correct device. Expected answers include: *Radio — have an interview with a popular artiste'; Television — have a short play on the effects of obesity or a public service announcement'; Cellphone — send a message via BBM and other message apps like whatsapp.*

Section C – Module 3

This module consisted of Questions 7–10. Questions 7–8 were both scenario-based and tested candidates' knowledge of, and ability to evaluate elements and forms of communication, as well as differences between verbal and non-verbal communication, Questions 9–10 were also scenario-based, but they tested candidates' knowledge of, and ability to evaluate mediums of communication and their use.

Question 7

This question was based on a scenario in which the minister of health decided to visit a rural area badly affected by flooding to address the community on the precautions they need to take to guard against diseases. Candidates in their role as communication specialists were to write the Minister's speech. The question had three parts, with Part (a) asking candidates to state three elements of the communication process that they would need to consider before beginning to write the speech, Part (b) requiring them to name two other forms of communication, apart from a speech, that the minister could use to convey his message, and Part (c) asking that they give one reason why one of the forms of communication might be more effective in creating interest.

There were 14, 214 responses and the mean score was 4.79 (out of 7). Sixty-eight per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

Performance on the question was just about average. Some candidates confused the concepts 'element' and 'process', as well as the concepts 'form of communication' and 'type of communication'. They also failed to comment on the effectiveness of the form of communication named in Part (b); instead, they provided a purpose.

Question 8

This question was based on a scenario in which a student who had recently been transferred to a school sat by herself at the back of the class and did not seek to interact with her new classmates. It had three parts, with Part (a) asking candidates to suggest a possible interpretation of the new student's non-verbal behaviour, Part (b) requiring them to state two types of non-verbal communication that the class could use to make the new student feel welcome, and Part (c) asking them write two statements that could have the same effect as the types of non-verbal communication provided.

There were 14, 219 responses and the mean score was 6.14 (out of 8). Seventy-seven per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

The question was well done. However, many candidates faltered on the types of non-verbal communication and, for Part (c), used non-verbal behaviours as answers.

Question 9

This question was based on a scenario in which a school's hibiscus plants were being destroyed by the mealy bug and the school's agricultural club embarking on a project to alert the students, staff, and community about the effects of the infestation and some of the preventative measures they could take. The question had two parts, with Part (a) asking candidates to suggest three mediums that could help convey the club's message effectively and Part (b) asking them to explain why two of the mediums would be effective.

There were 14, 171 responses and the mean score was 5.84 (out of 7). Eighty-three per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

The question was well done. Most candidates identified three appropriate mediums and therefore scored full marks for the question. Other candidates gave mediums that were not relevant to the scenario or gave general categories of mediums, for example, electronic, print, visual, etc. Many candidates gave responses that were specific to one of the groups mentioned, which was good.

Question 10

This question was based on a situation in which a girl sent a text message to her grandfather, using linguistic shortcuts, and did not get a response. It had three parts, with Part (a) asking candidates to give two possible barriers to communication, Part (b) requiring that they suggest a way to facilitate communication between both parties, and Part (c) asking them to give either a verbal or non-verbal form of communication by which the grandfather could express a lack of understanding.

There were 14,189 responses and the mean score was 6.03 (out of 8). Seventy-five per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

The question was well done, but it must be observed that for Part (a), too many candidates provided general barriers, for example, physical, psychological, etc., rather than ones specific to the scenario.

Paper 01B – Aural Comprehension

This paper was based only on Module 1 objectives and consisted of four questions based on a passage for listening comprehension.

Question 1

This question asked candidates to state the writer's main idea in a sentence of no more than 30 words.

There were 14, 222 responses and the mean score was 1.04 (out of 3). Thirty-five per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

Performance on the paper was below what was expected.

The examiners expected good answers to recognize the different stages, moods or phases of the river. Many candidates were able to score at least a mark on the question, but far too many provided vague and general responses like ‘...pollution can destroy the beauty of (the) natural environment’; ‘...how the water flows and what it passes through before it reaches the Northern Range’. Many candidates continued the bad practice of expressing their answer as a purposive statement: ‘...to describe/explain the effects of pollution on the rivers...’ Very weak candidates focused only on one element of the main idea, for example, pollution.

Teachers are advised to give students practice in using phrases like the following in the stem of their answers: *is about*, *deals with* or *is that*.

Question 2

The question required candidates to list four details from the passage that assisted them in identifying the main idea.

There were 14, 219 responses and the mean score was 2.75 (out of 4). Sixty-nine per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

This question was well done even though many of the candidates who did well on it did poorly on Question 1. Many candidates were able to score full marks on this question. A superior response recognized that each detail had to be related to a specific stage, mood or phase of the river. Candidates lost marks if they chose two or more details from the same stage, for example, ‘overflows its banks’ and ‘made roads impossible to cross’. As has happened in the past, too many candidates commented on the author’s methodology rather than providing the details from the passage. Responses in this category include the following: ‘the elaborate descriptions of the streams’ and ‘the tonality of the writer’. Other inadequate answers were ‘the odd movement of the river after pollution’ and ‘the effect of the water when it was polluted’, which failed to capture the idea of stages, moods, and phases.

Teachers should emphasize to students the need to extract specific details from the passage in relation to the writer’s main point and then to generalize these points in the summarization.

Question 3

This question had two parts, with Part (a) requiring candidates to identify two literary devices used by the author, and Part (b) requiring them to give an example of each of the devices identified in Part (a).

There were 14, 220 responses and the mean score was 3.40 (out of 4). Eighty-five (85) per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

This question was handled best by candidates. Most of them correctly identified the literary devices and gave suitable examples of them. The more knowledgeable candidates provided

devices such as anthropomorphism and transferred epithet. However, far too many provided, as literary devices, parts of speech (adjectives), discourse types (description/descriptive writing), and totally unrelated devices like onomatopoeia. Others were able to identify a device but were unable to provide the requisite examples. A few candidates continued to select examples from their classroom experience rather than from the passage.

We reiterate the suggestion that teachers should compile an extensive list of devices complete with examples and a brief comment on their functions so as to reduce the incidence of candidates writing arbitrary responses to this question. We also advise candidates to desist from listing ‘imagery’ as a device without qualifying the type of imagery (for example, visual, auditory, olfactory).

Question 4

The question asked candidates to comment on the effectiveness of each of the two devices they identified in Question 3(a).

There were 14, 213 responses and the mean score was 1.00 (out of 4). Twenty-five per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

Not surprisingly, the question was poorly done. It continues to be the most challenging question for candidates, who are still struggling with the task of expressing the effectiveness of (examples of) literary devices. This question, more than any other, brought out weaknesses in candidates’ combining the skills of listening, comprehension and expression.

Teachers should emphasize that the process involved in analysing effectiveness consists of two steps: (i) explicitly stating what the device does in the given context (for example, the metaphor *they become dustbins* compares the people’s dumping garbage into the river to the way they dump trash in garbage receptacles), and (ii) making a link between the comparison and the writer’s main idea and/or purpose, or indicating that a particular condition or state of affairs is being highlighted.

Other Recommendations

- There should be more intensive practice in listening comprehension exercises in preparation for the examination. Teachers should discuss with students the requirements of the various questions during these preparatory sessions.
- Many candidates indicated on the examination script that they were unable to hear the passage clearly. Schools should therefore consider using a sound amplification system as well as an articulate reader.
- For Question 2, even though paraphrasing is allowed, teachers should emphasize the need to quote specific details from the passage, which would assist students in identifying examples of the devices and discussing the effectiveness of their use in the quoted examples.
- Far more careful focus needs to be placed on the study of the effective use of literary devices.

Paper 02 – Essays

Paper 02 consisted of three questions – one per module.

Section A – Module 1

Question 1

The question had two parts, with Part (a) requiring candidates to state the main point of an adapted passage and Part (b) requiring them to write an essay of no more than 500 words discussing the writer's purpose, organizational strategies, language techniques and tone.

There were 14, 233 responses and the mean score was 9.88 (out of 25). Forty per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

Performance on this question was the lowest. While there were many scripts that showed an improvement in writing and organization, there were too many that did not and that were deficient in content as well. Candidates supplied vague responses for the main idea (such as "tertiary institutions/universities in the Caribbean are expanding technologically"), expressed the purpose in terms of merely providing information, and failed to differentiate between organizational strategies and language techniques.

Teachers are encouraged to

- teach their students to look beyond the verb *inform* to verbs and verb phrases like *encourage, persuade, highlight, sensitise, develop awareness* to properly express an author's purpose
- make their students aware of the difference between organizational strategies and language techniques
- help their students to develop strategies and techniques in order to score more marks for organization
- show their students how to use material from a passage to support a point
- show their students how to express themselves in their own words in summary form as they tend to hide behind chunks of text lifted from a passage to make a point, thereby compromising the assessment of their expression.

Recommendations

Candidates are encouraged to:

- Use the correct phrasing in distinguishing main point and purpose.
- Respond within the word limit.
- Supply the organizational strategies and language techniques as asked.
- Link each point (organizational strategy and language technique) to the writer's purpose.

Section B – Module 2

Question 2

This question was divided into two Parts — (a) and (b) — and required candidates to write an essay of not more than 500 words, discussing the attitude to language by the main characters in an excerpt adapted from Elizabeth Nunez’s *Bruised Hibiscus*.

Part (a) tested candidates’ ability to discuss the attitude of Cedric and Anna towards Creole and Caribbean Standard English (CSE). In Part (b), candidates were required to discuss how a televised presentation of the relevant scenes in the extract could help readers to understand the main characters’ attitude to language.

There were 14, 178 responses and the mean score was 12.41 (out of 25). Fifty per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

Most candidates understood the question and were able to identify the language variety used by Cedric (CSE) and Anna (Creole) in the extract. For the most part, they were also able to make the relevant associations between the language variety and each character’s attitude. For example, Cedric’s use of CSE revealed that he took pride in the language as he believed that it was, politically speaking, a passport to high social regard and importance, etc. On the other hand, Anna, who could speak CSE, was diffident about its importance as evident in her utterance (‘And what you tink it will get you?’). However, a number of candidates did not develop their discussion by identifying an adequate number of specific behaviours of the characters. Furthermore, many candidates evidently memorized some linguistic terms (basilect, mesolect, acrolect, etc.) that they used without due consideration of context.

Part (b) required candidates to identify specific behaviours of each character and apply critical thinking skills to discuss an enhancement of such behaviours via different scenes that focus on facial expressions, body language, tone of voice, and dress. Importantly, candidates were expected to focus on the characters, for example, Cedric speaking in pleading and serious tones to Anna as he begged her to ‘speak good English’. However, this part of the question was less successfully handled by the candidates, many of whom merely repeated incidents from the passage without any attempt at meaningful analysis. Also, some candidates discussed the use of audio-visual aids and paralinguistic behaviours in general terms while others mentioned actual television films.

With respect to organization, many candidates exhibited challenges in producing an essay with an introduction, well-developed paragraphs and a conclusion. Consequently, at the macro level, many of the responses were structurally deficient. For example, some candidates divided their responses to match the division of the questions without suitable syntactic or semantic transition devices. In some cases where introductions and/or conclusions were attempted, they were ineffectively developed. Often there were paragraphs that were incoherent; and some essays were one extended paragraph.

With regard to expression, there was a slight improvement over the previous year. However, many candidates showed that it was a struggle to (i) agree subjects with verbs, (ii) select the right tense, (iii) use tenses consistently, (iv) control complex syntax, (v) choose the right word, (vi) spell words correctly, (vii) punctuate correctly, and (viii) use the appropriate register/level of formality.

Despite the improvement, it was clear that composing an essay continues to be difficult for numerous candidates. Teachers need to hone both their essay-writing knowledge and their essay-teaching skills. Emphasis should be placed on the structure of expository essays and on fundamental topics, such as (i) effectively introducing expository essays, (ii) expressing controlling ideas, (iii) stating the theme and constituent topics, (iv) illustrating a point, (v) ways of making a paragraph cohesive, (vi) making transitions from paragraph to paragraph, and (vii) effectively concluding expository essays.

Generally, candidates were awarded average scores. Several candidates did not attempt the question, and some attempts were merely a paraphrase and/or summary of the contents of the passage, a vague or circuitous discussion, or short, inadequate responses. It should be noted that in addition to essay-writing skills, candidates need to be guided in the application of the theoretical content of the module to authentic language/communication situations.

Section C – Module 3

Question 3

This question was based on a scenario about a school fair in respect of which the candidates' class, upper six, was selected to create a campaign promoting the fair as a community event. It required candidates to outline a 50-word procedure for creating the campaign, as well as to write a 300-word letter to the principal setting out the proposals of the campaign.

There were 14, 190 responses and the mean score was 12.63 (out of 25).

Even though this was the best done of all the questions, the performance of candidates was not outstanding, with only a small number of candidates scoring in the upper band. Most candidates failed to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of formal letter writing format, as well as the manner in which an essay should be structured. Additionally, poor organization, paragraphing, spelling and general grammar and mechanics issues severely marred the presentation of the responses. There was evidence that candidates lacked understanding of certain key words like *outline*, which they interpreted as 'summarize' only, and other words such as *promote*, *proposal* and *campaign*. There was also no distinction between the different forms and categories of media, with flyers and posters, for example, being presented as two separate types. Since these concepts are often required knowledge in Module 3, teachers are encouraged to reinforce them in order to adequately prepare their students to tackle this question.

Candidates also appeared not to have read the question carefully as most responses centred around how the strategies would raise awareness of the campaign, and failed to address the aspects of promoting community involvement and participation. Candidates should also be

reminded to demonstrate an awareness of audience in their responses. Many letters outlined the steps in the communication process, concepts which the principals to whom the letters were addressed would not necessarily have been familiar with.

Finally, candidates should cease the practice of religiously studying past papers then producing the answers to these papers on the current exam whether or not the nature of the exam requires it. Candidates presented answers which, for example, were in line with the previous year's exam but had very little to do with this one. They should be encouraged to independently interpret questions and apply their knowledge of the module to the answering of the question. Teachers are encouraged to ensure that their students are adequately prepared for the exam, not only through past paper practice but, more importantly, through systematic and rigorous knowledge and understanding of the syllabus.

We hope that next year will see a greater improvement in the treatment of this question by the candidates.

Paper 031 – School-Based Assessment

This paper involves the moderation or remarking of a maximum of five sample scripts from each of the schools doing Communication Studies.

This year's marking exercise was challenging in some respects. While there were students who responded well, there were others whose portfolios did not reach the required standard. Some centres seemed to be still using the old syllabus so they were reproducing more than one reflective piece and a rationale for each, while others seemed to be unfamiliar with the new one. It is not unreasonable to hope that by now the new syllabus would be sufficiently familiar so that students would be able to respond appropriately to the requirements. Teachers need to become familiar with the syllabus so that their students will not be at a disadvantage in the moderation process.

The Portfolio

Students are required to present, in addition to the preface and the reflective piece, an introduction containing specific features: theme and purpose; treatment of the same; and how the theme is related to the students' academic, personal and work interests. Many students did not respond accordingly, hence valuable marks were lost. However, some students demonstrated good control of the theme selected as well as creativity in their selected genre while others were presented research – with topics and portfolios which are very similar to those permitted for Caribbean Studies.

Some themes did not lend themselves to creativity so students should be guided in their selection, and other themes should have been delineated so that a specific aspect could be dealt with. Furthermore, creativity is to be demonstrated in students' ability to adequately express their views on the theme using the language rather than art work. Marks are not awarded for artistic presentations, but where the latter are provided, they should be suitably enhancing rather than detracting from the theme under consideration. Additionally, where research information is used,

it must be properly referred to in a bibliography. There should also be a suitable conclusion to the project.

General Introduction

Weaker students failed to show (i) how the theme was treated in the reflection sample; (ii) what aspects of it were discussed in the exposition task; and (iii) how it related to their academic, work-related and personal interests.

Reflection

Overall, highly creditable, creative pieces were produced by students who interpreted the selected theme quite effectively and, in some cases, with refreshing uniqueness. But weaker students failed to (i) provide the required particulars of the Preface; (ii) highlight the theme selected in their creative pieces; (iii) choose themes that either lent themselves to creative development or reflected the genre selected; and (iv) understand the meaning of ‘context’, seeing it as circumstances or an environment in which the piece was written instead of a situation or forum (for example, magazine, play) in which it could be shared; and (vi) write clearly and concisely.

Analysis

This section of the portfolio continues to be done ineffectively. Many students were able to respond appropriately to the requirements of the syllabus, while others were still unable to analyse the linguistic features of the reflective piece. Some analyses presented were definitions of the features rather than examples of these features and why they were used and how they conveyed the theme. In some instances, the concepts were named but students were unable to develop a meaningful discussion in their writing. This was in part due to the fact that the original piece did not contain sufficient features to be discussed. Very often students were unable to give relevant examples of dialectal variation and/or identify the Creole features. A few students presented analyses that were more literary than linguistic as well as discussions of all four linguistic features instead of two.

Further Comments

- Teachers must adhere to the marking guidelines in the syllabus as this is what is used in the moderation process. Students are at a disadvantage when this is not done as marks are not awarded when the features are not obvious.
- In the case where the computer selects a sample that does not contain all the areas to be moderated, the next lowest should be sent. The areas of the sample that are moderated are the introduction, the preface, the reflection, and the analysis. Therefore when the sample does not contain these, it is a meaningless exercise.
- Some students continue to use profane language and include too much graphic sexual detail.
- Teachers must ensure that students understand the difference between the theme and the topic of the portfolio. For example, if students are looking at the theme ‘Tourism’, they

must look at a specific aspect like the economic benefits or the environmental impact, which would enable them to cover both aspects meaningfully in one portfolio.

- Some teachers are not following the guidelines in the allocation of marks as stipulated on the COMM 3 forms. For example, they have been wrongly awarding half marks. (Incidentally, totals in the total column have been found to be incorrect.)
- Students are expected to conform to the writing conventions in the analytical essay, which include introduction, development, and conclusion.

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

This paper is done by candidates who do not present an SBA; it consists of three essay questions — one per module. Performance on this paper continued to be weak but there was a slight improvement this year over 2012.

Section A – Module One

Question 1

This question required candidates to summarize the argument of a passage in 30 words and write a 150-word evaluation of the passage exploring whether the information was valid.

There were 139 responses and the mean score was 8.28 (out of 20). Forty-one per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

Although some candidates were able to identify the main idea of the passage, they were unable to write the information in their own words. This suggested a weakness in their summary writing technique. Many were able to identify the sources supporting the views of the writer but they were not able to state why the information was valid.

Section B – Module Two

Question 2

This question presented candidates with an extract from Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* and required them to provide a 300-word analysis of the extract taking into consideration two of the following factors: dialectal variation, attitudes to language, communicative behaviours, and use of register.

There were 133 responses and the mean score was 5.96 (out of 20). Thirty per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

The responses showed a general lack of understanding of these features and where there was some understanding, responses were inadequate. Again, the conventions of essay writing were frequently not adhered to.

Section C – Module Three

Question 3

This question required candidates to write a 250-word response discussing the following in a given extract: the writer's level of involvement with the subject, the intended audience, the purpose, and two situations in which the extract could be used.

There were 135 responses and the mean score was 9.60 (out of 20). Forty-eight per cent of the candidates achieved the mean.

In many cases, candidates were able to respond satisfactorily but the discussions were not as in-depth as the question required. On the whole, candidates' responses suggested a peripheral knowledge of the concepts being examined, so better preparation is necessary.

Conclusion

Recommendations have been provided in the different sections of this report to help teachers improve their practice, and these should be associated with those given in the new syllabus. In particular, teachers are urged to expand their knowledge of the foci of the three modules by reading more intensively and extensively, devoting time for reflection on the new knowledge gained from such reading, and trying out new research-based methods of delivering their content.