

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

JUNE 2006

SOCIAL STUDIES

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SOCIAL STUDIES
GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS
June 2006

GENERAL COMMENTS

Social Studies has become very attractive to both School and Private candidates. More and more candidates are entering for the General Proficiency examinations. This year the number of candidates who entered for Social Studies was 44 081. The number who wrote the examination was 41 094. The Basic proficiency is becoming less attractive to candidates. Only 1334 entered for this proficiency level. The overall performance at the General and Basic proficiencies was similar to that of June 2005.

The performance of some candidates at the General proficiency level was excellent. This is probably due to desirable study habits by candidates, adequate delivery of the syllabus by teachers, the choice of questions by candidates and the quality of past examination papers.

Some questions on the core of the syllabus remain attractive, while others on Government and Regional Organisations continue to be unpopular. In Section C, the Options, there was a shift in popularity from Tourism to Communication.

The responses at the General Proficiency level continue to be varied. Some candidates offered responses that were substantial, thought provoking, challenging, well constructed and appropriate. Candidates who did not apply themselves, who did not have a clear grasp of the terms and concepts in the syllabus and who were ill prepared did not respond satisfactorily to the questions set at both proficiencies. In some questions in Section A, the candidates' performance was excellent. The knowledge profile component in most questions was well handled. The overall responses in some questions in the Interpretation Profile were quite interesting. The major problem in the Interpretation profile continues to be inadequate explanations and the lack of development of the responses by candidates despite the fact that the rubric in every section of the paper reminds candidates to develop responses fully. The Application component in each question asked candidates to justify why the suggested measure, strategy or action would be appropriate or would be successful.

A large number of the candidates who attempted the Basic Proficiency Paper 02, offered responses that contained single words and poorly constructed sentences. Some responses contained good understanding of the major terms and concepts. Overall most of the candidates who attempted the Basic paper performed less than satisfactorily.

DETAILED COMMENTS
Basic and General Proficiencies

Paper 1 – Multiple Choice

Paper 01, Multiple Choice paper, was common to both Basic and General proficiencies. This paper examined the core of the syllabus assessing both the Knowledge and Interpretation profiles. It consisted of 60 items, 24 on Individual Interaction and 36 on Development and Use of Resources. The reliability of this paper was very high. There was a variety of items testing various levels of difficulty, providing adequate syllabus coverage, and an acceptable range of equating items. The mean score for the Basic Proficiency was 30.29 while the mean score for the General Proficiency was 37.80. The mean compared favourably with last year's.

General Proficiency

Paper 02 – Structured Questions and Essays

Section A: Individual Interaction

This section required candidates to respond to two out of three structured questions set. The responses to this section were mixed. Some were outstanding while others lacked substance and were less than satisfactory. Question 1 was the most popular followed by Question 2.

Question 1

This question focused on divorce and child abuse within the family. Candidates were required to define the terms ‘divorce’ and ‘child abuse’ and to state the conditions within the family which may lead to child abuse. Several candidates wrongly defined ‘divorce’ as the legal separation between husband and wife. Those candidates who responded correctly defined ‘divorce’ as ‘the legal ending of a marriage’. Many candidates were able to define ‘child abuse’ and to state the conditions that lead to this abuse.

For the Interpretation part of the question candidates were asked to give reasons why laws are necessary to protect family members. Correct responses based on the prevalence of domestic violence in the home, the psychological scarring of abuse on the minds of children and the need for parents and children to communicate more frequently in the home were common.

The Application part asked candidates for suggestions that would make parents and children reduce indiscipline in the home. Candidates were further required to state why the suggestion they offered is likely to succeed. Common suggestions offered were based on ‘spending time together’, ‘sharing experiences’ and ‘openness in conversation and discussions’. Other correct responses such as setting codes of behaviour, and sanctions were also evident. In many instances the candidates were able to justify the likely success of their suggestions. Overall this question was very popular and candidates performed fairly well.

Question 2

This question was quite popular. The knowledge part asked candidates to define ‘religion’ and ‘customs’ and to state what is meant by ‘cultural diversity’. Most candidates who attempted this question had some awareness of the terms and were able to offer reasonable definitions. Candidates saw religion as a form of belief in a superior being and having faith in their worship and spiritual actions. Customs were defined by several candidates as ‘a way of life’, ‘as things done from generation to generation’ and as ‘traditions’. To many candidates, the expression ‘cultural diversity’ meant the existence of several different types of food, different ethnic groups, diverse musical rhythms and religions in the society. There were acceptable responses.

The Interpretation component asked candidates to give reasons for the variety of religious and cultural activities in the Caribbean. Most of the responses to this part were based on the history of the people who came to this region, forms of identity, the high tolerance and acceptability level of these activities, and their attractiveness to tourists.

For the Application part candidates were required to suggest ways religious organisations could promote their festivals and activities. Candidates also had to justify their suggestions. Most of the suggestions focused on advertisement of activities through flyers, making of videos for sale, the holding of shows and the formation of groups in other areas of the country. The central focus of the justification offered by candidates was ‘bringing the youth together to create awareness and commitment to desirable values’. The following are examples of student responses to the Application section of the question:

- (i) One way religious organisations may promote their religious festivals and activities in my country is to go into schools and around the community and talk to the youth. This is likely to be successful because the youth today are very easily influenced.
- (ii) One way religious organisations may promote religious festivals and activities is by establishing programmes and informing the public about their religion. This may be successful because people would have a better understanding of the activities and festivals and may join the group.
- (iii) Religious organisation may promote their religious festivals by encouraging family and friends to attend it. Family and friends are more likely to attend and may also invite their friends and family.

Overall the candidates' performance was fair. The mean score for this question was 6.61.

Question 3

Of the three questions in Section A, this was the least popular. This question focused on systems of governance and the arms of government. The knowledge part was based on a diagram that represented a Constitutional Monarchy. Candidates were required to name a CARICOM country that uses the system in the diagram and one country that uses another system. Many candidates were able to do this part of the question correctly. However, many candidates could not sketch and label a diagram to represent the Republican system of government as obtained in Guyana or Trinidad and Tobago.

For the Interpretation component candidates were required to write one sentence that would explain how each of the three arms of the government works. Few candidates knew the functions of these arms. For the executive arm, some candidates offered correct responses based on setting policies; for the legislative arm, correct responses were based on passing bills and making laws, and for the judicial arm, correct responses were based on dispensing justice. Generally this part of the question was not well done.

The Application part asked candidates for ways in which citizens of a CARICOM country participate in the governance of their country and a justification of the suggestion. The common response to this part was 'participating in national elections' and 'ventilating political concerns in the media'. The justification statement offered by candidates was based on citizen's rights and freedoms. The overall performance in this question was weak. The mean score was 5.10.

Section B: Development and Use of Resources

This section is divided into two parts. Part I contained two structured questions while Part II comprised two extended essays. Candidates were required to attempt one question from each part of this section.

Part I – Structured Questions

Question 4

This question was very popular. It focused on graphical data showing unemployment among males and females in an unnamed country. It asked candidates to define 'unemployment' and 'underemployment' and to state the factors that contribute to unemployment in the Caribbean. Most candidates defined unemployment as 'persons unable to find a job' or 'persons not having a job'. The term underemployment was not well known by several candidates. These candidates defined the term as 'having skills or talent but cannot get a job'. Some candidates gave acceptable definitions and

good examples to show their knowledge of the term ‘underemployment’. Among the valid factors stated for underemployment were overpopulation, more machinery in the workplace and inadequate job skills.

The Interpretation part of the question required candidates to look at the graphical data and to write a statement describing the difference between male and female unemployment figures. They were also asked to give reasons for the trend of unemployment between men and women. A common response was ‘more females than males were unemployed’ and a popular reason was males ‘had the skills to do the jobs’ so men got the available jobs. This part of the question received a variety of correct responses from several candidates.

The Application part asked candidates to suggest ways a youth organisation might encourage its members to become self-employed. Most of the suggestions referred to skills training, courses and programmes in business operations. The justification for most suggestions focused on the independence of the individual in the world of work. Overall the performance of the candidates in this question was fair. The mean score was 7.47.

Question 5

The focus of this question was ‘health care, primary and curative’. Many candidates who attempted this question did not offer satisfactory responses. The knowledge segment required candidates to define ‘primary health care’ and ‘curative health care’. The definitions offered were based on the concept of ‘a level of care’ provided by health services of a country. These responses were too vague. Good responses made reference to the prevention of diseases and illnesses and on treatment to make people well again. Candidates had some difficulty in stating services provided in each category of health care. Services such as immunisation against infectious diseases, prenatal and postnatal care check ups for mothers and babies and waste disposal were few. On the curative side, few candidates stated services such as treating accidents and emergencies, radiology, blood tests and surgery.

The Interpretation part of the question was fairly well done. Candidates gave good reasons for nutrition education in a health plan. Some of the reasons focused on developing a healthy workforce, increased productivity and healthy life styles for citizens. Other candidates gave responses based on cost reduction in government spending on health care if the population practised good eating habits.

The Application part asked candidates to suggest ways business places might assist in maintaining a healthy work force in a country. Suggestions ranged from ‘monetary contributions, keeping the work place safe and clean and the provision of protective clothing to good cafeteria services’. The justification for most of the suggestions focused on the loss of fewer man-hours and greater productivity. Generally this question was fairly well done. The mean score was 7.89.

Part II

Question 6

This question was quite popular. It focused on ‘food security’ for CARICOM countries. Candidates were required to define ‘food security’ and to state the factors that affect the production of food in the Caribbean. Many candidates looked at food security in relation to safety and health, protection of crops and defending the food supply. These candidates apparently were influenced by media reports of terrorists’ activities in developed countries. Few candidates defined food security as producing sufficient local foods to meet the demands of the countries in the region. The candidates’ responses on the factors that affect the production of food ranged from praedial larceny to poor farming practices and inadequate infrastructure.

The Interpretation part of the question asked candidates to give reasons why food security is necessary for the region. Some candidates indicated the health benefits to the people, foreign exchange savings, and a contributor to sustainable development.

The Application part required candidates to suggest initiatives farmers may take to ensure food security for the region. Most of the initiatives related to lobbying the governments in the region to provide land, loans and technical advice. Few candidates stated what farmers themselves could do. Initiatives such as the use of better farming practices, the development of family farms and diversification programmes were rarely mentioned. Justification for the initiatives was based on the financial capability of governments to support farmers in food production. This question was not well done by many candidates. The mean score was 5.54.

Question 7

This question was based on 'globalisation'. Candidates were required to define the term and to state its negative effects to Caribbean businessmen. Most candidates who attempted this question did not know what globalisation meant. A few candidates correctly mentioned the penetration of capital, technology and goods into the region. Some stated that it was about the coming together of countries. Some candidates knew some of its negative effects. These included more imports, competition on the world market, dumping of commodities and higher costs.

The Interpretation part of the question was not done well. The common response was producing more locally grown foods and import restrictions through taxes and quotas. Correct responses such as pooling of resources and greater bargaining power in negotiations were few.

The Application part required candidates to suggest actions businessmen may take to prepare workers for globalisation. Most candidates suggested courses and seminars and retraining of workers to handle technology. The justification for these suggestions was focused on survival and keeping abreast with the rest of the business world. Many candidates rambled in this question. The mean score was 4.63.

Section C – Options

There were three options in this section. Each option had two questions. Candidates were required to respond to one question in this section. All the questions in this section were attempted.

Consumer Affairs

Question 8

This question focused on 'Income, Savings and Investments' and was popular. Candidates had more knowledge of 'savings' than of 'investments'. The term 'savings' was defined as money put into a bank or credit union while the term 'investments' was regarded as 'something put aside to make bigger for future use'. In other words, these terms were not clearly defined. Most candidates had some awareness of the sources from which income is derived. The common response was rents and pensions.

The Interpretation part of the question was not well done. It asked how a country benefits from the savings of its citizens. Many candidates gave an explanation based on money becoming available as loans for development. Some stated that a country benefited from the taxes collected on savings. Correct responses such as 'developing a culture of thrift' and improving the credit rating of the country were rare.

The Application part sought strategies to encourage citizens to save. Many candidates focused on the provision of attractive inducements by financial institutions such as credit unions and insurance

companies. A few candidates suggested educational programmes by banks etc on the benefits of savings for the acquisition of future needs and wants. The justification for the strategies offered focused on retirement income and the high cost of living that is now evident in the region. The overall performance in this question was less than satisfactory. The mean score was 6.62.

Question 9

This question was not popular. It was set on 'devaluation'. Candidates in an essay format had to state the meaning of 'devaluation' and to outline two factors that cause governments to agree to devaluation. The meaning of devaluation as stated by some candidates hinged on 'making the currency less'. Other candidates saw devaluation as 'lowering the price of goods' and as the 'decrease in the value of a currency'. These responses were considered and rewarded accordingly.

The Interpretation part of the question solicited reasons why consumers might object to devaluation. Those candidates who did know the meaning of devaluation did not respond correctly to this part of the question. However some candidates offered reasons based on the higher costs for imports and fewer choices of goods and services in the domestic market place. These were adequate responses and candidates were appropriately rewarded.

The Application part of the question was not well done. This part required the suggestion of actions consumers may take to deal with the negative effects of devaluation. The most common suggestion consisted of some form of protest action involving marches and placards. Good suggestions were finding local substitutes of a similar type and quality and developing ways to help oneself. The justification statements for the action suggested were vague and ambiguous. Generally this question was not well done. The mean score was 6.94.

Communication

Question 10

This question focused on cultural traditions and their transmission in the Caribbean. In an essay format, candidates had to state the meaning of cultural traditions and indicate the factors responsible for the variety of traditional practices in the Caribbean. Many candidates offered correct responses based on the diverse ancestral background of Caribbean people, the role of the media in the promotion of these traditions, and the importance of religious awareness by ethnic leaders. The methods of transmission mentioned by candidates included music, song, dance, celebrations and festivals.

The Interpretation part of the question asked candidates to give reasons why CARICOM states support the region's cultural practices financially. Many candidates cited 'the positive effect of traditional practices on the minds of the youth in the society', a sense of 'belonging and companionship' for citizens and on the importance to tourist industry.

The Application part of the question required candidates to suggest measures to promote cultural traditions and to justify the measure suggested. Many candidates suggested the formation of cultural groups to promote concerts, plays and festivals, education of the young in these traditions, and financial contributions to undertake research and hold displays and exhibitions. The question attracted a fair number of candidates. The performance however was only fair. The mean score was 7.74.

Question 11

This was a popular question. It focused on the breakdown of the communication process. Candidates had to define communication and state factors that cause a breakdown in communication in a class. Most candidates correctly defined communication as the 'passing of information and ideas' and as an interaction among individuals. Few candidates included components – sender, the message, the

receiver and feedback in their definition of communication. Common factors posited for the breakdown in communication in a class were lack of trust, the keeping of secrets, and feeling of isolation and discrimination by class members.

The Interpretation component sought reasons why breakdown in communication affect group activities. Responses to this part centred on 'lack of cooperation' and 'group disputes'. These responses were not well developed and candidates could not receive full marks. Other correct responses such as time wasting in finding solutions and arriving at consensus were few.

The Application part asked candidates to suggest measures the members of youth groups may take to maintain effective communication. A common measure suggested was to 'allow members to talk freely' and to have activities to bring group members together. Most candidates were able to offer some justification for the measure suggested. The candidates' performance in this question was fair. The mean score for this question was 6.75.

Tourism

Question 12

In this question candidates were required to write a report and to state the factors that influence the development of tourism in the Caribbean. Many candidates responded correctly to the knowledge component. They stated factors such as air transport to the region, adequate accommodation, beautiful beaches, historical sites and favourable exchange rates.

The Interpretation component was not well done. Candidates were required to give explanations to show how people in rich countries create demand in a tourist destination. Many candidates found this part of the question difficult. Their responses hinted at advertisements, leave/vacation breaks for workers, and financial undertakings by investors from prosperous economies. These responses were vague and not well developed. Some candidates focused on the development of infrastructure such as hotels and roads in tourist destinations. The candidates' scores in this part of the question were less than satisfactory.

The Application part asked candidates for actions tourism officials in the Caribbean might take to promote the development of regional tourism. The most common response was to advertise regional festivals and sports as tourist attractions. The justification statement hinged on the power of the electronic media to reach people in their homes. The following are examples of students' responses to the Application component of this question.

- (i) One action tourism officials in the Caribbean may take to promote the development of regional tourism is to have more advertisements in magazines about the Caribbean region and what it has to offer. In that way each international country would be informed more accurately about the Caribbean and also be influenced to visit the region.
- (ii) Tourism officials in the Caribbean can promote their destinations as being unique and special emphasising activities and sites that can be found nowhere else. By doing things like this, Caribbean nationals and other tourists would be encouraged to visit all the islands to experience different cultures, practices and activities.

Overall the performance on this question was weak. The mean score was 4.56.

Question 13

This question was based on tourism and the marine environment. Candidates were asked to identify marine-related recreational activities provided for tourists and to state the negative effects of these activities. Many candidates identified scuba diving, fishing and snorkelling. The negative effects of

these activities were cited as damage to coral reefs and the destruction of small fishes. This part of the question was well done.

The Interpretation part of the question asked candidates to give reasons why an environmental impact study is necessary before hotels are built. Responses to this part were varied but not developed. These responses ranged from conducting soil tests to decide on the ability of the site to sustain the size of the hotels, and to explore the likely damage to the marine environment by effluent from these hotels. Other good reasons referred to the possibility of coastal erosion and effect of waste disposal on marine life. This part of the question however, was not well done and candidates' scores were unsatisfactory.

The Application component required candidates to suggest measures to protect the marine environment and to state why hoteliers should support these measures. The most common measure suggested by candidates indicated that hoteliers should conduct education programmes for everyone connected to the industry. The justification statement was not quite convincing in many instances and few candidates could get full marks. Overall the candidates' performance in this question was fair. The mean score was 7.22.

Paper 3/1: School Based Assessment

This year schools entering candidates for Social Studies were required to submit a total of five SBA samples according to CXC guidelines for moderation. Interestingly many of the candidates' projects submitted had lower limit scores above 20 marks. At moderation several of the scores were adjusted downwards. It was evident that some classroom teachers were quite lenient in Tasks 5, 6 and 7. The topics researched by candidates this year were based on current issues such as drugs, crime and domestic violence. In many instances candidates are not framing problem statements in the form of a question, not explaining how their samples were chosen, and were merging several tasks rather than dealing with them separately. Candidates who were guided, presented data accurately in computer-generated graphs and tables, and explained and interpreted the data presented quite well. Such candidates received full marks for these tasks. The SBA submissions this year were better in design, layout and presentation than previous years. One may wish to attribute this to teachers' guidance along with credit now awarded for grammar, spelling and expression. Generally the candidates' projects received scores that were better than 2004. The mean for this paper was 25.15. A few teachers continue to use the old moderation format to enter candidates' scores despite the fact that schools were in receipt of the correct form.

Paper 3/2: Alternative to the SBA

This paper caters for private candidates. More candidates than anticipated attempted this paper. This paper tests candidates' familiarity, knowledge, understanding and application of basic research skills and methodologies. In this paper candidates were asked to select one of the topics provided and to respond to the questions that followed. The questions that followed tested the candidates on data gathering protocols, selecting a sample, displaying data, explaining data, stating findings and making recommendations. A case study was presented and research type questions were asked on it. Many of the research terms such as 'research question', 'sample', 'defining variables' and 'data gathering protocols' were not well known. The translation and calculation of quantitative data from the case study to a table presented difficulty for some candidates. In cases where this was not well done, candidates could not state findings nor make recommendations. Candidates who were prepared for this paper did well. Overall the performance of candidates in this paper was fair. The mean score was 13.99.

Basic Proficiency

Paper 2 of the Basic Proficiency examination consisted of 12 questions; distributed in three sections A, B and C. Candidates were required to answer two questions from section A, two questions from section B and one question from section C.

Responses to this year's examination showed that many candidates followed the general directions and attempted the appropriate number of questions in each section of the paper. Generally it was observed that for some questions, marks were consistently low for the Interpretation and Application profiles. Some candidates were unable to define terms and concepts related to the subject. Other candidates were not able to provide clear information and some provided irrelevant and inappropriate responses. Some candidates responded to questions for which they were not prepared.

Section A: Individual Interaction

Question 1

This question was quite popular. It focused on relationships between spouses and required candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of the terms 'divorce' and 'alimony'. Generally candidates' response to (a) correctly included the legal elements of divorce. Many candidates however were unable to define alimony and as a result could not respond adequately to (c) the Interpretation part of the question. Responses to (b) – factors causing divorce, were satisfactory. In their responses to (d) – strategies to reduce divorce, many candidates often stated a strategy but experienced difficulty in developing the statement to suggest a method or process. Justification was usually relevant to the stated strategy. Many candidates did not achieve high scores for this question. The mean score was 3.69 out of 17.

Question 2

This question was also popular. Candidates were required to express their knowledge and understanding of the nature of criminal activities, the factors that give rise to such activities and the effects of the criminal activities of one family member on the entire family. Candidates responded satisfactorily to all parts of the question. Responses to (b) included community ostracism of the family and its psychological effects on family members. Section (c) asked candidates to suggest a strategy to deal with criminal activities in their communities. The most common response was based on the concept of a neighbourhood watch. Candidates were able to justify this strategy quite convincingly. Overall the candidates' performance in this question was encouraging. The mean score was 5.63.

Question 3

This question tested the candidates' knowledge on the characteristics of an institution and on the function of religious and educational institutions. Many candidates were unable to state the characteristics of an institution. Characteristics such as common symbols, shared values and rules, and regulations were hardly evident. However, some candidates gave examples of the two kinds of institutions required in response to (ii) and (iii).

Responses to (b) differences in function of educational and religious institutions, were relatively fair, but many candidates experienced difficulty in trying to make comparative statements to complete the columns in the question. Responses such as 'rewards you with a diploma' and 'rewards you with eternal life in heaven' were common. Most candidates limited their suggestions in response to (c) to 'educate', 'teach about our culture' and 'teach about our history'. Other suggestions such as cultural exhibitions and field trips to observe cultural practices were few. Generally this question was not well done. The mean score was 5.13.

Section B: Development and Use of Resources

Question 4

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the use of modern technology in the workplace, and the type of jobs created by the introduction of technology. Responses suggested that candidates had limited knowledge of the use of technology in the workplace and that this knowledge consisted mainly of knowledge of the computer. Most candidates experienced difficulty in responding to (a) and (b).

Responses to (c) demonstrated candidates limited understanding of the range and diversity of modern technology available to the work environment. Response such as 'to have a better product', 'most of the work need technology', 'technology helps to complete work faster' were common. In response to (d) many candidates gave reasons why schools should be assisted or encouraged to use technology but failed to identify a strategy. In such cases, these candidates lost marks for the justification part of the Application profile. The candidates' performance on this question was less than satisfactory. The mean score was 6.99.

Question 5

This question required candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of resources and their understanding of the effects of poor agricultural practices on natural resources. Many candidates had some difficulty in defining natural, renewal and human resources. Non-renewable resources were often defined as 'resources that cannot be returned', 'resources that can only be used once' or 'resources that cannot be used again'. Definitions given for human resources included 'resources made and used by man' and 'man-made substances that humans use'. Some candidates defined human resources as 'the food we eat and the clothes we wear'. In response to (b) many candidates referred to ways in which natural resources may be destroyed rather than giving ways by which agricultural practices destroy natural resources. Responses to (c) were fairly satisfactory. Suggestions such as 'workshops for farmers', 'the use of technical persons from the Ministry of Agriculture to conduct classes' and the creation of institutions to teach self-employment skills were offered. The performance in this question was fair. The mean score was 6.17.

Question 6

This question dealt with some of the salient features of CARICOM, the logo, the treaty and membership. Candidates were also required to give reasons for the establishment of the organisation and to suggest ways in which manufacturers may be encouraged to support CARICOM. Most candidates performed well on the knowledge part, (a)(i), (ii) and (iii). Responses to part (b) the Interpretation component were generally inadequate. Many candidates had difficulty to state reasons. There were responses such as 'to educate the people with different learning standards', 'so that everyone may be treated as equal'. Correct responses such as 'to cooperate in education, health and sports', to encourage Caribbean unity and cooperation and 'to develop the natural resources' were not evident. The suggestions in response to (c) were generally inappropriate. Examples of suggestions ranged from 'support CARICOM so that goods can be traded', 'to teach youth farming so that they can start their own farming' and 'CARICOM is a family and it will need support'. The suggestions were many, but were not focused on the question. The overall performance was less than satisfactory and the mean score was 4.76.

Section C: Options

Consumer Affairs

Question 7

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the uses and features of ATM cards and to solicit reasons why banks issue these cards to customers. Candidates were unable to give adequate responses to (a), (b) and (c). They experienced difficulty in defining an ATM card, stating instead the information on the card and stating transactions that can be made with these cards on the ATM machine. One common response to (b) was that the card gives information about the account number and the amount of money in the account. Many candidates gave acceptable responses to (d) citing ease of access to savings and the speed of transactions when using the card.

Suggestions on how to create awareness of banking facilities focused mainly on the use of the media and open house educational activities at banks. The justification statements were barely adequate. This question was popular and fairly well done. The mean score was 8.46.

Question 8

This question was not popular. It tested candidates' knowledge of thrift, their understanding of the reasons for practising thrift and their ability to identify practices in the home that would encourage conservation. Many candidates could not give a reasonable definition of thrift or state family practices that could be classified as conservation activities. Generally responses to (b) were satisfactory. Candidates' responses were based on budgeting to save money and 'creating an awareness of the value of goods bought'. In some cases candidates experienced difficulty in responding adequately to (c). Many of the responses were not focused on the promotion of public interest in conservation practices. From the responses given to (a)(ii) and to (c), one can conclude that many candidates did not understand the expression 'conservation practices'. Overall the performance in this question was not satisfactory. The mean score was 5.23.

Communication

Question 9

This question required candidates to identify uses of the internet, to state factors which would interfere with communication by electronic mail and to explain why the internet is an important means of communication. Most candidates responded fairly well to (a)(i), (ii) and (b). Responses to (c) were also quite satisfactory. Many candidates suggested the use of websites for advertising and the advantages of telemarketing. Few candidates developed their suggestion very well. Candidates who were familiar with this technology scored high marks for their responses. In some cases candidates suggested why the internet should be used to market a product but not how the technology should be used to do so. There were some good performances in this question. The mean score was 9.52.

Question 10

This question focused on the mass media. Candidates were required to state the functions of the mass media, to explain how the mass media influence attitudes and behaviours and to suggest how the mass media may promote Caribbean culture.

Many candidates responded satisfactorily to (a) and (b). Few candidates had difficulty in expressing clearly their reasons in their responses to (b). Suggestions for promoting Caribbean culture were based on the use of the television and the radio to air programmes that highlighted the music, history,

literature, folklore and cultural practices. Overall, not many candidates attempted this question. The mean score was 7.29.

Tourism

Question 11

This question dealt with the development of tourism facilities in the Caribbean, the negative effects of this development on the physical environment and the creation of a fund to restore the physical environment. In response to (a) candidates were able to name countries from which tourists come to the Caribbean. Many candidates listed Caribbean countries. A few candidates did not understand (b) and gave responses such as ‘the clothes they wear’, ‘tourism institutions’ and the ‘tourist board’.

Responses to (c) were sometimes not relevant to the question. One candidate stated as a response ‘the climate, the fauna and the temperature’. Other responses included ‘prices are revised’, and ‘poor communication between each other’. Clearly some candidates misunderstood the question. Suggestions for (d) included the payment of a restoration fee by tourists on their arrival at the airport. Some suggestions were plausible such as, ‘the creation of special activities which highlight the physical features of the country, the historical sites and attractions for which the tourist must pay a fee’. Generally the question was not well done. The mean score was 5.02.

Question 12

This question tested candidates’ knowledge of cultural features that attract tourists to the Caribbean. It also tested their understanding of areas of government control and their perception of how occupancy of local hotels may be made accessible to residents for family vacation. Responses to (a) were satisfactory. Candidates’ responses to (b)(i) and (ii) were really reasons rather than ways. Examples of such responses are ‘one way to improve beach security is so that half of them would not drown’ and ‘one way to control illegal visitors is because it may cause conflict’. Correct responses to (b)(i) were the perusal of passports or other means of identification and the enforcement of immigration regulations. Correct responses to (b)(ii) were the erection of signs, employment of beach patrols and clean-up teams.

Responses to (c) were generally inadequate. Candidates took the words tourism activities out of context and stated reasons such as ‘to get more tourists to come to the Caribbean’, ‘to increase foreign exchange’, ‘they can impose their own rules and regulations’ and ‘they can make a profit and earn money from visitors’.

In their responses to (d) many candidates gave workable suggestions such as ‘lowering the hotel rates’, ‘quoting hotel rates in Caribbean currency rather than in US dollars’ and ‘provide the same services for residents as is done for tourists’. Some candidate gave reasons why residents should be encouraged to stay at a local hotel rather than suggestions on how this could be made possible. Overall this question was poorly done. The mean score was 4.09.

Suggestion to Teachers

Social Studies is a popular subject at CSEC level. The questions in all papers set for the examination have been strengthened in terms of syllabus objectives, syllabus content, formatting and attractiveness. A common sense approach and life experiences are therefore insufficient to respond to the demands of the questions. Candidates entering for this examination must be taught and encouraged to read their textbooks and other resource materials in their preparation.

The following are reminders for teachers who prepare candidates for the examination.

1. Candidates must read all instructions on the question papers carefully and must follow them.
2. Teachers should advise candidates that classroom lessons are strengthened by reading textual material on the topics discussed.
3. Candidates should respond to the questions in the Options for which they have been prepared.
4. Candidates should not answer more questions than necessary and should recognise that all the parts of a question are important.
5. Teachers should pay close attention to the SBA feedback and CXC guidelines designed to improve their assessment of school projects.
6. SBA projects should cover a wide range of research topics.
7. All school candidates need guidance to begin and complete good research projects.
8. Teachers can access the CXC website for developments in Social Studies.