

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

JUNE 2008

THEATRE ARTS

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MAY/JUNE 2008

GENERAL COMMENTS

Seven hundred and seventeen (717) candidates registered for Theatre Arts in 2008 from the following territories: Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. This figure represents an increase of 4 per cent over last year's 690.

Three papers comprise the Theatre Arts Examination. Paper 01 offers six written questions accounting for 30 per cent of the total marks. Paper 02 representing 50 per cent of the marks, is the practical examination and is examined by a Theatre Art Specialist and the teacher. Two assignments are given in Paper 03, the SBA for the final 20 per cent.

While there was a small increase in the number of candidates, their performance in paper 01 was less than satisfactory. The basic areas of difficulty appeared to be

- (a) inaccurate use/weak knowledge of theatre terminology
- (b) improper reading of questions
- (c) weak reflection on their learning process
- (d) weak imaginative development and
- (e) weak written expression.

However, questions requiring memory or recall were satisfactorily handled.

Question 1

This question sought to test candidates' knowledge of commonly-used theatre terminology, as well as the application of this knowledge to the candidates' learning process.

Candidates' response was barely satisfactory; the mean was 4. Part b which required the synthesizing of theory and practice, presented the most challenges for candidates.

Suggestion: Teachers need to use and teach accurate terminology in both practical and theory work.

Question 2

This question tested candidates' knowledge of cultural forms as well as elements of theatre.

This part of the question was well done. The meaning of the terms "Costuming" and "Music" seemed quite clear to some candidates, others however, were unsure of these terms; some candidates were unsure of how the term "makeup" applied to cultural forms. Some scripts however, showed exceptional knowledge of cultural forms and were able to compare and contrast competently the question asked. The terms "Properties", "Performance Space", and "Pre-performance Preparation" presented some difficulty. Candidates are used to using the term "PROPS" in place of PROPERTIES.

Some candidates appeared not to understand the meaning of the word "function," they equated this term with origin/history.

Suggestions for Class work:

1. Teachers should allow students to practice with the past papers so that they may develop an aptitude for writing and continue to gain understanding about cultural forms.
2. Teachers need to use correct terminology when communicating with students.
3. Practitioners of the cultural forms should be invited into schools to provide correct information about the forms. It would be better to invite more than one (if possible) of any one form for varied perspectives.
4. Students should be made aware of the difference between the form in its natural environment and as a staged performance. Teachers/candidates should be aware that staged presentations of cultural forms differ significantly from what happens in the “field”. With this in mind, field trips are a necessity to the process.

Question 3

This question assessed candidates’ knowledge of and attitude toward cultural forms. Though some were unable to identify forms prescribed in the syllabus, candidates generally handled this question moderately well.

Suggestions:

1. Teachers must pay attention to the prescribed forms for use.
2. Teachers also need to make clear to students what is a cultural form and what is NOT in terms of the syllabus. For example, obeah, drama and reggae are not cultural forms on the syllabus.
3. Teachers need to remind students that instructional words as well as mark allocation for questions indicate the examinations expectations.
4. Candidates need to read carefully and understand questions before attempting to answer them.

Question 4

This question tested candidates’ observation and interpretive skills. Candidates were also required to engage imaginatively with the stimulus.

Part (a), of this question was well done. Part (b) presented some difficulty. The term “element” and “develop” presented a challenge. The purpose of the question was missed.

Suggestions:

1. Teachers SHOULD allow students to practice for their examinations using the past papers so that they may develop an aptitude for writing and using their creativity and imagination. In a number of instances candidates were not used to “having a voice/say” and demonstrating that right. They seemed afraid to imagine.
2. Teachers need to assist students to transfer knowledge from practical experiences to theory through processes of reflection, discussion, writing in journals, diaries, reports, reviews etc.
3. Teachers should use a variety of stimuli in teaching in order to develop analytical skills.

Question 5

This question tested candidates' basic knowledge of technical theatre and understanding of the social and institutional value of the art. Candidates were credited for using their specific school circumstances. Candidates' performance was poor. The weakest responses were unable to identify what was a technical need.

Many candidates failed to distinguish between the contribution of the theatre space to their school's development and the theatre's contribution to their own development.

Suggestions:

1. Students need to be introduced to the terms, equipment and functions of the technical aspects of theatre. E.g. In lighting – lanterns, spotlights etc.
2. Students need to read and practise answering past paper.

Question 6

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the syllabus, ability to link syllabus objectives to practical experience and their sense of visualization.

Candidates were able to handle Part (b) quite well. This section allowed the candidates to think about their process, and for most, because it is recall they were able to make connections. Part (a) and (c), however presented some challenges to the candidates. For instance, information from the SBA was not transferred to the response. It appeared as though candidates are not clear about what should be gained from the SBA experience. Also, candidates were unsure of what is termed "theory".

Suggestions:

1. Teachers must allow candidates to read and practice past papers. Terminologies – the phrasing of the questions, also application skills/synthesis, need to practice writing out their thoughts.
2. Candidates need to be engaged with more reading exercises in class. They should begin to understand the need for theory as an active component to practice – cognition.
3. Also, journaling and reflective writing should be practiced. Candidates need to have a general understanding of the importance of the arts to their development as creative beings as well as being employable.
4. Teachers also need to focus on skills of analysis and application.
5. Teachers need to help students understand the relationship between the creative, performing and visual arts.

SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)

The requirements of the SBA are: 1) the research paper based on a Theatre Artist or cultural Practitioner and 2) a critique of a dance or drama production or a film or video of such a production.

SBA's generally met CXC requirements in terms of the number of submissions. The following concerns however, need to be restated.

RESEARCH PAPER

1. The subject of the Research paper must be a Theatre Artist or Cultural practitioner. That is not cultural form or genre of music.
2. The Research paper must be written according to CXC guidelines.
3. It is expected to be done in ESSAY format.
4. The interview must be conducted by the candidate.
5. The interview is a tool for research and not the substance of the Research.
6. The entire interview should comprise more than the 5 questions submitted in the paper.
7. Teachers should make qualitative distinctions in marking the interview.
8. Should a secondary source be used for information an interview must still be conducted.
9. Personal reflection must convey the candidates' voice– his/her opinion, sentiments, his findings and reflections on the research and his impact on him/her.
10. To avoid plagiarism all sources of information written or otherwise must be acknowledged in the bibliography.
11. Supporting materials should be identified by labelling.

CRITIQUE

1. Students should be given practice in critique writing.
2. Critique headings are guidelines to content and are not intended for use as sub-headings.

GENERAL COMMENTS

1. Teachers must mark SBA work so that CXC can see the teacher's markings.
2. Marks are to be recorded in the script and on the assessment sheet.
3. Students' information must be placed on the front page of each assignment.