

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

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

MAY/JUNE 2013

**THEATRE ARTS
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Theatre Arts examination consists of three components. Paper 01, the essay paper, consists of six compulsory questions each worth 10 marks. Paper 02, the practical examination, consists of three practicals within three options: Dance, Drama and Stagecrafts. These practical examinations are examined externally by the Theatre Arts teacher and an independent specialist in the field. Paper 03, the School-Based Assessment (SBA), consists of two projects – a research paper and a critique. The research paper is based on a Theatre Arts or cultural practitioner and the critique on a dance or drama production.

Since 2003 when the Theatre Arts syllabus was examined for the first time, new centres and territories have registered for the examination each year. It has been noted on some occasions that these new centres may at times misinterpret areas of the syllabus, particularly in relation to the SBA. Most of these teachers have learnt quite quickly and have used the SBA feedback to improve their teaching. However, there are some teachers who, despite the feedback to their school, continue to ignore the comments and suggestions made on these reports. For example, despite the fact that the cultural forms to be studied are clearly identified in the syllabus **up until 2017**, teachers continue to teach cultural forms that are not on the syllabus at all or those that are not being studied for the particular year. This negatively affects candidates' performance. Students and teachers need to take responsibility for ensuring that their examination preparation is in line with the current syllabus.

This is the second year of the examination of the revised syllabus. In the revised syllabus, there was a change in the allocation of profile marks in Paper 01. Ten of the 60 marks that were previously assigned to Profile 1 (Analysing and Appreciating) were assigned to Profile 3 (Creating). In the 2013 examination, Question 4 assessed Profile 3. Candidates were given a choice of themes and asked to imagine and then create a dance or drama on one of the themes. They were also required to state how they would use two theatrical elements in order to stage their dance or drama.

This year 1442 candidates registered for the examination. Overall performance on the 2013 examination was good.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01— Essay Questions

Paper 01 is designed to test core objectives of the syllabus. These include knowledge of production personnel and their responsibilities; cultural forms; theatre elements; the ability to create from a given stimulus and to make creative predictions; as well as describe the personal value of aspects of the theatre arts process.

This paper engages the candidates in recalling of facts, describing, observing, analysing, imagining and reflecting.

The structure of the Paper 01 is as follows:

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|------------|--|
| Question 1 | Responsibilities of the theatre personnel during a musical |
| Question 2 | Cultural forms |
| Question 3 | A picture stimulus |
| Question 4 | Imagining |

Question 5 Reinforcement of work done on Paper 03

Question 6 Reflection/Reinforcement of work done on Paper 02

Question 1

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the responsibilities of theatre personnel involved in a musical production (Specific Objective 1).

Part (a) of the question required candidates to identify four production personnel required for a musical. Candidates had the freedom to select appropriate and accurate roles from within any of the three options: drama, dance or stagecrafts to respond to this question. This part of the question tested simple recall. There was evidence of a lack of accuracy on the part of candidates in correctly labelling roles. Names such as "lights man" and stage coordinator" were not accepted. Teachers must teach the students to use the correct terminology. Other colloquialisms and slang terms were not accepted. While the stage-hand is a member of the back stage team, he would certainly not be considered a formal member of the production team. Of particular concern, was the fact that some candidates listed names of individuals with whom they were familiar, such as; Mr. Oliver Samuels, or listed physical infrastructure as personnel, such as costume room, or in some cases listed items such as piano or guitar as production personnel. Furthermore, a number of candidates included: singers, actors and dancers in the response about production personnel. Some candidates even used words such as "cast" and "technical team". These responses suggested that candidates were unclear about what is meant by the term 'production personnel'. Indeed the word 'personnel' appeared to not be a part of the vocabulary of some students.

Some candidates experienced difficulty in responding to Part (b). This part of the question was designed to assess the candidates' ability to describe responsibilities of the chosen personnel in a musical within a classroom setting. Candidates had difficulty applying the knowledge of these roles to the production of the musical. Candidates had some difficulty in identifying the responsibilities of the musical director and the sound designer, sometimes confusing the role of the sound designer with that of the musical director. Candidates need to be taught the difference between the roles of the technician and the roles of the designer in all areas of the design process. Many candidates merely identified the tasks without necessarily applying them to the production of the musical.

Performance on this question was fair, with a mean of 4.89 out of 10. Sixty eight (4.74%) out of the 1 436 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Question 2

This question assessed candidates' knowledge of cultural forms, one of the major components of the syllabus (Syllabus Objectives, 5, 6, and 8). For the question candidates needed to draw on the knowledge which they would have acquired in the classroom as well as the experience they would have gained in their preparation for the Paper 02 examination.

Teachers are advised to pay careful attention to the list of cultural forms on the syllabus. Candidates will not gain marks by using cultural forms which are not on the syllabus. Teachers **MUST** refer to page 14 of the syllabus which lists the cultural forms to be studied up to 2017. Teachers must teach a minimum of **THREE** of the cultural forms identified in the syllabus.

Candidates performed very well on Part (a) of this question and the majority of the candidates earned the full two marks. The question required simple recall. Candidates were required to name a national holiday and the cultural form to be performed at the national holiday celebrations. A small number of candidates did not name the correct cultural form, and fewer did not identify a national holiday. Easter and summer

holidays and Carnival were not accepted as correct responses. Candidates needed to identify a specific holiday such as Kadooment Day or Emancipation Day.

Candidates did not score as well on Part (b) of this question. Indeed, this part of the question appeared to be the most challenging question on the paper. Some candidates provided only one-word responses such as "music" or "costumes". Too few candidates were able to fully explain the elements of the cultural form. Some candidates also tended to give inaccurate information about the cultural form.

Part (c) of the question was done better than Part (b). Candidates were required to justify the appropriateness of the cultural form chosen for the national holiday celebration. The majority of candidates were able to make the link between their choice of cultural form and the national holiday chosen. This section clearly showed candidates understood the significance of the cultural form chosen in relation to the national holiday. Candidates offered a variety of reasons for choosing the cultural form.

Performance on this question was fair with a mean of 4.57 out of 10. Thirty (2.08%) of the 1442 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Question 3

A picture was used as the stimulus for the question. Candidates needed to identify significant details in the picture in order to respond to the question.

Part (a) required candidates to suggest a title or theme for the picture. Most candidates were able to earn the one mark available.

Part (b) required candidates to provide justification for their choice. The majority of candidates had no difficulty providing two reasons for their title in Part (a). Most candidates were able to earn the three marks.

Part (c) proved to be the most difficult for the candidates. Many candidates failed to apply the elements of theatre to the picture. Many of the candidates provided definitions of the elements of theatre listed. Some made generalizations about the elements in relation to the picture rather than making specific recommendations about the way in which the elements would take the image on the page to the stage. Some candidates even continued to provide more rationale for their title in Part (c). No marks were awarded in the latter instance.

Teachers need to use the practical/rehearsal times with students to help them to realise how to apply the theatre elements to improvisation, playmaking, dance making and production so that candidates can apply this learning in Paper 01.

Performance on this question was good with a mean of 5.62 out of 10. Seventy-one (4.89%) of the 1452 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Question 4

Question 4 was designed to test Profile 3, Creativity. The candidates were required to imagine and create a dance or drama based on a number of themes. These themes were: Haiti, Fashion, Bullying, Social Networking and Graduation. The question also tested candidates' application of theatre elements (Syllabus Objectives 1, 4 and 5).

For Part (a), candidates were required to provide two reasons for their choice of topic. Most candidates gave well expressed and insightful reasons for their choice. Candidates generally did well on this part of the question.

For Part (b), candidates were required to select a theme and develop an outline for either a dance or drama. Candidates' responses suggested that they were comfortable with the following topics: Haiti, Fashion, Bullying and social networking. Having chosen their topics, candidates presented reasonable justifications for their choice. Graduation Night was not a popular topic. However, candidates who chose Graduation Night presented their personal experiences and failed to outline a narrative structure for Part (b).

For Part (b), the candidates who chose to provide an outline for a play showed a clear understanding of setting, plot, character(s) and their relationships, conflict and also provided a resolution to their story. Very few of these candidates failed to resolve the conflict of the narrative. The majority of candidates did well in this section. However, candidates who chose to provide a dance outline often began a narrative drama and made no mention of dance elements. These candidates showed little evidence of knowledge of how to create or structure a dance. Those candidates who chose dance did not do well.

For Part (c), candidates had to select any two elements of theatre to apply to their dance or drama. Too many candidates were not able to apply the elements to the story that they had written in Part (b).

Teachers need to use the opportunities provided in the practical Paper 02 to demonstrate clearly with the students how to use all of the theatre elements. They ought to ask critical questions about lighting, sound, costume design, makeup and setting during class time and rehearsals in order to improve candidates' performance in this area. Using the past papers would also aid in this area.

Performance on this question was good, with a mean of 5.21 out of 10. Fifty-eight (4.02 %) out of the 1442 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Question 5

This question was a reinforcement of the work done for SBA in which candidates would have had to interview either a theatrical or cultural practitioner. Generally, candidates posed questions which were insightful and showed that they understood what was required of interviewing a theatrical or cultural practitioner. Some candidates, however, showed little understanding of interviewing. For these candidates all five questions asked were about: "What inspired you to write?" "What inspired you to act?" "What inspired you to be in theatre?" and "Who inspired you?" These questions suggested that some candidates might either not be adequately prepared for the SBA research paper or might have a difficulty transferring the skill acquired in Paper 03 to Paper 01, the essay paper.

Performance on this question was good with a mean of 5.92 out of 10. Fifteen (1.04%) out of 1442 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Question 6

The question drew on candidates' experience of journal writing and their reflection on the process and its impact on their own learning. The question assessed the candidates' ability to operate in the affective domain, with reference to the act of journal writing which they should be familiar.

Many of the responses to Part (a) of the question showed that candidates seemed not to understand the role of the journal. Too often they responded to this question by merely writing about how Theatre Arts had helped them rather than commenting on the journal writing processes.

For Part (b), the majority of candidates were able to identify their challenges in writing the journal.

Overall, there were some exceptional responses to this question which had a mean of 5.74. One hundred and eight (7.66 %) of 1412 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Recommendations for Paper 01

In summary, the overall performance on this paper was good. Candidates generally referenced the cultural forms accurately although there were a few territories whose candidates referenced cultural forms which are not on the syllabus. It was refreshing too, to see the number of candidates who were able to comment on how much they had learnt from the journal writing process. Unfortunately, there are too many candidates who seem unable to apply knowledge and factual information learnt in the classroom to a new or given circumstance. The following recommendations are made in this regard:

- Students need to be provided with the behavioural terms used in setting the questions for the examination and which are included in the syllabus on pages 54–55. Teachers should continue to ensure that students understand the requirements of each term in relation to producing appropriate relevant and complete responses.
- Students need to know and to practise correct use of Theatre Arts terminology.
- Students need to be given practice in answering questions from past papers.
- Students need to be presented in the classroom with more opportunities to analyse, synthesize and evaluate the elements of theatre and be given opportunities to apply this to live theatre.
- Students should be taught the terms and terminology associated with ‘best practice.’
- Rather than limit students to merely studying cultural forms from their own territory, teachers should consider teaching at least ONE cultural form from another territory. This would provide students with greater opportunities to acquire more varied and wider knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the cultural forms of the Caribbean region.
- Teachers should encourage students to develop sample interview questions before conducting their SBA.
- Teachers should allow students to practise mock interviews.
- Teachers need to guide students in journal writing and should constantly monitor and evaluate the journal process, providing constructive critical feedback to students during the process of working on their journals.

Paper 02 – Practical Examination

The reports done by the External Examiners are the evidence of the conduct of the Paper 02 examinations. The Examining Committee wishes to advise the participating territories through their Local Registrars, to use a team of specialists (where they are available) to ensure objectivity in assessment. The Examining Committee also advises teachers and specialists to mark independently, and encourages schools to follow the guidelines provided by CXC on the timing of examinations so that all candidates are able to sit their practical examinations under conditions of fairness and equity.

In this regard, territories need to ensure that schools adhere to the schedule for the three practical exams as specified in the syllabus. Schools are therefore reminded that the Practical 1a must take place in Term 3 of Year Four, Practical 1b must take place in Term 1 of Year Five and that Practical 1c must take place in Term 3. Additionally, the production **MUST** be based on a 20 to 30 minute excerpt from a Caribbean text. It is expected that the period of rehearsal will be no more than eight weeks and no less than six weeks. **At least eight weeks must elapse between the assessment of 1b and the final presentation on 1c.** There is evidence that this has not been adhered to in several cases. Teachers are asked to pay careful attention to page 6 of the Theatre Arts Syllabus, which clearly states that the production must be based on an excerpt from a text on the reading list on the final pages of the syllabus, pages 23 to 41, which outline the conduct and assessment of the practicals.

Paper 03 – School-Based Assessment (SBA)

Only a few schools did not use the new marking scheme this year. The SBA team ensured that those schools were not disadvantaged in any way.

The Research Paper

As in previous years, some candidates again chose musicians, calypsonians, and visual artistes as practitioners to be interviewed for the research paper. However, it is important to note that this practice was less frequent. We urge schools to ensure that this is discouraged. The person chosen must make significant contribution to dance, drama and/or a Caribbean cultural form as identified in the syllabus. Some teachers persist in failing to advise their students about the inappropriate selection for the Research Paper of individuals who are neither theatre nor cultural practitioners across territories. Teachers need clarification and guidance about this as they also continue to mislead candidates, as demonstrated through the high marks inappropriately awarded by some teachers for research papers based on craftsmen, visual artists and soca artistes.

Teachers could perhaps compile a list of practitioners to ensure that the research meets the objectives of the syllabus. Indeed, there is no reason why a candidate in Antigua could not do research on a practitioner in St. Kitts or a candidate in Barbados could not do research on a practitioner in Trinidad and Tobago. Perhaps the choice of cultural practitioners should correspond to the cultural forms being studied per year. In this way, there would be two groups of individuals who could be researched: theatre personnel and practitioners connected to any of the elements of a given cultural form.

There were also candidates from schools who presented exactly the same questions and in fact exactly the same paper. This is unacceptable as this would suggest plagiarism and copying. It continues to be of concern to the Examining Committee that some teachers fail to recognise these instances of copying and plagiarism. Indeed, it would seem that there are a few teachers who condone or support candidates who produce exactly the same questions and interview the same practitioner. Schools are once again asked to desist from this collective approach which impacts on the candidates' ability to demonstrate a personal voice. This is certainly not good teaching practice. Furthermore, plagiarism and copying are treated as serious offences by the Council. Where these are detected during the moderation exercise the candidates are subjected to severe penalties. Candidates can use web sources for research, but they are reminded that copying and pasting text into the body of their report and presenting it as their own work, without acknowledgment of the original author, is an act of plagiarism.

Candidates need support and guidance in the field research component of the Research Project which requires them to meet with and interview practitioners. Candidates' interview questions need to be better crafted before they set out to conduct the interview. Further, the submission of a CD without a transcription is not allowed. Candidates should aim to provide evidence of the interview through photographs and a transcription. Information from the interview must feed the report writing. Some interview questions are inappropriate such as: "How old are you?"

The Research Paper needs to be in an essay format without subdivisions. It should be neat, preferably typed and printed, and follow closely the guidelines of the syllabus. It must include a table of contents, report, appendix and bibliography.

Teachers must provide a breakdown of the mark scheme for the Research Project for each candidate of their sample and attach this to each Research Project. Teachers need to ensure their calculations are accurate in their recording of scores on the Moderation Forms.

The Critique

Most candidates were able to select either a dance or drama production for review. This means that many teachers are providing the necessary support to facilitate field trips at schools. There was a marked improvement in the critiques of plays, which was not evidenced in dance critiques. The latter continues to be of concern.

Of particular concern to the Examining Committee is the fact that there were two schools from the same territory in which all candidates wrote a dance critique in which they were actually performing. This is not acceptable. The purpose of the critique is to provide candidates with the experience of being an objective member of an audience so that they can reflect on and make judgments about the dance presented before them. The syllabus clearly states (page 42) that the critique must be based on a production viewed. These same schools also had candidates who interviewed their teachers for their research. Teachers miss the point of the objectives of the subject when they deliberately or unwittingly limit their students' dance experiences to only those over which teachers themselves have control. It inevitably resulted in poor evaluation and analysis since it is impossible to critique work that you are not actively observing. Teachers are reminded that they are placing their students at a disadvantage when they fail to follow the syllabus guidelines.

Recommendations for the School-Based assessment

The following recommendations are made for the SBA.

- Candidates need to become better acquainted with the descriptive language needed to critique live performances, particularly the ability to review theatre elements and comment on how or why these were used for a particular production.
- Candidates need to be encouraged to comment on what they gained from the production as well as develop their confidence in commenting on what the director or choreographer was attempting to say through the use of theatre or dance.
- Candidates need to attend many dance recitals in order to practise the skills of observation, description, evaluation and analysis of the work of choreographers.
- Teachers who are new to the syllabus and those who have been teaching for some time, need to ensure that they read the syllabus carefully to avoid placing their students at a disadvantage.
- Training workshops by Ministries of Education or institutions such as the Barbados Community College, the Centre for Festival and Creative Arts and the Edna Manley College could certainly assist in providing training for teachers in this area in order that teachers themselves would be better equipped to assist students in the writing of critiques. This training should also include assistance for teachers to build their capacity to help students with the Research Paper.