

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
MAY/JUNE 2008**

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

**Copyright © 2008 Caribbean Examinations Council®
St Michael, Barbados
All rights reserved**

COMMUNICATION STUDIES
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2008

GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates' performance this year was fair. Some weaknesses seen are as follows:

- candidate's inability to critically read the requirements of the comprehensions, both aural and written.
- unable to select the specific answers and illustrations from the passage to substantiate their answers.
- indiscriminate use of jargon.

Candidates must pay more attention to the actual identification of relevant devices and techniques rather than creating a blanket list with the hope of actually including a correct response.

Although most candidates used paragraphs in their essay writing, there is a serious lack of coherency in these paragraphs. Candidates therefore need to pay closer attention to the basic rules of paragraphing. There is also the continued evidence that candidates do not proofread their work in the examination. This is necessary in order to improve the quality of their responses.

DETAILED COMMENTS

PAPER 01A

Module 1 Section A

This section was fairly well done. However, the performance in Question 1 was somewhat disappointing. The mean for this question was 3.77 as compared to the 5.26 mean for Question 2. Most candidates were able to correctly identify the various methods of carrying out the survey but Part 1 (b) was not as well handled. Question 2 was generally well handled and only a few candidates failed to score marks for this question.

Module 2 Section B

Question 3

This question posed a challenge to some candidates. The word 'attitudes' seemed to present a challenge and as a result candidates wrote about their own experiences rather than address the way the characters in the scenario felt. Candidates should be reminded that when a scenario is given as a stimulus for a question that they should respond to that stimulus.

Part (b) of this question was generally well done.

Part (c) of this question about language was simple and straightforward and the answers can be found in the syllabus document.

Question 4

This question was not well handled by the candidates as demonstrated by the mean of 4.19. Too many candidates were unable to gain the two marks for Part (b) and Part (c). More attention needs to be paid to discussion of the historical influences on language as every year candidates appear unsure of their own linguistic history.

Question 5

This question was generally well done by candidates.

Question 6

This question was surprisingly not well done by candidates. The purposes of language are detailed in the syllabus as well as found in any text on communication.

Module 3 Section C

Question 7

This question was done quite well by candidates. Candidates need to be comfortable with discussing the importance of the aspects or elements of the communication process.

Question 8

Part (b) posed some challenges to candidates. The word “delivery” caused difficulty, as many candidates did not interpret it to have reference to how Dr. Blake **said** or performed his speech. This term should be very familiar as candidates prepare for the delivery of their internal assessment speech.

Part (c) also posed difficulty, as candidates appeared unfamiliar with the idea of organizing their writing. This question asked candidates to recognise what they themselves need to use when writing, that is sequential paragraphs, an introduction, a conclusion and linkages.

Question 9

Part (d) posed some challenges for candidates, as some did not see any weakness in the sign. As a result some candidates wrote the same sign in the box provided. This question is asking candidates to be aware of the way language works or does not work in their community and as such they should be able to recognise the barrier to understanding and correct the sign to improve communication. Practical examples are around us everyday and should be used in class for students to improve the messages being delivered. Example, POST NO BILLS. What does this sign mean? Does it have more than one meaning? Can it be rewritten to be specific to its intent? These are the type of assignments that could make a similar question very easy for candidates to handle.

Question 10

This question was fairly well done by candidates. There are still too many candidates who do not know the contexts of communication. The response to Part (a) can be found in the syllabus. The term channel presented some difficulties for the candidates and a closer analysis of this term needs to be encouraged. The final question on the paper was quite simple as the term mass media should be familiar to all candidates.

PAPER 01B

There was some improvement in the performance of this paper this year. However, greater attention must be given to teaching candidates to identify the purpose of

- the main idea of a piece of work
- literary devices and
- reasons why a writer used a particular device in his work.

Question 1

Candidates seem unaware of how to identify the main idea. There appears no distinction in the mind of the candidate between the main idea and purpose/intent of the writer. Too many candidates simply wrote chunks of the poem as a response hoping to somehow include the answer. This weakness resulted in few candidates scoring full marks for question 1 on this paper.

Question 2

Part (a) (ii), asked candidates to select two phrases from the poem. Surprisingly candidates appear unable to differentiate between phrases and sentences. Again candidates appeared unable to be highly specific in their response.

Part (b) required candidates to give two examples of rhyme. Rhyme by its nature alone requires that two words must be identified in order that rhyme can occur. Thus, two examples of rhyme would entail the use of four words. Candidates need to think through their responses to questions posed.

Question 3

Again candidates wrote complete sentences, seemingly unsure as to what constituted the metaphor. This device is one of the most basic literary devices used in prose and poetry and thus should pose no difficulty for candidates at this level.

Question 4

This question proved to be quite challenging to the candidates. Whilst some candidates understood what the question required they were still unable to express themselves clearly. Many candidates were unable to explain the effectiveness of the metaphor as used in the poem. Far too many of them examined the metaphor without reference to the specific context. There were also far too many candidates who appeared to have no idea what effectiveness means. This problem with the Paper 01B does not appear to be addressed in the teaching thus greater attention needs to be paid to this aspect of the teaching of Communication Studies.

PAPER 02

Generally, there appeared to be a decline in the quality of responses this year. The control of language was weak and quite a number of candidates appeared unprepared for this level of examination.

Module 1

Question 1

A disturbingly large number of candidates appeared unable to understand the passage or portions of it.

Once again the difference between the main point and the purpose seems to elude candidates. More attention needs to be paid to this aspect of the syllabus.

Many candidates made reference to strategies without giving examples or providing a sustained discussion of how the strategies linked to the writer's purpose. Many other candidates produced a generic analysis commenting on the discourse type, dialectal variation without answering the question.

There were too many instances where candidates summarized or paraphrased the passage with little attempt at answering the question. There were also too many instances where use of full stops capital letters and correct spelling were pointed out as techniques used by the writer. The repeated reference by candidates to this incorrect analysis suggests a need for teachers to correct this misconception.

Where candidates were able to adequately identify and give examples of technologies, there were weaknesses in the presentation of their discussion. Logical linkages were too often missing and candidates were not always efficient at maintaining the focus of the essay.

Module 2

Question 2

Candidates' performance in this section was satisfactory. However, some candidates did not appear to recognise that when required to highlight differences there should be some contrast taking place, that is a discussion of two entities.

The section on the attitudes to English and Creole was fairly well done; however, the third requirement continues to be of concern. Candidates must be aware of the difference between a face-to-face reading and a televised reading. The use of technology allows for many nuances to be explored that a face-to-face cannot. The candidate is supposed to explore a televised reading and as such reference must be made as to how technology allows meaning to be enhanced. A simple reference to facial expression and hearing the words spoken cannot suffice as an answer as these can be related to a face-to-face reading. Thus, the candidate is being asked how can television bring meaning clearer to the viewer? Those who did well on this section of the question made reference to the sound track that could be used in the background and the scene changes that would be associated with Miss Ida's changing use of language, for example, a church for the Standard and the market for Creole. These responses recognise the use of technology in enhancing meaning.

Module 3

Question 3

Many candidates did not demonstrate a high level of writing skill. Paragraphing, use of transitions and well executed conclusions were all missing or inadequate. The practice of using text-messaging language has crept into the examination booklets. This must be stamped out from the classroom level and students must be encouraged to recognise the social context of language. Ironically this objective is being tested in this paper.

Candidates appeared to confuse visual aids with verbal and nonverbal elements. These terms need to be discussed at greater length.

What was even more disturbing is the number of candidates who did not appear familiar with the three terms they were required to discuss. Tolerance, respect and togetherness are all words that students at this level should have within their repertoire. Sadly, this did not appear to be the case.

The term feature address also appeared to hinder some candidates' response. The candidate at this level should be capable of using context clues to decipher meaning. It was stated in the question that it would be for the annual graduation and 'you' would deliver the address. Candidates must be encouraged to read with understanding and utilize techniques to improve understanding.

Candidates need not miss a line if they indent to signal a new paragraph.

INTERNALASSESSMENT

The Portfolio

Overall, there was an improvement in the presentation of the portfolios. Most candidates selected themes that could be dealt with in a creative and imaginative manner. Although there were portfolios that looked at the over-used themes like rape, abortion, homosexuality and incest, these were in the minority. Of concern is candidates continued use of profanity.

Reflective

Candidates showed insight and creativity in the presentation of their theme of choice. In addition to writing there were pieces of artwork or woodwork created to enhance the presentations.

One recurring problem is the failure of candidates to clearly state a situation and target audience with whom they wished to share their information. In many instances "situation" in the rationale was interpreted to mean the setting in which the incident took place. In many instances, situation was interpreted to mean the situation or context in which the action takes place rather than the situation/context in which the production/creation would be shared, for example, a magazine. Candidates also need to follow the current syllabus requirement of a rationale that should include why they chose to write about the selected theme.

In creating the reflective pieces, candidates should ensure that these contain the elements of the selected genre. Hence, the language used by the characters in a story for example should reflect the character's status and emotions. Plots need to be structured in such a way as to embrace the variations/varieties of language registers and communicative behaviours. They must also reflect the theme. When candidates set out to use argumentative or persuasive writing, they should also employ literary and /or persuasive techniques.

The Language Analysis

While many candidates demonstrated an understanding of the task to be completed, other showed a distinct lack of knowledge of the linguistic components/features and produced either a literary analysis or focused on the sentence structure and literary devices used. The syllabus clearly points to the elements that should be discussed for this part of the portfolio. Language variation, attitudes to language, communicative behaviours are all listed as the elements of this discussion. Candidates must submit a copy of the piece that they have analysed whether it is their original work or one that has been sourced. A reminder that if the candidate chooses to use an unoriginal or sourced piece it must fit into the theme chosen by the candidate.

Other Comments

Schools are encouraged to ensure that teachers are using the current syllabus. It seems some new teachers are not fully cognizant of the requirements of the course.

Candidates should ensure that watermarks do not detract from the presentation and that pieces remain legible. They should also use colours and fonts that are reader friendly. Teachers need to ensure that the names and grades on the Com.-3 form correspond with the samples submitted.

Teachers who encounter instances of plagiarism of internal assessments should mark the scripts and place the mark on the Com-3. The marking should not be left for the moderator.

PAPER 3B

Alternative Paper

Candidates still appear somewhat unprepared to meet the requirements of this paper.

Module 1

Question 1

Part (a) asks candidates to produce a summary of 60 words; however, the word limit was often ignored and candidates attempted to write the complete extract or some of the extract without paying attention to finding the main points.

Part (b) was not well done either. In analysing credibility the candidate must speak to the source of the article, the references made, that is, to government agencies, the provision of the website and to illustrate the weaknesses in credibility some reference should be made to the lack of statistical information. Candidates also needed to address the issues of, for example, bias, source and research, in analyzing the credibility of the information.

Module 2

Question 2

Once again, this question was badly done by most candidates. There appeared to be little understanding of the terms detailed in the question: dialectal variation, communicative behaviours, attitudes to language and use of register. Therefore, some candidates either summarized the extract or tried to explain what they thought was taking place in the extract.

A good answer to Part (i) of this question should include discussion on the use of English Creole by the writer and some characters while Standard English is used by Ivan Morton. Examples should be given to support this response.

The discussion on attitudes to language should include reference to the fact that Lovelace, the author, believes in the power of the Creole to carry his narrative.

A discussion on Eva and Bee's attitude to Creole should follow and then Morton's attitude to Standard English and English Creole.

Communicative behaviours refers to the body language and other non-verbal clues to the persons attitudes and feelings. This should also be fully discussed.

Private candidates should be using the Communication Studies study guide which explains the terms used in this type of question.

Module 3

This question performed fairly well. Candidates were able to address most of the areas detailed here. The areas of weakness were in discussing the writer's style and in determining what the writer hopes to achieve.

CONCLUSION

Sharing of skills and ideas remains the one sure way to improve the teaching and learning in Communication Studies. The recommended activities listed in the syllabus often ask for group work but teachers apparently fail to see that team teaching or sharing of ideas would achieve the same purpose of team work, that is, a sharing and pooling of ideas. In some cases the problems observed in the performance in this subject can be improved by teacher knowledge and thus the onus is on teachers to research the content of the syllabus and become more familiar, especially in the area of Creole language and its sources. Candidates also need to be encouraged to read current articles in magazines and the newspaper as they appear to find the articles on the examination paper difficult to comprehend. Students must also be encouraged to appreciate the importance of effective communication as a skill for life as opposed to passing an examination.