

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2014

**CLOTHING AND TEXTILES
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The 33rd examination in Clothing and Textiles was administered by the Caribbean Examinations Council in May/June 2014. This examination comprised three papers: Papers 01, 02 and 03.

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper comprised 60 questions which were designed to test all the areas of the syllabus and were allocated equally to test Knowledge (Profile 1) and Use of Knowledge (Profile 2). The mean score was 31.93 compared to 31.56 in 2013. The highest score attained was 57 marks and the lowest score was 6.

The Profile 1 component was better handled than the Profile 2 component. In many instances, candidates were not able to apply the principles to specific situations as required.

Paper 02 – Structured Essay Questions

This paper comprised two sections, Section A, which consisted of three compulsory questions, and Section B, which consisted of four questions from which the candidates were required to choose any two. Hence, candidates were required to answer a total of five questions.

Each question was worth a total of 16 marks allocated as follows: six marks for the Knowledge profile and ten marks for Use of Knowledge profile.

The mean mark obtained was 32.09 and the maximum mark gained was 70.

The syllabus gives the instructions for the modules to be used for the development of the compulsory questions. The table of specifications used for the development of the paper selected modules and objectives from across the syllabus to reflect the required scope and depth of syllabus coverage.

Paper 03 – School-Based Assessment

The School-Based Assessment comprised three practical assignments designed to test the practical garment construction skills of candidates. Each of the assignments was worth 20 marks. The assignments were set and assessed by the class teachers using the criteria outlined in the syllabus. The second of the three assignments was assessed jointly by the class teacher and an external examiner. Candidate performance was consistent with that of the previous two years, with 93 per cent of candidates achieving Grades I–III, in 2014, compared with 94 per cent in 2013 and 93 per cent in 2012.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 02 – Structured Essay Questions

Question 1

The first part of this question was designed to test the candidates' knowledge of methods of fabric construction. The question required them to identify three methods described and to name a fabric made by each of the methods identified.

Generally, candidates were able to identify the methods of fabric construction as required by the question. A few candidates were unable to satisfactorily answer this part of the question. Candidates who were unable to identify the fabric construction methods were also unable to answer the rest of the question and hence performed poorly.

Part (b) of this question was designed to test the candidates' knowledge of embroidery stitches and their effective use in specific applications. This part of the question asked candidates to sketch the front view of a white cotton shirt with a design of their choice and to show on the design where they would use embroidery stitches of their choice to decorate it. It was instructive to note that many candidates sketched a blouse instead of a shirt and while some who sketched a blouse were able to use named embroidery stitches appropriately, many were unable to do so.

Part (c) of the question further required that candidates identify indigenous materials that could be appropriately used together with the embroidery stitches that they chose at (b) to further enhance the design of the white shirt. It was clear that many candidates did not understand the term "indigenous materials" as they named ribbons and lace. A small number of candidates also named inappropriate indigenous materials such as sand. The question was designed to test candidate's use of knowledge so that whatever material was named should be appropriate for the fabric, bearing in mind the type of item to which it was being applied. Since the item named was a shirt, the indigenous material named should be able to withstand the method of cleaning to be used for the shirt. For example, the use of sea shells with holes punched to enable them to be sewn on, or fish scales used as sequins or bleached burlap was what was expected. It would seem that in many instances the indigenous material was named without regard to the context of the question. Candidates who named appropriate indigenous materials were also able to effectively give a suitable reason for the choice. Marks for this question ranged from 0 to 16, with two candidates scoring full marks.

Question 2

Part (a) of this question tested candidates' knowledge of guidelines that should influence the choice of fabrics specifically for garments and household articles.

Generally candidates gave correct responses. However, many candidates did not cue in to the key word "outline" and gave one-word answers, such as "cost", "pattern" and "style". Candidates need to be mindful of the requirements of the question and to pay attention to key words, for example, *list*, *state*, *outline*, *explain* and *name* that indicate what the question requires in terms of the response. Where a question requires a candidate to "outline" more elaboration is required than when the candidate is required to "list". In this specific instance expected correct responses were:

1. *Fabric should be free from major flaws.*
2. *The amount of money paid for the fabric should be in proportion to the amount of use that the fabric is expected to give.*
3. *The method of cleaning that the garment/textile article would be subjected to.*

Part (b) of this question required candidates to sketch the front view only of a design incorporating the principles of line and shape, appropriate for a short, plump, teenaged girl with a large bust line.

This part of the question posed some difficulty for many candidates. It was clear that many candidates were not familiar with the principles of line and shape. Many candidates interpreted shape to be the shape of the figure, and so labelled the bust, waist and hip on the garment sketched. Many candidates also sketched extremely close fitting garments, to "show off the girl's shape", according to their explanations, indicating that candidates were not applying concepts taught in the classroom but were relying on their observation of what is currently popular in their environment. Many candidates did not relate the design they sketched to the specification given in the question — the requirement of appropriateness for figure type.

Some candidates accurately applied the knowledge required and generally these were candidates who also scored in the higher range on the question.

Part (c) of the question asked candidates to suggest a fabric appropriate for the design that they had sketched, with a reason for the choice, and to name an event for which the design would be worn and why the design was appropriate for the event.

Some candidates performed well on this part of the question while others performed poorly. Candidates continue to confuse the terms 'fibres' and 'fabrics'.

It is suggested that various fashion resources (such as newspaper fashion articles, magazines, television advertisements and segments) be incorporated in the classroom to illustrate the principles and the elements of design, as it is evident that these topics are unclear in the minds of candidates.

Marks gained on this question ranged from 0 to 16; with seven candidates scoring full marks.

Question 3

This question tested candidates' knowledge of hand stitches, controlling fullness in garment construction and the methods of finishing raw edges.

Generally, the content tested in Part (a) (i) of the question was not widely known. A few candidates were able to correctly name a hand stitch suitable for transferring pattern markings to delicate fabrics. Many ignored the term "delicate fabrics" while others named embroidery stitches or processes unrelated to the question.

Part (a) (ii) asked candidates to name a hand stitch to hold the facing on a jacket in place in preparation for machining. This was better handled as most candidates named "basting" as the suitable hand stitch.

Part (a) (iii) asked for the name of a hand stitch for controlling fullness at the waist of a child's skirt. This was generally well known as most candidates named "gathering" and "shirring". A few candidates completely ignored the stem of the question and named "elastic" as a hand stitch.

In Part (b) of the question candidates were generally well aware of the methods used for controlling fullness in garment construction.

Part (c) of the question required candidates to suggest a suitable method for finishing the raw edges of the bodice on a voile dress and to explain why the method that was suggested was appropriate. Many candidates were able to satisfactorily answer this part of the question, but for a great many, the methods chosen were unsuitable for the fabric. The most common correct responses included "binding", "piping" and "edge stitching" but the reasons given, even for those who had chosen correctly were generally unsatisfactory.

Section (d) (i) of this question required candidates to study a sketch of a jacket and to suggest two suitable fastenings for the front opening. This part of the question was well done by most candidates who were able to suggest suitable fastenings. It was noted, however, that many candidates also listed "buttons" without also specifying "buttonholes". Candidates need to be reminded that the fastening is buttons and buttonholes, as buttons only are meant to be decorative. Even candidates who chose appropriately were in many cases not able to clearly state the reason for their choice, nor were they able to relate the particular design of opening to the named fastening. Quite apart from the fact that many candidates were unable to express themselves clearly, it was also evident that in many instances they could not give a compelling reason for the choice of fastenings and many candidates were unable to relate the fastenings chosen to the design sketched or the appropriateness for the projected use as requested by the question.

Marks gained on this question ranged from 0 to 16 marks, with three candidates achieving full marks.

Question 4

This question was optional and approximately 55 per cent of candidates attempted it. Textile terms, and fibre burning behaviour were the concepts tested in Parts (a) and (b) of this question. Part (a) proved to be a challenge for many candidates as they gave fibre names, ignoring the stem of the question and actually restated part of the definition given. Therefore for Part (a) (i), many candidates gave the answer for “a textile fibre composed of pure cellulose from a plant source” as “a plant fibre” rather than the expected answer “cellulosic” and for Part (a) (ii) “a textile fibre from an animal source” such as sheep, goat or silkworm” as “animal fibre” instead of “protein fibre”. A large percentage of candidates was able to correctly identify fibres by their burning behaviour.

Part (c) of the question tested candidates’ knowledge of working with special fabrics. Many candidates were able to name “velvet” as the fabric used with an incorrect layout but a larger number of candidates did not provide correct responses to this question and were not able to identify incorrect layout as the reason for the problems on the jacket.

The knowledge of the layout for special fabrics was not evident from many of the responses given.

Part (d) tested laundry aids and the application of the knowledge of laundry processes. Many candidates were able to handle this part of the question satisfactorily and were able to score full marks.

Overall, marks on this question ranged from 0 to 16 marks with one candidate achieving full marks.

Question 5

This was the most popular optional question, with approximately 76 per cent of candidates attempting it. This question was designed to test candidates’ knowledge of tools used for measuring, marking and cutting in garment construction. Part (a) involved tools and Part (b) dealt with identifying the factors to consider when purchasing a sewing machine. Part (c) examined remedying common problems which occur when using the sewing machine.

Most candidates attempting this question showed excellent knowledge of the tools and equipment required in Part (a), and this part of the question, which was the knowledge component, was very well handled.

However, when it came to making adjustments to the sewing machine to sew specific fabrics, candidates generally were not able to give appropriate responses. In many cases some generalizations were given, for example, “adjust stitch”, or “change needle”, or in one particular case “restring the machine” instead of “rethread”, but rarely did any of the responses focus on the fact that the changes had to be made because of the type of fabric.

Again, the responses here suggested an inability to apply the general knowledge to specific situations.

Part (d), was designed to test candidates’ ability to adapt a basic bodice to a waistcoat with princess seams from the shoulder with an equal hem opening. Most candidates were unable to correctly indicate on their patterns, the adjustments that were required to make the change to the pattern. Some candidates were able to show the adjustment of the neckline and the princess seams, and a smaller number showed the front equal hem opening. More emphasis must be placed on the teaching of pattern drafting and adaptation as outlined in the syllabus.

No candidate who attempted this question scored full marks, but six candidates scored between 13 and 15 marks.

Question 6

This question was not compulsory and only 33 per cent of candidates attempted it.

Part (a) of this question tested seams and seam finishing. Most candidates who attempted this question were able to correctly define the term 'seam' as well as to outline general guidelines to be followed when working seams. Most candidates were also able to state methods of finishing a plain seam, medium-weight cotton fabric.

Part (b) of the question focused on the use of commercial patterns and required candidates to adjust the pattern to make it longer.

Many candidates ignored that the pattern had to be adjusted and went on to describe, in all cases very incorrectly, how they would lengthen a skirt. It was evident that this is an area of the syllabus with which many candidates were not familiar. Emphasis needs to be placed on making adjustments to commercial patterns, and how to use commercial patterns, as past performance in examinations in this specific area has shown the same deficiency in candidates' performance. Many candidates also displayed an inability to state steps in a logical sequence. Candidates who performed well on this part of the question also did well in other parts of the question and generally did well on the other questions attempted also.

Part (c) of this question tested the unit on openings and fastenings. This part was fairly well done. However, many candidates named unsuitable openings for the type of garment and the position of the opening. Some candidates also confused the terms 'openings' and 'fastenings'.

Candidates were also required to give a reason for choosing the opening that they selected for the garment. Many stated that the opening was chosen to "allow the garment to be removed easily" rather than to relate it to the type of garment, the position of the opening or the fabric from which the garment was made. Marks gained on this question ranged from 0 to 16 marks with one student gaining full marks.

Question 7

This question was optional and also was not a popular choice. It was attempted by approximately 34 per cent of candidates.

The first part of the question was designed to test candidate's knowledge of waistline finishes and required them to identify the waistline finish on three trousers shown. This question attracted mixed performance; some candidates were totally at a loss especially for the faced waistline finish in (a) (ii). As a result of candidates not being able to identify the faced waistline finish they were unable to give the steps for preparing the facing.

Part (b) of the question was generally well answered. Again, many candidates used one-word answers (e.g. "size") for outlining 'factors to consider' when selecting soft furnishings. Candidates need to be reminded that one-word answers do not convey a consideration since this conveys nothing to the reader who may well ask "What about size?" or "Size of what?" Hence, a factor would be better stated as "The size of the article in relation to the size of the room" or "The colours of the soft furnishings chosen should complement the colour scheme used in the room".

It would seem some candidates also neglected to read the stem of the question which specifically stated that it was the living room for which soft furnishings were being selected. Some candidates named "bed sheets and pillows" while others named items of furniture.

Marks gained on this question ranged from 0 to 16 marks with nine candidates gaining full marks.

Comments

The use of language continues to pose a challenge for some candidates who respond using colloquialisms that are not always familiar to the Examiners. An example of this is the use of the word “string” to mean yarn or thread as in “restring the machine” instead of “rethread the machine”.

Candidates continued to show inadequacy in applying the knowledge of the subject matter to specific situations.

That candidates continue to perform poorly in the compulsory part of the paper is a cause for concern since the parts of the syllabus from which these questions were developed are clearly identified in the syllabus.

Recommendations

- 1 Focus must be placed on the areas of the syllabus from which the compulsory question are derived. Too many candidates perform poorly in these areas especially in the knowledge profile where it is expected that at least the six marks would be attained. Many candidates cannot give simple definitions or give incorrect answers where definitions are provided.
- 2 The use of the language of the discipline is also a concern since candidates so often misinterpret words used in questions. Too many instances of the vernacular of the region are found in candidates' responses and this poses a challenge for markers. For instance, one candidate stated as a response to remedying a problem with the sewing machine stitching to “restring the machine” while in another instance a candidate referring to thread as “twine”. While this may be the norm in the candidates' environment, it does not gain marks in the examination and candidates must be reminded of this.
- 3 Many candidates continue to confuse instructions such as ‘list’ ‘define’ ‘outline’ and ‘explain’ which each require a different level of response from the candidate. Teachers may find it helpful to demonstrate and to allow practice in answering questions so that comparisons may be made. For example when a question asked candidates to OUTLINE three guidelines for choosing fabric, many candidates gave one-word answers, for example, “cost”, “colour” or “use”. These one-word answers are not acceptable when the question specifically requires that the candidate “outline”, indicating that a more expansive answer is necessary. Stating the word “cost” as a guideline does not satisfy the requirements of the question.
- 4 Drafting continues to pose a challenge to the candidates and this has been a trend observed over the years. The syllabus requires that the candidates be familiar with basic pattern drafting and some basic adaptation procedures.
- 5 From some of the extremely poor performances on Paper 02 that were seen, it was evident that many candidates were not sufficiently prepared for the examinations. Some basic instructions such as start the answer to each question on a new page were ignored, and while markers are trained to look for parts of answers over the entire script it may be indicative of a lackadaisical approach by the candidate that interferes with the performance at the examinations.
- 6 It is accepted that there are myriad challenges facing the teaching of the discipline in the schools, so new and innovative methods will have to be developed to attract candidates who are genuinely interested in pursuing the subject to examination level.