

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 2014

**THEATRE ARTS
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Theatre Arts examination consists of three components. Paper 01, an essay paper, consists of six compulsory questions each worth 10 marks. Paper 02, the practical examination, is examined externally by the Theatre Arts teacher and a 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 that on some occasions these new centres may misinterpret areas of the syllabus, again particularly in relation to the SBA. Most of these teachers, however, learn quite quickly and have used the SBA feedback to improve their teaching.

However, there are some centres who despite being involved in the subject for some time, continue to do the wrong thing and this affects candidates' performance. Indeed some teachers continue to ignore the feed and suggestions made on these reports. It remains of concern to the team that despite the fact that the cultural forms to be studied are clearly identified on the syllabus until 2017, teachers continue to teach cultural forms that are not on the syllabus either at all or those cultural forms that are not being studied for the particular year.

However, it is reassuring for example to see that teachers in Jamaica are teaching Landship (Barbados) and teachers in Antigua are teaching Bruckins (Jamaica). Unfortunately, it is clear that some teachers are not providing their students with the experiences and learning to be gained from providing their students with the knowledge of cultural forms from other territories and therefore diminishing the richness to be derived from teaching cultural forms other than those that are specific to their territory. Indeed, there is also evidence that the teaching of cultural forms lack the pre-requisite research. So that for example, the notion that there is no religious influence in cultural forms such as storytelling and stick fighting is incorrect. Teachers and students need to take greater responsibility for ensuring that their examination preparation is more thorough and meticulous.

However, generally the Examination Committee continues to see improvements in the quality of responses from the candidates in relation to their understanding of cultural forms.

In 2012 there was a revised syllabus. In the revised syllabus, there was a change in the allocation of profile marks in Paper 01. Five per cent of the 60 marks that were previously assigned to Profile 1 (Analysing and Appreciating) were assigned to Profile 3 (Creating). In the 2014 examination, Question 4 assessed Profile 3.

Amendments to Paper 02 in the revised syllabus included the inclusion of 10 marks (five per cent) for Profile 1. This change ensured that the three profiles were assessed in the three components of the examination.

Amendments to Paper 03 (school-based assessment) included: specific instructions for the research paper to be presented in an essay-type format and the increase of Profile 1 marks, from 20 to 30 marks and a decrease of the Profile 3 (Creating) marks from 20 to 10. More detailed marking criteria were also developed.

Overall performance on the 2014 examination was good. Approximately 94 per cent of the candidates in 2014 earned Grades I–III. Performance in all Profiles remained consistent compared to 2013.

This year 1709 candidates registered for the examination.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01—Essay Questions

Paper 01 is designed to test core objectives of the Syllabus. These include knowledge of cultural forms, knowledge of types of theatre spaces, the function of theatre personnel and theatrical action as elements of theatre, the analysis of dramatic action as well as describe their knowledge of the personal and social value of the theatre arts processes.

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

The structure of the 2014 Paper 01 is as follows:

- Question 1 Functions of theatre personnel
- Question 2 Cultural forms
- Question 3 Imagining (Stimulus - an extract from a poem)
- Question 4 Elements of Theatre
- Question 5 Cultural form and reinforcement of work done on Paper 03
- Question 6 Reflection/ Reinforcement of work done on Paper 02

Question 1

The question assessed candidates knowledge of the “nature, function and processes of theatre” (p.12 of the syllabus as well as objectives 1, 2, 4). The candidates were asked to outline a play or dance that they had seen or participated in. In this regard, the question was also a reinforcement of the work done in Paper 02 of the examination.

Section (a) was the stronger part of this question. Candidates gained marks easily for identifying the dance or play. However, candidates who chose to write about dance were often unable to outline the elements of the dance in particular.

For Part (b), the candidates were asked to explain the roles of theatre personnel. 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 theatrical production. Teachers must teach students the activities/functions/tasks/responsibilities of stage personnel in the theatre. Additionally, they must select the difference between stage manager and stage crew/hand;

Musical director and Sound designer; Lighting operator and lighting designer.

Teachers need to use the opportunities provided in the practical Paper 02 to demonstrate clearly with the students how theatre personnel function both in the real world situation as well as in the international theatre industry. It is important that candidates are taught the differences between local setting and what applies within the professional setting. Many candidates were vague in their responses. This part of the question tested simple recall.

Performance on this question was fair with a mean of 5.28 out of 10. Twenty-three (1.44 per cent) out of the 1599 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Question 2

This question assessed candidates' knowledge of the 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 in preparation for this paper.

Teachers are asked once again to pay careful attention to the list of cultural forms on the syllabus. Candidates will not gain marks for the use of cultural forms not on the syllabus. Teachers **MUST** refer to page 14 of the syllabus which lists the prescribed cultural forms to be studied up to 2017. Teachers must teach a minimum of **THREE** cultural forms identified on the syllabus.

Knowledge of the cultural forms across the centres was generally better than in previous years. A high percentage of students were not able to tell you the religious influences but could identify elements of the form.

Candidates performed well on Part (a) of this question. Section (a) of this question required candidates to select a Caribbean cultural form from the prescribed syllabus which had religious influence and identify a country where it is practiced. Most students earned the full two marks. The candidates were required to identify a cultural form with a religious influence. Most candidates chose the following: storytelling, stick fighting, wakes and revival. A few candidates used ring games – making good link between certain ring games being performed on the second and eight night after a death; being played to cheer up the family of the deceased and the link to the Plague in London.

However, some candidates had several problems arose for this question. These are identified:

1. Candidates selected cultural forms not on the syllabus.
2. Candidates selected cultural forms that did not have a religious influence.
3. Candidates selected accurate cultural forms but did not identify the country

In the Part (b) section candidates were also asked to explain three elements of the cultural form. Most candidates were able to do so but answers tended to merely identify the elements without a detailed explanation.

The candidates were asked to identify the Part (c) section the majority of candidates were able to identify the lessons learnt from examining the cultural form.

Performance on this question was good with a mean of 5.66 out of 10. One hundred and fifty-seven (9.91 per cent) out of the 1584 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Question 3

This question was designed to test Profile 3, Creativity. An extract from a poem by Kamau Brathwaite was used as the stimulus for the question. The candidates were required to interpret the poem and identify the relationship between the girl and the boy and subsequently answer a four part question imagining the dialogue, the costume for the girl and the setting for the scene.

For Part (a) candidates were required to suggest a title for the extract. Most candidates were able to earn the one mark available. They were also required to provide a reason for their choice of title. Most candidates gave well expressed titles and a reason for their choice. Most candidates were able to earn the two marks.

For Part (b) candidates were required to describe the clothes that the girl in the poem would wear. Candidates' responses suggested that they understood and enjoyed the poem. Candidates were able to make clear reference in their descriptions of the girl's age; the game of hide and seek; the fact that it was in the country and also the references to style and appropriateness. References were also made to colour, fabric and texture. Candidates appeared to enjoy this section of the question. A few candidates drew detailed drawings of the girls dress with patterns, labels and colours. These candidates were awarded the marks by the Examining Team.

Part (c) in which candidates were asked to write four lines of dialogue. Their responses were approached with creativity and understanding of the text. Only few candidates wrote only two lines of dialogue.

Part (d) proved to be the most difficult for the candidates. Candidates continue to have difficulty with applying their knowledge to elements of theatre.

Performance on this question was very good with a mean of 7.15 out of 10. One hundred and seventy-three (10.87 per cent) out of the 1592 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks. Overall, there were some exceptional responses to this question.

Question 4

For section (a) of this question candidates were given a drawing and required to name the places associated with the stage from A to F. The majority of candidates did not know for the most part the names of stage spaces. This is very alarming as this is something which is taught at the lower end of the secondary school in a drama class. The ability to know stage positions is the basis by which

storytelling and blocking happens. Furthermore, this part of the question tested simple recall - centre stage, down stage left etc. Many candidates scored 0 – 2 on this question. Teachers must note page 12 of the syllabus under CONTENT in which stage positions and levels must be taught in order to fulfil objectives 1, 3, and 5 of the syllabus.

Part (b) of this question was done better than Part (a). Candidates were required to describe two ways in which a director or choreographer can place focus on a performer on the stage. This is interesting given that this part of the question required candidates' responses to display critical thinking and problem solving skills by applying their knowledge of theatre elements to the question (note specific objective 5).

Performance on this question was fair with a mean of 4.51 out of 10. Twenty-nine (1.83 per cent) out of the 1589 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Question 5

Candidates were able to answer section (a) of this question well.

In section (b) Candidates were asked to describe TWO ways that the cultural form was used by the choreographer or director. Candidates who wrote about drama productions did well in this section. But mostly for production which were drama based. Candidates who wrote about dance productions tended to name the production and the cultural form.

There was a misinterpretation of the meaning of the word production. Again this is surprising given the general and specific objectives of the course.

In Part (c) this was the easiest section of the question and most students gained 4 marks showing that they were able to transfer the knowledge gained on the SBA to the Paper 1 situation.

Performance on this question was very good with a mean of 7.25 out of 10. One hundred and ninety-four (12.65 per cent) out of the 1534 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

Question 6

The question drew on the candidates' experience of journal writing and their reflection on the process of preparing for a production from Paper 02 and its impact on their own learning. The question assessed the candidates' ability to operate in the affective domain, with reference to problems encountered and the solution to the problems within the act of journal writing which they would be familiar.

A few candidates misinterpreted the question and made reference to studying for the Paper 01 examination.

Many of the responses to Part (a) showed that candidates were very aware of the process and the implications of preparing for the production; the problems they encountered and their solutions to the problems showed they enjoyed this particular question. Most candidates were able to respond to the question fully and showed they understood the process of journal writing.

For Part (b) the majority of candidates were able to identify their roles in the production and discuss in detail how they contributed.

Performance on this question was good with a mean of 5.49 out of 10. Eighty-six (5.65 per cent) out of the 1521 candidates who attempted this question scored full marks.

The candidates' ability to express themselves coherently was the main challenge

Recommendations for Paper 01

In summary, the overall performance on this paper was good. Candidates particularly enjoyed the CREA question. It was also refreshing to see the improvements in the responses to the cultural form questions. Unfortunately, there are still too many candidates who chose the incorrect cultural form to answer the question and too many who seem to not be able to apply knowledge and information from other parts of the syllabus to the exam situation. Candidates need to be able to apply what they learnt in their production to Paper 01. The following recommendations are made in this regard:

- Students need to be provided with practice of past papers in order to improve their communication skills which continues to be a challenge
- Rather than limit candidates to merely studying cultural forms from their own territory, teachers should consider teaching at least ONE cultural form from another territory. Furthermore, teachers should not merely provide a territorial perspective when choosing generic cultural forms such as wakes, storytelling and ring games. They MUST provide their students with a Caribbean perspective. The exam is designed to provide candidates with a knowledge, understanding and appreciate of cultural forms of the Caribbean region.
- Candidates should be taught the terms and terminology of the theatre arts industry.

Paper 02 – Practical Examinations

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 practice of using only one or two specialists does not assist to build capacity necessary for the development of the subject in the region. In that regard, teachers in School A can act as a specialist in marking School B. The Examining Committee also advises that 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 relation to the issue of fairness and equity, teachers are NOT to provide their students with the titles for their improvisation exam beforehand for the purpose of rehearsing. Specialists are encouraged to provide improvisation titles/stimuli in the event that they suspect such a practice or situation. Teachers are reminded that “the given stimulus” (pp. 22/23/24) must be given to the students on the day of the exam.

Again, as it relates to fairness and equity, territories need to ensure that schools adhere to the schedule for the three practical examinations as specified in the syllabus. Schools are therefore reminded that Practical 1a must take place in Term 3 of Year Four, Practical 1b must take place in Term 1 of Year 5 and that Practical 1c must take place in Term 3. Additionally, MUST be based on a 20 -30 minute excerpt from a Caribbean text.

Paper 03 – School Based Assessment (SBA)

Once again there were a few schools which did not use the correct marking scheme this year. The SBA team wishes to assure centres that those candidates were not disadvantaged in any way.

The Research Paper

As in previous years, a few candidates again chose Pan Players, Saxophonists, Musicians and Theatre Critics to be interviewed for the research paper. We urge schools to ensure that candidates choose persons who have made significant contribution to dance, drama and/or a Caribbean cultural form as identified in the syllabus. Some teachers continue to not give their students the right advice in this regard and therefore they make inappropriate choices of individuals who are neither theatre nor cultural practitioners across the territories. Teachers also appear to need clarification and guidance about the marking criteria. This is evidenced by the inappropriate awarding of high marks by some teachers for research papers which do not fulfil the criteria as outlined in the syllabus.

There were also some candidates who presented exactly the same questions and in fact exactly the same paper. This was noted in 2012 and 2013 and is becoming a disturbing trend. This is unacceptable as this would suggest plagiarism and copying. It continues to be on concern to the Examining Committee that some teachers do not recognise instances of plagiarism and copying. Indeed, there were too many instances of teachers who appear to support or condone candidates who produce exactly the same questions and interview the same practitioner. Schools are once again asked to desist from this collective approach which negatively impacts on the candidates' ability to demonstrate a personal voice. It is also of concern to the Examining Committee that candidates' choice of interview is in fact their classroom teacher. Neither of these options are good teaching

practices. It absolutely defeats the objectives of the syllabus which is designed to encourage students to demonstrate an awareness of Caribbean society. Candidates who venture no further from their classroom are certainly not reaping the full benefits of the syllabus.

On the issue of plagiarism the Examining Committee wish to reiterate that plagiarism and copying are treated as serious offences by the Council. Candidates are subjected to severe penalties during the moderation exercise. There were too many instances of copying from the web sources. The web is an important research tool. But teachers appeared not to notice the copying and pasting of text which were obvious to the team. Indeed, the high marks awarded to the candidates' work demonstrate a lack of meticulousness on the part of teachers. Web sources must be acknowledged by the original author and a clear indication of the date in which the work was retrieved should appear in the references. Failure to do so will constitute an act of plagiarism.

The research paper needs to be in essay format without subdivisions. These subdivisions in which candidates write introduction on page one; rationale on page 2; interview on page 3 - this approach is utterly unacceptable. In a number of instances, candidates wrote as a heading: Communication of Information. This is indeed alarming as the headings provided in the syllabus were intended as a guide for teachers to assist students in preparing their work. For clarification, the breakdown named "communication of information" as indicated on the syllabus is to assist the teachers in marking/grading the students' quality of language.

The Research Paper should also 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.

It was encouraging to note the growing number of candidates who found creative ways to interview their practitioners, including Facebook and Skype. Others still were able to interview other individuals who had worked significantly with their chosen practitioner; these are encouraging trends.

There were too many instances in which teachers marks did not confirm to the scores on the Moderation forms. Calculations were incorrect. This was particularly the case in differentiating between the CREA and APAN components. Special attention must be paid to this when submitting the sample and attaching the correct marks to each Research Paper.

Perhaps some reorganisation of the layout of the marking for the Research Paper may assist to avoid the errors in calculation.

APAN		CREA	
Justification (4)		-----	
Presentation of findings (4)		Appropriateness to interview (2)	
Support Materials (4)		Presentation of support materials (2)	
Structure & Organisation (4)		Neat Presentation of work (2)	
Link between rationale & findings (5)		Reflection on findings (2)	
Personal Reflections (3)		Presentation of ideas (2)	
Communication of information (6)		-----	
Total			

Below are some additional concerns about the Research Paper which teachers are asked to pay particular attention to:

- Candidates must demonstrate a clear link between rationale and findings in their essay.
- Too often there was an absence of interview transcripts which impacted negatively on the performance of the students.
- Candidates need to be taught how to do a bibliography.
- There was an absence of personal reflections for the research paper. Candidates must be encouraged by teachers to describe what they learnt and how they felt about the practitioner and his contribution or what they learnt through conducting the interview.

- Candidates' language skills continue to be a great concern to the Examining Committee. The issues relating to grammar, spelling and subject verb agreement continue to impact negatively on the final marks awarded in the area of Communication of Information.

The Critique

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

Dance critiques need to pay attention to the following:

- Genre of dances;
- Choreographic style;
- Type of movement;
- Patterns (floor/air) number of dancers;
- Theatrical elements;
- Impact of the performance on the audience; and
- Personal reflection on the choreographer's intent

The Examining Committee is nevertheless concerned generally about the inability of many candidates to reference analysis of theatrical elements and to explain the impact of the production. Many candidates fall down in this area, and teachers are awarding marks inconsistently for mere description and not for analysis.

APAN		CREA	
_____		Details of the production (4)	
_____		Summary of the production (6)	
Analysis of the Production (12)			
Impact of the Production (12)			
Communication of information (6)		-----	

The Examining Committee makes note that a large number of candidates included photographs and other supporting materials in the critique and this is completely unnecessary for the critique.

Recommendations for the School-Based Assessment

The following recommendations are made for the SBA:

- Candidates need to be taught the necessary theatre and dance language needed to critique live performances. Particular attention must be paid to the areas of analysis which deals with the theatre elements and impact which deals with the students' ability to discuss the social and personal significance of the play as well as the audience's response to the production.
- Candidates need to be encouraged to comments on what they learnt or experienced or felt as a result of watching the production as well as develop the confidence to critically express their views on what the choreographer or director was attempting to do.
- Candidates need to attend many dance and drama recitals as well as performances which incorporate cultural forms in order to practice the skills of observation, description, evaluation and analysis of the work of practitioners.
- 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 in order to avoid placing their students at a disadvantage.

- New centres are strongly advised to consult with CSEC teachers who are experienced at marking for the much needed guidance in this area.
- Candidates should separate the critique and the research paper and present them as two separate documents.
- It is obvious that some teachers still require training to assist them in the teaching and marking of the SBA as their marking does not reflect the actual work of the candidates. In many cases the marks are completely inflated.