

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE  
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

**MAY/JUNE 2003**

**COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

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**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Candidates' performance this year was generally fair. Ninety-five per cent of the 3601 candidates achieved Grades I – V. There were a few instances where questions were not attempted, pointing to the need for greater preparedness on the part of candidates. There is also the need for improvement in the techniques of written expression. There are still too many basic spelling and grammar errors evident which candidates at this level should have mastered.

The level of comprehension remains a cause for concern. Candidates appear unable to critically read/listen to the requirements of specific questions and respond to what has been asked. Rather, candidates appear content to respond as generally as possible, hoping that they will hit on the answer. There is also the unfortunate tendency to use the jargon, with little understanding of the meaning or appropriateness to the specific question.

**DETAILED COMMENTS**

**PAPER 01**

Generally, this paper was fairly well done by most centres. However, Section B was not as well handled as Section A and Section C. Many candidates did not appear to read the questions critically and therefore did not answer correctly.

**Module 1 – Gathering and Processing Information**

The questions on this module related to a report of an eyewitness to a vehicular accident.

Question 1

For the most part responses to this question, on what the investigating officer might ask, were quite good and well thought through.

Question 2

Again, this question elicited some good responses for both Part (a) and Part (b). Candidates should however note that when they are asked for three other sources of information that these should be quite different from each other and not the same thing said in different ways.

Question 3

Candidates seem unaware of the difference between fact and opinion and as such many failed to gain the three marks assigned to part (a) of this question. Despite the fact that the negative was in capitals, some candidates mis-read Part (b) of this question. Greater attention should be paid to question - attacking skills.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to effectively respond to the first part of the question which asked why the police statistician cannot use the data from the accident to draw general conclusions about road accidents. However, the second part proved somewhat of a challenge. Candidates did not appear to see the words “generalized statements” and thus responses did not focus on the types of information that could lead to generalizations, for example, causes of other accidents.

**Module 2 – Language and Community**Question 5

In this question, some candidates responded literally by writing what the characters in the scenario actually said. This demonstrates a very simplistic interpretation of the question, one not consistent with this academic level.

Question 6

This question on the relationship between social class and language, caused some concern as there was a need for basic inferential skills and these were beyond some candidates. Again, candidates resorted to writing the actual dialogue in the scenario as a response.

Question 7

Candidates failed to read the rubric of this question which asked them to describe, not list, characteristics of dialect. This question therefore was not well done by most candidates.

Question 8

This was generally a well-answered question that asked candidates to associate certain languages to specific territories.

Question 9

Part (a) was generally a poorly-answered question. Candidates indicated differences in accents and gave the differing meanings of words and expressions used in the two countries but failed to explain *the differences in the linguistic characteristics*. Here again is the problem of lack of critical reading of the question, leading to incorrect responses.

Part (b) was generally well handled. However, in several cases candidates did not appear to be familiar with the term *linguistic characteristics*, and spoke to the history of the island without making the link with language characteristics.

Question 10

Responses to this question were generally good with most candidates managing to score near full marks. However, candidates appeared to confuse Dominica and Dominican Republic.

Question 11

Most candidates were able to gain the marks for identification of the language strategies used in the advertisement. However, there appeared to be some level of incompetence in the candidates' ability to speak to effectiveness of the technique. Again it is clear that many candidates have not mastered the higher-level skills required.

Question 12

Part (a) of this question was badly done by many candidates. The rubric indicated that the candidate should state *two features* of the vernacular. However, candidates chose to write what was actually said in the scenario, or stated that the language was non-standard. Candidates needed to actually identify the features of the language used in the scenario, for example, absence of the interrogative.

Part (b) was also badly done. Most candidates focused on pronunciation as a difficulty that would be experienced in learning to "speak English". There were also vague answers such as problems with punctuation. Since the two boys already speak English Creole it is difficult to appreciate how pronunciation would be a difficulty. Also, a vague reference to punctuation does not clarify for the examiner what is meant. Specificity is needed in the short-answer paper. A few candidates were able to recognize the fact that the boys would already believe that they speak English and as such, the difficulty lay in unlearning their speech habits. The difficulties that the Creole speaker has with the Standard were applicable here.

**Module 3 – Speaking and Writing**Question 13

Candidates performed well on this question, which asked for them to identify the sender, message, medium and feedback. Most of them gained near full marks.

Question 14

This question asked candidates to name two types of non-verbal communication, other than body language. Too many candidates did not read the question carefully and as a result gave examples of body language. This was unfortunate. Teachers need to allocate some time to examination techniques.

Question 15

Candidates were asked to list four features of language organization necessary to create a good written report. Many candidates focused on the word *report* and not on *language organization* as the question required. Candidates therefore wrote about the layout rather than how the language should be organized. This is another case where critical reading skills were called into question.

Question 16

This question dealt with non-verbal clues that may have led to a particular assumption. Here, responses required specificity as well. The candidate should realize that not all gestures would lead to the conclusion drawn so that he/she should state the specific type of gesture, for example, a nod.

**PAPER 02**

The performance in this paper was moderate with mean scores for each question being 13 out of a maximum of 25 allocated. In this paper the candidates were quite familiar with the jargon, but often mentioned terms without understanding what they were writing about. Candidates were content to make general remarks without any examples to clarify the meaning.

**Module 1 – Gathering and Processing Information**Question 1

The majority of candidates failed to differentiate between the main point and the writer's purpose. Additionally, though candidates seemed to have some knowledge of the language strategies and techniques, the majority seemed unable to aptly apply them to the answering of the question. Also, many candidates used terms that were irrelevant to the particular question, but which were applicable to language analysis. With too few exceptions, candidates' vocabulary skills were poor. Paragraphing skills were also of concern. Paragraphs were either undeveloped or non-existent and transitions were often lacking.

**Module 2 – Language and Community**Question 2

There were some excellent responses to this question which demonstrated that candidates were aware of the requirements for producing effectively organized and coherent responses. Sadly, there were too few in number of this standard.

Generally, responses suffered from weaknesses in all areas tested. In the area of content, candidates experienced difficulty in responding to the two final parts of the question. The term "*wider acceptability*" in part (c) seemed challenging and candidates wrote about the attitudes to Creole instead of discussing the possibility for greater acceptance.

The majority of the responses to part (d) merely mentioned the general effects of presenting a message on video. Candidates failed to make specific references to the poem.

Another significant problem was the tendency to give irrelevant information. Candidates chose to write all they knew about Creole, starting with the origin and then going into a long discourse on dialect, acrolect and mesolect. These terms were often misused. A few candidates took the route of analysing the poem instead of discussing the questions asked.

There is still the disturbing tendency on the part of candidates to view Creole as the language of the illiterate and lower class. Candidates should not at this point believe that the only reason the poet used Creole was because he was uneducated and belonged to the lower class.

Organization of the responses was also problematic and there needs to be more attention paid to the use of topic sentences and supporting details. There were scripts that contained one-page paragraphs as well as long paragraphs with only one sentence.

Effective expression of ideas is another area for concern. There were also too many instances of faulty construction. Simple rules of mechanics were too often ignored.

### **Module 3 – Speaking and Writing**

#### Question 3

Many candidates appeared to focus on pollution but failed to refer to nuclear waste. Also, candidates tended to ignore the fact that the shipment would directly affect the audience to whom they were directing their composition.

While some candidates were quite creative and detailed in explaining their selection of medium, too many candidates gave sketchy details and inadequate presentations.

In some cases, part (c) was ignored by candidates. There appeared to be some degree of uncertainty as to how to respond to the appropriateness of the composition.

### **PAPER 03**

Candidates continue to perform well in the Oral component of this paper. Happily this year there was some improvement in the performance on the Listening Comprehension.

#### **Section A**

#### Question 1

There was some improvement in performance on this question but candidates still failed to perceive the difference between the purpose and the main idea of the extract. Some attention should be paid to differentiating between these concepts. There was also a marked improvement in the fluency of the responses in this question.

#### Question 2

While most candidates were able to identify two literary devices, there appeared to be some difficulty in matching examples to devices. More revision in this area is suggested, as candidates would have covered this material at the CSEC level.

#### Question 3

Candidates' inability to match the example to the device impacted on their ability to respond to the effectiveness. Some candidates wrote generally on the effectiveness of a device without reference to the extract. Some candidates used this opportunity to give definitions of the device. This question produced the weakest responses.

#### Question 4

Candidates' responses to this question were generally fair. However, there was a tendency for candidates to ignore the part of the question which asked for evidence from the extract. Alternatively, evidence was given with no statement of description. Candidates need to observe the rubric of the question.

## Section B

Candidates maintained a high level of performance in the oral examination. However, there was a tendency for candidates to generalize on the topic chosen, rather than speak specifically to the question/ topic given.

### **PAPER 04 – Internal Assessment**

Overall, most of the pieces submitted suggested that some teachers or candidates in most territories were aware of most of the requirements for the various modules. However, there were some centres in all territories that showed little or no understanding of the modules.

#### Language Analysis

These were generally well done in most of the territories. In a few instances however, inappropriate passages were selected that did not allow for analysis of the components listed in the syllabus. Some centres treated the language analysis like Question 1 of Paper 02. No piece selected for this exercise should be completely written in the standard or non-standard form. Extracts from novels and plays are highly recommended.

A general weakness of some of the pieces submitted was the depth of the analysis provided. The focus was more on identifying the communicative features of the extract rather than on discussing the effectiveness of these features on the communicative process. Only a few candidates were able to correctly identify the registers or dialectal variations, or to take their responses beyond merely identifying features.

#### The Portfolio

Some of these samples exhibited a high level of creativity. Those candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the concept of the portfolio.

However, far too many still showed evidence of hasty composition, and a few produced portfolios that demonstrated clear examples of plagiarism. In addition, some of the topics were inappropriate and some candidates limited themselves to one genre.

The overall quality of the portfolios could have been considerably improved had candidates provided commentaries on the process of composition of their pieces.

Far too many are still submitting portfolios without the stipulated introduction, development and conclusion. However, the concept of thematic unity was understood by almost all of the candidates.

#### The Projects

This module continues to be problematic. Some centres in almost all territories appeared to have little or no understanding of the requirements of this module. There is also some measure of difficulty in expressing a clearly defined statement of issue.

Topics chosen were relevant but tended to be far too broad in scope and presented difficulty for the candidates who were unable to focus on a specific issue. Very few of the candidates demonstrated any understanding of the word “issue” and failed to identify or express any

debatable point. Some candidates produced elaborate preambles more suited to a research paper. A few centres completely ignored the guidelines and mark schemes for this module.

Difficulty in expressing a clear statement of issue very often resulted in poor choice of sources and inadequate or unrelated information. Much of the information gathered was poorly summarized. Far too many candidates relied on news items (headliners) rather than editorials or articles, and this led to weak analysis. Where candidates used questionnaires, surveys and interviews, the findings from these forms of research should be summarized, not the research methodology. There is no need to present numerous charts and graphs.

Evaluations were generally unsatisfactory. Candidates tended to focus on evaluating the source alone and made no mention of the effect of the content/medium, on the validity and reliability of the information presented.

A few centres focused on analyzing the literary merit of the information, rather than reliability and /or validity.

Far too many candidates are still approaching the project as a research project. A few chose topics that were inappropriate, for example, The Prosecution of R. Kelly. One centre completely misinterpreted the aim of the project and included budgetary proposals... The syllabus description clearly points to a completely different approach.

There is still a lot of work to be done in this area. Many candidates appear to be misdirected. Territories and schools need to carry out ongoing workshops to continually upgrade teachers and allow for sharing of expertise.

### Conclusion

There is a need to ensure that there is continuity in the teaching of the subject. Some centres or schools that normally produced reasonable internal assessments did not produce work of the same standard this year. There should be documentation of the procedures used by teachers so that new teachers do not misguide students.

Attention should continue to be focused on developing higher-level comprehension skills and encouraging critical reading and listening skills. More attention on the process of writing is sorely needed.