

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

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

**MAY/JUNE 2004**

**COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

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## **COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

### **CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

**MAY/JUNE 2004**

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The performance of candidates on the 2004 examination was generally fair. There was some improvement in the level of expression though there were still too many spelling and grammar errors that should be absent at this level.

Comprehension, both aural and written, remains a cause of concern. Candidates appeared unable to critically read or listen to specific questions and respond to what was asked. Candidates often answered by giving definitions rather than applying knowledge to the questions posed. Candidates also continued to use jargon without a clear understanding of its meaning and relevance to the question asked.

#### **DETAILED COMMENTS**

##### **Paper 01A**

Generally, this paper was not well done by most centres. However, Section A was much better handled than Section B and Section C. Many candidates did not appear to read the questions carefully and therefore did not answer appropriately.

##### **Module 1 - Gathering and Processing Information**

The questions on this module referred to a scenario relating to a school research project.

##### Question 1

Candidates did quite well on this question and many were able to gain full marks.

## Question 2

Candidates also handled this question quite well. However, not many candidates offered the best response for Question 2(c). There was not always the recognition that research could have relevance even when done in a different social setting. Too many candidates dismissed the research as being totally irrelevant. A superior response pointed to the difference in social setting but also pointed to the possibility of its use as background and as a point of discussion and comparison.

## **Module 2 - Language and Community**

Questions 3 - 4 referred to a telephone conversation between a parent and a teacher on the value of Creole.

## Question 3

This question was generally well done. However, candidates appeared more comfortable with discussing the function of Standard English than that of Creole in Question 3 (a).

## Question 4

This question was rather poorly done. Candidates gave some very general responses such as “grammar”, “spelling” and “syntax”, in response to Question 4 (a) that asked for “...four Creole structures that are likely to persist...”. Responses such as “absence of copula, time marking with adverbs, use of front focusing” should have been employed in the answer. Question 4 (b) was also poorly answered. Many candidates could not find four different reasons “... in support of the official use of Creole in instruction.” More emphasis needs to be placed on discussion of Creole languages and their importance.

## Question 5

This question was rather poorly done. This is especially true of Parts (b) and (c). Question 5 (b) tested a new objective in the syllabus and this may have accounted for the poor responses. The following is an example of a good response to this question.

- (i) The slave trade allowed two or more languages to interact and as a result a middle language or Creole was formed.
- (ii) The dominant language is that of the slave owners but there are hints of the African language used in communicating.

Candidates also found difficulty in justifying Mavis' pride in her Creole. Some suggested answers are: "her knowledge that what she speaks is in fact just as much a language as the standard", or "the fact that it is spoken and understood by a specific group".

### Question 6

This question which was based on Meena's opening a nursery suffered from candidates' failure to carefully read the rubric. Question 6(a) specifically asked for "TWO audio-visual aids" but candidates chose aids that were either audio only or visual only thereby not accommodating the intent of the question. Question 6 (c) was also misread by many candidates as they ignored the reference to "the non-instructional side of the nursery". Thus, candidates repeated the responses for Part (a) at Part (c) and as a result failed to score maximum marks.

## **Module 3 - Speaking and Writing**

### Question 7

This was generally a poorly answered question. Candidates did not appear to differentiate between the process of communication and the elements in the process. Question 7(a) asked for the elements in the communication process, for example, sender, message, receiver, channel and feedback. However, 7(b) asked for an explanation of the importance of three parts of the process of communication. Many candidates merely defined the terms presented and ignored the context of the question. An example of a superior answer given by a candidate is presented below:

**Conceptualization:** Clearly review the comment before you make it for appropriateness and content.

**Encoding:** Present the comment in a manner appropriate to the context in which it is being used - context, purpose and medium.

Interpretation: Consider how the message may be received and also consider the message for possible discrepancies due to bias or culture.

### Question 8

Responses to this question were generally good. However, candidates needed to be more specific when pointing out non-verbal clues. 'Facial expressions' or 'body language' are rather general responses and, in both cases, can be negative or positive. Thus, when a candidate is pointing to a clue that indicates lack of acceptance, the specific nature of the facial expression or body language should be stated – for example, a frown (facial expression), turning the body away (body language). **Teachers need to remind candidates that the use of vulgarity, for example swear words, is unacceptable in this forum.**

### Question 9

This question testing appropriate channels used for a specific presentation was satisfactorily done. Most candidates were able to gain at least half of the marks awarded on this question.

### Question 10

This question was reasonably well answered. Candidates were able to identify the form of communication used in the extract, as well as situations in which specific means of communication might be used.

## **Paper 01B**

Candidates did not perform well on this paper. The aural component continues to be of concern. The number of low scores indicates that candidates are unprepared for listening comprehension. The skills required for this exercise are quite different from those utilized in respect of written comprehension. It is therefore imperative that candidates be taught listening skills and strategies for isolating information. Adequate practice must be given in this type of exercise.

Candidates were unable to correctly identify a simple figurative device, metaphor. While candidates demonstrated some improvement in their ability to discuss the effectiveness of the device, too many of them still experienced difficulty in showing any relationship between the writer's intent and the use of metaphor.

### Question 1

Candidates performed poorly on this question. Many responses suggested that candidates believed that whatever was said at the beginning of the passage constituted the main idea of the passage. This was definitely not so in the case of this passage. Much work needs to be done to help candidates to recognize the main idea.

### Question 2

Candidates performed poorly on this question. Many of them selected pieces of information that were not consistent with the main idea they had identified in Question 1. There appears to be a need for candidates to be taught how to identify and use clues to identify the main idea.

### Question 3

Although many candidates could not correctly identify the device used in the passage, they managed to identify other examples. Metaphor is one of the simplest literary devices used by speakers and writers so it is somewhat puzzling that it presented such a challenge to the candidates.

### Question 4

The effectiveness of a device continues to challenge candidates. Many candidates performed quite poorly on this question. There is a need for more practice in evaluating the writer's use of devices.

## **Paper 02**

The performance on this paper was moderate, with mean scores for each question falling between 13 and 15 out of 25. Candidates used jargon without understanding what they were writing about.

This was seen especially in Module 1. Candidates continue to make some very general comments without the examples to illustrate their points.

## **Module 1 - Gathering and Processing Information**

### Question 1

There were some excellent responses to this question which demonstrated candidates' knowledge of the requirements of the syllabus. Weaker candidates tended to mention writing strategies whether they could be found in the passage or not. These candidates were not then able to give examples to highlight their points. As a result, there was large measure of irrelevant information evident in responses to this question. Candidates also needed to improve organization skills and paragraphing. There was often an absence of good topic sentences followed by supporting details.

## **Module 2 - Language and Community**

### Question 2

This question also produced some excellent responses. Candidates attempted to answer all parts of the question and there was some improvement in the organization of the responses. However, it was obvious that some candidates did not know the difference between the narrator and the writer and, in some cases, between 'linguistic' and 'non-linguistic'. Regrettably, some candidates wrote a language analysis of the excerpt while ignoring the question before them. There were other instances where candidates went into involved discussions about the meaning of the word "Creole" and the several levels of Creole that exist in their territory.

Happily, candidates' attitudes to Creole appear more positive as illustrated in the frequent response that Creole is suitable for narrating a story for an international audience.

The quality of expression is still a matter of concern as there were too many simple errors in grammar and spelling at this advanced level.

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

### Question 3

Just as in the first two modules, there were also some excellent responses to this question. However, there were some general weaknesses identified.

Candidates often wrote lengthy responses without clearly addressing the specifics of the question. It appeared as if candidates wrote all they knew about this specific area hoping to gain some marks. This led to vague references to problems in communicating and too brief discussion on the information to be relayed and the strategies to be used. Candidates needed to direct their responses to the specific questions asked.

Candidates need to be reminded that the use of profanities is unacceptable. Some candidates used the scenario as justification for the use of profanity. This will not be tolerated.

### **Paper 03 - Internal Assessment**

#### The Reflective Component

Some candidates produced pieces that were interesting and appropriate for the literary genre. There were, however, several weaknesses in some of the Reflective pieces.

There appeared to be some confusion with regard to the introduction and the rationale. The portfolio requires a brief, general introduction in which the theme is identified and candidates show how the theme relates to the candidates' academic life and personal interest. The rationale should precede each piece and should indicate the specific audience, purpose and content of the respective piece. Candidates should briefly indicate the channel and medium through which the piece could reach the projected audience.

The syllabus states that the Reflective pieces should be taken from literary genres. However, this appeared to be overlooked by some centres. Far too many candidates submitted expository pieces for this component. Literary pieces should include stories, poems or songs, short dramatic pieces, or diary entries that develop a story. **Candidates must remember that the pieces must all reflect the**

**same theme.**

Teachers are reminded that samples should represent completed work and therefore the portfolio of a student who does not give a response to a section should not be included in the teacher's five samples. Teachers need to ensure that the marks written on the COM 2 sheets correspond with the marks recorded on the students' portfolios. The tally of marks should be checked for accuracy.

Analytical Component

Most candidates seemed aware of the requirements of this component and attempted an analysis. However, there were some glaring weaknesses that need to be highlighted. Many of the selected extracts did not allow for an adequate analysis of the components of the linguistic analysis. Also, too many candidates wrote a literary analysis rather than a linguistic analysis of the selected piece. Several candidates spent too much time defining the key components and summarizing the content of the piece rather than analyzing the required elements.

Many candidates appear to confuse dialectal variations with register and some appeared unable to adequately discuss attitudes to language. The latter was often interpreted as one character's attitude towards another.

Teachers and candidates are reminded that the analytical piece must fit the theme selected: the portfolio must be thematically consistent. Candidates need to proof-read their work carefully and the presentation of the portfolio should reflect careful preparation and attention to detail. Too many analytical pieces were handwritten on scraps of paper and pushed into folders with little regard for the overall quality of the presentation.

**Paper 03B**

This paper was written by four private candidates and was poorly done by all four of them. None of the candidates seemed to have been sufficiently prepared to do the paper. All three of the modules produced low scores. Private candidates need to pay greater attention to the specimen paper and mark scheme.

## Conclusion

Teachers need to become more comfortable with the changes in the syllabus. Greater attention needs to be placed on listening comprehension skills and critical thinking. Another area that needs to be focused on is “Characteristics of Creole languages”, that occurs in Module 2. This is an area in which candidates did not demonstrate competence.

There needs to be a continued focus on the process of writing. Certainly the samples of work for the Internal Assessment did not always demonstrate due care and attention to spelling, grammar and general presentation expected at the post-secondary level.



