

**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  
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

**JUNE 2006**

**THEATRE ARTS**

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## THEATRE ARTS

MAY/JUNE 2006

### GENERAL COMMENTS

This is the fourth year of the Theatre Arts CSEC examination. Five hundred and thirty-six candidates were recorded as registering for the examination. Only 481 scripts, however, were received. They represented candidates from 46 centres across six territories: Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago.

Theatre Arts is examined through three papers. Paper 01 and Paper 03 (SBA) are marked by CXC. Paper 02 (Practical) is school-based and is moderated by a Theatre Arts Specialist.

Paper 01 consists of six questions, all of which are compulsory. Generally, this paper seemed to present greater difficulty for this year's candidates than was the case last year.

#### Question 1

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the state of Caribbean Cultural forms and their understanding of the use and effects of elements of theatre. The question has a speculative/imaginative component based on candidates' knowledge of theatre. The question met objectives: GI, II; SI, II, IV, V, VI in the syllabus.

Candidates' responses ranged mostly between 0 – 7 on the Marking scale (1 - 10). Weaker candidates failed to read/interpret the question adequately. The term 'extinct' may have presented a challenge to some candidates whose responses did not reflect this descriptor.

There was also a great deal of variation in the interpretation of 'theatrical elements' - from 'music and dance' to stage props. Weaker candidates were also challenged in distinguishing clearly the impact of their chosen elements on the categories listed in the question.

Many candidates also misinterpreted the phrase practitioner of the form question (d) (iii). They were not able to make reference to what would interest a practitioner to a prescribed cultural form as the form is presented by a young person or a non-practitioner.

#### Recommendations:

- Students need to be given practice in reading and interpreting questions.
- Attention must be paid to clarifying theatre terminology, for example: theatrical elements/devices/techniques/strategies – and the components of a cultural form – music, movement and ritual.

#### Question 2

This question tested candidates' knowledge of set texts and set videos. The question further tested analytical skills and candidates' ability to make rational aesthetic choices.

In so doing, the question met objectives GII, SIII, IV, VI.

Many candidates failed to score any marks in this question. Those who did however, ranged comfortably between 4 - 8, the very middle of the mark scale. Candidates who failed to score either

ignored the instruction “from a prescribed text or video you have studied” or interpreted this literally enough to cite any video material of their liking.

In section (b), weaker responses also simply re-told the plot or were unable to make connections between character and theme or cultural form.

Recommendations:

- Students need to be given practice in reading and interpreting questions.
- Students should be required to study at least one prescribed text which should be carefully analysed in terms of character, plot, story, theme, statement. Students should be encouraged to read other available texts on the syllabus.

**Question 3**

This question tested candidates’ regional knowledge as well as their ability to discern by comparison. The question met objectives GI, II, III, SII, III in the syllabus. Most responses fell within the lower to middle ranges of the mark scale 0 - 7. Candidates often failed to name two Caribbean countries where a specified cultural form could be found.

The wording of the question could have been more explicit in this regard. Marks were allocated therefore at any point in answer where candidates made reference to the countries. Many responses reflected a lack of comparative knowledge about cultural form in the region.

Recommendations:

- Students need practice in reading and interpreting questions. In particular, teachers need to stress the guiding words in a question, for example - analyse, explain, describe, identify.
- Schools need to acquire more reference material on Caribbean cultural forms.
- Students should be encouraged to establish pen-pals across the region so information and experiences can be exchanged.
- A contact list of Theatre Arts schools and teachers should be circulated by CXC so that teachers can set up their own links for information exchange and support.

**Question 4**

This question tested candidates’ knowledge of cultural forms and appreciation of drama as a cultural form. In so doing, the question met objectives GI, II, SII, III, of the syllabus. This question was well handled with the majority of responses ranging from 4 - 8 in the mark scale.

Weaker answers were too generalised or failed to identify a ‘cultural dance form’. The term ‘indigenous’ was not understood in some cases.

Recommendations:

- Students need practice in reading and interpreting questions.
- Teaching cultural forms should include an appreciation of the context of the performance. Students should be able to distinguish between a performance in its natural setting and its staged version. The experience of cultural performances in their natural environment as far as possible is highly recommended.

### **Question 5**

This question tested candidates' understanding of theatrical roles, knowledge of prescribed material and aesthetic reasoning, therefore meeting objectives SIV, VI, in the syllabus. Candidates in the main scored in the lower end of the mark scale 1 - 4.

Many candidates failed to make the required link between their knowledge of theatre roles and the characteristics of a specific production. Many candidates however did not identify a named text, cultural form or dance. Candidates merely recalled the roles of the personnel without specific reference to text. In addition, candidates even where they named a text, cultural form or dance were unable to analyse the roles in relation to the chosen text but merely listed the characteristics. The mark scheme was adjusted to allow for a maximum of 3 marks in these instances.

#### Recommendations:

- Students need practice in reading and interpreting exam questions.
- Students need practice in text analysis - full plays as well as scenes.
- Students need more experience in practical theatre processes.

### **Question 6**

The question tested candidates' analytical skills and knowledge of cultural forms. The questions met objectives GI, II, IV, VI. Most responses ranged between 1 - 6 on the mark scale. Weaker candidates were challenged by the analysis required and displayed a poor knowledge of the movement aspect of cultural forms.

#### Recommendations:

- Students need practice in text analysis as a written exercise.
- Students need to read other texts in the syllabus.
- Students need to learn to apply a comparative approach to the study of cultural forms.
- Additional time may be required for reading of extract (10 minutes)

### **School-Based Assessment - Paper 03**

In all 49 School-Based Assessments (SBA's) were moderated during this 2006 exercise. The quality of SBA's was generally fair. Critiques showed an understanding and appreciation of theatrical productions in the level of critical appraisal and the use of appropriate terminology. Overall the mark scheme was fairly applied.

The research papers reflected a wide variety of subjects within the limits of the exercise. This is to be commended as in the past, there were many instances of groups of students selecting the same practitioner and asking the same set of questions.

Some candidates tended to choose practitioners who may be easily accessible but so young that their career in the arts or cultural practice was limited. We recommend therefore that teachers guide

candidates in the selection of research subjects toward persons with substantial experience in the arts and cultural practice/tradition, especially individuals whose contribution may not otherwise be documented.

Marking on this assignment was at a wide variance with CXC's. It is our conclusion that the mark scheme for the research paper maybe misleading as

1. Teachers/candidates may conclude that the interview is to consist of five (5) questions;
2. Assigning 1 mark per question and 1 mark per response fails to take into account qualitative differentiation in the interview. As a result, high marks were often given in that area by teachers (maximum 10 marks) which skewed the assessment.
3. In many instances, the full text of the interview was not presented as an appendix.
4. The mark scheme does not refer to or include the body of material that is the research paper itself. The interview is one research tool from which information is extracted for shaping and presenting the body of the paper.

Some submissions were therefore consistent with the mark scheme but lacking the substance and body of a research paper.

Other disturbing trends that developed this year were:

1. Instances of candidates downloading material from the Web in lieu of interviewing the subject.
2. Candidates copying, that is duplicating page for page, from one another.

What was alarming about these instances was that nothing in the marking or comments on these projects suggested that teachers responded to the situation.