

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2011

**HOME ECONOMICS: MANAGEMENT
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The 30th examination of Home Economics was administered in May 2011. The examination includes three components: Paper 01 – Multiple Choice, Paper 02 – Structured Essays and Paper 03 – School Based-Assessment. Approximately 89 per cent of candidates who sat the examination achieved acceptable grades, I–III.

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

Paper 01 comprised 60 compulsory multiple-choice questions. The mean score on this paper was 35.75 or 59.58 per cent of the total mark.

Paper 02 – Structured Essays Questions

Paper 02 consisted of two parts — Part A and Part B. Part A comprised three compulsory questions while Part B comprised four questions from which candidates were required to choose two. Candidates were required to answer a total of five questions. Each question was awarded a total of 16 marks, 6 marks were awarded for the Knowledge profile and 10 marks for the Use of Knowledge profile. Out of the maximum possible mark of 80, the mean was 35.75 or 44.87 per cent.

GENERAL COMMENTS

PART A

The compulsory questions on Paper 02 have historically revolved around Objectives 5, 7 and 10. Over the years this known fact has had little impact on the quality of candidates' responses. This years' performance reflected some improvement in the overall grasp of the subject matter tested. Even when candidates used their everyday language to present their responses, the examination team noticed an improvement in the application component of the concepts being tested. Candidates gave fuller answers, showed improvement in their use of language and displayed greater awareness of the subject which is good evidence that they see the relevance of the subject to their everyday lives. There was some improvement in the organization of responses but there is still much more room for growth. While many candidates gave detailed responses which showed a good command of the content, their responses continue to be disorganized.

Content organisation terms such as *principles, features, effects, factors and guidelines* are concepts and constructs that are not well understood by the candidates. These are part of the vocabulary in the syllabus and textbooks and teachers should ensure that students understand the language of the subject. This is important because candidates often give examples of core ideas in relation to the subject matter that are unrelated to the concept being tested. A case in point is that when asked to state principles, candidates instead gave examples of principles. This resulted in the loss of marks.

Candidates continue to misinterpret tasks which required them to *describe* and *explain*.

There are continuing concerns that candidates show poor mastery of the *Management Principles*. The foundation of Home Economics: Management revolves around the management concept and its clear relationship to family activities. This was one of the weakest areas reflected in candidates' responses.

Candidates continue to regurgitate words in a nonsensical manner which suggests that they have heard these words but need help to attach them to the concepts and then apply them appropriately. For example, planning, organizing, evaluating, and so on, are words that candidates repeat in their responses but with inaccurate definitions, descriptions and applications.

There continues to be the need for greater evidence of subject mastery and at least reasonable exposure to the standard knowledge by the majority of candidates across the region. It is important that regions and schools do more to improve understanding of the content, mastery of important areas in the curriculum, and seek to revise and update the texts and other resources used in the teaching of the topics. What is clear is that teachers need to take active steps to improve the academic value of the Home Economics: Management curriculum.

Candidates continue to demonstrate weakness in answering questions. There has been a tendency for them to answer all seven questions instead of focusing on the five questions required and thus compose responses that would earn them maximum marks for each question.

It is important to again stress that teachers should make a concerted effort to help students to read and interpret the essay questions and thus be more likely to provide reasonable responses that will earn higher marks. The low scores of some candidates suggest that they did not study the subject or at best did not prepare well.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Question 1

This was a compulsory question which tested candidates' understanding of work and work ethic.

Part (a) required candidates to state four reasons why people work. This section was generally well done; however, a few candidates duplicated responses in stating the reasons why people work. For example, "To provide basic needs" and "To provide food, clothing and shelter" were given as separate reasons.

Part (b) required candidates to explain the expression 'a proper work ethic'. This section was not well handled by some candidates. They gave a definition for 'work' or 'work ethic' instead of explaining the meaning of 'proper work ethic.'

Some candidates also focused on the word 'expression' instead of giving a definition for the term. For example, a poor response was, "Having a good job and working in a clean environment." A good response was: *Showing positive attitudes to work, having a proper demeanour and doing one's best to achieve company goals.*

Part (c) (i) required candidates to identify four features which demonstrated poor work ethic and to suggest the proper practices for the features identified. This section was generally well done by most candidates who performed well in listing features of poor work ethic. Some candidates, however, listed the proper practices without the features while some gave the features without the practices. Some candidates listed the features but failed to link the correct practices to the responses. Examples of incorrect responses included:

- The insects and rodents will be attracted to the office.
- She was drinking alcohol.
- Absolutely no work was being done.

In addition, some candidates sketched the drawing and used words like 'jaws', 'jars' instead of 'drawers'.

Examples of correct responses:

- *Feature: The fan was on high speed blowing documents all over the office.*
- *Correct Practice: Lower the fan speed and place a paper weight on the documents.*
- *Feature: Food and drink should not be on the work station.*
- *Correct practice: No eating/drinking should be done at the work station and the employee should make use of the lunchroom.*

Part (c) (ii) required candidates to explain how the behaviour of the employee could affect the company's finances.

Some candidates linked their responses to the features given in (c) (i). Some candidates simply stated "that the company would lose customers" but did not give an explanation. Other candidates linked the loss to the documents being blown away. Some candidates gave suggestions about what should be done rather than saying how it would affect the company's finances. Some candidates responded that the company would be 'closed down' by the Public Health Inspector due to the untidiness of the office. Most candidates showed some awareness of acceptable workplace behaviour.

Question 2

This was another compulsory question. It tested candidates' knowledge on money management. Approximately 99 per cent of the candidates attempted the question. Part (a) tested candidates' ability to recall reasons for preparing a budget. Part (b) required candidates to list three factors that should be considered when preparing a budget. Part (c) tested candidates' understanding of how to analyse the information given in the scenario and to explain two important money management guidelines that the family did not follow and to give one example from the case to show how each guideline was not followed. They were also asked to state two guidelines for money management that should be used to meet the outstanding payments for the rent, while correcting the spending habits of the family.

Part (a) in particular, was fairly well done. Most candidates were able to correctly state at least two of the three reasons for preparing a budget. However, a number of overlapping responses were given by candidates for the same question. Some of these responses included:

- To prevent overspending
- To avoid impulsive spending
- To prevent spending unnecessary money

Part (b) was generally well done as the majority of candidates were able to give the correct responses. However, it was noted that some candidates gave reasons for preparing a budget and guidelines to follow instead of factors. Some of these responses included:

- Plan budget wisely
- Do not over-spend/impulsive
- Health of the individual

It was also observed that the following unacceptable responses were quite popular:

- Gender
- Age
- Size of family
- Management process-planning, organizing and evaluation

In instances where the reason was named in Part (a), it was repeated in this section. This indicated that some candidates did not know the factors to consider when preparing a budget.

Part (c) (i) was generally fairly done. Some candidates did not attempt this section and many of those who did encountered difficulty with the interpretation of the stem. The stem was stated in the negative but in a number of cases candidates responded in the positive. For example:

- They should do comparative shopping
- They could have bought a cheaper phone
- They should spend their money wisely
- They should plan

Candidates must be more aware so that they can recognize exactly what is being asked whether the question is stated in the negative or positive. Nevertheless, many candidates were able to give correct examples to the case.

Although Part (c) (ii) was also fairly done; most candidates did not give sufficient guidelines so as to earn full marks. It was also found that in some cases the guidelines given lacked adequate explanation. Overall, candidates' performance on this question was average. Most candidates scored between the ranges 11–9 and 8–6 out of a total score of sixteen.

Question 3

This question tested Module 1 – Specific Objectives 3 and 5 and Module 2 – Specific Objectives 2 and 12. This question consisted of five parts: Parts (a) and (b) were the knowledge questions while Parts (c) (i), (c) (ii) and (c) (iii) represented the use of knowledge profile.

Part (a) asked candidates to identify three accidents that can occur in the bathroom. Some of the expected answers were:

- *Slips and falls on loose mats and falls from tripping on the floor in the bath*
- *Electrocution from handling live electrical appliances while handling water*
- *Cuts from razor blades*
- *Drowning*
- *Injury from falling objects*
- *Taking medicines which leads to accidentally poisoning*
- *Misuse of chemicals*

The majority of candidates were able to answer this section correctly and were able to score full marks. Other candidates gave the causes of accidents but made no mention of the accidents themselves. Many candidates listed accidents that were not personal in nature, for example, mobile phone falling into the toilet, mirror breaking and the overflowing of toilets.

For Part (b), candidates were required to describe three ways in which accidents in the garden could be prevented. This section was not answered as well as expected but it was well done with a fair number of participants scoring full marks. The answers expected included:

- *Use tools for the purpose intended*
- *Store all tools and equipment in a safe place after use*
- *Label all chemical supplies clearly and visibly*
- *Store dangerous substances out of the reach of children*
- *Wear protective gear and clothing when working in the garden*
- *Fill up holes and ditches in the garden*
- *Dispose of cuttings and other debris properly*
- *Ensure poisonous/dangerous plants are secured from children*

Instead of focusing on the preventative measures in their responses, candidates named accidents which could occur in the garden. Answers such as *'slip and fall'*, *'being bitten by insects'*, *'poisoning'*, *'misuse of chemical'*, *'cuts from sticks and stones'*, were given. Other candidates gave answers to protect the garden from outsiders. Responses like *'fence the garden'*, *'put a dog at the gate'* and *'keep people out of the garden'* are among such answers. Some candidates had responses such as wear protective wear/gear using each gear, as an answer and so scored only one mark out of a possible three.

Example of responses which would have earned full marks are:

- *wear masks when using chemicals*
- *wear gloves when working in the soil to protect hands*
- *wear appropriate clothing and wear boots when working in the garden*

The most popular correct answers were: *wear protective gear, put away tools and equipment and put away pesticides and insecticides.*

In Part (c) (i), a family scenario which included physical and age challenges, was given. This section required that candidates describe two safety features that must be put in place in the new house to protect the toddler twins as they move about inside the house. This section was poorly done as candidates gave safety guidelines instead of safety features. From responses given, it was obvious that many candidates were unaware of safety features. Expected responses include

- *Non-skid floors, no loose mats*
- *Use portable gates/barriers to barricade steps to prevent twins from climbing*
- *Children play area should be in clearly visible areas away from work areas/kitchen and laundry areas*
- *Install features that will prevent doors from slamming on children's fingers and toes*
- *Keep kitchen cupboards locked and child proofed*

Most candidates gave answers based on their experience in caring for children. Some unacceptable responses were:

- *Keep knives and chemicals away from them (instead of install child safe locks)*
- *Install surveillance camera, hire a baby sitter (instead of put away toys when not in use)*
- *Let the children play safely (this is a meaningful response)*

Many candidates alternated the answer for (c) (i) with that for (c) (ii). Other candidates stated how Jonas and the twins should relate in the house. For example, "the twins should be out of Jonas' way" or "Jonas should not let the twins play with his wheelchair."

In Part (c) (ii), candidates were required to describe two features that must be in place to allow Jonas to comfortably move around, inside and outside the house. Similar to (c) (i), candidates stated guidelines instead of features.

Expected answers in response to access to the house included:

- *Doors and passageways should be wide enough to allow the wheelchair to move between, inside and outside the house*
- *Ramps should be installed to allow for wheelchairs to navigate stairway access*
- *Handrails to facilitate access or any feature that facilitate access*

Some incorrect responses were:

- Clean up the house and yard
- Wipe up spills immediately
- Buy a house that has no steps/a one-storey house
- Move toys and objects out of the way

Some candidates even mentioned changing floor coverings and paving the yard. Many of them had no description at all, others placed emphasis on proper lighting as a feature and placing things where Jonas could reach.

For Part (c) (iii), candidates were required to describe two procedures that should be performed when applying first aid to treat Molly's injury. The responses to this section were poor. Many candidates gave treatments suitable for cuts and burns instead of scald. Some of these examples are:

- apply pressure to stop bleeding
- clean using hydrogen peroxide, mentholated spirits or alcohol
- *put scald under warm/hot water*
- *add band aid or bandage tightly*

Many candidates stated that ointment, Vaseline, milk and butter should be used.

The expected responses included:

- *Determine the severity of the scald*
- *Cool down affected area by running cold water for relief of pain or cover with clean ice*
- *Apply a paste of baking soda and clean water to the scalded area/apply scald or burn medication*
- *Cover affected area with a clean gauze*
- *If skin is broken, seek medical attention immediately*
- *Remove encumbrances (watch, ring, bracelets etc)*

Attention should be given to the following concepts:

- Safety features
- Scalds
- Accidents as they relate to specific rooms in the house
- Temporary and permanent injuries

Candidates should be made aware of the needs of persons with disabilities and the use of appliances and mobility aids like wheelchairs, crutches etc. Such concepts should be taught using role play, pictorial studies, discussions, case studies and scenarios which will allow for critical thinking. These are content areas that are not only on the syllabus for testing but they are also concerns and issues that impact the everyday lives of individuals and families for which candidates need to be prepared to handle effectively.

PART B

Part B consists of the optional questions. Candidates were required to do two of the four questions given.

Question 4

This question tested Modules 1 and 2, Specific Objectives 5 and 3, 2 and 12 respectively. The question consisted of three parts. Part (a) tested candidates' knowledge and Part (b) their use of knowledge.

In Part (a), candidates were asked to describe two roles that each member of a modern-day family namely father, mother and teenage children may assume. Most candidates responded excellently to the question; however, a few of them stated that the roles of the children were to:

- respect parents
- uphold or carry on the family name
- display love and respect to siblings
- respect elders or parents

The expected responses were:

- *contribution to family income*
- *housekeeping*
- *running errands*
- *purchasing groceries*
- *student*
- *baby sitting*
- *advisor*
- *caretaker of pets and plants*

A few candidates listed the function of family members rather than the roles. Some responses cited were:

- procreation
- provide food for the family
- doing chores
- taking care of family
- being man of the house

For Part (b) (i), candidates were expected to describe three possible effects the global economic recession can have on the financial stability of Ravindra's family. This section was fairly well done. However, candidates focused on the *social* aspects of the global economic recession rather than the *economic* aspects as was required. Some responses included: "not enough space", "moving into higher houses", "expanding the house", "cooking", "buying food", "he has to take care of his mother" and "more money will be spent".

Correct responses for this section were:

- *Inability to meet financial commitments*
- *May become impossible to support mother and sister so sister will be required to seek employment*
- *May need to seek government for financial support for ill grandmother*
- *Wife and children may be required to seek employment*
- *Children may have to delay further studies*
- *Conflict may arise over financial decisions and inability to meet financial commitments*
- *Family may have to practise family planning*

In Part (b) (ii), candidates were asked to name one family value and explain how it can influence any conflict that could occur as a result of changes in the family outlined at (b) (i).

This section was poorly done. Most candidates displayed little understanding of the concept 'values'. Some candidates did not attempt this section. In addition, those who attempted it failed to explain how values influence conflicts that could occur as a result of changes in the family.

The expected responses for values were *family togetherness, love, commitment, responsibility, honesty, loyalty, education, family, relation, respect, privacy*. Some incorrect responses for values given were 'socialization', 'evaluation', 'income', 'money', 'the decision making processes', 'family council'. In responses where correct values were named, the explanation did not link to the value. It is strongly recommended that teachers

1. Reinforce the following concepts:

- values
- conflict resolution
- family values as they affect conflicts
- the effects of an economic recession on the financial stability of the family
- the difference among family roles, responsibilities and functions

2. Implement teaching techniques that will encourage students to develop analytical skills. Scenarios and case studies should be used for this purpose.

Question 5

This question tested candidates on Module 3, Objectives 2 and 3. It was attempted by approximately 60 per cent of the candidates and 55 per cent gave satisfactory responses.

For Part (a), candidates were required to write the definition of migration and emigration. This section was poorly done. Most candidates were unable to differentiate between the two concepts. In addition, many of them gave the same response for both terminologies. Most of the definitions given were incomplete, for example, candidates wrote: "Migration is leaving from one place to go to another and emigration is coming into a country". Some candidates even gave definitions that were related to deportation for emigration. They missed the key point – *leaving from one place to go to another to reside or live* and not just the fact of moving from one place to another.

Part (b) asked candidates to give adjustments that immigrants must make in their new setting. This was generally done well by candidates. However, some of them failed to write complete sentences, for example, 'house', 'job', and listed requirements of immigrants such as passports and green cards.

In Part (c), candidates were required to explain the benefits that residents could expect from the construction of a computer assembly plant, and the community resources that would be needed for it to be successful. This posed a great deal of difficulty for candidates. In responding to this part of the question, a large number of candidates placed emphasis on the use of computers and referred to the computer plant as an agricultural/botanical plant, as well as a computer centre. Some of the responses given were: "persons would benefit by getting computers, becoming more computer literate, completing assignments and surfing the net etc".

The community resources were clearly identified and described and most candidates were able to complete this task adequately.

Question 6

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to:

- Explain three management processes
- Describe two actions to be taken when organizing care for a grandmother
- Name two methods of work simplification and explain how one of these methods could assist in completing chores while caring for a grandmother
- Suggest two ways of evaluating performance at the end of the day

Part (a) of the question was fairly done. The weaker candidates confused organizing with implementing. They also focused on event planning, for example, weddings and birthday parties instead of defining the terms.

Part (b) (i) seemed to pose a challenge to candidates as they answered the question as if the grandmother was already in their care. They gave examples such as 'bathing her', 'feeding her', and 'playing games with her' instead of organizing these activities before her arrival. The process of 'organizing' was referred to as organizing in the colloquial sense and not as used in management. Possible answers are:

- *Check to make sure that grandma has her medication supplies and ensure that she has enough medication for the day*
- *Prepare a pleasant room for grandma to rest in and/or do simple tasks like reading a colourful magazine.*

Part (b) (ii) was fairly done. The majority of candidates were able to name the work simplification methods and showed how the named method would be able to assist them in taking care of the grandmother. However, weaker candidates named the management processes as well as labour-saving devices for the work simplification methods.

Part (b) (iii) was generally well done by most candidates who answered this question. While some candidates were able to suggest two correct ways of evaluating their performance at the end of the day others gave unrelated responses.

Question 7

This question was the final optional question on the examination and was the least popular. It tested candidates' understanding of consumer education.

Part (a) required candidates to **define** the terms 'impulse buying' and 'hire purchase'. The term *impulse buying* was poorly defined while *hire purchase* was interpreted in many cases as *lay-away*.

In Part (b), candidates were asked to give two examples of 'consumer rights' and 'consumer responsibilities'. Most candidates gave the correct response for consumer rights but confused consumer rights with consumer responsibilities.

Part (c) (i) required candidates to give reasons and concerns for their choice of earthenware as a wedding gift. Candidates were not sure about the difference between earthenware and disposables as their responses frequently indicated this confusion. Also, the reason for choosing earthenware was reflected in their responses. Many candidates also gave cost of the earthenware as an answer for concern.

Responses for Part (c) (ii) were mostly ambiguous. The opinion of the wedding guest purchasing the gift was considered, rather than that of the friend for whom the gift was intended.

Part (d) required candidates to name pieces of silverware cutlery used to serve a given three course meal. Candidates misinterpreted cutlery for serving dishes and most of them did not give the correct use of each piece named and its relevance to the menu. Examples of responses were 'eating fork', 'small fork', 'salad basin', 'serving platter'.

Conclusion and Recommendation

While some of the continuing issues of inadequate mastery, inaccurate interpretations and expressions were present in the 2011 responses, some improvements have been noted in terms of candidates' expressions and language usage. Answers were more coherent. Candidates gave many real-life examples as requested, indicating the movement towards the appropriate application of the knowledge and skills taught in the Home Economics: Management programme in schools. There is still a way to go to raise the academic value of the programme and teachers are urged to continue to read more widely and to update the reading list for students as they prepare for this important examination.