

CXC Study Guides to Boost Preparations for CSEC and CAPE

Candidates sitting the Caribbean Examinations Council's (CXC) regular and advanced level external examinations now have the benefit of the organization's newly published study guides, to boost their preparations.

The CXC, in partnership with British publishing firm, Nelson Thornes, has published some 19 study guides this year, covering 11 subject titles in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC), and eight in the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE). Subjects covered under the CSEC include: English A (Language) and B (Literature); Mathematics; Integrated Science; Social Studies; Information Technology; Office Administration; Principles of Business; Economics; Religious Education; and Geography. The CAPE subjects are: Biology; Chemistry; Physics; Communication Studies; Caribbean Studies; Economics; Geography; and Accounting. The guides, which were officially unveiled earlier this year during a ceremony hosted by the CXC in Kingston, are available in countries across the region that are members of the Council. The publications are the realization of a joint commitment by CXC and Nelson Thornes in June 2011, to undertake development and delivery of additional resources for CXC subjects under CSEC and CAPE, over the ensuing 18 months. They are also the culmination of work which the Council started on the guides back in 2003. Outlining, during the launch, CXC Assistant Registrar, Curriculum and Syllabus Development and co-author of the study guides, Gerard Philip, explained that the subject syllabuses are broken down into chapters, with each page illustrating a new topic. Other key features: case studies; colour coding of key points; exam-style, essay-type and multiple-choice questions at the end of each chapter; a glossary of key terms; and an interactive compact disc comprising 100 questions, split into quizzes comprising 10 questions each. Mr. Philip said a "concerted and meticulous approach" was taken to developing the study guides. He pointed out that the drafting team comprised persons with years of experience teaching the CXC syllabuses. "In most instances, they included the chief examiner, examiners in the particular subject areas (and persons) who have served...in the field of education for a number of years...and know intricately, the depth that is required in various objectives and content, which is invaluable to students, who are reading a number of books and accessing a lot of information," he stated. Mr. Philip said that the study guide will prove an "invaluable resource", as it will assist in developing effective study skills, improve examination techniques, help students discover their personal learning styles, manage their time efficiently, and learn the best way to prepare for their examinations. "The study guide does not replace the textbook at any point, but hones the skills in specific areas. Key competencies (are) stressed so that students accessing (them) are honing into critical knowledge areas," Mr. Philip added. Pro Registrar for the CXC, Glenroy Cumberbatch, said the rationale for the study guides was based on, among other things, the exponential growth in the number of candidates registering across the region to sit the exams and the need identified to provide material that can assist them in their preparations. He pointed out that the number of candidates sitting the external exams at the end of the 2011/12 academic year, in May and June stood at 184,000 for CSEC and 28,000 CAPE. More than half of the persons sitting the exams, particularly in the CSEC, he disclosed, were "out of school" candidates. "So, the audience that we are preparing exams for has increased...and it makes it even more important that the materials that we make available are materials that both groups of persons can use," the Registrar said.