



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit  
State Examinations Commission**

**JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2005**

**CIVIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION**

**CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

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## 1. Introduction

Civic, Social and Political Education became a core, mandatory subject in the Junior Cycle curriculum in 1997. It was examined nationally for the first time in 2000.

Civic, Social and Political Education is a course in active citizenship based on human rights and social responsibilities. It is assessed at a Common Level in the Junior Certificate examination. It comprises two components

- a terminal written examination paper which carries 40% of the overall mark (80 out of 200 marks).
- a Report on an Action Project (RAP) *or* a Course-work Assessment Booklet (CWAB) which carry 60% of the overall mark (120 out of 200 marks)

The allocation of 60% of the overall mark to the class-based work reflects the importance the syllabus places on active, participatory learning.

The numbers presenting for this examination remain stable from year to year as they reflect the entire cohort of Junior Certificate students. The following table shows the number of candidates taking the subject in the past four years:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>
<b>Number of Candidates</b>	55082	55118	57659	58413

## 2. Performance of Candidates

A total of 55082 students sat the Junior Certificate Civic, Social and Political Education Examination in 2005. The following table shows the percentage of candidates achieving each grade in 2005, and in the previous three years:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>ABC</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>NG</b>	<b>EFNG</b>
2002	58413	23.9	39.5	23.3	86.7	9.2	2.6	1.4	0.2	4.2
2003	57659	24.2	38.2	24.4	86.8	9.4	2.4	1.1	0.2	3.8
2004	55118	23.5	37.1	24.7	85.3	10.8	2.6	1.1	0.2	3.9
<b>2005</b>	<b>55082</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>39.7</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>87.4</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>3.2</b>

The results in 2005 are in keeping with those of previous years. A slight increase in the ABC rate can be noted. The high ABC rate in this subject relates to the fact that this is a common level examination. It also relates to the amount of excellent work produced by candidates. 2005 also saw a slight decrease in the EFNG rate. This is welcome.

In spite of the overall good results in this examination, a worrying feature was noted by examiners in 2005. There was a two-fold increase in the instances where a candidate had done an Action Project on a topic outside of the Civic, Social and Political Education syllabus. Such Action Projects are most commonly based on health related issues. This will be elaborated upon later in the report.

Examiners also reported a small number of instances where the candidates had copied work from each other or from a 'master template'. It is important to note that the number of these instances is very small (less than 1%) and that the vast majority of examination RAPs reflected an impressive body of excellent work being done by candidates in this subject.

### **3. Analysis of Candidate Performance**

#### **3.1 Analysis of Candidate Performance in the Written Examination Paper**

The written paper accounts for 40% of the overall mark available in the examination - 80 marks out of 200 marks.

The written paper was generally well answered by candidates, though very few achieved full marks. Although the vast majority of candidates gained a grade of D+ on the written examination, examiners commented that marks were lost where candidates did not pay careful attention to the questions and did not answer the questions as asked. Instances of this will be pointed out in the following analysis of the responses.

A very small number of candidates presented for the written examination paper only and those found it very difficult to gain a D grade. In effect, they would have had to achieve a 100% score on the paper in order to reach a D grade overall.

#### **Section 1**

##### **Question 1**

This question asked candidates to match photographs of politicians with the title or position which each politician holds. Candidates did very well here, often scoring full marks. Some, however, wrote the name of the politician rather than the position, and therefore lost marks.

##### **Question 2.**

This question which linked a course concept with its meaning was answered very well, with most candidates scoring full marks. Examiners noted that where candidates did not get full marks, it was usually due to confusion between the concepts of Stewardship and Interdependence.

### **Question 3.**

In this question candidates were asked to match a political party with its leader. Relatively few scored full marks here. Gerry Adams, Bertie Ahern and Trevor Sargent were well known, while the other figures were not as well known.

### **Question 4.**

In this question candidates were asked to tick boxes. Most knew the meaning of ‘Tánaiste’ and could say where the Dáil and Seanad meet. However, many had problems with the numbers of Dáil constituencies and MEPs representing the republic of Ireland.

## **Section 2**

Section Two provides the candidates with stimulus-based questions addressing one or more of the seven course concepts. Candidates are asked to do three of the four questions presented. The sub-questions (a), (b), etc. are based on the stimulus and as they progress they become broader, demanding greater knowledge and understanding of the topic being examined. It is important that candidates take cognisance of the fact that the last few sub-questions, while staying focused on the question topic, broaden out from the given stimulus. In general, examiners noted that candidates utilised the stimulus well in the earlier sub-questions but in the later sub-questions occasionally failed to realise that a broader answer was required.

In each of the three questions of their choice, the vast majority of candidates attempted all sub-questions. This is good practice which is commendable.

### **Question 1. The 60th anniversary of the death of Anne Frank**

This question was a popular choice for candidates with the majority scoring well, although few students scored full marks.

(a) and (b) were well answered, using the stimulus provided.

(c) was very poorly answered. Only a minority of candidates could name the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with an even smaller number naming the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. A significant number of students left both parts of (c) blank. This is disappointing as work on Human Rights is fundamental to the CSPE course.

(d) was well answered on the whole, though some confusion arose with the wording of this question. Some candidates were unsure whether 'discrimination' related to the past (World War 2) or 'today' and whether 'Ireland' referred to 26 or 32 counties. This was accommodated in the Marking Scheme.

(e) was well answered with a range of actions being mentioned. However, some candidates did not read the questions carefully, and wrote on 'you' instead of 'your school'. This is an instance of marks lost where candidates did not pay careful attention to the question and did not answer the question as asked.

## **Question 2. Student Councils**

Many examiners commented that this was an accessible and appropriate topic.

(a) and (b) were well answered using the stimulus.

(c) Some confusion arose here as candidates misread the introduction to the question and thought they were being asked to set up the council rather than to campaign for it.

(d) When marks were lost here it was because candidates did not connect the slogan to the importance of the council, as asked in the question.

(e) was generally well answered with a wide range of issues being mentioned.

### **Question 3. Child Labour**

(a) and (b) were well answered using the stimulus.

(c) generally was not well answered as a lot of candidates did not realise that this question had moved away from relating directly to the stimulus.

(d) Again this was not well answered in general. Some of the responses were not in the remit of the 'Irish Government'. Examiners noted that a number of candidates failed to distinguish between 'I', 'my class', 'my community', 'my government', 'NGOs'. This is another instance of marks lost where candidates did not pay careful attention to the question and did not answer the question as asked.

(e) In general this was well answered. Many candidates availed of the opportunity to write about a range of actions.

### **Question 4. Trading Fairly**

Where candidates attempted this question, they scored high marks. They demonstrated a good awareness of issues surrounding Fair Trade and also some excellent ideas for the promotion of fairly traded goods.

(a), (b), (c) and (d) were well answered.

(e) Candidates lost marks in if they misinterpreted Fair Trade as a charity, and as a result, described fundraising activities.

## **Section 3**

Section Three is composed of open-ended or essay type questions. These questions allow candidates to address particular issues related to the course. They also provide candidates with the opportunity to use the learning they have gained from undertaking Action Projects. Candidates are asked to do one of the four questions presented.

Examiners noted that the spread of answering was good in 2005 with no one question proving to be more popular with candidates.

### **Question 1. Celebrate Earth Day**

(a) was well answered. Candidates produced some excellent posters. Marks were lost when candidates focussed too broadly on the environment, forgetting that the question was directed to 'Earth Day' itself.

(b) This section was reasonably well answered. Candidates were asked to explain why Earth Day was important and to give two reasons for getting involved. When candidates lost marks, it was because they did not answer the specific question but gave answers which tended to be quite vague, giving no concrete reasons.

(c) was quite well answered. Problems arose when candidates wrote too briefly and did not 'describe' as required by the question. They also lost marks when they wrote on an Action sited within the school, rather than in 'the 'community'. This is another instance of marks lost where candidates did not pay careful attention to the question and did not answer the question as asked.

### **Question 2. Save the Round Tower Campaign**

(a) was well answered. The majority of candidates who did this question seemed to have an interest in such planning issues in their local community.

(b) Most candidates answered in the letter format required. However, some candidates tended to get carried away with the objections and did not deal with the two developments as required by the question.

(c) was well answered. Candidates were well versed in a range of methods for peaceful protest.

### **Question 3. Mock Election**

This question was well answered, with candidates clearly showing their experience of carrying out a mock election.

(a) was well answered, with candidates coming up with very relevant and appropriate reasons why the mock election would benefit students throughout the school.

(b) In this question posters were well done on the whole. Candidates lost marks when 'encouragement' was missing, i.e. no reference to the actual election, or to the date and place of election.

(c) was very well answered, with good evidence of the types of committees required.

### **Question 4. A visit to a court house or prison**

A prison was the preferred choice for most candidates who took this question.

(a) was very well answered, reflecting the experience students have gained from carrying out an Action Project based on a visit.

(b) was poorly answered in general, especially by those candidates who sited their visit in a prison. Many missed the point that the questions were designed to elicit their understanding of the law.

(c) was generally well answered.

### **3.2 Conclusions on the Written Paper**

- The overall performance of candidates on the written paper was in line with previous years and, in general, was evidence of very successful work by candidates and their teachers.
- Examiners commented that in some sections of the paper marks were lost, not due to the difficulty of the questions, but rather where candidates did not pay careful attention to the question and did not answer the question as asked. This was apparent in a number of instances in the written paper, and these instances have been indicated above.
- This year examiners noted a tendency among some candidates to be unclear about the distinction between the concepts of Stewardship and Interdependence.
- It was also noted that many candidates were unsure about the number of Dáil constituencies and the number of MEPs representing the republic of Ireland.
- In 2005, in Section 2 of the paper, the vast majority of students attempted all sub-questions in each of the three questions of their choice. This is good practice which is commendable. However, they also noted that some candidates did not take cognisance of the fact that later sub-questions, while staying focused on the question topic, required a broader perspective.
- It was disappointing to note that only a minority of candidates could name the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Section 2, Question 1) with an even smaller number naming the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **3.3 Recommendations on the Written Paper**

- Candidates should read the questions carefully, and answer them as asked. For instance, when asked ‘what would YOU do?’, do not answer as if asked ‘what would YOUR SCHOOL do?’
- Candidates should understand the seven concepts upon which the course is based, and avoid confusion between concepts such as Stewardship and Interdependence.
- Candidates should take cognisance of the fact that in Section 2, while later sub-questions stay focused on the question topic, they move away from the given stimulus in that they require a broader answer.

## **4. The Report on an Action Project (RAP) and the Course-work Assessment Book (CWAB)**

### **4.1 General Comments**

Candidates are required to submit either a Course-work Assessment Book (CWAB) or a Report on an Action Project (RAP) as part of their final assessment. This accounts for up to 60% of the marks awarded. These elements of the assessment are designed to assess candidate's active involvement in a relevant CSPE topic.

In a RAP a candidate presents a detailed description of an Action Project that s/he has undertaken. This report must be written and presented in accordance with the format and procedures outlined in the official CSPE *Guidelines on Action Projects and their Assessment* produced by the Department of Education and Science.

The CWAB questions candidates on a number of areas related to one module of work that they have completed as part of the CSPE Course. The completion of Action Projects is the central component and is a compulsory part of the module.

In 2005, a number of excellent examples of RAPs and CWABs were presented by candidates. Along with the written paper they gave an insight into the candidates' understanding of the subject, the skills they had developed and the obvious enjoyment that they got from the course. Examiners commented on the high standard of RAPs and CWABs in 2005.

A detailed and comprehensive guide to RAPs and CWABs and their assessment was first outlined in the official CSPE Guidelines produced by the Department of Education and Science. Copies of these guidelines were sent to each school in 1998. In June 2005, Circular M13/05, announcing the publication of revised Guidelines, was sent to all schools by the Department of Education and Science (DES). These new revised Guidelines recently have been issued to schools and provide continued support for teachers preparing candidates for assessment. These guidelines set out what candidates should include and what they should avoid when completing RAPs and CWABs. These guidelines are available to download at

[http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/jc\\_cspe\\_guide.pdf](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/jc_cspe_guide.pdf) or from the NCCA website at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

In addition, Exemplars of Standard with sample/model answers were produced by the DES and circulated to schools, in both 2001 and 2002. Circular Letters S71/00 and S32/00 provided further clarification around what is encouraged and what to be avoided in the Action Project.

## **4.2 Issues of concern**

While the vast majority of RAPs and CWABs submitted in 2005 were of a high standard, a number of serious issues continue to recur in the marking of these components of the CSPE examination. It is evident from a minority of candidates' submissions that a lack of understanding of the principles underpinning both the choice of Action Project and the Completion of the RAP and CWAB still exists. The immediate result of this is that candidates continue to receive low marks for their RAP/CWAB because they fail to follow the procedures as outlined in the official guidelines and/or they fail to follow the correct format.

The failure to follow official guidelines is evident mainly in two scenarios which come to the notice of examiners each year. The first of these occurs where candidates have undertaken Action Projects which are outside the parameters of the CSPE syllabus. The second occurs where candidates present sections of RAPs or CWABs which are not their own individual work, but which are identical to those presented by other candidates. Other irregularities also exist and these are elaborated upon below.

### ***Action Projects outside the parameters of the CSPE syllabus***

In 2005 there were 1,756 recorded cases of action projects which fell outside the parameters of the CSPE syllabus. While this represents a small minority of the cohort (3.2%), it is an increase on 2004 when 1.4% was recorded. This is a worrying trend. It is also a great pity that teachers and their students put such time and effort into such

projects only to lose marks in Section 4 (Summary of information) and possibly Section 5 (Reflections) of the RAP and in Sections 4.4 and 5 of the CWAB.

Teachers of CSPE and their students should clearly understand that the Action Project/s referred to in either the CWAB or RAP should have the following characteristics:

- be based on one or more of the course concepts
  
- be consistent with the human rights and social responsibility perspective of CSPE
  
- have an action component
  
- enable and encourage the student to:
  - (a) engage / communicate with other people
  - (b) practice the skills associated with Civic, Social and Political Education
  - (c) develop his / her knowledge and understanding of the subject of the action
  
- include a reflection and evaluation dimension.

1,756 candidates in 2005 presented RAPs or referred to Action Projects within the CWAB that did not meet the criteria outlined above. The most common of these Action Projects are in the health related area and are concerned with subjects like Smoking, Drinking, Drugs, Child Care, Healthy Eating, Healthy Lifestyle, or diseases of all kinds. These topics are outside the parameters of the CSPE syllabus when they focus on personal health aspects rather than on, for example, the effects on community or make links with Law. For example, pages consisting of lists of different types of drugs and their side effects or the impact of diseases on the individual, do not meet the required criteria for an Action Project, and therefore lose marks. Where these topics focus on the effects on a community or make links with the law, and are clearly allied to one or more of the concepts of CSPE, they are within the

parameters of the syllabus. This distinction has been made explicit in guidelines sent to schools, and it is essential that teachers refer to those guidelines and that they and their students are clear in their understanding of them.

Where a candidate's Action Project is concerned with topics that are outside the parameters of the syllabus, marks are allocated to sections 1, 2 and 3 in the RAP and Sections 1, 2 and 3 in the CWAB to reflect the action in which the candidate engaged but marks are likely to be lost in sections 4 and 5 of the RAP and in sections 4 and 5 of the CWAB.

### ***RAPs or CWABs which are not a candidate's own individual work***

In 2005, 417 cases of this irregularity were noted by examiners. While this is a very small minority of the cohort of candidates, it is a serious breach of regulations. It also prevents students from engaging with the subject in a way which maximizes the participatory citizenship at the heart of CSPE.

### ***Other irregularities***

- A very small number of candidates included inserts in order to describe their Action Project. It is clearly stated on page 1 of the RAP that 'Candidates must not include any additional material or insertions in their report'.
- Some reports were word-processed. All pro-forma RAP booklets and CWABS should be handwritten, as stated in the circulars which the State Examinations issue to schools each year.
- A very small number of candidates submitted more than one report. They are required to submit one report only.

- There is some evidence that a minority of candidates are unaware that Action Projects are not the traditional project with which most students and teachers are familiar, i.e. a scrap book in which students either rewrite or place information primarily taken from printed materials or downloaded from the Internet on a particular topic. Reports confined to such activities lose marks in the ‘Activities Undertaken’ (Section 3 of the RAP) and in Section 4 of the CWAB.

### *Other issues of concern*

- In a small number of cases, examiners reported the use of rude and vulgar language and inappropriate comment.
- In a very small number of cases, examiners reported difficulty in reading the RAPs as some of them were in a dirty, torn state or written in pencil which had faded.

### **4.3 Candidate Performance in the Reports on an Action Project (RAP)**

In 2005 almost all candidates presented a RAP for assessment. The variety of Action Projects undertaken was impressive. The range of topics encountered included mock elections, surveys of all kinds, environment issues (including recycling and waste management, global warming, tree planting, tidy towns, animal rights), raising awareness around refugees and asylum seekers, disability, the Travelling Community, homelessness, visits to the Dáil, courts, prisons, landfill sites, centres for elderly people, visits from the ISPC, Simon, Bóthar, T.D.s, an Garda, Amnesty International, an investigation into the need for a community play park, revamping the local youth club, organising and running the school sports day, road safety, fundraising for all types of organisations, raising awareness of fair trade, very topical issues such as the smoking ban and the tragedies of Beslan and the Tsunami. There was clear evidence that candidates are doing interesting work.

Examiners noted instances where candidates either failed to complete the different sections of the RAP or confused the type of information required to complete each section. These candidates lost marks unnecessarily. Those who carefully followed the pro-forma booklets, remained firmly on track.

Examiners also emphasised the fact that candidates who were involved in an Action Project as defined in CSPE guidelines and circulars scored high marks, no matter how complicated or simple this Action Project was.

### **Section 1. My Action Project**

Most candidates gave appropriate titles to their RAPs. However, some titles were much too broad. For instance, some candidates gave ‘Democracy’ as the title of their RAP when, in fact, the Action Project was a visit to the Dáil. In other words, those who lost marks here did so generally because they failed to indicate in the title the type of action undertaken in the Action Project.

### **Section 2 Introduction**

Candidates are required to tick the concept on which the Action Project was based, explain the link, and give one reason as to why they had chosen this particular Action Project.

Most candidates gave appropriate answers. However, some ticked most, if not all, of the concepts in the hope of hitting the right connection. This may indicate that they had not made the link with the course concepts while actually undertaking the project. Making this link with the CSPE course concepts is an essential step in the process of undertaking an Action Project. Teachers and candidates should make this link with course concept(s) explicit before undertaking an Action Project.

In this section, explanations were weak sometimes as they restated what the project was about or explained the actual concept.

### Section 3      **Activities Undertaken**

There are four parts to this section of the RAP.

(a) This part asks candidates to tick the people communicated with during the Action Project, and then to explain why they were communicated with and why they were involved. The majority of candidates did as required but some ticked many boxes and ran out of space trying to explain the reasons for communication and involvement. Where a number of people/groups have been communicated with and involved, it is sufficient for full marks to explain the link with one person/group only.

(b) The second part asks the candidates to list and briefly describe the different activities undertaken during the course of the Action Project. Most students did this. Those who provided only a list of activities without a description lost marks. This is an example of candidates losing marks by not following the requirements of the pro-forma booklet carefully.

(c) The third part asks candidates to describe in detail one particular task they had done.

While the majority of candidates completed this section well, there were some poor answers. The main weaknesses were:

- the accounts provided were too short
- the accounts provided were incomplete
- candidates did not focus on a detailed account of ONE task but rather gave an account of a number of small tasks. The simplest task, clearly explained, is all that is required here
- candidates lost marks for not focusing on ‘what *I* did’ (rather than ‘we’)
- candidates lost marks for only writing out the actual letter sent or the survey questions used
- some candidates did not score at all in this sub-section as their activity was not listed in (b).

(d) The third part asks candidates to identify two skills and to describe how they were applied to the particular task undertaken. Explicit reference to skills is required here. A number of candidates did not link the skills to the activity described in part (c), or failed to clearly describe how the particular skills had been used. There is a tendency to discuss the skills' application 'with whom' rather than 'how'. Some candidates appeared unsure of the definition of 'skills', and consequently could not explain how they were applied. In such cases, candidates repeated descriptions of the task. In other cases, candidates suggested that an emotion such as happiness was a skill.

Examiners noted that this is an area of the course where it is clear that a number of candidates do not appear to be aware of the skills that they use and develop over the duration of the course. It is an aspect of the course which needs particular attention.

#### **Section 4                      Summary of Information**

In this section candidates are asked to give five pieces of information or facts that they found out about the subject of the Action Project. The subject of the action is the CSPE concept, issue or theme upon which the students base their Action Project.

In the majority of cases, candidates presented five distinct facts either numbered or bulleted. However, a number of candidates failed to clearly list what they actually found out about the subject of the Action project. For instance, a candidate may have written '*I learned all about how an election is run*' but did not identify the different elements which led to such an overall conclusion. In other cases, the results of surveys were sometimes presented as the only pieces of information in this section. A significant number of results are required for full marks as two survey results are combined as one fact in the Marking Scheme.

It is important to emphasise what is required in this section. The subject of an Action Project must be linked to one of the course concepts. For instance, where the action involved in the project was a visit to the Zoo, the subject is not the visit but rather e.g. a study of animal rights which is linked to the concept of Stewardship. In this case, information such as the number of lions in the Zoo is not relevant to Section 4

whereas information about the role of the Zoo in the area of animal rights is relevant. This is the type of information or facts which the section requires for candidates to gain marks.

Another example of this lack of clarity in candidates' responses to Section 4 occurred in accounts of fundraising actions undertaken by students. In some cases, these particular actions were not grounded within a CSPE context. As stated in the previous paragraph, the fundraising event, or indeed any action, is merely a method of exploring a concept, issue or theme from a CSPE perspective. The subject of the action is the CSPE concept, issue or theme which candidates were investigating rather than e.g. the amount of money collected.

Examiners also reported misplaced answers in Section 4. This occurred when candidates included thoughts and ideas which rightly belonged in Section 5. Again, this is an instance of candidates straying from the guidance of the pro-forma booklet.

## **Section 5                      Reflections**

In this section students are asked to reflect on the whole Action Project experience, to give their own thoughts and to explain why they think this way.

Examiners noted an overall improvement in the standard of responses in this section of the RAP. Many candidates expressed their thoughts and experiences very well, giving lots of recommendations with accompanying reasons.

On the other hand, a minority of candidates gave a summary of the entire project as their "experiences" and used the words 'I learned' rather than 'I think'. A number of candidates wrote reflections without reasons. This is another area where candidates strayed from the guidance of the pro-forma booklet and marks were lost unnecessarily.

#### **4.4 Conclusions on the RAP**

- Examiners commented on the high quality of RAPs in 2005.
- Candidates who followed carefully the official guidelines on Action Projects as stipulated by the Department of Education and Science scored high marks.
- Candidates who were involved in an Action Project as defined in CSPE scored high marks, no matter how simple or complicated this Action Project.
- A significant number of candidates (1,756) lost marks because the subject of their Action Projects was outside the parameters of the CSPE syllabus.
- Some candidates did not complete different sections of the report as required and confused the type of information required to complete each section, and so lost marks.
- Where candidates carefully followed the Pro-Forma booklets, they remained firmly on track, did not confuse the information required in each section and did not omit vital sections.
- Examiners noted that a number of candidates are not aware of the skills related to CSPE that they use and develop over the duration of the course. For example in the Activities Undertaken section of the RAP some candidates struggled, particularly where they were asked to identify and describe how they applied particular skills to the task they had undertaken.
- Some candidates confused Summary and Reflection.
- Marginal pieces of information/facts outside the CSPE syllabus were presented in the Summary.

- Examiners noted an overall improvement in the standard of responses in the Reflections section of the RAP. Many candidates expressed their thoughts and experiences very well, giving lots of recommendations with accompanying reasons. In a minority of cases, some Reflections were made, but did not have accompanying reasons. Marks were lost as a result.
- Examiners reported 417 (0.7%) instances where candidates appeared to copy each other's work or copy from a master template.
- There is some evidence that a minority of candidates are unaware that Action Projects are not the traditional scrap-book type project.

#### **4.5 Recommendations on the RAP**

- All teachers of CSPE should be familiar with the official guidelines which outline in great detail the different sections of the RAP. They also indicate what a candidate is expected to write or record in each of these sections. Hard copies of this handbook have been sent to all schools. They are also available to download at [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/jc\\_cspe\\_guide.pdf](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/jc_cspe_guide.pdf) or from the NCCA website at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).
- All teachers of CSPE should be familiar with the syllabus, previous marking schemes, and the circulars sent to schools each year by the State Examinations Commission.
- Making an explicit link with the CSPE course concepts is an essential step in the process of undertaking an Action Project. Teachers and students should make this link with course concept(s) explicit before designing and undertaking an Action Project.
- An Action Project around topics involving health, drugs, smoking, alcohol abuse, diseases and healthy eating/lifestyle should only be undertaken if the

link with a CSPE course concept(s) is clearly understood by the candidates and that this link can be made explicit. If this cannot be done, the Action Project is likely to be outside the parameters of the CSPE syllabus.

- Understanding of the skills used and developed over the duration of the course must be strengthened. It is an aspect of the course which needs particular attention. Teachers should refer to the guidelines for support in this regard.
- All candidates should carefully follow the guide provided by the pro-forma booklets for the RAP and provide the correct information in the correct section of the booklet.
- No section of the pro-forma booklet should be left incomplete or undeveloped.
- A RAP must be a candidate's own individual work. Any contravention of this is a serious breach of regulations. On foot of any such breach of regulations, penalties may be incurred which include the withholding of candidates' results in CSPE by the State Examinations Commission. This contravention also prevents candidates from engaging with the subject in a way which maximizes the participatory citizenship at the heart of CSPE.
- Candidates must not include any additional material or insertions in their report.
- All pro-forma RAP booklets and CWABS should be handwritten, as stated in the circulars which the State Examinations issue to schools each year.
- Candidates should submit one report only.

#### **4.6 Candidate Performance in the Coursework Assessment Book (CWAB)**

The Coursework Assessment Book (CWAB) reflects a module of work. A module is a significant piece of work carried out over a 12 to 15 week period, based on **one** of the course concepts and includes a report of an Action Project.

The CWAB is designed as an educational tool in itself. The 'Account of One Class' page is structured to enable students to keep a record of their weekly CSPE class. This record encourages students to look, not only at the information learned, but also to analyse the process itself and to develop their skills of reflection.

One module only is presented for examination, with reports on three distinct classes and a two page report on the Action Project.

Module topics presented in 2005 included Human Rights, Stewardship, Local Community themes, Democracy, Law and Interdependence.

Examiners noted that when the structure of the CWAB and the guidelines for writing up the CWAB were followed, students across the ability range scored well.

Examiners commented that the CWAB mode of assessment appears to benefit candidates with lower literacy skills.

However, in 2005 a number of candidates presented CWABs which scored badly.

The reasons for low marks included:

- using the Action Project (e.g. 'Our Mock Election') to complete every section, even though the action is merely a component of the module and actually has its own section in the CWAB (Section 4)
- the three classes in Section 3, while each relating to the broad concept chosen, need to reflect quite distinct, independent aspects of the topic
- the description of each of these classes (part b) frequently included the restating of the class topic and / or knowledge learned and / or a vague 'we discussed' rather than a step by step account of the methodology used

- naming, but not describing, one activity undertaken as part of the action project in Section 4.3
- repetition of facts, opinions, skills and methods from section to section
- not reflecting the theme of the chosen module in all sections of the CWAB
- choosing topics which are outside the CSPE syllabus.

Examiners noted that teachers need to be familiar with what is required in each section and each part of each section. They also noted that candidates need thorough guidance in their understanding of what is required.

### **Section 1      Title**

Most titles presented were appropriate to the module. However, some titles were not relevant to the actual modules, or were either too narrow or too broad for work spanning 12-15 weeks. For example, ‘Democracy’ is a suitable title for a module, but ‘Our Mock Election’ is not. The mock election is the Action Project and thus forms a part of the overall module.

### **Section 2      What my Course Work module was about**

This section requires candidates to mention five different components of the module. In general, candidates scored well here, but some did not give five clear components.

### **Section 3      Things I have done – class one, class two, class three**

Candidates who did well in this section described three distinct classes related to the module and had information not repeated anywhere else in the booklet. They also gave a step by step account of the methodology used in (b).

(a) *‘The main topic of this class was ..’*

This was generally well done.

(b) *'This is a short description of what took place during the class.'*

Unfortunately, quite a number of candidates lost marks in this part of the section. They often repeated the name of the topic here and/or merely said 'we discussed' a topic without saying *how* they discussed it. Candidates need to give the details of what they did to 'discuss'. However, some candidates gave good answers, e.g. 'we went to the hall and sat in a semi-circle facing one blank wall. The teacher put up six pictures of different people and places and six classmates read out about each one and how the right to vote was involved in each one and then we went back to class to discuss it'.

(c) *'One important thing I learned from this class is'*

This was well answered by most candidates, although some offered vague answers. For example, 'I learned all about different laws and about human rights' is lacking in specific detail.

(d) *'What made this class particularly interesting for me'*

This attracted high marks when the candidates gave her/his opinion. For example, 'What made it interesting was looking at the pictures and discussing ourselves about what the people's needs and wants were, and not the teacher telling us.' Students lost marks if they merely repeated the learning of (c).

#### **Section 4      Things I have done - Action Project.**

**N.B.    Candidates have to complete *all* four parts of Section 4 to receive any marks for the section. Section 4 is compulsory.**

4.1      *'The TITLE of the Action Project ...'*

This was well done in general.

4.2      *'One reason I/We did this ...'*

This was also well done.

#### 4.3 *'One activity I/we took part in during this Action Project'*

This was often poorly attempted. Students didn't seem to realise that a description of the activity or task undertaken is required here. For example, 'We paid a visit to the recycling centre in St. ... Park. The bulk of their recycling is mainly natural materials such as grass, Christmas trees and hedge clippings', scored low marks. But 'I was part of the question committee. I prepared a suitable question for EPIC. I roughed it out with my teacher in one of my CSPE classes. When the teacher said it was o.k., I typed it up on the computer and asked it on the day', scored well.

#### 4.5 (b) *'A description of how I used this skill'*

This was often a repetition of the activity in 4.3 or of the learning in 4.4. As in the RAP, the students had difficulty in giving details of how the skill was used.

### **Section 5                      Something I have to say**

It is important that candidates state the actual issue here. Some lost marks if the issue was not appropriate to the module. Examiners noted that this section was well answered in 2005, as in previous years. The candidates made good use of the freedom to express themselves, and were often passionate about the chosen topic.

#### 4.7 Conclusions on the CWAB

- Examiners noted that when the structure of the CWAB and the guidelines for writing up the CWAB were followed, candidates across the ability range scored well.
- Examiners commented that the CWAB mode of assessment appears to benefit candidates with lower literacy skills.
- Examiners noted that Section 5, Something I have to Say, was well answered in 2005, as in previous years. The candidates made good use of the freedom to express themselves.
- Reasons for loss of marks by some candidates included:
  - Using the Action Project to complete every section, even though the action is merely a component of the module and actually has its own section in the CWAB (Section 4)
  - Not reflecting distinct, independent aspects of the topic in the three classes in Section 3
  - In part (b) Section 3 restating the class topic rather than giving a step by step account of the methodology used
  - Naming, but not describing, one activity undertaken as part of the Action Project in Section 4.3
  - Repeating facts, opinions, skills and methods from section to section
  - not reflecting the theme of the chosen module in all sections of the CWAB

It is important to note that the tendency to choose Action Projects which are outside the parameters of the CSPE course is far less evident when candidates undertake a CWAB rather than a RAP.

#### **4.8 Recommendations on the CWAB**

- All teachers of CSPE should be familiar with the official guidelines which outline in great detail the different sections of the CWAB. They also indicate what a candidate is expected to write or record in each of these sections. Hard copies of this handbook have been sent to all schools. They are also available to download at [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/jc\\_cspe\\_guide.pdf](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/jc_cspe_guide.pdf) or from the NCCA website at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).
- All teachers of CSPE should be familiar with the syllabus, previous marking schemes, and the circulars sent to schools each year by the State Examinations Commission.
- Examiners noted that teachers should be familiar with what is required in each section and each part of each section of the CWAB. They also noted that candidates should receive thorough guidance in their understanding of what is required.
- Making an explicit link with the CSPE course concepts is an essential step in the process of undertaking an Action Project. Teachers and students should make this link with course concept(s) explicit before designing and undertaking an Action Project.
- Understanding of the skills used and developed over the duration of the course should be strengthened. It is an aspect of the course which needs particular attention. Teachers should refer to the guidelines for support in this regard.

## Appendix: Exemplars of Standard

### 1. Written Paper

The following is a selection of answers to the questions in Section 3 of the written paper. They indicate the standard required.

#### Section 3 Question 1: Celebrate Earth Day

**(b) Write a short article for your school magazine explaining why Earth Day is important. In your article mention at least TWO different reasons for getting involved.**

Candidate wrote:

*Students: The earth's future rests in your hands. This year World Earth Day falls on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April and I encourage you to get involved in this very worthy cause because, remember, you are the World's future and whenever you drop a piece of litter you are only destroying **your** planet. The earth was given to you by your parents and we will eventually give it to our children so let's give them something that is clean and that we can be proud of. Another reason to celebrate World Earth day is that a cleaner, healthier environment is better for us all. Just imagine: London without a halo of smoke, no more asthma from breathing foul air and no more polluted streams. It's a dream. Only you can make it real. So, go on get involved, celebrate World Earth Day.*

Mark awarded: 6

**Comment:** This answer scored full marks as it explains why one should get involved, contains two reasons and has sufficient detail to merit the full overall mark.

**Question 2: Save the Round Tower Campaign**

- (b) Write a letter to your local authority objecting to the proposed development. In your letter suggest TWO other development proposals for this important site. Explain how these developments will be good for the community.**

Candidate wrote:

25, Main St,  
X.....,  
Co. Dublin.  
5<sup>th</sup> June 2005

*Dear Councillor,*

*I am really opposed to the proposed plans for the development of shops and buildings in my area. These plans include knocking down the Round Tower, which has survived the attack of the Vikings! I am sure that there are better ways in which the area could develop. Instead of shops and businesses, would it not be more useful to the community and the environment if we could set up a park. This park would mean that the local children would not have to play football in the middle of the roads and the old or ill people would have a place in which they could take some gentle exercise, without being in danger of cars. In this age where obesity is becoming a very big problem, it would be very useful to create an area in which exercise is welcomed. Another suggestion for the area is a Heritage Centre. The Round Tower is of historical interest and would attract a great number of tourists. These suggestions would be good for the community as a whole and not just the business people. This way, the Round Tower, an artefact from ancient Christian Ireland is saved. I do hope that you will listen to the concerns of your constituents.*

*Is mise le meas,  
Deirdre.*

Mark awarded: 6

**Comment:** This answer scored full marks as it is written in a letter format, gives an objection, has two development proposals, explains how these would be good for the community and has sufficient detail to merit the full overall mark.

**Question 3: Mock Election**

**Imagine that an election is taking place in Ireland at the moment. You and your classmates have suggested that your CSPE class hold a mock election for the whole school.**

**(a) Suggest TWO reasons why this mock election would be a good Action Project for all the students in the school.**

Candidate wrote:

*A lot of teenagers when given the right to vote at the legal age of 18 are not educated enough and are not familiar with how to vote and how not to have a spoiled vote. This would educate the students so that when they reach the age of 18 and are given the choice to vote they will do it wisely and correctly as educated young voters so we actually will have people who have a clue having a say in our country.*

*A lot of young people find politics boring as they are never really given a chance to get involved. So having this mock election could encourage people to get involved and give them a chance to get interested in politics and elections so that when they are able to vote they will use their right.*

Mark awarded: 6

**Comment:** This answer scored full marks as it gives two reasons and has sufficient detail to merit the full overall mark.

**Question 4: A visit to a Court House or a Prison**

**(b) Write THREE questions that you would ask your guide on the visit in order to develop your understanding of the law in Ireland.**

Candidate wrote:

*Three questions I would ask are:*

*At what age can a person be called for jury duty?*

*Do you have to do jury duty if you are called?*

*How many judges sit at each of the different courts?*

(Court House visit)

*I would ask my guide these questions:*

*What's the longest prison sentence that a criminal can get?*

*Is every prisoner entitled to parole?*

*If a prisoner commits a crime in prison does he have to go to court again and get a new sentence?*

(Prison visit)

Mark awarded: 6

**Comment:** These questions scored full marks as they are clearly trying to develop an understanding of the law in the context of the particular visit.

## 2. Report on an Action Project

**Section 3 (c) Give a detailed account of ONE particular task/activity from the list in Section (b) that YOU undertook as part of the Action Project.**

Candidate wrote:

*As part of the Action Project we divided into groups and I was part of the questionnaire committee. I looked in the library and on the internet for sample questionnaires and based my questionnaire on these. I then picked my questions carefully from a list I had made up. We discussed the questions we would use in our group and I made a questionnaire with the questions and space for people's answers. We made sure that the questions needed only a yes or a no answer. We also had questions that gave a number of answers for people to choose from. We then photocopied the sheets and handed them out around the school making sure we had a mixture of age groups. When they were all collected we wrote the results out and posted them around the school. Finally we wrote out a simple introduction about the questionnaire to inform people what it was about. When we had completed all our work, we thanked all those in helping with the questionnaire.*

Mark awarded: 15

**Comment:** This account scored full marks as it met the requirements of the marking scheme: 'a very good description of ONE particular task/activity'

**Section 3 (d) Describe how YOU applied at least TWO SKILLS when undertaking the activity described in part (c).**

*I improved my computer skills while typing in the questions for the questionnaire. I learned how to use different tools on the computer such as Wordart, Clipart and bold print. These helped to give a clear and good layout to the questionnaire.*

*I used my communication skills to communicate with a number of people while doing this Action Project. Firstly, I had to ask the other members of my group for advice on the questions to include in the questionnaire. I then practised my introduction and questions on my class to see if any changes needed to be made. Next I asked my teacher to take a quick look at the questions. Finally, I discussed with my group when and where we would carry out the survey.*

Mark awarded: 15

**Comment:** This student has clearly identified two skills and described how they were applied in carrying out the task in (c). This section scored full marks.

**Section 4. Summary of Information: Give FIVE pieces of information or facts that you found out about the subject<sup>1</sup> of the Action Project.**

The candidate wrote:

*During the Action Project I learned many facts. These are five:*

- (1) The people elected to the Dáil are called T.D.s (Teachtaí Dála) and there are 166 T.D.s altogether.*
- (2) Ireland is divided up into 43 constituencies. A constituency is a area of the country that elects a certain number of TDs based on the size of the population in the area.*
- (3) The Irish constitution is known as Bunreacht na hÉireann.*
- (4) The word Democracy comes from two Greek words: Demos- meaning 'people' and Kratio meaning 'to rule'.*
- (5) People over 18 years are only allowed to vote if their names are on the 'Register of Electors.'*

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<sup>1</sup> [Note: the “**subject**” of the Action Project is the concept, issue or theme of the Action Project indicated in the Title and the CSPE concept ticked.]

Mark awarded: 30

**Comment:**

This section scored full marks as it has five 'valid facts relevant to the subject of the Action Project', as required by the marking scheme. (Note: the title of this candidate's Action Project was 'Organising a Visit to the Dáil.' The concept ticked on page 2 of the RAP was 'Democracy'.)

Vague 'facts' submitted by candidates in different reports included:

*'I now know what P.R. is'*

*'I now know what happens when the President is inaugurated.'*

*'I learned what WSPCA stands for.'*

*'I learned all about the work of the Gardai.'*

These cannot score as they are lacking information.

**Section 5: Reflections: Think back on the different experiences you had while doing your Action Project. Give your OWN thoughts on these experiences and state the reasons why YOU think this way.**

Candidate wrote:

*From this experience in organising the student council elections, I feel that the Student Council has a very important and vital role to play in the school as it gives the students a voice which will actually be listened to and get their point across. Without this the school would be a complete dictatorship and I feel that the Student Council brings more enjoyment to school life.*

*The most important thing to me in this project is highlighting the importance of a responsible vote from all ages. I believe that students need to realise that if they vote for a friend just because they are their friend, but who might not actually be the best person for the job of representing them that they are losing their voice in the school.*

*I also believe that the Student Council is a group who works well. I believe this because the Student Council is something which both students and teachers are glad to have. This group gives staff and pupils a common ground and helps disputes to be managed better.*

*I recommend that all schools should have a student council because it can be so beneficial to school life. It brings about togetherness and peace among the school community and I believe that to have this effect on all schools in the country would be a great achievement.*

*I feel that all schools deserve to run as smoothly and work as well as my own.*

Mark awarded: 30

**Comment:** The marking scheme asks that ‘a student should show his/her own thinking/reflection on the Action Project undertaken and should outline the reasons why s/he thinks this way, within the context of the Action Project.’ Students are required to have 3 reflections with 3 reasons and to have sufficient detail to merit an overall mark of up to 12. This reflection clearly meets these requirements. It scored full marks.

However, the following reflection did not score full marks.

*I enjoyed doing this Action Project. I really enjoyed the video we were shown. It showed dogs coming into the centre in a terrible state. That was very sad. After a while they were really happy, joyful and friendly. It was great to see all the volunteers helping the animals. I think it is a shame that Paws have to depend on the public for donations. The government should support them in their great work. I really enjoyed working with the other students in my group.*

Mark awarded: 15

**Comment:** While it has three reflections, it does not have three reasons and merited ‘fair’ for the overall mark. It scored 15 marks in total.

### **3. Course Work Assessment Booklet**

#### **Section 1: Title**

This section shows what the entire module is about. Therefore ‘Democracy’ is suitable, but ‘A visit to the Dáil’ is not. Likewise, any of the other six concepts could be used as a title. Issues, such as Racism, are also suitable modules.

#### **Section 2: What my course-work module was about...**

Candidate wrote:

*The class discussed the need for rules and what everyday life would be like if there were no rules. We also made a list of rules and laws that we know of. We also learned about the different courts and what court cases they deal with. We watched a video called ‘Twelve Angry Men’. We examined law breaking by watching a video of ‘Crimeline’ and we took notes and made statistics on what we saw. As our Action Project we invited a Garda in to speak to our class about enforcement. We got to ask him questions and he explained to us about the life and job of a garda. We read poems written by a person in prison and we learned about how he felt.*

Mark awarded: 7

Comment: The marking scheme requires five different components of the course-work module for full marks. Since this description contains at least four distinct classes and names the Action Project undertaken as part of the module, it clearly merits full marks.

#### **Section 3: Things I have done**

##### Sample 1

(a) The main topic of this class was:

*'Fair Trade'*

(b) This is a short description of what took place during this class...

*'We watched a video on Fair Trade and filled in a work sheet in class. We discussed the issue that the growers in the third world countries do not get paid enough.'*

**Comment:** This description scored full marks as it gave a clear description of what actually happened in the class. (video, work sheet, discussed)

### Sample 2

(a) The main topic of this class was:

*'We discussed waste management in Ireland'*

(b) This is a short description of what took place during this class...

*'We had a speaker into our class and we discussed about how a wormery works and how it fertilises your plants and composts your rubbish.'*

**Comment:** This description scored 3/8 marks. It says that the class had a discussion, thus repeating the title. It informs us of the subject of the class discussion but does not give details of how the discussion was organised - of what actually happened in the class.

## **Section 4: An Account of Action Project for this course-work module.**

### Sample 1

(4.1) Title

*'Organising a visit to the Dáil'*

(4.3) One activity I/we took part in was...

*'I was part of the transport committee. We contacted numerous bus companies and asked about availability and prices. We choose the most reasonable price and gathered the money to pay for the bus.'*

**Comment:** This answer merited full marks as it clearly shows the steps of the particular task.

### Sample 2

(4.1) Title

*'Crime Survey of our local area'*

(4.3) One activity I/we took part in was...

*'I learned how to brainstorm and we put some questions up on the board that we would ask in the survey.'*

**Comment:** This answer scored 4/8 marks. It does not have enough detail about the task of devising the actual questions for the survey.

(4.5)

### Sample 1

(a) One skill I used while doing this Action Project

*'Letter writing'*

(b) A description of how I used this skill in my Action Project

*'I learned how to write a formal letter. I learned that I that I had to put two addresses. The first one is my address and that had to be in the top right hand corner. Underneath, at the left hand corner is the person I am writing to. I learned that the writing had to be blocked. I learned how to begin and end a letter. I learned how to address an envelope. That writing also had to be blocked. I also learned that it was necessary to practise writing the letter because I didn't get it right the first time.'*

**Comment:** This section scored full marks as it clearly shows how the skill was used.

### Sample 2

(a) One skill I used while doing this Action Project

*'Using the internet'*

(b) A description of how I used this skill in my Action Project

*'I went onto the internet and looked at different bus timetables to get an idea of what times the buses would be running and where. I gathered the information and brought it back to the class. I informed my class mates and teacher of the information I had gathered.'*

**Comment:** This answer did not score any marks as it is not to the point: it does not show how the student applied the skill of using the internet.

### Section 5

(5.1) One issue I feel strongly about or found interesting from this course-work module is...

*'The importance of people voting when they have the right'*

(5.2) I feel strongly about or found this issue interesting because...

*'Over the centuries so many people have died fighting for the right to elect governments to govern for the people not for themselves. This is called democracy and should not be taken for granted.'*

(5.3) What I can do about it or what I think can be done about it...

*'Once I reach the age of 18 I will exercise my right to vote at every opportunity. I initially thought that a fine should be imposed if a citizen fails to vote because we are very lucky to have this right. In developing countries still today people are still fighting for their right to vote. However I now realise that choosing not to vote is also a right allowed by democracy.'*

**Comment:** This section scored full marks as the student clearly had an opinion and a possible solution about a particular issue pertinent to the module of work entitled 'Democracy'.