Report on the 2012 WACE examination in
English as an Additional Language or Dialect Stage 3

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees from all examination components
2012	914	18
2011	1033	13
2010	896	8
2009	758	8

Summary

The practical examination comprised 15 minutes preparation time and 10-12 minutes speaking time with two examiners. Overseas candidates were assessed using Centra technology at SIDE. The percentage mean of the practical examination was 65.77% which is slightly higher than the 2011 percentage mean. The minimum percentage for the practical examination was 16.04% and the maximum percentage was 100.00%. The standard deviation was 15.20%.

The written examination comprised three sections: Listening; Reading and Viewing; Writing; totalling 2 hours and 30 minutes. The examination was of appropriate difficulty with a percentage mean of 61.11% which is higher than the percentage mean of 60.71% in 2011. The percentage standard deviation of 11.86% indicates that the examination was a good discriminator of candidate ability. The minimum percentage for the written examination was 19.33% and the maximum percentage was 90.00%, indicating a good range of marks allocated. The percentage means for sections one, two and three were 62.39%, 61.32% and 59.67% respectively. Statistics provided indicate consistency between the questions within the sections of the paper although it is noted that questions 4 and 5 (worth 2 marks each) scored a significant difference in the number of candidate attempts, with only 880 of 914 candidates attempting these questions.

The standard reflected in the examination by this candidature was high.

General comments

Practical examination

The performance of candidates in the practical examination was competent. Most candidates handled part B, the picture description, with ease and were able to address questions in part C relating to course content. Overseas candidates frequently had difficulty with part C due to text choices for Unit 3A Australia as a Cultural Community. The texts chosen did not always relate to Australia.

Advice for candidates

- Be able to discuss more than one text and to name the text and its author/director as well as the main characters.
- Study a range of texts such as feature articles, novels and films which exemplify language and empowerment, not just spoken texts.
- In part C, link chosen topics/issues to the texts and provide examples from the text in support of any argument.
- When discussing language and empowerment avoid simply naming techniques, provide examples of the technique and be able to explain how the technique works to persuade the audience/reader. Be aware that you could be asked to apply your own experience to a topic/issue being discussed.

Advice for teachers
- Text choices for Unit 3A Australia as a Cultural Community, must relate to Australia. The choice of American texts like *The Joy Luck Club* or non-fiction such as *Desert Flower* is not advised. While these texts certainly deal with gender issues, they lack a cultural base in Australia.

Written examination
The percentage mean in section one was 62.39% higher than the percentage means of other sections. A number of candidates did not attempt questions 4 and 5 as they required aural comprehension of figurative language rather than simply listening for key information. In section two a proportion of candidates were unable to analyse the table and identify patterns in immigration in question 19. Instead information was copied from the table as a response.

There was a good balance of topics in section three that related closely to the suggested contexts of the syllabus. Some candidates confused work placement in school with part-time work while at school (question 24) which adversely affected their marks. Question 25 required candidates to produce a feature article. Responses to this question often failed to demonstrate accepted generic conventions. The choice of texts used as examples caused some candidates to provide generalised, superficial examples in their extended responses.

Advice for candidates
- Read all instructions carefully e.g. when asked to identify patterns do not copy information from the text.
- If a question is allocated two marks and two dot points are provided for the responses then provide two answers.
- Providing numerous answers to one question does not indicate understanding of the question or the required response.
- In the Extended synthesis, look for links between texts and try to make these apparent. Avoid, where possible, separating the answer so that each paragraph addresses one text only.
- Give specific responses, particularly in the Listening section.
- Use a dictionary to check the meaning of any unknown words.
- Use texts studied in class to provide responses to questions.

Comments on specific sections and questions
Practical examination
Part A
Candidates were well prepared and addressed familiar topics. They responded fluently and accurately.

Part B
Candidates encountered a range of images related to common experiences and to the course content. Candidates were aware they needed to provide just a brief description before launching into discussing the focus questions. Again, most were able to speak at length, and did not wait to be asked questions. This indicates that they had been well prepared for this section.

Part C
This was the most challenging section of the examination. While nearly all candidates were aware of and prepared for this section, the capacity to discuss, analyse, provide examples and make links was generally underdeveloped. It was evident that a number of candidates were reciting memorised answers, but were unable to engage in discussion when the

interviewer led them to deeper levels. Where examples from the plot are used they should be succinct. Poor choice of texts was also a major factor in this section.

Written examination
Section one
Question 1 – mean of 74.78%
Candidates performed well although weaker candidates misheard key words or provided partial answers.

Question 2 – mean of 65.17%
Candidates had little difficulty with this question.

Question 3 – mean of 63.83%
Some candidates provided 'scatter gun' responses to this question, listing all things they heard. This rendered their answers incorrect.

Question 4 – mean of 19.49%
This question was a good discriminator that required inferential comprehension of metaphor. Many candidates misinterpreted 'covering some territory' as meaning gaining momentum, which was in the surrounding text.

Question 5 – mean of 47.67%
Many candidates did not understand the reference to quills and so included this in their answer, missing the second correct response.

Question 6 – mean of 59.79%
Candidates generally discerned correct responses although some referred to the creation of cassette tapes, found in ancillary text.

Question 7 – mean of 53.20%
Candidates often only provided one response to this question.

Question 8 – mean of 75.00%
Some candidates used the future projections in 2023 as a response for evidence of what had happened in the past, indicating that they had not read the question properly.

Questions 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 were done well by candidates with means ranging from 58.67% to 89.61%.

Question 14 – mean of 43.32%
Candidates were often distracted by peripheral information for this question.

Section two
Question 15 – mean of 91.40%

Question 16 – mean of 48.62%
Many candidates discussed the benefits for the individual, rather than the benefits for a country in their responses.

Question 17 – mean of 68.09%

Question 18 – mean of 62.44%
Candidates who did not get full marks for this question often failed to identify that it was the date of Australia Day that was not inclusive, instead, simply referring to the existence of a national day.

Question 19 – mean of 65.67%
Candidates who performed poorly on this question failed to identify a change in the pattern of citizenship, instead only highlighting information from the table.

Question 20 – mean of 57.26%
Candidates found the skill of synthesising difficult. References and links across texts were often not made. Weaker responses were characterised by separate textual discussions and then a last paragraph of personal opinion or experience.

Section three
Question 21 – mean of 59.75%
This question was well answered generally. Candidates had many ideas that they were able to relate to their own experiences. Some candidates addressed the advantages of learning an additional language while omitting to discuss the benefits of studying their own first language.

Question 22 – mean of 55.44%
This was a popular question but some candidates relied on generic, superficial ideas and texts (such as Harry Potter) without relating specific examples back to the texts. A number of responses referred to one text only.

Question 23 – mean of 63.70%
Candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of the speech format and tone but many candidates did not 'urge their classmates to act' as required by the question.

Question 24 – mean of 60.38%
Many candidates confused work placement with part-time work.

Question 25 – mean of 58.30%
Of all the extended answers the generic conventions of this question, the feature article, were the least well done.