PART I

3.0   ENGLISH (101)

3.1   GENERAL CANDIDATES PERFORMANCE

The table below shows the performance of candidates in the three papers offered in 2011 in KCSE English Examination. Data for the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 is also given for comparison.

Table 13 :   Candidates' Overall Performance in English(101)in the last four years

Year	Paper	Candidature	Maximum Score	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
2008	1	300,794	60	24.59(40.98%)	8.68
	2		80	22.71(28.38%)	11.54
	3		60	20.25(33.75%)	8.62
	Overall		200	67.57(33.78%)	26.24
2009	1	335,415	60	30.75(51.30%)	8.05
	2		80	26.99(36.66%)	12.21
	3		60	20.81(34.75%)	7.97
	Overall		200	78.42(39.21%)	25.64
2010	1	354,935	60	28.12(46.86%)	9.17
	2		80	31.07(38.83%)	11.61
	3		60	18.64(31.06%)	8.42
	Overall		200	77.36(38.68%)	26.82
2011	1	410,949	60	25.73(42,88%)	8.41
	2		80	28.53(35.66%)	12.46
	3		60	18.60(31.0%)	7.04
	overall		200	72.84(36.42%)	25.14

From the table above it can be deduced:
Performance in Paper 1 declined, by 2.39 points from 28.12 in 2010 to 25.73 in 2011.
Performance in Paper 2 also declined by 2.54 points from 31.07 in 2010 to 28.53 in 2011.
Performance in Paper 3 dropped minimally by 0.04 points from 18.64 in 2010 to 18.60 in 2011.
Overall performance shows a drastic decline by 4.52 points from 77.36 in 2010 to 72.84 in 2011.
The cause of the decline will become apparent as the items that gave trouble to the candidates are discussed under the individual papers.

Paper 101/1

The mean of 25.73 is the lowest in the four years under review except for the year 2008 when it was 24.59, but with a slightly better standard deviation. The Chief Examiner reported that the candidates had trouble with questions 1 and 2 in this paper.

Question 1

This question tested the writing of a **Notice** of an impending event – the performance of a play production of a compulsory set book (part (a)) and the writing of a **synopsis** of the set text to accompany the notice for the benefit of the general public who may not have read the play and who were also being invited to the performance.

Weaknesses Observed

Candidates seemed to have been taken by surprise, as they did not expect a notice, being such a short form of writing to be tested. Or perhaps, the teachers had ignored the teaching of this form of writing! Most candidates did not know the format of a notice; much less the tone of such writing. A few candidates gave letter formats.

Synopsis was the worst done. Many candidates did not even know what a synopsis was! A majority of those who did could not condense the play into a synopsis that told what the play was all about in the word limit given, thus leading to a number of candidates presenting longish or incomplete synopses. Some candidates couldn't accurately present the message of the play; indicating that they may not have read the text.

Advice to teachers
Teachers are advised to teach the syllabus and present examples of what the syllabus requires and set tasks for candidates to practice.
Teachers to insist on candidates reading the set texts, elicit evidence of such reading and then helping the candidates to analyze the set books – all aspects of the texts.

Question 2:
This was a cloze test requiring mastery of integrated grammatical and vocabulary knowledge. The Chief Examiner reported that many candidates performed poorly in this question. He attributed this to unfamiliarity with the subject matter under discussion. Yet proficient readers need not have interacted with the subject matter to be able to intelligently anticipate and supply the required words for the slots given the context provided.

101/2 REPORT

This paper declined. It dropped 2.54 points from 31.07 in 2010 to 28.53 in 2011.
The chief examiner reported that candidates had trouble with question 1.

The passage was about a well known public figure – the American President Obama. That he had Kenyan roots also caused a problem as candidates forgot about the passage and gave unsolicited information!

Another thing about him that the passage expected and played upon but which many candidates missed was that he was black. This played a large part in the perceptions of the protagonist in the

story without which knowledge, some candidates could not get some of the questions asked e.g. 2(b), 2(c) and 2(d).

Weaknesses observed

The candidates were unable to read between the lines and to use contextual clues and inference. Poor reading skills made them even fail to get the correct answer to question 2(h) whose answer is glaringly given in the same sentence!

Advice to teachers

Teachers are advised to teach responsive reading and the need to take cognizance of contextual clues in interpreting the texts they read. Candidates to be advised to gear their responses to the demands of the question (relevance) and with regard to the award (how much the question is worth in marks) to signal how much writing is called for.

101/3 REPORT

Performance in this paper remained more or less constant. There was a negligible decline of **0.04** points from **18.64** in 2010 to **18.60** in 2011. Nevertheless performance in this paper remains depressed. The percentage mean of 31.0 is quite low given that the acceptable mean should be around 50.0%. Every effort needs to be made to improve performance in this paper by teaching composition writing and developing better approaches to teaching the set books. Candidates' mastery of the set texts is wanting and must be addressed if any improvement in this paper is to be realized. Candidates also had problems with the essay questions.

Question 2

Candidates were required to write an essay on cultural conflict in the novel. Majority of the candidates wrote on conflict generally and did not tie it culture.

Question 3

This question elicited the worst performance in years. The Chief Examiner attributed this to the fact that the questions were equally balanced in quality and demands. There was no question easier than the others in the optional texts category. Besides, many schools do not opt for the short story and the novel. So the majority who traditionally chose the play were beset with a question that, though it was quite good, was difficult for candidates. It not only required the candidate to notice that there was deception in the lives of the characters, but that this deception held them in bondage from which they could only be set free by confronting and acknowledging the truth and confessing it. This proved a hard task as it involved not only analysis of the characters, their deceptions and how these controlled their behaviour and made their relations with one another difficult.