

INTRODUCTION

Assessment is the one aspect of Language Facilitation that poses the most serious challenges to the learning and teaching of the subject. Educators still deem assessment to be done at the end of the teaching and process with very little attention given to the implications it has upon their classroom practice.

The distinction between Higher and Standard Grade is such an artificial one as the question papers look exactly the same: in length, content, mark allocation, etc. The subtle and not-so-subtle nuances between Higher and Standard Grade is something that has never been fully understood and executed by examiners, let alone classroom practitioners. The reason for this is that there were never clear guidelines set for the teaching and learning of English Second Language Standard Grade. Educators were not able to differentiate their classroom facilitation to suit the needs of Standard Grade candidates and their final assessment. This state of affairs led to examination papers being set that did not address the needs of such learners, but more seriously, papers with no criteria and/or guidelines English Second Language Standard Grade.

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The marking process reflected some examples of excellent preparation of candidates by classroom practitioners, but also some glaring shortcomings in classroom facilitation.

General examination preparation

- Learners should be taught how to approach examinations.
- Examination techniques with regards to numbering, headings, leaving lines between answers, etc should actively be taught.

Comprehension

- Educators should focus on teaching “How to approach a comprehension” and not only work through old question papers to prepare candidates for the final examination.
- When setting questions on texts, the different taxonomies should be considered.
- Inferential questions (where learners had to infer) should be focused on seriously, as learners had difficulty answering these questions in the examination.

Summary

- The summary should be taught by using the sections in the memorandum that fall under the headings 'Marking' and 'Penalties'.
- Pay attention the counting of words. (contractions, hyphenated words, etc)

Grammar

- More attention should be given to the teaching of Grammar, i.e negatives, questions, direct and reported speech, etc. as this section posed huge challenges to the learners.
- As everything in this section should be spelt correctly, spelling tests (first few minutes of periods for 10 marks?) could be meaningful. Learners lose many marks for the spelling errors they make in this section.

Response to non-verbal texts

- Educators should be using relevant graphics (advertisements, cartoons, etc) in their classroom facilitation so that they expose the learners to a variety of printed media.

Conclusion

Many of the learners that offer English on the Standard Grade do not have the guidance of full-time educators and one should acknowledge and the efforts of ABET-practitioners, but also request that full-time educators reach out a helping hand to the candidates and educators in this sector.