

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The NCS requires candidates to answer questions on their comprehension of prose texts, be able to summarize a passage in a particular way, be able to interpret visual texts (e.g. graphs, cartoons, advertisements) and answer some questions on grammar. To be able to do this, candidates should be taught certain techniques, i.e. comprehension and summarizing, and get sufficient practice in them. These are set out in the NCS and not all textbooks contain all that is set out in the Assessment Standards for FET Languages.

Teachers who are responsible for facilitating the learning and teaching of the candidates who will enter for this examination will then have to teach candidates the above techniques for them to be able to be successful in the examination.

GENERAL

The paper managed to assess the above-mentioned as prescribed.

The open-ended questions, as required as per Barret's taxonomy, were asked, but posed far-reaching challenges for both assessors, who marked the paper, and candidates, who sat for the examination. There were questions that were simplistic, while others were rather challenging and at quite an advanced cognitive level, especially the open-ended questions.

Teachers will have to ensure that the skill of thinking and reasoning (as prescribed by Outcome 5 of Senior Phase-Grades 7 – 9) is taught well and that learners are able to express and/or defend or support a statement/opinion.

Teachers will also have to obtain resource material that will give learners sufficient practice in comprehension, summary-writing and grammar – at the appropriate level.

One way of doing this is to allow learners – after solid teaching – to work through old NCS question papers, but also the FET exemplars. (Grades 10 –12)

SECTION A

COMPREHENSION

Teachers should **teach** learners **how** to approach comprehension tests, i.e. **model** it to them in class. They do not learn this when you work through a comprehension test with them! You have to teach the skills to them first and then work through one with them for practice, and then, **ONLY** then, can you send them home and let them do one on their own!

Learners also need to be taught how to substantiate their answers to TRUE/FALSE or YES/NO questions.

- Show them how to read the passage. (Tell them that a passage is normally arranged around a few central ideas, a paragraph has a central idea/thought and so has a sentence.)
- Tell/suggest how many times they could/should read the passage.
- Show and explain to them how to read the questions.
- Teach them questioning words, e.g. how, why, what.
- Teach them what is expected when they are asked to explain, state, mention, compare, quote, etc.

Learners need to be taught how to make predictions about how a passage could end, imagine different scenarios as per passage, etc.

SECTION B SUMMARY

The most important skill here is to be able to read and follow the instructions, because candidates lose marks when they do not! For example: Learners are asked to number their facts (They do not do this!), they are asked to write the number of words at the end of their summary (They write it at the end of each sentence!). Neither of these is adhered to.

Learners need to be taught to read and write a paragraph, so that they are able to **recognise topic sentences**, know where these topic sentences appear in a paragraph, what the core parts of a sentence are, **what information is additional** to a sentence, etc.

They need to be taught the necessary skills in the class context, be given a summary for practice (in class, where you can see how they do it and whether they have understood) and then be asked to do one on their own.

SECTION C

VISUAL LITERACY AND GRAMMAR

This section was answered rather poorly. Apart from the generally challenging questions in the paper, some candidates were not able to manage the simpler questions, which tested prepositions, parts of speech, etc.

Questions 4 and 5, which tested visual literacy, were answered from well to poorly as candidates were not able to support their YES/NO responses. The questions set on the cartoon were generally well answered and one could see that efforts have been made to ensure that learners grasp cartoons and their intent.

However, the aspects of advertising – which we have taught all along (before NCS) – seem not to have been taught well as learners could not answer simple questions on advertising (methods/techniques of advertising, etc.).

Even though we had one candidate who scored full marks for Question 5 (in my venue - Chief Marker), the candidates', generally speaking, performed very poorly in this question. The candidates struggled with direct and indirect speech, punctuation, and even tense. This is disturbing as these are the basics of the Language syllabus. Learners need much practice and rigorous teaching to answer this section well – not only in Grade 12, but much earlier.

CONCLUSION:

For teachers to prepare candidates well for this paper, they need to **TEACH** the skills, and also use appropriate and effective teaching and learning resources. One cannot leave it to chance and use the excuse of time constraints (even if it is valid). We have to ensure that it is done and maybe ensure that, in Grade 10 and 11, it is well taught.