

# **Grade 12 Home Language Examinations, 2012 – 2014: Trends and Issues**

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Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, SiSwati, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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**March 2015**

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## Abbreviations

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| ASC   | Assessment Standards Committee                   |
| DBE   | Department of Basic Education                    |
| CAPS  | Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement           |
| CASS  | Continuous Assessment                            |
| DBE   | Department of Basic Education                    |
| FAL   | First Additional Language                        |
| HL    | Home Language                                    |
| IEB   | Independent Examinations Board                   |
| NCS   | National Curriculum Statement                    |
| NSC   | National Senior Certificate                      |
| SACAI | South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute |
| SAGs  | Subject Assessment Guidelines                    |
| SC    | Senior Certificate                               |

## PART I: THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

Since the introduction of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) in 2008, Umalusi has conducted several studies on curriculum and assessment standards to monitor standards in the transition from the old Senior Certificate (SC) to the new National Senior Certificate (NSC). In 2004, Umalusi investigated whether or not standards in six of the Home Language (HL) examinations were comparable (titled: *Comparative Analysis of the National Senior Certificate Home Language, 2008-2010: Afrikaans; English; isiNdebele; isiXhosa; isiZulu; and SiSwati*). In 2012 a further study was undertaken to compare the standards of all eleven official language at HL level (published as: *The standards of the National Senior Certificate Home Language Examinations: A comparison of South African official languages*). Both of these studies highlighted complexities with regard to achievement of equivalence in the assessment of HLs. Key amongst the highlights were consistency or lack thereof across HLs and within the same HL over a period of time, caused perhaps by the different roles and status of the languages concerned; different histories in terms of their syllabuses and examinations. All these aspects have an effect on comparability of HL exams standards.

The current study forms part of Umalusi's on-going *Maintaining Standards* research into the standard of examinations associated with the NSC. This is the third report in a series that focuses specifically on the standard and quality of the end of the year Grade 12 HL examinations. Key amongst the findings of the 2012 Umalusi study were that:

The examination results indicate that, with the exception of English, the pass rates and mean scores are too high, suggesting that papers might not have been set at a sufficiently high standard. The study also reveals that standards are not consistent throughout the 11 HLs. The English examination appears to be set at a higher standard than the other HLs (Umalusi, 2012:4).

In the same connection, the recent Ministerial Task Team Report on the promotion requirements and other related matters that impact on the standard of the NSC found that:

The standard of the African languages Home Language papers has repeatedly given rise to questions over the last five years ... One key issue that has arisen as a criticism of the NSC is that the mean scores are very high in the African languages compared to Afrikaans and English and all other subjects in the NSC. (DBE, 2014, 181-182).

These points are concerning considering the fact that common curriculum for all HLs have been in place since 2008. Similarly, all HLs have been assessed on the basis of the same subject assessment guidelines (SAGs), which were introduced along with the NSC in 2008. Since the above findings defy the existence of a national curriculum for languages at HL level and associated exam guidelines, and have the potential to undermine the credibility and standing of the languages for their respective speech communities, Umalusi undertook the present study, entitled: *Grade 12 Home Language examinations, 2012 - 2014: Trends and issues* takes place in the context of on-going attempts to improve the standard of HL examinations. As is the case with the previous studies, this study is situated within the broader *Maintaining standards project*. Broadly, the project aims to develop an informed understanding of the cognitive demand and levels of difficulty of the NSC examinations across subjects and from one year to the next.

## **1.2 Research aims and questions**

Umalusi has identified the need to evaluate the standards of HL examinations in all 11 official languages, as well as in English First Additional Language (FAL). The aim of the present study is to evaluate the quality and standards of the 2012 – 2014 Grade 12 HL examinations. Specifically, this study aims to:

- determine the degree to which 2014 HL examinations adhere to CAPS-based Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAGs);
- determine the nature of the cognitive demands made in the 2014 HL examination papers in their own right and in comparison to the 2012 – 2013 HL examinations;
- evaluate the degree of difficulty of the 2014 HL examination papers in their own right and in relation to the 2012 – 2013 HL examinations; and
- determine whether the skills/knowledge examined in the 11 HLs are equivalent.

In summation, the chief aim of the investigation is to determine whether the levels of difficulty and cognitive demand of the examinations in question are comparable across all HLs and years. The research questions framing the study are:

- What are the standards of the NSC Home Language examinations administered between 2012 and 2014?
- Are the standards consistent within and across the 11 official Home Languages, and if not, in what respects do they differ?

### **1.3 The rationale for the study**

For Umalusi, studies of this nature are vital in that they: (i.) produce useful information which feeds into standardization process of the Assessment Standards Committee (ASC), and (ii.) the results always assist in improving the quality and standard of the HL examinations.

## PART II: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

### 2.1 The examination paper analysis instrument

Table 2.1 presents the examination paper analysis instrument used to analyse the NSC examinations across all HLs. An important change that has been made to Umalusi's revised examination evaluation instrument, used for the first time in this study, is that the analysis of *the type of cognitive demand* of a question and analysis of *the level of difficulty* of each question are treated as two separate judgments involving two different processes. Prior to its implementation, the instrument had been discussed and critiqued at several Umalusi workshops with examination evaluators and moderators, and, based on the critique; refinements were made to the instrument. Generally, participants acknowledged that the instrument allows for greater comparability of standards across subjects and years because of the sameness of the framework used to think about question difficulty.

The abbreviation 'ID' in Columns 4 and 6 stands for invalid moderators of difficulty, which are those that impede the measurement of the construct. In other words, they do not contribute to the measurement of the construct/task under consideration.

**Table 2.1: Template for recording team analysis of NSC exam papers**

| C1       | C2              | C3                                       | C4                                 | C5  | C6   | C7                              |
|----------|-----------------|--|------------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|
| Question | Mark allocation | Type of cognitive demand (1,2,3,4, OR 5) | Difficulty level (1, 2 3, 4 or ID) | Main sources of difficulty (content, stimulus, task and/or expected response) | Justify your difficulty level or ID rating | Content / skill/ topic assessed |
| 1.1      |                 |  |                                    |   |  |                                 |
| 1.2      |                 |  |                                    |   |  |                                 |
| 1.3      |                 |  |                                    |   |  |                                 |
| Etc.     |                 |  |                                    |   |  |                                 |
| TOTAL    | 100             |  |                                    |   |  |                                 |

**Column 3:** 1= lower order processes; 2= medium order processes; 3= higher order processes.

**Column 4:** 1= easy; 2= moderately difficult; 3= difficult; 4= very difficult; ID= invalidly difficult

All language teams used this instrument to conduct an item-by-item analysis of the respective languages papers. Once the level of cognitive demand had been established, the next step was to determine the degree of difficulty of a given question. The final step in the analysis was to compare examination papers over a three-year period (2012 – 2014) with a view to determining whether a comparable standard had been maintained over the years.

In order to determine whether the standard of these examination papers was equivalent and had been maintained over the years, the raw scores allocated to levels of difficulty and cognitive demand in each paper were converted to percentages. Percentages were used, because they have the advantage of allowing comparisons between scores allocated to cognitive skill and degree of difficulty in different papers.

## **2.2 The documents used in the analysis of the examinations**

A comprehensive set of examination documents was collected for each HL. These included:

- Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAGs) for HLs; and
- 2012 to 2014 Home Language examination papers (Papers 1 - 3) and their associated memoranda and rubrics.

The next section discusses the design of HL exams. The section begins by highlighting what is examined by each of the components that make up the whole HL exam. Thereafter the changes that have been brought about by the introduction of CAPS-based HL examinations in 2014 are discussed.

## 2.3 The structure of Home Language examination papers

As indicated in Table 2.2, the HL examination comprises four papers and continuous assessment tasks. The external component (Papers 1 - 4) is marked out of 300 marks, of which 50 marks (12.5%) is constituted by the oral tasks undertaken during the year. The internal component (CASS) contributes 100 marks or 25% towards the final mark, whereas the external component makes up 75% of the final HL mark.

**Table 2.2: Design of Home Language examinations**

| Exam paper                                 | Content of paper  | Marks |            |
|--|---|-------|------------|
| <b>Paper 1</b>                             | <b>Language in context</b>  |       |            |
|  | <b>1.1 Comprehension:</b> Passages(s), visual texts/graphics, explanations, descriptions, etc.  | 30    | <b>70</b>  |
|  | <b>1.2 Summary:</b> Summarizing in point or paragraph form  | 10    |            |
|  | <b>1.3 Language:</b> Advertisements, cartoons, prose texts, structures, critical awareness, reports, descriptions, procedures, explanations, etc. | 30    |            |
| <b>Paper 2</b>                             | <b>Literature</b>   |       |            |
|  | <b>2.1 Seen and unseen poetry:</b> Essay + contextual questions or two contextual questions + essay or contextual question (unseen poetry)        | 30    | <b>80</b>  |
|  | <b>2.2 Novel:</b> Essay or contextual question  | 25    |            |
|  | <b>2.3 Drama:</b> Essay or contextual question  | 25    |            |
| <b>Paper 3</b>                             | <b>Creative writing</b>   |       |            |
|  | <b>3.1 Essay:</b> Narrative, descriptive, reflective, argumentative, expository or discursive   | 50    | <b>100</b> |
|  | <b>3.2 Longer transactional text:</b> Newspaper article, diary, memorandum, minutes and agenda, letter, etc.                                      | 30    |            |
|  | <b>3.3 Shorter text:</b> Flyers, instructions, advertisements, postcards, posters, etc.   | 20    |            |
|  |   |       | <b>250</b> |
| <b>Paper 4</b>                             | <b>Oral:</b> Reading, prepared or unprepared speech, conversation or debate, interview, etc.  |       | <b>50</b>  |
| <b>CASS</b>                                | 14 tasks (900 divided by 9)   |       | <b>100</b> |
| <b>Total for Home Language examination</b> |   |       | <b>400</b> |

Of the three papers, only Paper 1 contains no choice of questions. In other words, candidates have to answer all questions in this paper. In Paper 2, candidates must answer a total of five questions. They answer three questions From Section A: two choice questions based on prescribed poetry, and one compulsory question based on unseen poetry. In Section B (novel), candidates answer either an essay or a



contextual question, both of which are based on the novel they have studied. In regard to drama (Section C), the choice is also between an essay and a contextual question on the prescribed play. In all HLs, there is a condition that if candidates answer the essay in Section B, they must answer the contextual questions in Section C, or vice versa. Candidates answer three questions in all in Paper 3; one in Section A and two in Section B.

## **2.4 From the NSC to CAPS HL examinations: Differences and similarities**

This section highlights the changes that were brought about by the introduction of CAPS-based HL examinations in 2014.

The design of **Paper 1** is the same as it was in the previous HL exams. Changes have been introduced in Papers 2 and 3. In **Paper 2**, the difference can be seen in the unseen poetry subsection where the choice between the essay and contextual question has been removed. From 2014 onwards, all candidates answer 10 mark short questions based on unseen poetry. In terms of **Paper 3**, the 2014 exams experienced changes in Sections B and C. The number of choice questions in Section B (longer transactional texts) has increased from four to six, thereby allowing candidates to answer two questions for 25 marks each. Section C has been removed completely.

## **2.5 Historical candidate enrolments in Home Languages**

This section compares and contrasts growth in HL enrolment during two transitional periods. The first period covers the years 2007 - 2008 during which the system was in transition from the old Senior Certificate (SC) to the new National Senior Certificate (NSC), whilst the second transitional period from 2013 to 2014 was when it was made compulsory for all examinations to be aligned with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

**Table 2.3: Candidate enrolment since the inception of the NSC**

|                   | 2007           | 2008                | 2009           | 2010           | 2011           | 2012           | 2013           | 2014           |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Afrikaans</b>  | 47 228         | 56 293              | 54 916         | 53 439         | 47 971         | 48 471         | 50 101         | 48 885         |
| <b>English</b>    | 72 051         | 94 094              | 96 999         | 94 929         | 85 495         | 95 338         | 110 243        | 105 480        |
| <b>IsiNdebele</b> | 4 283          | 3 702               | 4 264          | 4 190          | 3 685          | 3 525          | 4 287          | 3 363          |
| <b>IsiXhosa</b>   | 79 281         | 65 766              | 74 460         | 70 377         | 71 780         | 72 215         | 79 307         | 74 925         |
| <b>IsiZulu</b>    | 145 879        | 142 645             | 133 701        | 122 694        | 124 412        | 125 325        | 136 302        | 138 004        |
| <b>Siswati</b>    | 14 781         | 18 052 <sup>1</sup> | 16 153         | 16 037         | 15 527         | 16 214         | 16 586         | 15 545         |
| <b>Sepedi</b>     | 75 115         | 66 996              | 69 292         | 68 569         | 58 122         | 60 296         | 65 207         | 58 042         |
| <b>Sesotho</b>    | 32 441         | 31 990              | 32 117         | 28 750         | 26 482         | 25 151         | 28 243         | 27 794         |
| <b>Setswana</b>   | 43 621         | 44 048              | 43 373         | 41 095         | 35 213         | 36 698         | 40 719         | 35 939         |
| <b>Tshivenda</b>  | 21 814         | 17 570              | 18 521         | 19 702         | 12 689         | 13 607         | 14 914         | 13 952         |
| <b>Xitsonga</b>   | 28 328         | 23 684              | 27 056         | 27 102         | 21 279         | 20 964         | 21 882         | 19 577         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>564 822</b> | <b>546 788</b>      | <b>570 852</b> | <b>546 884</b> | <b>502 655</b> | <b>517 804</b> | <b>567 791</b> | <b>541 506</b> |

(Department of Basic Education, 2009; 2011; 2013; Umalusi 2014)

The general picture presented in **Table 3.2** is that during the periods of transition HLs experienced a drop in candidature. For example, in 2008 the total number of enrolled candidates dropped to 546 788 from 564 822 in 2007, and from 567 791 in 2013 to 541 506 in 2014. This pattern can also be observed at the individual language level, except for Afrikaans and English which experienced an increase in the number of candidates between 2007 and 2008. The same was true for Setswana between 2007 and 2008 and isiZulu between 2013 and 2014.

Similarly, the period 2009 through to 2011 is characterised by a general decline in the number of candidates enrolled for HL examinations.

## **2.6 Participation and success rates during the period under study**

The purpose of this section is to compare the HL exams in terms of the number of candidates enrolling and passing each HL annually over the three year period. The section begins by comparing the number of candidates sitting the exams by

<sup>1</sup> Because the figure of 37 731 learners in the 2008 report was not reliable, we used the one obtained from the 2009 report, which also raises many questions.

language and year. Thereafter the average performance of candidates is compared across the languages and years.

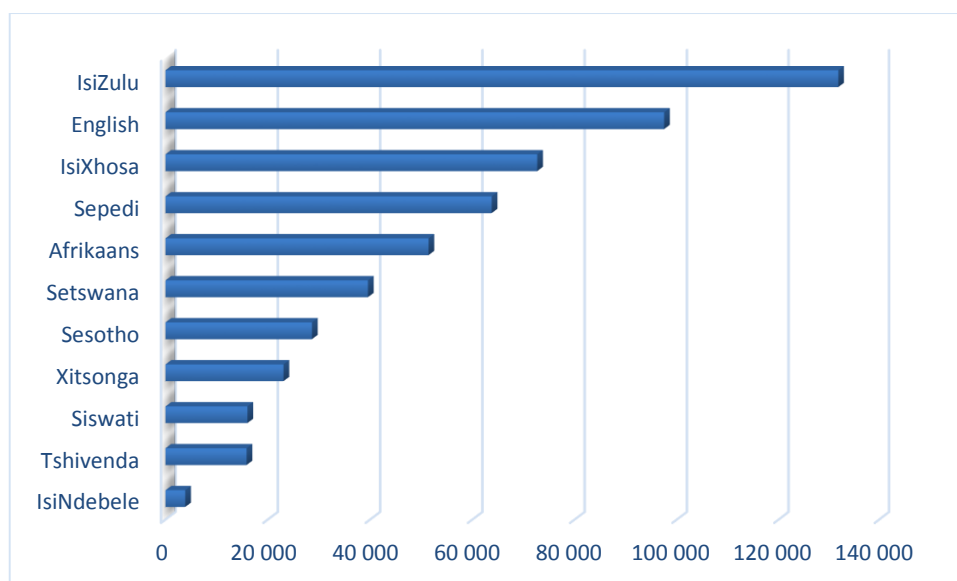
**Table 2.4: HL exam participation and performance (Papers 1 - 3), 2012 – 2014**

|                   | 2012           |               | 2013           |               | 2014           |               | 3 year average |               |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
|                   | Wrote          | %Pass         | Wrote          | %Pass         | Wrote          | %Pass         | Wrote          | %Pass         |
| <b>Afrikaans</b>  | 48 471         | 98.3%         | 50 101         | 97.9%         | 48 885         | 96.9%         | 49 152         | 97.70%        |
| <b>English</b>    | 95 338         | 95.3%         | 110 243        | 96.8%         | 105 480        | 95.1%         | 103 687        | 95.73%        |
| <b>IsiNdebele</b> | 3 525          | 99.9%         | 4 287          | 99.9%         | 3 363          | 99.9%         | 3 725          | 99.90%        |
| <b>IsiXhosa</b>   | 72 215         | 99.9%         | 79 307         | 99.9%         | 74 925         | 99.8%         | 75 482         | 99.87%        |
| <b>IsiZulu</b>    | 125 325        | 99.4%         | 136 302        | 99.7%         | 138 004        | 99.4%         | 133 210        | 99.50%        |
| <b>Siswati</b>    | 16 214         | 99.3%         | 16 586         | 99.3%         | 15 545         | 99.6%         | 16 115         | 99.40%        |
| <b>Sepedi</b>     | 60 296         | 99.6%         | 65 207         | 99.6%         | 58 042         | 99.3%         | 61 182         | 99.50%        |
| <b>Sesotho</b>    | 25 151         | 99.7%         | 28 243         | 99.7%         | 27 794         | 99.5%         | 27 063         | 99.63%        |
| <b>Setswana</b>   | 36 698         | 99.7%         | 40 719         | 99.7%         | 35 939         | 99.8%         | 37 785         | 99.73%        |
| <b>Tshivenda</b>  | 13 607         | 99.9%         | 14 914         | 100%          | 13 952         | 100%          | 14 158         | 99.97%        |
| <b>Xitsonga</b>   | 20 964         | 99.2%         | 21 882         | 99.5%         | 19 577         | 99.5%         | 20 808         | 99.40%        |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>517 804</b> | <b>99.11%</b> | <b>567 791</b> | <b>99.27%</b> | <b>541 506</b> | <b>98.98%</b> | <b>542 367</b> | <b>99.12%</b> |

(Source: Department of Basic Education, 2014)

Between 2012 and 2013, all languages experienced a growth in the number of candidates writing HL examinations. However, there was a decrease in the number of candidates writing HL examinations between 2013 and 2014, thereby reversing the picture seen in the preceding years. Overall there was a decline in the total number of candidates from approximately 568 000 in 2013 to just over 540 000 in 2014 (**Table 2.3**), a decrease of 26 282 or 4.62%. Notably, this trend played out differently with regard to isiZulu, which saw an increase of approximately 2 000 candidates. As has always been the case, English and isiZulu are the two biggest HLs in terms of candidate enrolment. The HLs at the bottom of the ladder are isiNdebele and Tshivenda.

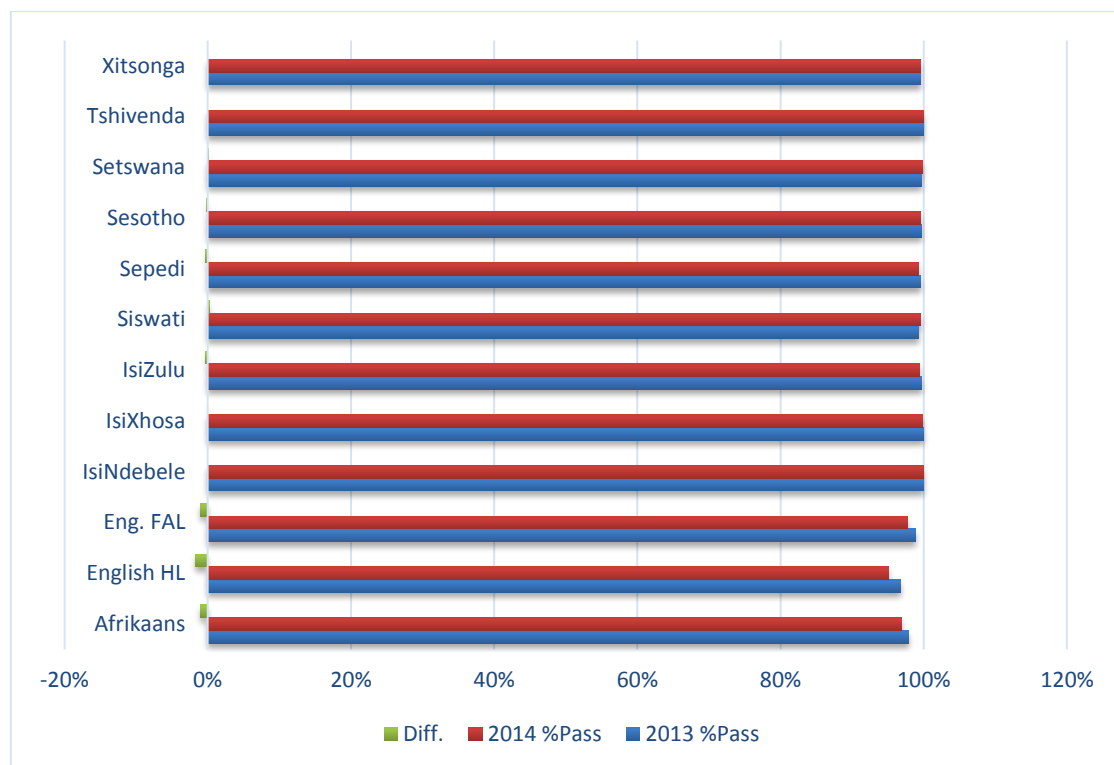
Presented graphically, the above data on candidate enrolment over a period of seven years looks as follows:



**Figure 2.1: Seven year average candidate enrolment in HLs (2008-2014)**

**Figure 2.2** displays change in pass rates by HL between 2013 and 2014. The pass rates were obtained by dividing the total number of candidates who wrote the exams by the total number of candidates who achieved 40% and above for HLs and 30% for English FAL. Whilst the pass rate in Afrikaans and English has been, on average, below 98%, over the past three years, African HLs have exceeded a percentage pass of 99%. On the other hand, the rest of the HLs remained the same in terms of pass rates between 2013 and 2014, whereas Afrikaans and English HL as well as English FAL have experienced a marginal decline of 1%, 1.7% and 1.1% respectively.

This picture, with regard to English First Additional Language included, is illustrated graphically in **Figure 2.2** below.



**Figure 2.2: Change in pass rates between 2013 and 2014**

English HL stood out at 1.7% as a share of the candidates who could not achieve 40% or more in order to pass the exam. The pass rates in African HLs have remained the same.

## PART III: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

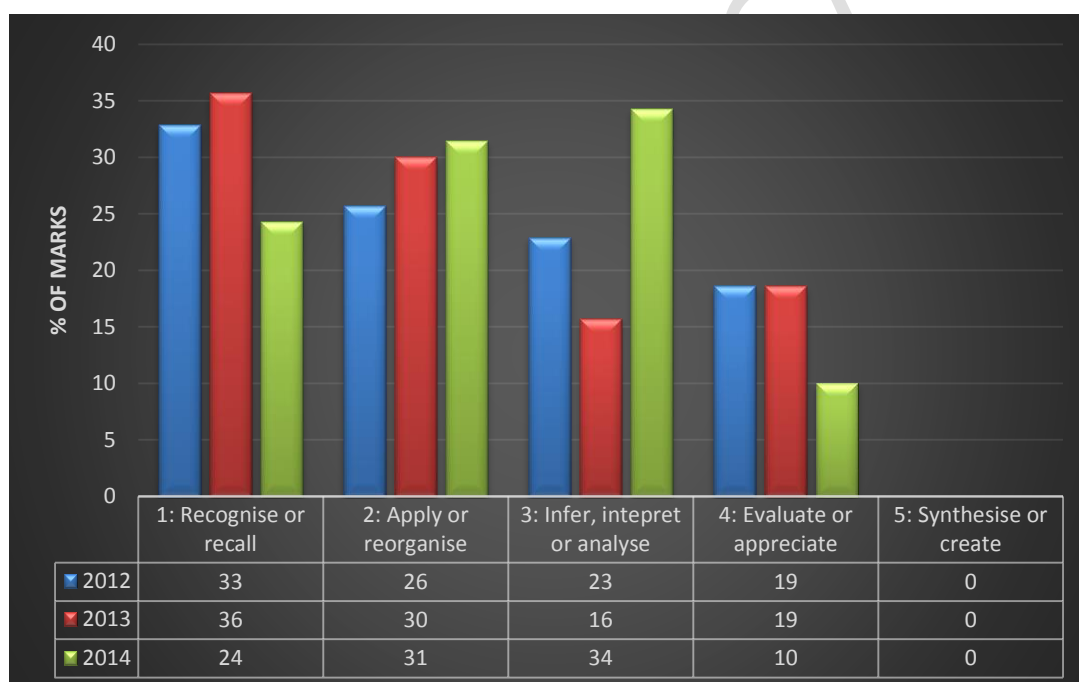
### 3 Afrikaans Results

#### 3.1 Compliance in terms of format and structure

All three papers (2012, 2013 and 2014) comply with the CAPS and SAG's in terms of structure and format.

#### 3.2 Distribution of cognitive demand in the papers

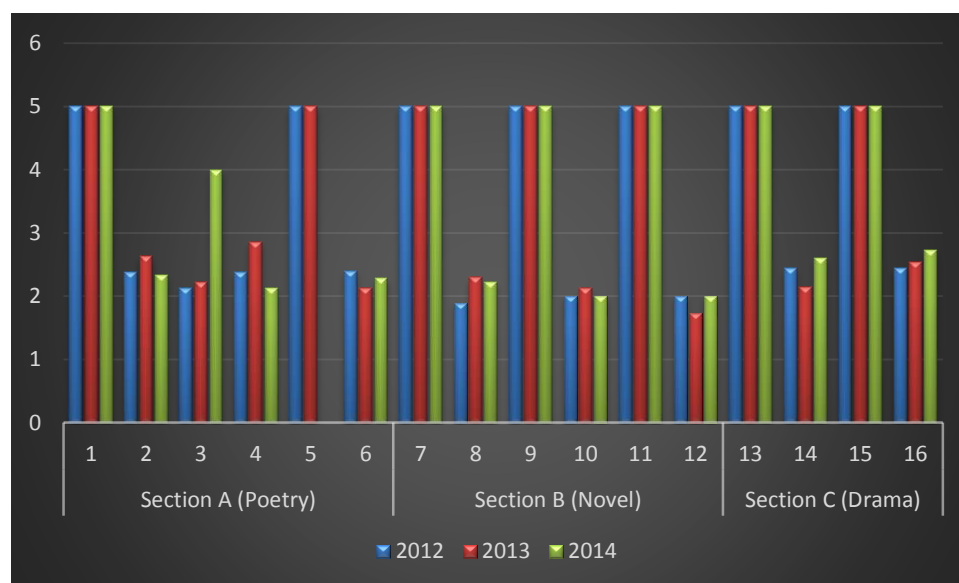
##### 3.2.1 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 1



**Figure 3.1: Weighting of cognitive demand in Afrikaans Paper 1**

As can be seen from the graph (**Figure 3.1**), Paper 1 (2012, 2013 and 2014) does not comply with SAG's. There is a noticeable decline regarding levels 4 and 5 of cognitive demand in the 2014 paper: from 19% down to 10%. Regarding level 3 there is a marked improvement in the 2014 paper: from 16% to 34%.

### 3.2.2 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 2



**Figure 3.2: Weighting of cognitive demand in Afrikaans Paper 2**

#### (a) Poetry-based questions

Not all questions are at the same level of cognitive demand. It is clear that the weightings differ within each section. Question 3 in 2014 is clearly at the highest cognitive level of the poetry questions, and therefore very challenging. Because of the choices available, it cannot be concluded that the 2014 poetry section as a whole was more or less cognitively demanding than those of the two previous years. All essays were at the same level of cognitive demand.

In the 2012 and 2013 papers, in all poetry contextual questions, 20% of the contextual questions were on level 4, as stipulated in SAG's. However, in 2014, Questions 2 had no questions on level 4. Question 3 in 2014 is at a higher level than all the poetry contextual questions in 2012 and 2013.

It is however not possible to compare Question 3 of 2014 to Question 3 of the other years. The poems themselves are different and demand different kinds of questions. Sometimes the content of a certain poem is not easily accessible but the questions could be fairly undemanding and vice versa. What can be said is that a learner that chose Question 3, 2104, would have had to apply his or her mind more rigorously. But: this imagined learner could easily have chosen a less demanding question.

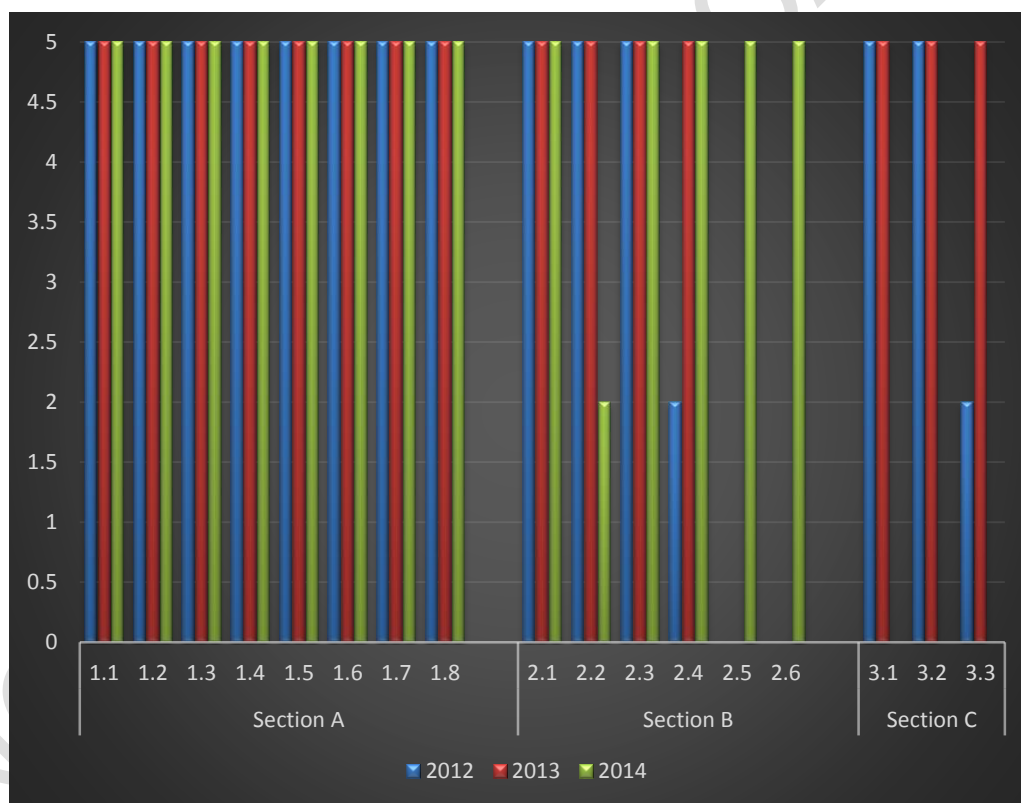
### (b) Questions based on prose

The contextual choices were more or less on the same level of cognitive demand with no question being more challenging than the other. All essays were at the same level of cognitive demand.

### (c) Questions based on drama

The two 2104 contextual questions (14 and 16) are at a higher level than the previous years; with Question 14 being at a significantly higher level of cognitive demand than the same question in 2013. All essays were at the same level of cognitive demand.

## 3.2.3 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 3



**Figure 3.3: Weighting of cognitive demand in Afrikaans Paper 3**

Because of the inherent differences in the choices of transactional writing (cf. the instrument we used) not all choice questions are at the same cognitive level (compare Questions 2.2 and 2.4). We want to make it clear that this is a factor of the curriculum used and not because of the examination as such.

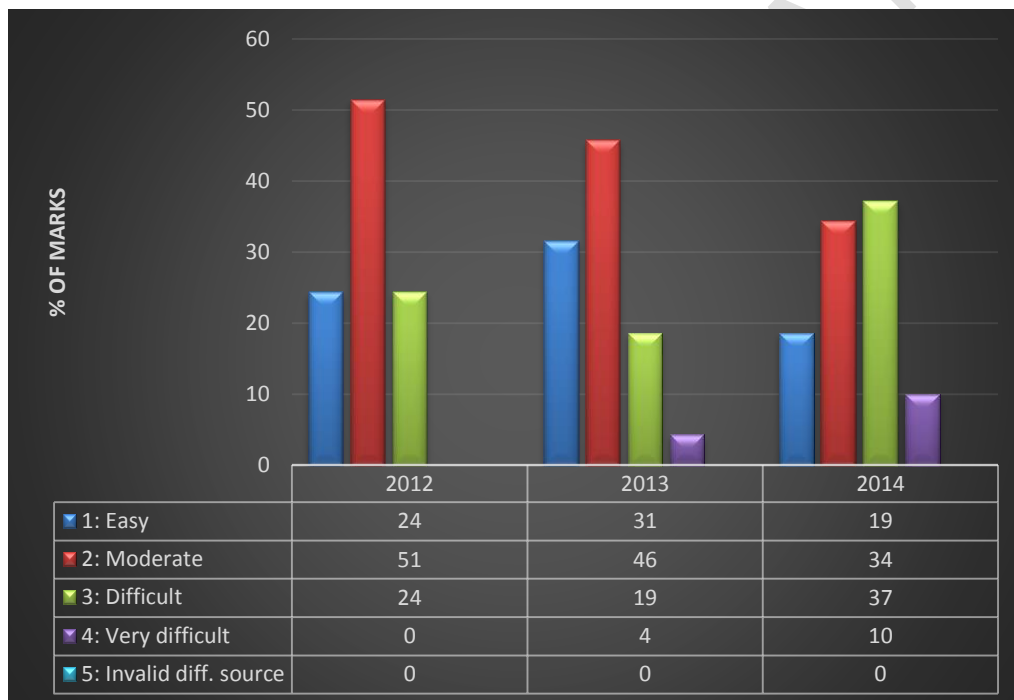


As can be seen from the graph above, Paper 3 is set at the highest level of cognitive demand. There is no significant difference in this regard between the 2014, 2013 and 2012 papers.

### 3. Distribution of levels of difficulty in the papers

#### 3.3.1 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 1

The next graph shows the percentage of marks awarded to the different levels of difficulty in the examination paper(s).

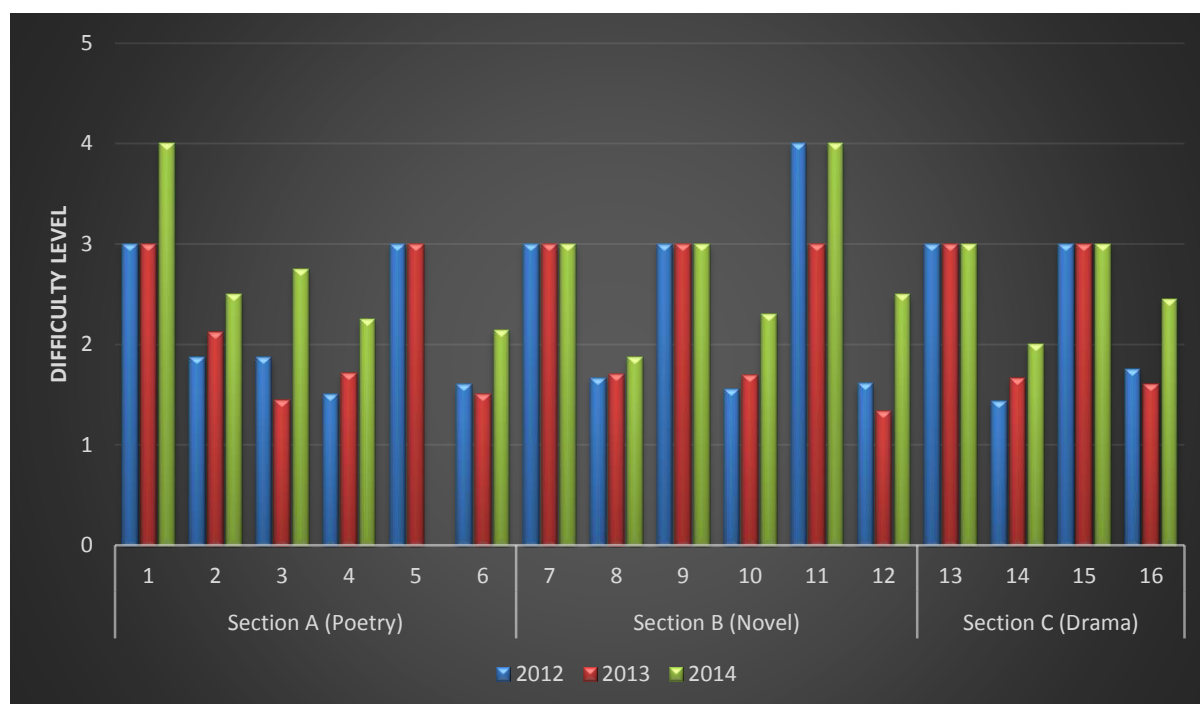


**Figure 3.4: Weighting of difficulty level in Afrikaans Paper 1**

The exams vary across the three years. As can be seen from the graph (**Figure 3.4**), there were no very difficult questions in 2012. There were more easy questions in 2013 than in 2012. 2014 had more difficult and very difficult questions than 2012 or 2013 and fewer easy and moderate questions. It was a more balanced paper than 2012 and 2013.

### 3.3.2 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 2

The large number of choice question in Paper 2 makes it difficult to calculate percentages or marks allocated to each of the different levels of difficulty.

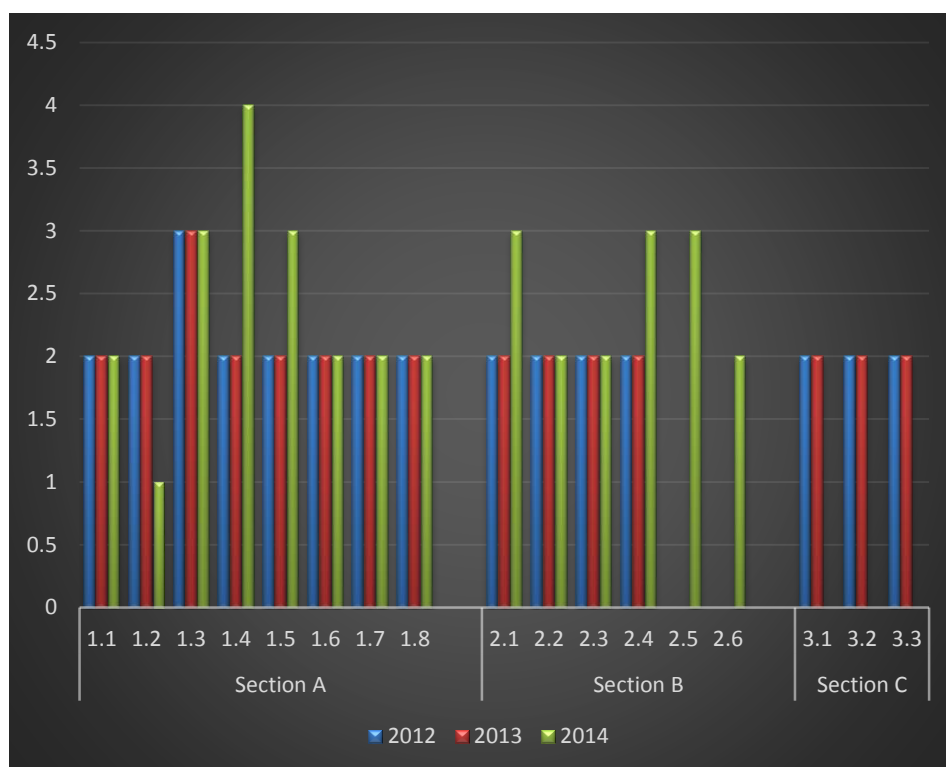


**Figure 3.5: Weighting of difficulty level in Afrikaans Paper 2**

The overall picture is that of comparability in terms of essay-type questions. In terms of the trend, the short questions are generally getting more difficult by the year.

### 3.3.3 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 3

Depending on what choice a candidate made in Paper 3, and which kind of essay the candidate chose to write, some questions in the 2014 paper could be considered to be more difficult than choices in the 2012 and 2013 papers and one question (1.2) could be seen as very easy. On the whole there is a good balance between moderate and difficult questions in 2014.



**Figure 3.6: Weighting of difficulty level in Afrikaans Paper 3**

### 3.4 Topic or content and/or skills area weightings

The abilities examined are those that are typically associated with the HL curriculum. All three papers (2012, 2013 and 2014) cover all necessary topics and content in a balanced and fair way. No single topic or content is assessed excessively and to the exclusion of others. In Papers 1 and 2 the topics and content are assessed based on the texts that are used.

### 3.5 Other points regarding the quality of the examination

#### (a) Paper 1

Many of the questions should be **subdivided** into two questions. For example, in **2012** Question 1.1 and 1.14 the sub-questions can then be on two different levels of cognitive demand, the second sub-question building on the first.

#### **2013 Section A, Question 1.17**

The memorandum does not make it at all clear how Texts A and B should be linked in the answer.

**2013** Section C: the print quality of the cartoon was not very good, it contained a huge amount of text (one frame consisted entirely of text) in very small print, making it difficult to read. Only one frame contained dialogue, which is not usual for a cartoon. We recommend that more care should be taken with the choice of cartoon in future.

In summary, we expect that learners will find the new requirement to write the summary only in paragraph form (with which we are in agreement) more difficult, as they will have to write compound sentences which show cohesion and coherence.

The *stimulus material* - which is really not easy to find - is appropriate and should be interesting to a variety of learners.

### Memoranda

Although we did not have access to the memorandum for the 2014 Paper 2, the memoranda are adequate and accurate, on the whole, but it also seems clear to us that the memoranda are adjusted once the marking starts. This is because of a lack of clarity in the formation of the formulation, or invalid questions.

## 3.6 Difficulty of stimulus/source material

### (a) Paper 1

*Comparison of levels of difficulty of source or stimulus material*

| Stimulus material                   | Year | Difficulty           |
|-------------------------------------|------|----------------------|
| Section A: Text 1: Newspaper column | 2012 | Moderately difficult |
| Section A: Text 1: Website article  | 2013 | Moderately difficult |
| Section A: Text 1: Magazine article | 2014 | Moderately difficult |
| Section A: Text 2: Cartoon          | 2012 | Moderately difficult |
| Section A: Text 2: Brochure         | 2013 | Moderately difficult |
| Section A: Text 2: Advertisement    | 2014 | Moderately difficult |
| Summary                             | 2012 | Moderately difficult |
| Summary                             | 2013 | Moderately difficult |
| Summary                             | 2014 | Moderately difficult |

|   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| Section C: Text 1: Newspaper article    | 2012 | Moderately difficult   |
| Section C: Question 3: Advertisement    | 2013 | Moderately difficult   |
| Section C: Question 3: Advertisement    | 2014 | Moderately difficult   |
| Section C: Text 2: Advertisement        | 2012 | Moderately difficult   |
| Section C: Question 3: Strip cartoon    | 2013 | The text in the cartoon was difficult to read because of unclear or too small print. The content was moderately difficult. |
| Section C: Text 3: Cartoon              | 2012 | Moderately difficult   |
| Section C: Question 4: Newspaper column | 2013 | Difficult  |
| Section C: Question 4: Magazine article | 2014 | Moderately difficult   |
| Section C: Text 3: Strip cartoon        | 2012 | Moderately difficult   |
| Section C: Question 5: Column           | 2013 | Moderately difficult   |
| Section C: Question 5: article          | 2014 | Moderately difficult   |

None of the texts used as stimulus material in Paper 1 were considered to be easy or inconsistent with expected levels for the average Grade 12 learner.

### (b) Paper 2

*Comparison of levels of difficulty of source or stimulus material of the optional questions*

| Prescribed texts | Genre                        | Difficulty rating   |
|------------------|------------------------------|---|
| 2012             | Prescribed poems             | The prescribed poems range between moderately challenging and difficult, whereas the unseen poem is difficult |
| 2013             | Seen and unseen poems        | The prescribed poems are less challenging than those of 2012, whilst the unseen poem is moderately difficult. |
| 2014             | Seen and unseen poems        | Moderately difficult.   |
| <b>Novels</b>    | <i>Kwart-voor-sewe-lelie</i> | Moderately challenging  |

|       |                   |   |
|-------|-------------------|---|
|       | <i>Manaka</i>     | Moderately challenging  |
|       | <i>Vatmaar</i>    | The length of this novel makes it very challenging. The content is also very difficult because of the amount of detail and the many different characters, each with his or her own story. (This is probably the reason why very few schools actually choose this text). |
| Drama | <i>Map Jacobs</i> | Moderately challenging  |
|       | <i>Mis</i>        | Difficult   |

The only text that really poses a serious challenge is the drama text *Mis*. Because of this, the levels of cognitive demand as well as the difficulty levels in the contextual questions are generally higher compared to those of the other drama, *Die krismis van Map Jacobs*. Compare our analyses of the 2012 - 2014 exams where the average difficulty level is higher for *Mis*. Our team (two teachers use *Die krismis van Map Jacobs* and one teacher uses *Mis*) agree that this does not in fact impact significantly on candidates' marks.

All prescribed texts are consistent with expected levels for Grade 12. No text makes very low demands on Grade 12 candidates.

### **(c) Paper 2: Essay questions**

With regard to essays in Paper 2, we are of the opinion that too much guidance (whether in the form of bulleted lists or included in the way in which the essay questions are formulated) should be avoided at all costs. The essay questions should be consistent with the English Home Langue Paper 2 - which are excellent papers in our view.

**(d) Comparability of papers in terms of quality**

| <b>Paper</b>                                      | <b>Quality</b>   |
|---|--|
| <b>Paper 1 2014</b> as compared to 2012 and 2013. | 2014 was <b>more challenging</b> than 2012 and 2013. The difference in quality is not significant. The 2013 paper is slightly easier and less cognitively challenging than the 2012 paper. The quality of the 2013 paper is therefore <b>slightly worse</b> than the 2012 paper. |
| Paper 2 <b>2014</b> as compared to 2012 and 2013. | The differences in quality between the three years are negligible. The papers of the three years are more or less <b>equal in quality</b> .  |
| Paper 3 <b>2014</b> as compared to 2012 and 2013. | Due to the character of this paper, there are <b>no differences</b> in quality between the different years.  |

The kinds of skills and knowledge examined **are equivalent across the** years. The 2014 papers seem **more balanced** than 2012 and 2013.

**(e) Comparability appropriateness of levels and depth of knowledge**

| <b>Paper</b>                | <b>Ratings</b>  |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Paper1 2012, 2013 and 2014  | All the papers reflect appropriate levels and depth of subject knowledge. |
| Paper 2 2012, 2013 2014     | All the papers reflect appropriate levels and depth of subject knowledge. |
| Paper 3 2012, 2013 and 2014 | Not applicable: subject knowledge is not tested.                          |

The 2014 texts used in Paper 1 were of a noticeably high quality but at the same time accessible to the average learner.

| <b>Paper</b>          | <b>Standard</b>   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Paper 1 2012 and 2013 | The difference in standard is not big. However, the 2013 paper is <b>slightly less cognitively challenging</b> than the 2012 paper. In this regard the standard of the 2013 paper is therefore <b>slightly lower</b> than the 2012 paper. There are <b>no significant</b> |

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
|                       | <b>differences.</b> regarding level and depth of subject knowledge, difficulty of stimulus/source material.  |
| Paper 2 2012 and 2013 | There are <b>no significant differences</b> regarding levels of cognitive demand, level and depth of subject knowledge, or difficulty of stimulus/source material. The papers of the two years are more or less <b>consistent</b> with each other. |
| Paper 3 2012 and 2013 | Due to the character of this paper, there are <b>no differences</b> of standard between the different years, nor are any differences expected for 2014.  |

### 3.7 Concluding discussion

**Paper 1 of 2014** (and of 2012 and 2013) were out of line with the SAGs: none of the papers adhered to the 40-40-20 guideline. But, in combination with Papers 2 and 3, it can be concluded that the papers of 2012, 2013 and 2014 were not seriously out of line with the SAG's. There were no questions that were too easy. No learner would have been unfairly advantaged. There was no "non-question" in the 2014 paper.

In Paper 1 no texts were too easy or too difficult and all texts were of the required length. Paper 2: the team is of the opinion that *Vatmaar* and *Mis* are slightly more challenging than the other texts, but not to the extent of unfairly disadvantaging any learner. Question 3, Paper 2 was without a doubt very difficult – a question that can discriminate between average and distinction candidates if chosen. But, candidates had two other poems to choose from.

The team did not identify any aspect of the 2014 papers that could disadvantage learners.

Compared to 2012 and 2013 the 2014 papers are on the whole better papers. They are more balanced regarding cognitive demand and difficulty levels. They make provision for learners to pass with 40% - there are enough questions that are easy and at lower levels of cognitive demand. They are also challenging enough to accommodate distinction candidates. This is particularly true of Paper 3. It must be



emphasised that the choices that are available to a single candidate in Papers 2 and 3 are a very important aspect of the HL papers. By their very nature they do not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any learner.

Regarding “non-questions” or questions with invalid sources of difficulty, the team noted that the memoranda typically gives the marks for questions with invalid sources of difficulty to ALL candidates who attempted to answer these questions. These questions are typically identified during the marking process before the memoranda are closed.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

## **4. English Results**

### **4.1 Compliance in terms of format and structure**

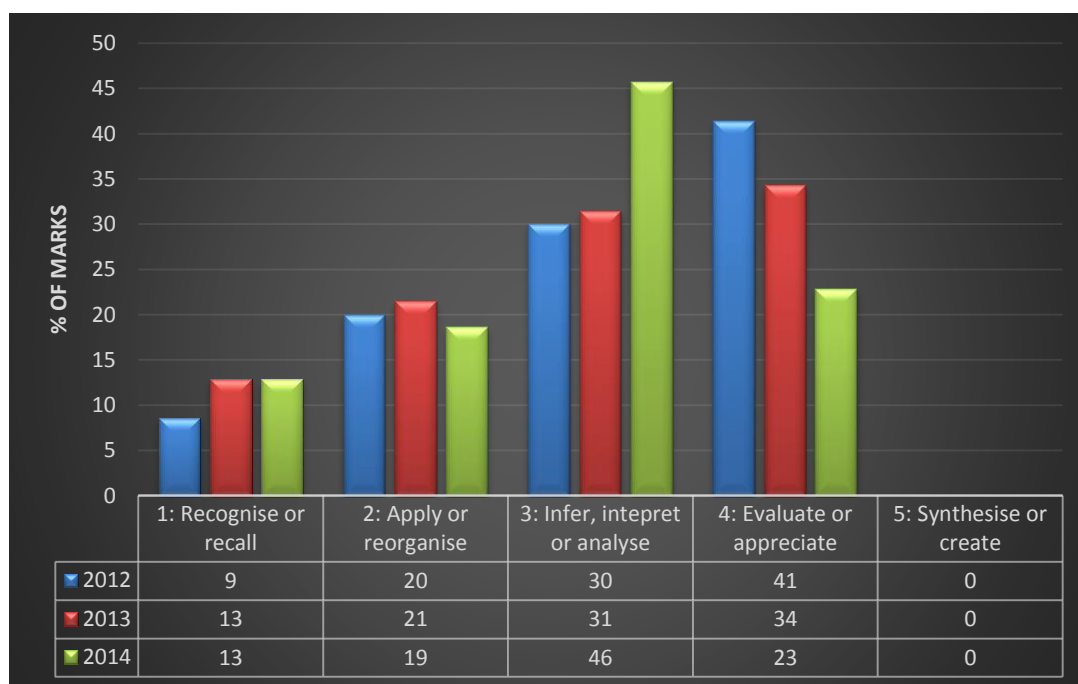
There are no differences between the 2012 and 2013 papers 1, 2 and 3 in terms of their format and structure. They comply with the NCS Subject Assessment Guidelines and Examination Guideline documents. It is clear that every effort has been made to produce good quality papers.

The 2014 papers comply with CAPS. Paper 1 has retained its format and allocation of marks per question. The only change from the previous two years in Paper 2 of 2014 is the exclusion of the unseen poetry essay. Paper 3 – Section C (shorter transactional) has been replaced with the choice of a second longer transactional piece. Thus, the mark allocation per section has changed: Section B from 30 marks to 25 marks; and Section C from 20 marks to 25 marks. Paper 3 now consists of Section A – 50 marks and Section B 2 x 25 marks = 50 marks.

### **4.2 Distribution of cognitive demand in the papers**

The cognitive demand over the three years (2012 to 2014) has been fairly consistent in all papers. A suitably challenging cognitive demand is considered necessary for Home Language learners who are preparing to achieve matric exemption and pursue their studies at a tertiary institution, or in the work place.

### 4.2.1 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 1

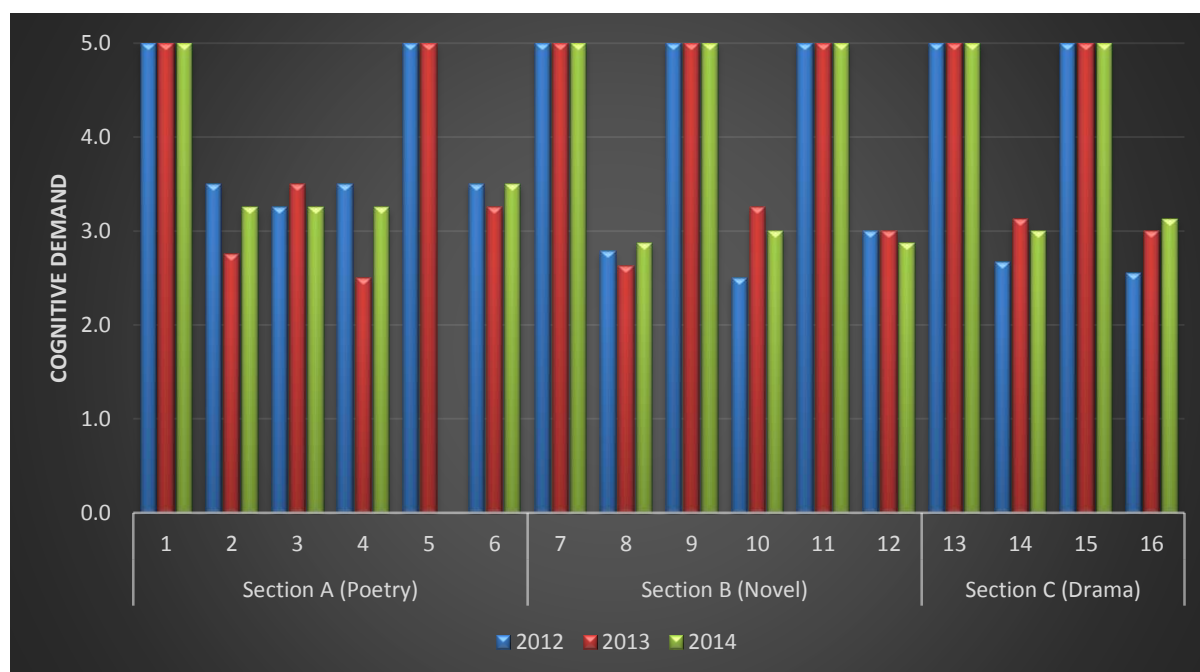


**Figure 4.1: Weighting of cognitive demand in English Paper 1**

The 2012 paper was higher in cognitive demand than the 2013 paper. Noted particularly on the Comprehension: Section A. The 2014 paper is less cognitively challenging than the previous two years.

What the table (Figure 4.1) shows is that 46% of the 2014 paper is moderately challenging. This is a significant shift from the previous two years. However, this shift in cognitive challenge aligns the 2014 paper more closely to the proportions as suggested in the guideline document. This would actually make the 2014 paper, although cognitively easier, more compliant with the SAGs than previous years.

## 4.2.2 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 2



**Figure 4.2: Weighting of cognitive demand in English Paper 2**

NB: In 2014 as there is a missing unseen poetry essay (Q. 5), questions on the above graph have not been assigned the correct question numbers for the purpose of catching this data. However the set work essays and contextual questions match the respective novels and dramas. i.e. 2014 Question 5 is captured as Question 6 *et cetera*.

### (a) Literature Essays

What can be observed from the graphs is that on the literature papers of 2012, 2013 and 2014 all the essay questions are of a high cognitive level. It is accepted that all essay type questions require both appreciation and synthesis which are higher order processes.

### (b) Contextual Questions

#### Section A: Poetry

The 2012 questions are slightly more challenging overall than both the 2013 and 2014 papers.

What is important is that the 2014 paper is balanced for all three of the choice questions (Qs 2, 3 and 4). Therefore no candidate should be disadvantaged by the

choice made. The unseen contextual poem (Q. 6) is compulsory so all candidates will have been faced with the same cognitive challenge.

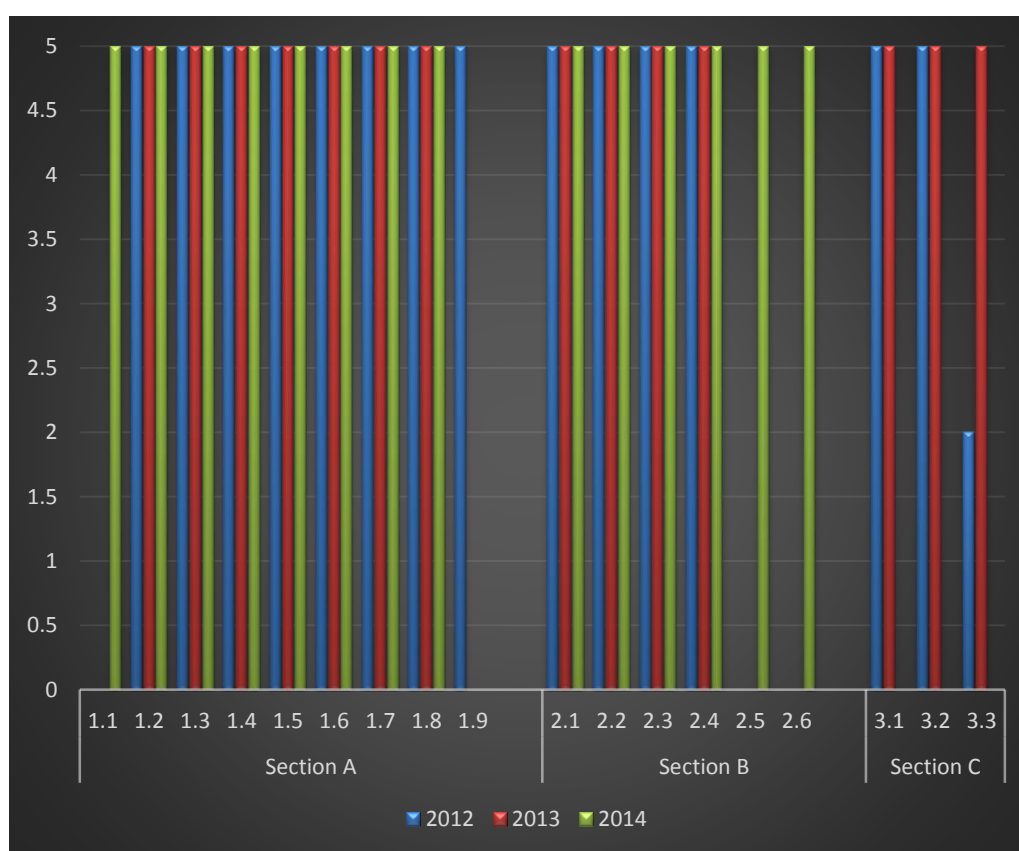
### **Section B: Novel**

The questions were equitable overall in terms of cognitive demand. All three years are, on average, moderately challenging. Again, the 2014 questions are consistent across all three novels. What has been built into the contextual choice questions in the 2014 paper is that all start with an easy literal comprehension, recall of facts, question. The questions that follow are then moderate inferential questions. The final question is always a higher order evaluation question. This is evidence excellent attention paid by the examiner to keep all the choice questions equal in cognitive demand.

### **Section C: Drama.**

There is a slight difference in the choice questions in the 2012 and 2013 papers. The 2014 paper shows consistency across both Dramas in terms of cognitive demand. As with the novels, the 2014 paper both options start with an easy literal comprehension, recall of facts, question. The questions which follow are then moderate inferential questions. The final question on each option is always a higher order evaluation question. This is evidence that excellent attention has been paid by the examiners to keep all the choice questions equal in cognitive demand.

### 4.2.3 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 3



**Figure 4.3: Weighting of cognitive demand in English Paper 3**

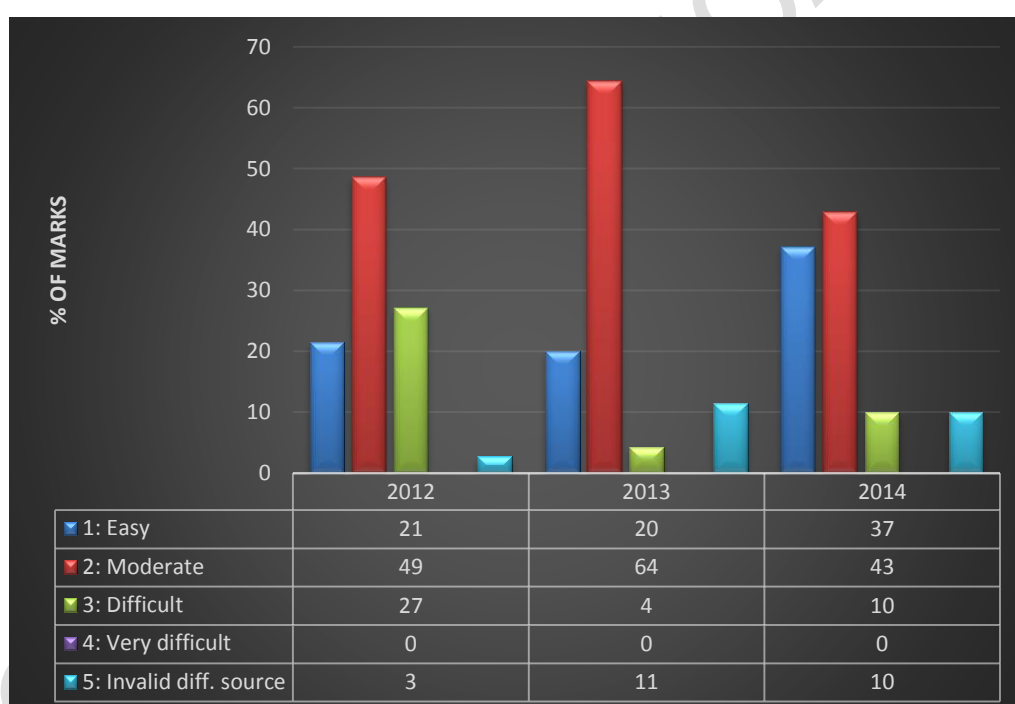
The Writing papers of 2012, 2013 and 2014 are of equal cognitive demand. All original writing questions require higher order processes in order to successfully put together a coherent whole and make a new or unique product. This applies to both the essay questions and the transactional writing pieces.

The team cannot see any significant difference in the cognitive demand of the combined papers of 2012, 2013 and 2014 as suggested by the combined weighting of the papers from the statistical analyses. The combined weighting of the 2014 papers may be affected by the shift in Paper 1 which was set more moderately than the previous two years. The combined shift however should not make enormous statistical difference to the results of the 2014 examination. The paper carries 70 of the full 400 marks.

The demand of balancing cognitive demand on choice questions applies on the Literature paper only. The optional question mark allocations are matched most carefully in the 2014 papers. The essay questions are well matched in terms of both cognitive demand and difficulty for all years. The contextual questions for the drama and novel choices are also well matched, with negligible differences in the cognitive levels over the 25 marks. The cognitive levels in the poetry Section A were particularly well matched in the 2014 paper. This has been carefully constructed into the paper by the examiner.

### 4.3 Distribution of levels of difficulty

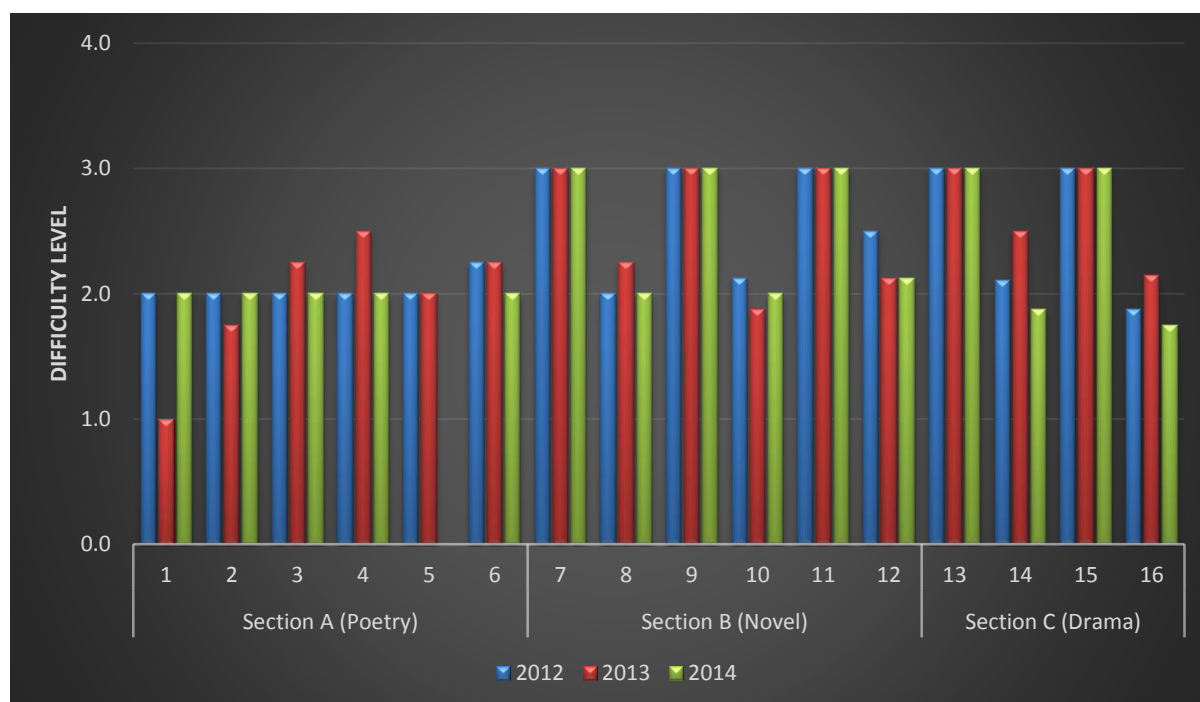
#### 4.3.1 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 1



**Figure 4.4: Weighting of difficulty level in English Paper 1**

Paper 1: The 2012 paper is clearly the most difficult paper of the three according to the team's analysis. 23% more of the questions are in the difficult category than on the 2012 paper than on the 2013 paper; 17% more difficult questions than on the 2014. The 2014 paper also has the highest percentage of easy questions. This is a significant difference. The analysis shows that the 2014 paper is easier than the previous two years.

### 4.3.2 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 2



**Figure 4.5: Difficulty weighting in English Paper 2**

Paper 2 of 2012, 2013 and 2014 were evenly matched with respect to the overall levels of difficulty.

From the graph one can see that there was a variation in the difficulty level of the choice questions in both 2012 and 2013. However, in 2014 there is an impressive consistency in the 'average' level of difficulty across all of the questions within their own sections. This as with the cognitive demand ensures that candidates are not disadvantaged by their choice of question or choice of prescribed work. This is evidence of meticulous attention on the part of the examiners.

It can be seen from the graphs that in all papers the majority of questions would be considered moderately challenging for the 'average' candidate. In the Literature papers the essay questions are all considered more difficult for an average candidate. This is not to say that an average candidate will not attain marks, but it is harder for them to get very good to excellent marks. Literature essays also present the highest cognitive challenge. The essays set all require a sound knowledge of the texts and engagement with the issues therein. It must be remembered though, that the



candidate must answer one essay only on the paper. That amounts to 25 of the 80 marks.

There is commendable correlation in the difficulty level of choice questions on the Literature papers but especially on the 2014 paper. This means candidates who write different options and have different set works are not going to be disadvantaged in the examination.

### 4.3.3 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 3

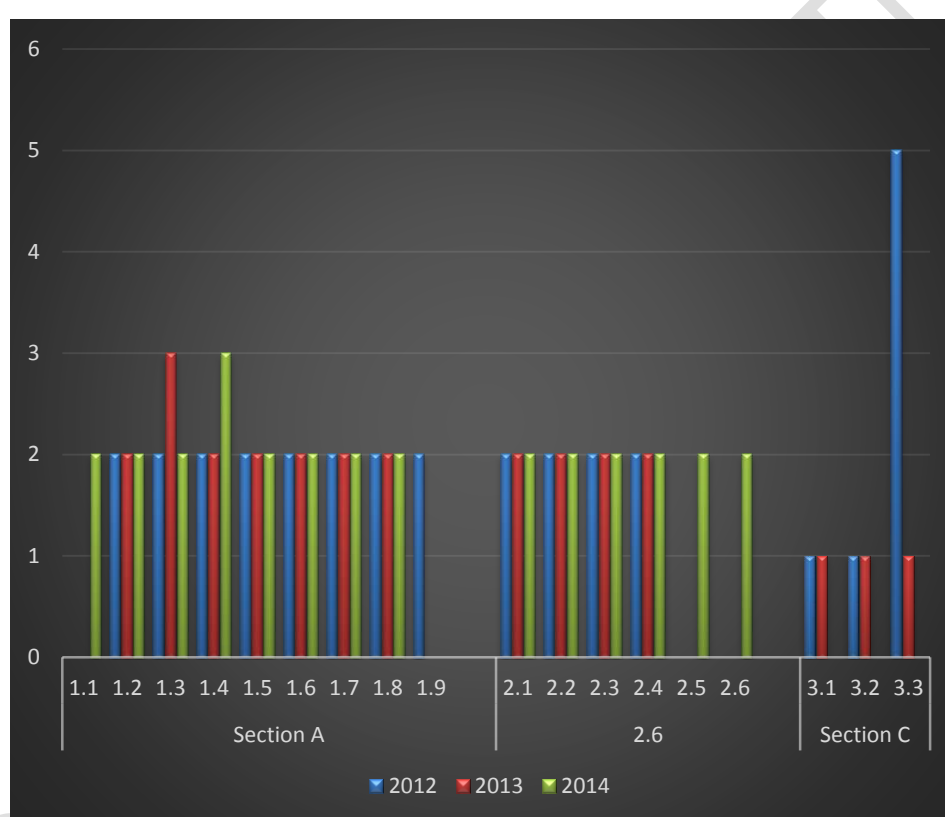


Figure 4.6: Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 3

### 4.4 Topic or content and/or skills area weightings

Paper 1, Paper 2 and Paper 3 for 2012, 2013 and 2014 have the correct weighting of content and skills coverage as stipulated in the curriculum with a suitable range of questions covering as much as can be expected of such a diverse subject within the framework of the examination. The combined skills coverage is designed into the

Examination by having the three papers. In this way content and skills are covered across the curriculum by the papers.

In terms of coverage of examinable curriculum, each paper covers a particular broad topic area for English Home Language. Content and skills are covered across the curriculum by the combined papers: Paper 1 covers Language; Paper 2 covers the Literature; Paper 3 covers Writing skills; Paper 4 captures an Oral mark which is assessed internally at each school.

#### **4.5 Invalid sources of question difficulty or ease**

There are remarkably few questions which the team felt were made more difficult in terms of an Invalid Difficulty. There is one question on each of the Literature papers of 2012 and 2013; there is one on the 2012 Language paper. This is certainly nothing that would seriously jeopardise a candidate's mark. Paper 1 of 2013 had 4 questions with Invalid Difficulty but these questions would be sorted out at the marking session so even then candidates would not be penalised. The concern with the 2014 Paper 1 is over the first cartoon (Text E) and its questions. The Stimulus difficulty lies in the wording of the questions. We felt that the cartoon itself was not a particularly good choice. It is considered less accessible than the cartoons in the previous two years.

The Invalid Difficulty question does not necessarily mean that a question will earn a candidate zero marks. Often the problems that occur from Invalid Difficulty is resolved and addressed at the marking session. The above percentages are not necessarily a fair reflection of difficulty incurred.

#### **4.6 Rating the quality of examination papers**

The opinion is that the papers are of a good quality in terms of both presentation and content. It is acknowledged that every care has been taken by the examiners to produce papers that are fair, varied and accessible to the average English Home Language candidate.

## 4.7 Level and depth of subject knowledge

The team believes that the curriculum has been suitably covered and the papers have the appropriate level and depth of subject knowledge. Particularly on Paper 1, there is no particular content or skill which is given more emphasis. There is little repetition of content testing over the three years which means that candidates cannot 'spot' learn for a paper. No paper would be predictable in the type of questions asked. This is on the understanding that an average candidate would attain an average mark across all of the examinations and that there is enough in the examination to be challenging enough for better candidates. The papers are suitably discriminating for a wide range of marks.

## 4.8 Difficulty of stimulus/source material

*Number of stimulus/source material analysed as easy, moderately challenging and difficult*

### (a) Paper 1

| Paper 1: Requirements for texts   |      |   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|------|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Section A: Comprehension</b>   | Q. 1 | 1 x Prose passage plus 1 visual text (cartoon or advert etc.) | Approx. 700 -800 words        |
| <b>Section B: Summary</b>         | Q. 2 | 1 x Prose passage   | 350 words                     |
| <b>Section C: Language issues</b> | Q. 3 | 1 or 2 Advertisements   | Word allocation not specified |
|                                   | Q. 4 | 1 or 2 Cartoons   |                               |
|                                   | Q. 5 | 1 x Prose passage   |                               |

| Stimulus/source material: Easy, Moderate and Difficult |      |           |          |                       |
|--|------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|
|  | TEXT | 2012      | 2013     | 2014                  |
| <b>Comprehension</b>                                   | A    | Moderate  | Moderate | Moderate to Difficult |
|  | B    | Moderate  | Easy     | Moderate              |
| <b>Summary</b>   | C    | Moderate  | Moderate | Easy                  |
| <b>Lang Structures</b>                                 | D    | Moderate  | Moderate | Moderate              |
| <b>Media Aspects</b>                                   | E    | Moderate  | Moderate | Difficult             |
|  | F    | Difficult | No Text  | Moderate              |
| <b>Lang Usage</b>                                      | G    | Moderate  | Moderate | Moderate              |

The number and length of source materials in each of the papers is consistent with the assessment guidelines. The texts in Paper 1 2012, 2013 and 2014 are moderately challenging as they require in-depth understanding and interpretation by Home Language learners, they are unseen texts. The Comprehension passages in Section A of the 2013 paper was perhaps more accessible in its content for the average Grade 12 learner than the 2012 paper. The 2014 Comprehension passage might be considered the least accessible in terms of content (Global warming and fuel emissions) and demand of the text because of the more factual and technical issues in the passage. The Cartoon in the 2014 Paper 1 is considered less accessible to candidates than cartoons in previous years.

### **(b) Paper 2**

The set work extracts in Paper 2 of 2012, 2013 and 2014 should be familiar to the learners, thus they would be moderately challenging. The unseen poems might be slightly more challenging as they are unseen texts. However, unseen poems for the examinations are selected with this in mind and are generally easier and more accessible than the prescribed set of seen poems.

### **(c) Paper 3**

The essays are all well matched topics. The 2014 paper essays topics would allow for a number of approaches (narrative/discursive/expository). This further aligns their equability in terms of choice of topic. The transactional topics are generally varied and well matched one with another. The source materials used for the different options are accessible for the average candidate.

### **(d) Comparison of levels of difficulty of source or stimulus material of the optional questions**

The stimulus material of the choice questions in Paper 2, 2012 and 2013 are on par with one another. The length of texts and levels of difficulty are no more challenging in one genre than the others. The exception being the Othello contextual extracts in 2013 were considered more challenging than those in the 2012 paper. Otherwise, the extracts from the different novels or dramas studied by the learners should pose a similar challenge. In Paper 3 learners are free to choose a topic from a selection of 15

topics. The difficulty of source is relevant to the type of essay/transactional piece which the learners choose

#### **4.9 Other points regarding the standard of the examination**

It is felt that the papers for 2014, as they stand, would give a good range of marks. There is sufficient that is easy enough to allow for the weaker candidate to gain a 40% pass. There is also sufficient to challenge top candidates especially on Papers 2 and 3. The questions on the Essay and Literature papers should allow this challenge and the memoranda and rubrics (expected response) if properly applied would give discriminating outcomes. It is the 80% to 100% candidates which are more difficult to differentiate between in the marking process, especially on the creative and literature essay type questions. There is always an element of subjectivity involved in marking language paper questions. Language educators are notoriously wary of giving full marks and therefore the top end marks tend to 'bunch' at the lower end of this continuum.

#### **4.10 Comparability of examination papers**

The examination papers over the past three years have been of sound quality. It is felt that every effort has been made to produce examination papers that are well presented in format, layout and structure. It is considered a positive aspect that the same formula has been applied to the layout, instructions and numbering of the three papers in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Candidates will have seen past papers and it will add to their confidence in an examination when they are faced with something that looks familiar in structure.

The report has dealt with the issue of standards. What is evident is that the standards in Papers 2 and 3 have been maintained across all three years and an improvement seen in the matching of the standards of choice questions in the 2014 paper. In Paper 1, the 2012 paper is considered to be of the highest standard followed by the 2013 paper and the 2014 paper the lowest in terms of the cognitive demand and level of difficulty.

#### **4.11 Recommendations for improving the quality and standard of English Home Language examinations**

It is felt that the English Home Language papers have, over the past three years, been suitable models for the assessment of the subject. The importance is to maintain standards. From the analysis undertaken it would be necessary to ensure that Paper 1 does not become more diluted in terms of its cognitive demand and its degree of difficulty. Though Paper 1 of 2014 is the most 'compliant' in cognitive demand, it is not of the same standard as the 2012 paper.

If English is to be used, as it is for many in South Africa, as the language of learning at tertiary level and the language of use in business and the workplace, then the examinations must be set at a level which will ensure that this will be accommodated. English is a global language and is therefore an invaluable tool. It is a common language that enables communication with people from non-English speaking backgrounds in virtually every arena of modern life.

Though it is not part of the brief for this report the following needs to be stated: The efforts on the part of the examiners and moderators to maintain good standards have been most commendable in of all the papers. However, the fate of the papers ultimately rests with the people who are responsible for marking them. If the marking process is not given due diligence by a team of competent markers then the whole process is compromised. This is a very real problem when it comes to looking at the raw marks once the examination has been marked and judging the standard of the examination papers.

The memoranda are finalised for all the marking panels across the country before the marking begins and so do not readily allow for additions or corrections to be made during the marking process. Often the candidates who suffer from markers being memo bound are the better candidates who articulate a correct response in a way that differs from the memo. In the languages it is impossible to cover every possible variation that may arise for a correct answer. A competent marker should not be 100% memo bound.

## 5. IsiNdebele Results

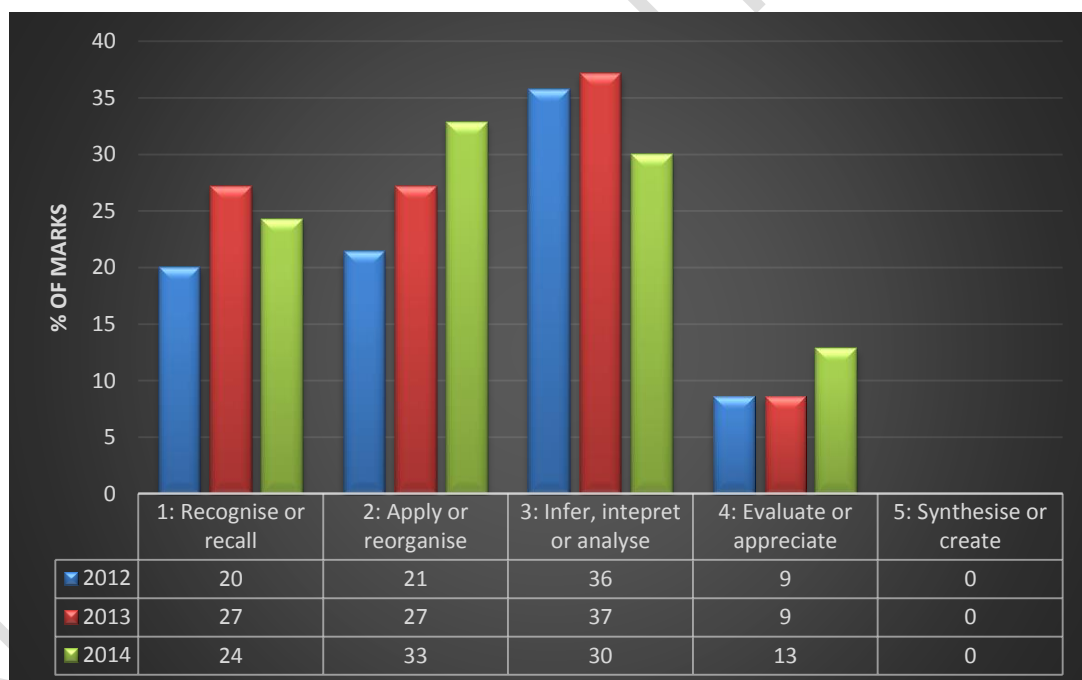
### 5.1 Compliance in terms of format and structure

All three papers are the same in terms of their format and structure.

### 5.2 Distribution of cognitive demand in the papers

#### 5.2.1 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 1

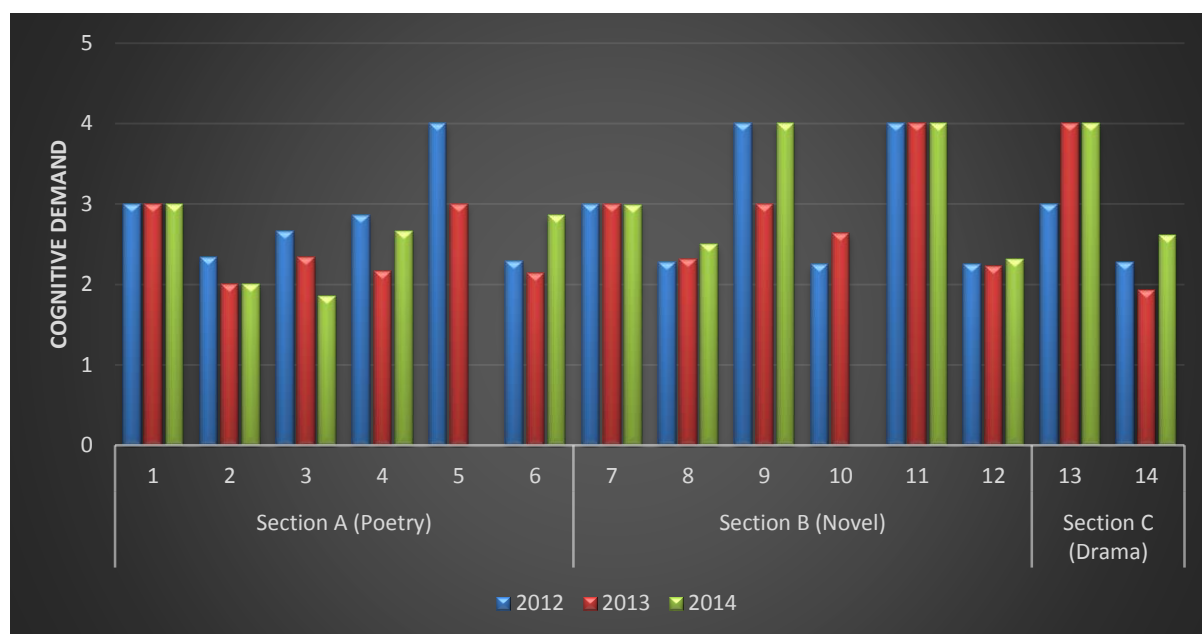
The 2012 and 2013 papers are dominated by low and medium cognitive level questions and few from the high order level. 2012 and 2013 papers are moderate whereas 2014 paper is slightly more difficult. The 2014 paper has marginally more questions that require higher order thinking skills as opposed to the 2012 and 2013.



**Figure 5.1: Weighting of cognitive demand in isiNdebele Paper 1**

The 2012 and 2013 papers are weighted similarly in terms of easy and moderate questions, but they differ in terms of their weighting of difficult questions. The 2014 paper is slightly more difficult because it has about 18% worth of very difficult questions. These papers are not fairly comparable because 2014 is more difficulty compared to both the 2012 and 2013 papers.

## 5.2.2 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 2



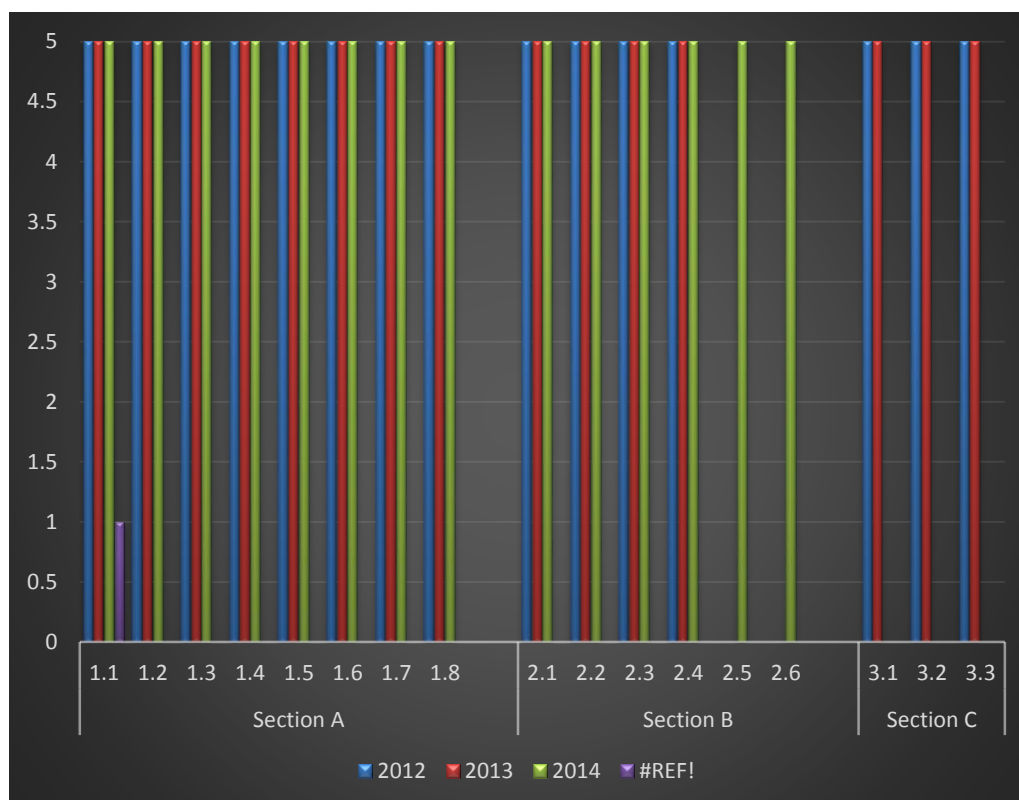
**Figure 5.2: Weighting of cognitive demand in isiNdebele Paper 2**

In 2012 - 2014 all essay questions (Questions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13) required medium and higher order thinking skills, whereas the contextual questions required low and medium order thinking skills.

The 2014 paper was slightly more challenging in all the genres compared to the 2012 and the 2013 papers. The 2012 question paper was more difficult than the 2013 paper because in 2012 Question 7 and 9 tested conflicts in relation to the theme. These questions are very demanding compared to the 2013 questions, which only expected *candidates to support that the main character is in line with the present lifestyle and in conflict with time and place (plot)*. In 2014 the question was about the setting.



### 5.2.3 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 3

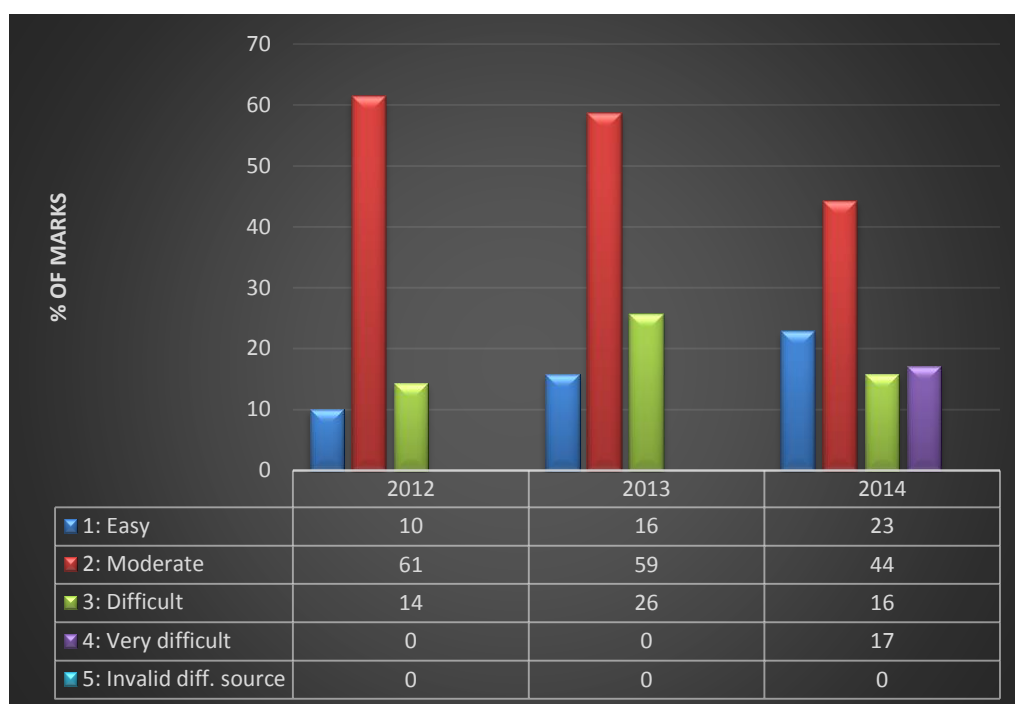


**Figure 5.3: Weighting of cognitive demand in isiNdebele Paper 3**

Reflected on the graph (**Figure 5.3**) is that the choice questions across all sections and years were the same in terms of cognitive demand. Thus, no candidate would have been unfairly advantaged on the basis of the choices they made in the examination.

## 5.3 Distribution of levels of difficulty in the papers

### 5.3.1 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 1



**Figure 5.4: Weighting of difficulty level in isiNdebele Paper 1**

All essays are assessed the same way in all questions and they are all on the same level of cognitive demand, thus they compare favourably.

### 5.3.2 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 2

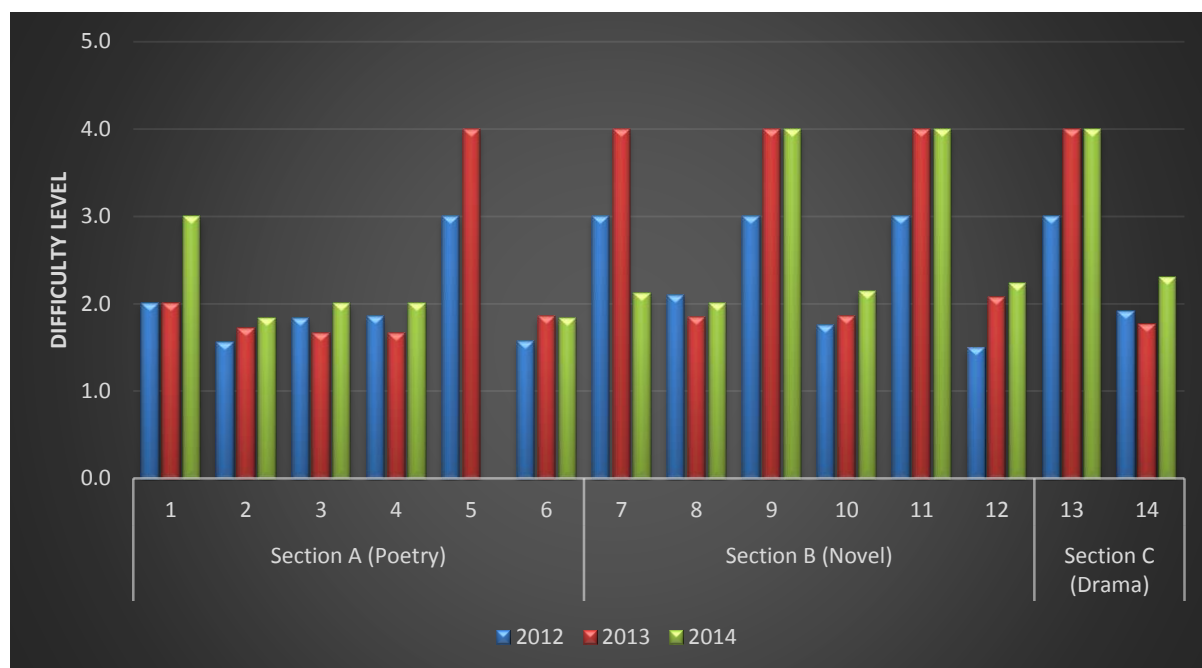
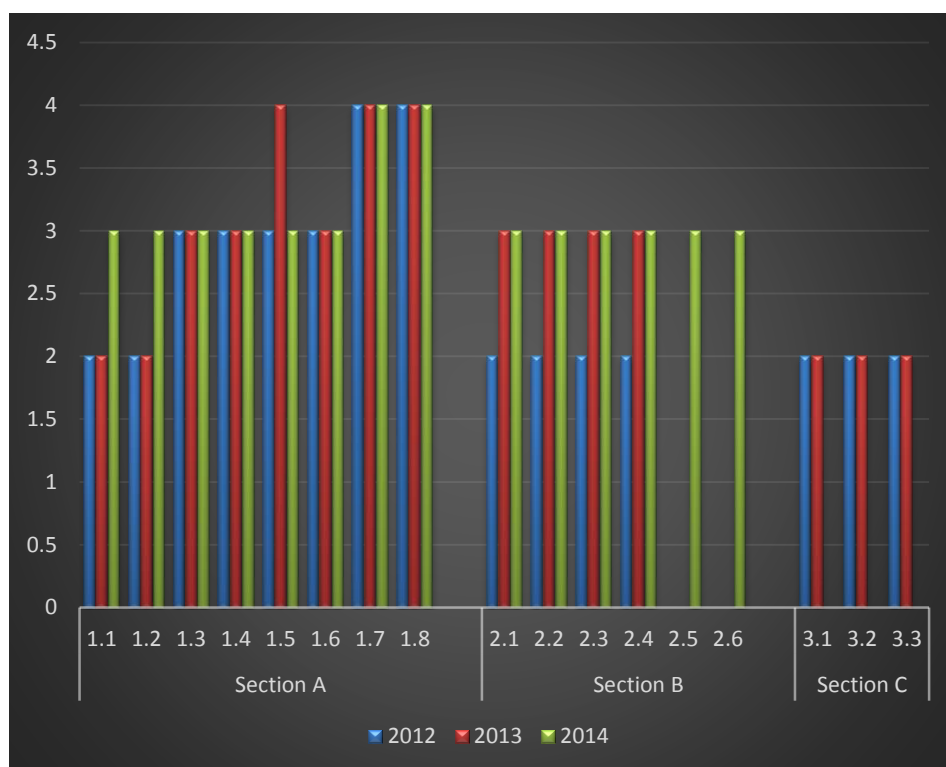


Figure 5.5: Weighting of difficulty level in isiNdebele Paper 2

### 5.3.3 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 3

Figure 5.6 shows that in the 2012 and 2013 papers, Question 1.1 and 1.2 in **Section A** compared favourably because both are easy, but in 2014 both of questions were a bit difficult. Again, Questions 1.3, 1.4 and 1.6 compared favourably across all years as they were at the same level of difficulty (moderate). However, Question 1.5 changed in 2013 as a result of an invalid source of question difficulty where the learners were expected to write an essay relating about the whole year's incident.



**Figure 5.6: Weighting of difficulty level in isiNdebele Paper 3**

Regarding **Section B**, in the 2012 paper, all the questions in Section B were moderately difficulty, whereas in both 2013 and 2014 those questions were difficult, according to the team's evaluation. Because the 2014 paper did not have **Section C**, there is nothing worth commending about except to say that in both 2012 and 2013 the questions were set at a moderate level of difficulty.

#### **5.4 Invalid sources of question difficulty or ease**

**Question 1.7** in the **2012 paper** has a picture that is difficult to interpret. *In the picture there is a car that looks like it is broken because the bonnet is open, and a few meters away from the car there are bottles, with funny names, lying around; but they do not look like liquor bottles, no one is seen in the car.*

In the same paper (2012), **Question 2.4** had a multi-concept stimulus which will pose a difficulty to the candidates on how to answer in relation to the way the question was phrased. The question reads: *Your uncle has passed away. Write an obituary that will be read during the funeral. In the picture there is a tombstone on which is written*

**R.I.P.** *There flowers lying next to the tombstone and on top of the tombstone there is a graduation hat.*

In the **2013 Paper: Question 1.5** requires the candidates to write an essay about the whole year's incidents/events. The topic is: *Write a story and explain about a year's journey (incidents) that took place from the first month until when you start writing the Grade 12 exams.*

### 5.5 Quality of examinations papers

The texts that were used in the comprehension test and summary are about current issues. The 2012 paper was about the National Census, and 2013 paper was about global warming. Summary tests were about cellphones and the challenges that new students face at tertiary level.

- **2012** had only one invalid source of difficulty question which is Question **5.5**. It is invalid because the question had insufficient marks allocated to it.
- **2013** had one invalid source of difficulty question which is Question **1.1.5**. The question was Agricultural or Geographical in nature, thus candidates who are doing these subjects were advantaged.
- **2014** had an invalid source of difficulty, in the summary question in Section B the instruction did not correlate with the summary text that candidates were supposed to summarise. (**Instruction:** *Summarise the way in which learners can get money for furthering their studies.*

However, according to the text, the **title** is: *How can you help your friend who is a drug addict.* The marks in the advertisement question were not consistent; in 2012 (**Question 3.1**) two marks were allocated for each point whereas in 2013 (**Question 3.1**) only one mark was allocated for a point.

### 5.6 Quality of examination papers

Only one invalid source question was found in the 2013 question paper., **8.13** was an invalid source question because the question does not correlate with the answer given in the memorandum. The question reads: *Critically analyse the ending of the*

*life that Mavela lived and state whether it is believable or not.* The answer in the memorandum addresses the issue of the twist in the tail that is found in the whole story.

## 5.7 General comments

**Paper 1**, the comprehension text in the 2012 paper was moderate because it was about the census which is the topic that is known by a majority of the learners and the language of the content is also easy to follow and to be read. However, the comprehension in the 2013 paper was a bit challenging because it was about issues of global warming. The terminology used in the text could be understood mostly by the candidates who have knowledge of geography or agriculture. The team found the 2014 comprehension text easy because it is more environmentally friendly to all the candidates because it was about bullying in schools, which is something that is currently topical and all candidates understand this very well.

## 5.8 Concluding discussion

All the exam papers were in line with the SAG/Examination Guidelines. Nothing could have disadvantaged the learners, all the questions asked were in accordance with the standard of the Grade 12 learners, i.e. they were fairly asked. There were no questions which every learner will get right or wrong. In 2014 the summary text was long it had **286** words instead of **270** words. In 2012 and 2013, Section A, Questions 1.1 and 1.2, the level of difficulty was the same but in 2014 it was a bit high. For Questions 1.3 and 1.4 it was the same across. Question 1.5 in 2012 and 2014 are the same, but in 2013 it is more difficult because it had an invalid question which wanted the candidate to write an essay of the whole year's events. However, there were also questions where the choices were not at the same level of difficulty, e.g. a friendly letter may not be the same as an official letter. Regarding things that could disadvantage the learners, in 2014 Paper 1 in the summary, the instruction was confusing because it did not correlate with the text.

Section C, an advert, a candidate who wrote in 2012 and 2014 was advantaged. There is a question that asks about the criteria to be followed when writing an advert. In 2013 candidates were requested to give 4 points and each point is worth one mark

(4). In 2012 only two points were asked for 4 marks; in 2014 the question was two marks but the number of points not specified. A candidate would use common sense, for 2 questions in 2014 candidates just had to identify words for 4 marks. They explained two words (ideas) for 4 marks.

In conclusion, all 2014 papers (Paper 1, Paper 2 and Paper 3) were slightly difficult compared to the 2012 and 2013 papers, as a result few candidates will reach Level 7 in their final examination.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

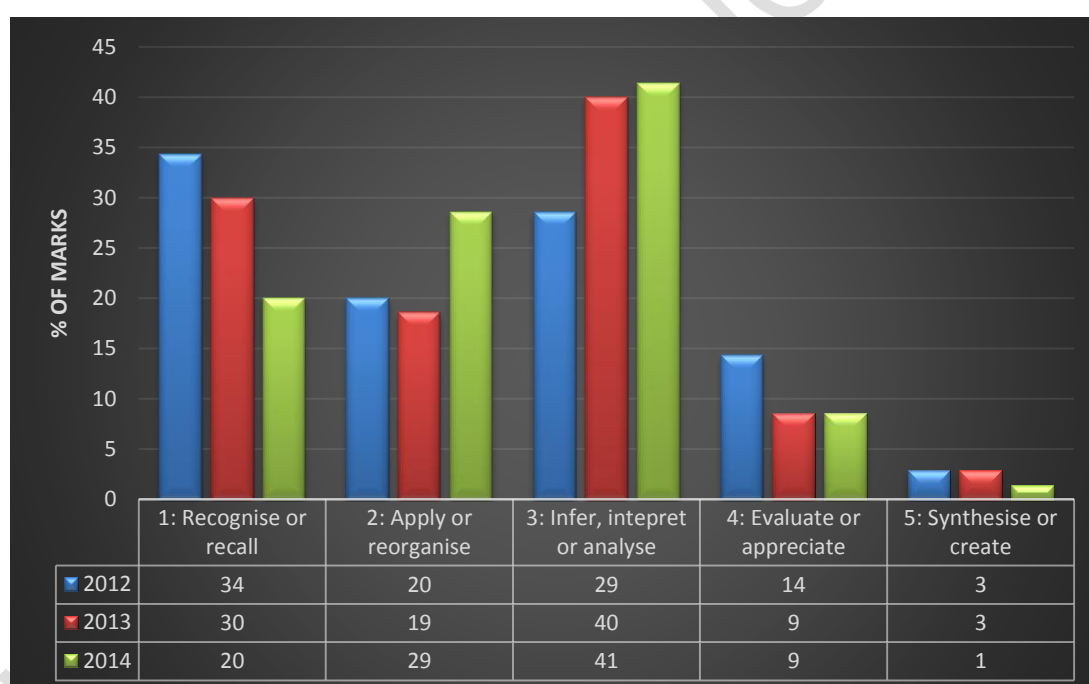
## 6. IsiXhosa Results

### 6.1 Compliance in terms of format and structure

All question three questions papers (Papers 1 – 3) for all the years comply with the examination guidelines. The format and structure of the papers comply with examination guidelines. However, in the 2014 Paper 2 Question 7.8 – the mark allocation does not comply with the exam guidelines for 2014. For example 1 mark is awarded for a question that requires 2 marks.

### 6.2 Distribution of cognitive demand in the papers

#### 6.2.1 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 1



**Figure 6.1: Cognitive demand weighting in isiXhosa Paper 1**

In terms of 40:40:20, the 2012 question paper has 54% in lower order questions, the 2013 and 2014 question papers has 49% of lower order questions. The medium order questions of the 2012 question paper is 29%; 40% and 41% for 2013 and 2014 respectively, which means they do comply with 40% as required by the Examination Guidelines. The higher order questions of the 2012 paper is equal to 17%, for 2013 it is 12% and for 2014 it is 10%, meaning all years do not comply with the 40% of the lower



order questions and 20% of higher order questions. The 2013 and 2014 question papers are almost the same in terms of cognitive demand level across all cognitive demand levels.

The 2012 questions are more on the lower order level of cognitive level, at 34%. The questions require the candidates to recognise/identify the answer that is explicitly stated in the text. The 2014 questions have more application and reorganised questions which is 29%; whereas the 2013 and 2014 question papers have more questions under inference and interpretation type questions, at 40% and 41%, respectively. The 2012 paper has more evaluation questions, at 14%; the reason for this is because of poorly phrased questions which are asked as if they need learners' response instead of the expected response from examiner. For example, questions, 1.8.2, 1.10, 3.1, 3.7, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.7

The main difference between the three papers is in relation to their allocation of marks to medium and to higher order questions. Lower order and medium order questions in the 2013 and 2014 question papers are the same which is at 49%, 40/41%, as compared to 2012 which is 54% and 29%.

### 6.2.2 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 2

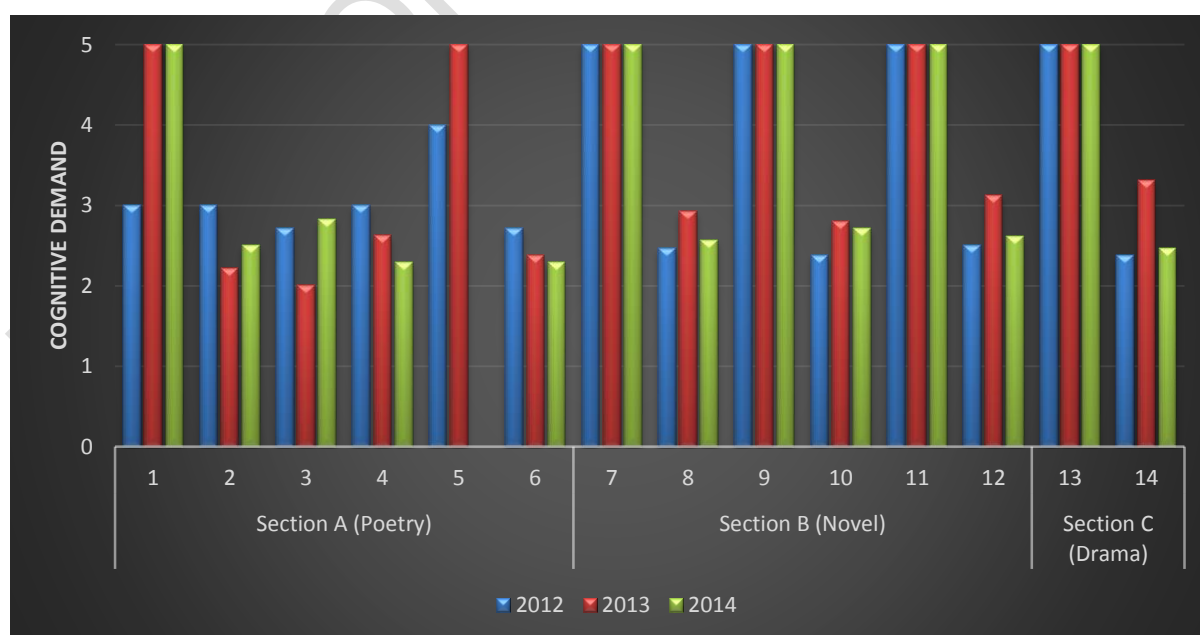
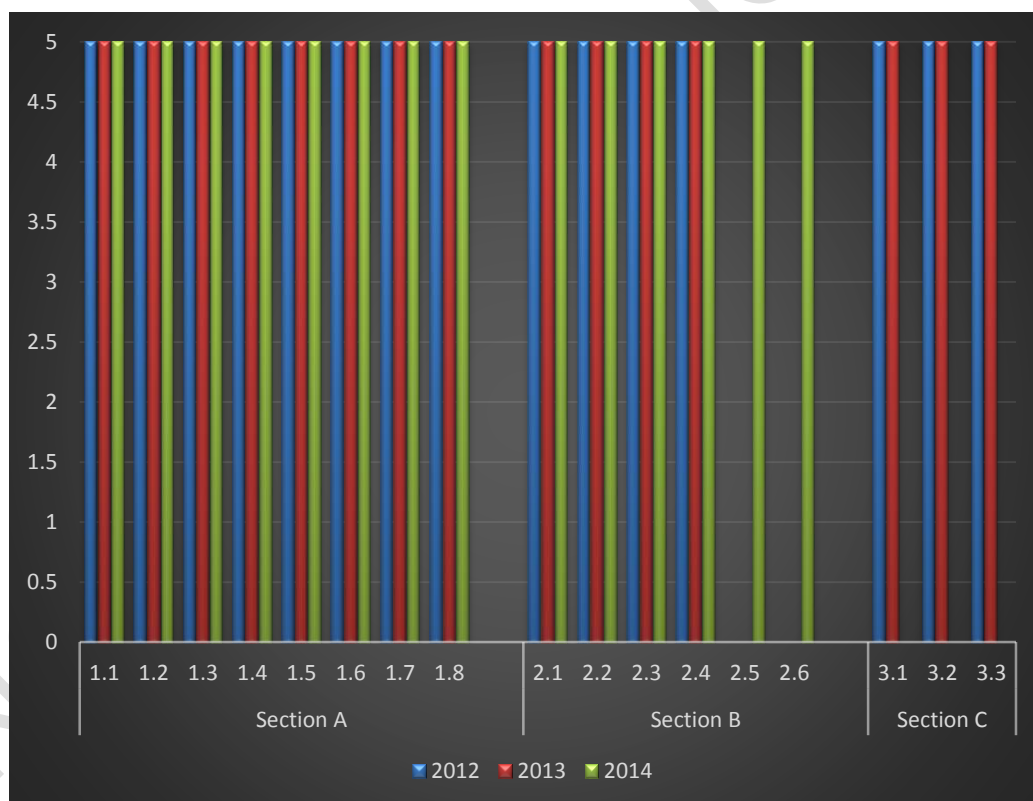


Figure 6.2: Weighting of cognitive demand in isiXhosa Paper 2

Except for those in the poetry section, all essay questions are the same in terms of cognitive level. Both the 2013 and 2014 question papers in Question 1 request the candidate to give the theme of the poems by critically analysing the underlined lines and chosen phrases. In the 2012 question paper, Question 1, the candidates were expected to give a summary of each stanza using their own words. Question 5 of the 2013 question paper is assessed in a similar manner to the 2013 and 2014 Question 1. The 2012 question paper, in Question 5, the examiners indicated the figures of speech to be identified by the candidate in the poem, the needed to use them to portray the context. Almost all contextual questions across the three years are of lower order in terms of cognitive challenge.

### 6.2.3 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 3



**Figure 6.3: Weighting of cognitive demand in isiXhosa Paper 3**

Cognitive demand of all the years reviewed is the same in all sections and questions. The candidates were assessed equally. All choice questions across the papers are of

the same standard in that they all require higher order cognitive skills. There is nothing in the papers that could unfairly advantage learners taking these papers.

## 6.3 Distribution of levels of difficulty in the papers

### 6.3.1 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 1

The 2013 question paper was the easiest one compared to other years. The 2014 question paper was the most moderate paper compared to other years. Although the 2012 question paper can be identified as moderately easy, it carries more ID questions as compared to the other papers.

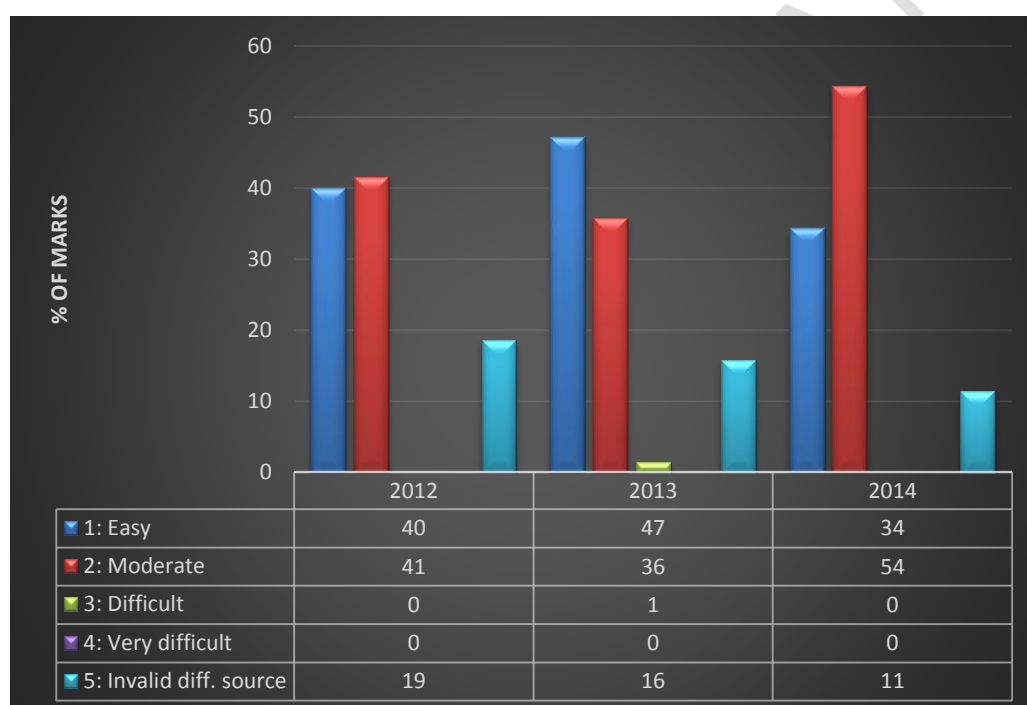


Figure 6.4: Weighting of difficulty level in isiXhosa Paper 1

### 6.3.2 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 2

All question papers (2012, 2013 and 2014) are at a similar standard in terms of level of difficulty for both essay and contextual type questions. This means that there is a minimal difference in terms of level of difficulty.

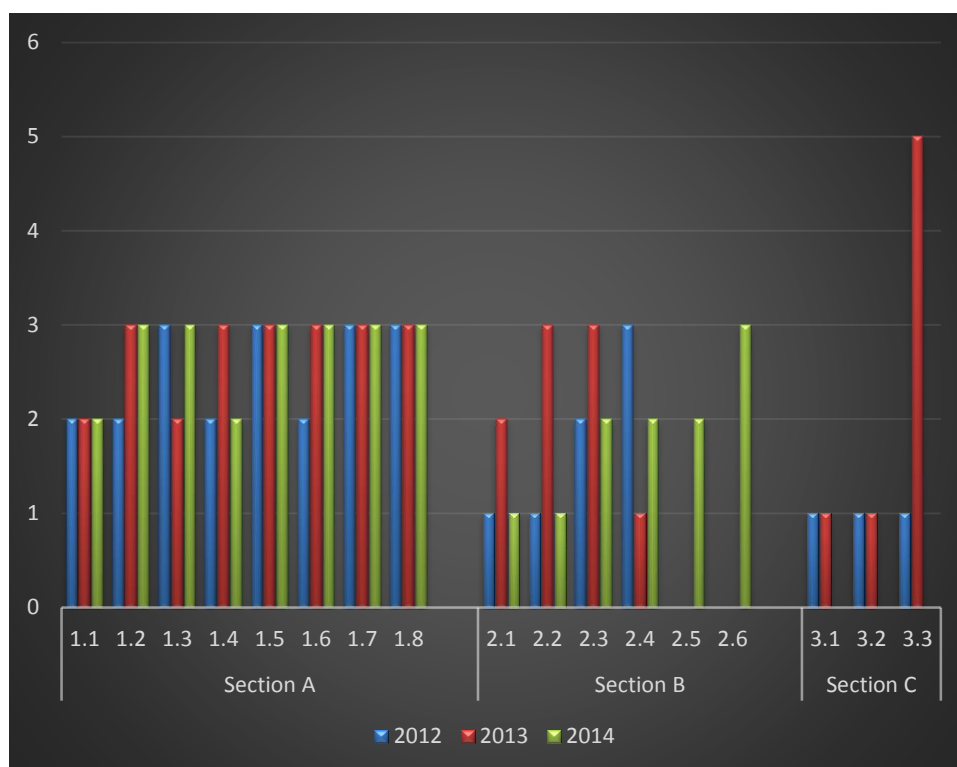


**Figure 6.5: Weighting of difficulty level in isiXhosa Paper 2**

The reason Question 5 in the 2012 question paper is difficult it is because the question requires the candidate to analyse the poem by identifying the metaphors and personification on their own, whereas in the 2013 question paper the candidates are requested to analyse the poem by looking at its meaning, focusing only on the highlighted phrases.

### 6.3.3 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 3

The difference in the level of difficulty in Section A is determined by the type of essay assessed, the same applies to Section B which is determined by the type of transactional writing assessed. In section C 2013 Question 3.3 is the only question at Level 5 due to the source that is invalid; it is a difficult task because the picture is complex, and unclear, and the landmarks are not specified.



**Figure 6.6: Difficulty level weighting in isiXhosa Paper 3**

#### 6.4 Other points

In Paper 1, all the expected assessment standards have been covered in 2012 question paper. Clauses are not covered in the 2013 question paper. Question Papers 2 and 3 of both years assessed the required content and skills in terms of Grade 12 curriculum standards. Also in 2014 Paper 3 Section A, reflective and descriptive essays were not assessed.

#### 6.5 Invalid sources of question difficulty or ease

In Paper 1, the number of questions with ID is 10 (19%) in 2012 (Questions 1.5.3, 1.9, 1.10, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 3.1, 3.2, 4.4), , the number of questions with ID is 7 (16%) in 2013 (Questions 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.9, 1.1.15, 1.1.16, 3.1, 3.8) and the number of questions with ID is 3 in 2014 (Questions 1.2.2, 1.2.4 and 3.3) (9%). For example, in the 2012 question paper, Question 1.5.3, the options given are all not correct. In Question 1.9 the picture does not assist the candidate to come up with the answer that is expected. In the 2013 question paper, Question 1.1.3 the question includes the

expression (*kaloku wayeseRoma nje, wayexhentsa etshila ngezidanga zamaRoma*/when you are in Rome do as Romans do) a phrase that is not familiar to the isiXhosa language and nor to the candidates either. In Question 3.8 the question is biased according to religious beliefs. In 2014 Question 1.2.2 asked the candidate to give the answer on what is being represented by a second bubble, which is unclear. In Question 3.3 the candidates are requested to verify whether or not the slogan agrees with the topic. In the advert given there is no slogan shown.

The raw marks of invalid source of questions in 2012 are 13; in 2013 there are 11, whereas in 2014 there are 8. Invalid sources of 2012 are of stimulus difficulty and they resulted from unclear resources, vague questions, questions that are poorly phrased, ambiguous questions, unclear source and inappropriate illustrations. In 2013 they range from stimulus to content difficulty, the results are from unclear questions, advanced concepts that candidates are unlikely to have the opportunity to learn, the number of knowledge elements assessed, unclear terms, and assessment of advanced concepts. In 2014 the invalid sources are from unclear sources and illustrations.

In Paper 2 of both years, there are minimal invalid sources, only 1 in each year which are both content and stimulus difficulty. The raw marks of invalid source of questions in 2012 are 2 marks; the question requires the candidate to give characteristics that have helped the character to change his behaviour and to become a minister of religion. The question should require incidents, not characteristics. The 2013 raw marks is 1. The question requires the candidate to identify the social beliefs motivated by Stanza 5. The question requires content that is not normally taught in the syllabus. The Invalid source for these questions resulted through ambiguous questions and vague concepts. (2012: 8.4, 2013: 2.7).

In Paper 3, only 2013 has an invalid source in Question 3.3. It shows a stimulus difficulty, the final sentence is not clear because it does not specify which route the truck driver must take from Settlers Monument to Lavender Valley. The visual is packed and there are no clear guidance given to candidates. The marks given for this question is 20. The question requires the candidate to give directions to a truck driver.

## **6.6 Level and depth of subject knowledge**

All question papers for all years are appropriate for Grade 12 candidates, for example, the language used is at their level as HL learners. There is consistency in terms of aspects or topics assessed. The question papers cover a variety of skills as indicated in the National Curriculum Statement. The candidates are asked questions of different cognitive demands and levels of difficulty; and this demands that the candidate should recall, infer, analyse, interpret, evaluate and synthesize.

## **6.7 Difficulty of stimulus/source material**

In Paper 1 of 2012, Question 1.5.3 (1 mark), Question 1.12 (1 mark), Question 1.13 (1 mark), Question 1.14 (2 marks), Question 3.1 (1 mark) and Question 3.2 (1 mark) show ID of unclear resource, misleading sources and inappropriate illustrations. These are explained under Invalid source of difficulty point 2.1 of this report. In the 2014 question paper the ID can be seen in Question 1.2.2 (2 marks), where the bubble referred to is not clear, and in Question 3.3 (2 marks) it shows invalid source where the visual is not clear.

In Paper 3 of all years (2012, 2013, and 2014) Questions 1.7.1 and 1.7.2 are essay questions, with a visual, that carries 50 marks. Only the 2013 question paper, which has a visual in section C, at Question 3.3 carries 20 marks. This visual shows invalid source, as explained above. The picture in Question 1.7.1 of 2012 does not cater to the background of some candidates.

## **6.8 Other points regarding the standard of the examination**

There is an improvement in the examination cognitive demand and level of demand assessed in the question papers. In Paper 2 and Paper 3 of 2012 and 2013 years there was only one invalid source question in each question paper, except for 2012, Paper 3, which had none. There is also a need to assess a variety of questions in contextual questions of Paper 2 Sections B and C. The topics that entail conflict, setting, style, sub-themes are limited in the 2012 and 2013 question papers; they are only assessed as essay type questions. The 2014 question paper shows an improvement in this regard

where the literary elements are not only assessed in essay questions but also in the contextual questions as well. This is evident in the contextual questions of 2014.

### **6.9 Comparability of examination papers**

The percentage of marks allocated to invalid questions in Paper 1 is 19% in 2012, 16% in 2013 and 9% in 2014. In Paper 2 it is 2 marks in 2012 (Question 8.4) and 1 mark in 2013 (Question 2.7). In Paper 3, Question 3.3, 20 marks are allocated to an ID question. (All of these are clearly stipulated in detail in Point 2.1).

As stated above, the skills and knowledge skills assessed are equivalent in all the years.

The 2014, Paper 1, is the same as 2013 in terms of cognitive demand assessed. In terms of level of difficulty Paper 1 of 2014 is the moderate paper. Looking at the other papers there is minimal difference reflected in the papers.

### **6.10 Concluding discussion**

In conclusion, no question paper was seriously out of line with the SAG/Exam Guidelines. In 2012 Paper 1, Question 1 was easier than in the other papers. No questions were observed in all the question papers. All the texts in the question papers were the required length, as specified in the SAG/EG/Policy document. All set work choices are at a similar level; therefore no question will unfairly advantage or disadvantage the candidates. All choice questions are at the same level of difficulty. The difference can be identified in Paper 3 where the difficulty level varied because of the difference in the essay type question and type of transactional writing questions asked.

### **6.11 Recommendations for improving the quality and standard of IsiXhosa HL examinations**

Looking at the papers of all years, it can be observed that the quality has improved as compared to the other years; this is proved by the uniformity in assessing the



cognitive demand and level of difficulty especially in Paper 2 and Paper 3 of all the years. Paper 1 shows a number of invalid source questions, this can mislead the candidate in answering the questions. The English Questioning verbs which are used as examples influence the examiners in such a way that they translate them as they are from English to isiXhosa and thus they sometimes disrupt the questioning style of the language intended. It is recommended that the examples of questioning verbs be made available in indigenous African languages as well.

Although it is recommended that the contextual questions should be balanced in terms of cognitive demand, level of difficulty and the content asked, the wording of the questions can be phrased differently. In 2014, Paper 2, it is observed that contextual questions use the same wording which carries the same content, e.g. Question 7.3 'Loluphi udidi lwempixano oluveliswa phakathi kukaThole noJoe neqela lakhe? Xhasa impendulo yakho'. (2), 11. 12 'Loluphi uhlobo lwempixano oluphakathi kukaDanile noNamhla? Xhasa impendulo yakho'. (2) 11.6 'Loluphi udidi lozobo oluvezwa nguDanile ngomlinganiswa ongulizo kwisicatshulwa? Xhasa impendulo'. (2). 13.2 'Loluphi udidi lozobo lwabalinganiswa oluvezwa ngumlinganiswa uQuka kwintetho yakhe noFiliphu? Xhasa impendulo'. (2), other questions are (7.5 and 9.10, 7.14, 9.14 and 13.13, 11.8 and 13.7, 7.4 and 9.9). The examiners should try by all means to avoid using questions embedded in each other, especially where the highest marks are awarded, since it will disadvantage those candidates who do not know the previous question, e.g. in 2014 questions in Paper 2, Questions 2.1 and 2.2; in Question 2.1 the candidate is asked to name the underlined figure of speech and in Question 2.2 the candidate is requested to give clarity on what the figure of speech identified in Question 2.1 entails. In Questions 7.1 and 7.2 In 7.1 the candidate is requested to state the place where the story takes place and in Question 7.2 the candidate is asked about the incident that happened which made Thole find himself in that particular place which was requested in Questions 7.1, 7.7& 7.10, 9.1 and 9.2.

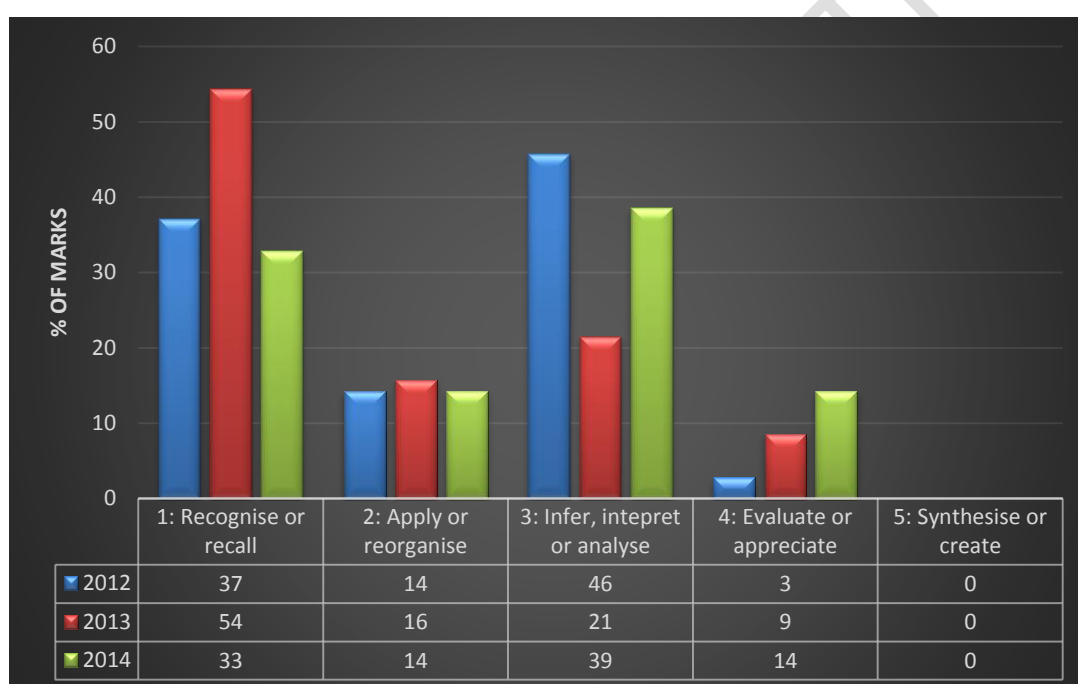
## 7. IsiZulu Results

### 7.1 Compliance with the SAG/examination guidelines

All three papers comply with the SAG in terms of technical details.

### 7.2 Distribution of cognitive demand in the papers

#### 7.2.1 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 1

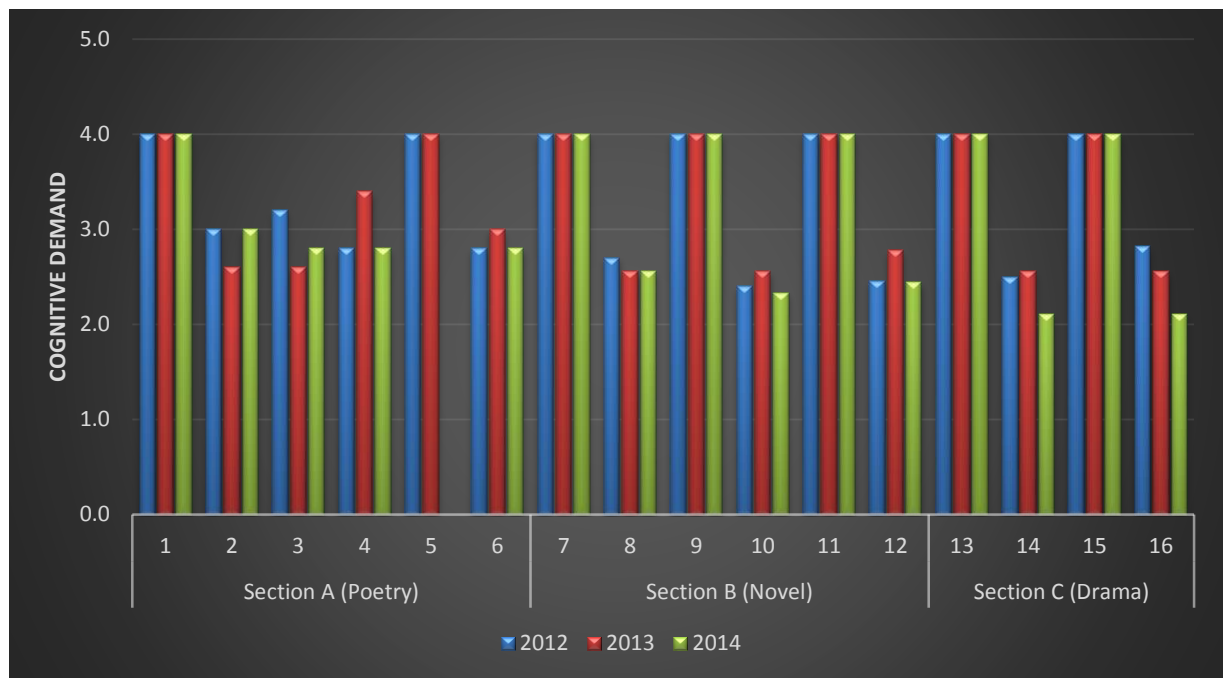


**Figure 7.1: Weighting of cognitive demand in isiZulu Paper 1**

The 2013 paper is not compliant in terms of the forty-forty-twenty principle. Seventy per cent of lower order questions are not acceptable as they exceed the forty per cent mark. With regard to medium order questions, the 2014 paper, sitting at 39%, is more compliant than the two as it is closer to the 40% mark. The 2013 paper therefore deprives the learners of the opportunity to engage in interpreting, inferring and analysing. With regard to higher order questions, both 2012 and 2013 fall short of the required 20%. Therefore, the 2014 paper provides a better opportunity to discriminate the high performers from the low performers, as it has the higher percentage of high

order questions. Therefore, of the three papers, the 2014 paper is more balanced as it shows a shift towards meeting the forty-forty-twenty principle.

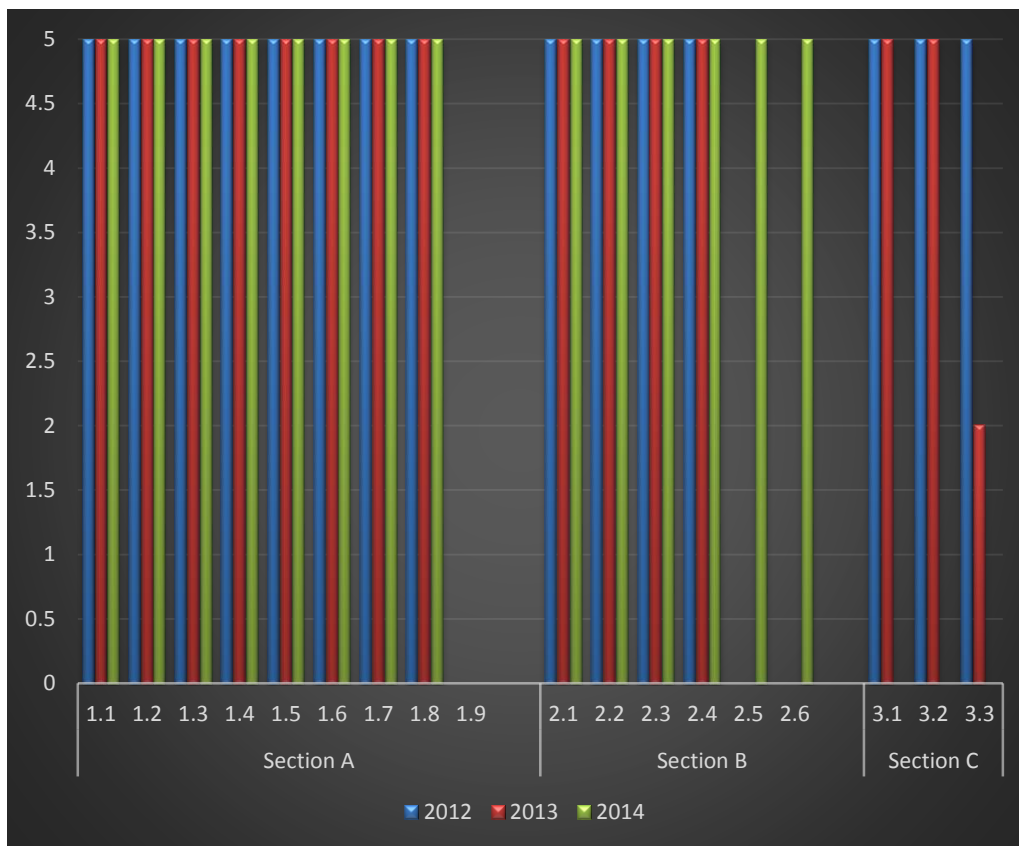
### 7.2.2 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 2



**Figure 7.2: Weighting of cognitive demand in isiZulu Paper 2**

All essay questions within and across the sections and years require the same skills, that is, evaluation and appreciation. This suggests that a level of consistency has been reached in terms of setting norms. As far as the short questions are concerned, there are fairly good reasons to argue that they, just like the essays, are comparable in terms of cognitive demand across genres and years.

### 7.2.3 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 3



**Figure 7.3: Weighting of cognitive demand in isiZulu Paper 3**

The picture presented by the graph above (Figure 7.3) is that of a greater degree of comparability of all questions across the sections and years. This situation is ideal in the case of choice questions so that no candidate is disadvantaged on the basis of the type of choice they in the examination or the year in which they wrote the exam.

## 7.3 Distribution of levels of difficulty in the papers

### 7.3.1 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 1

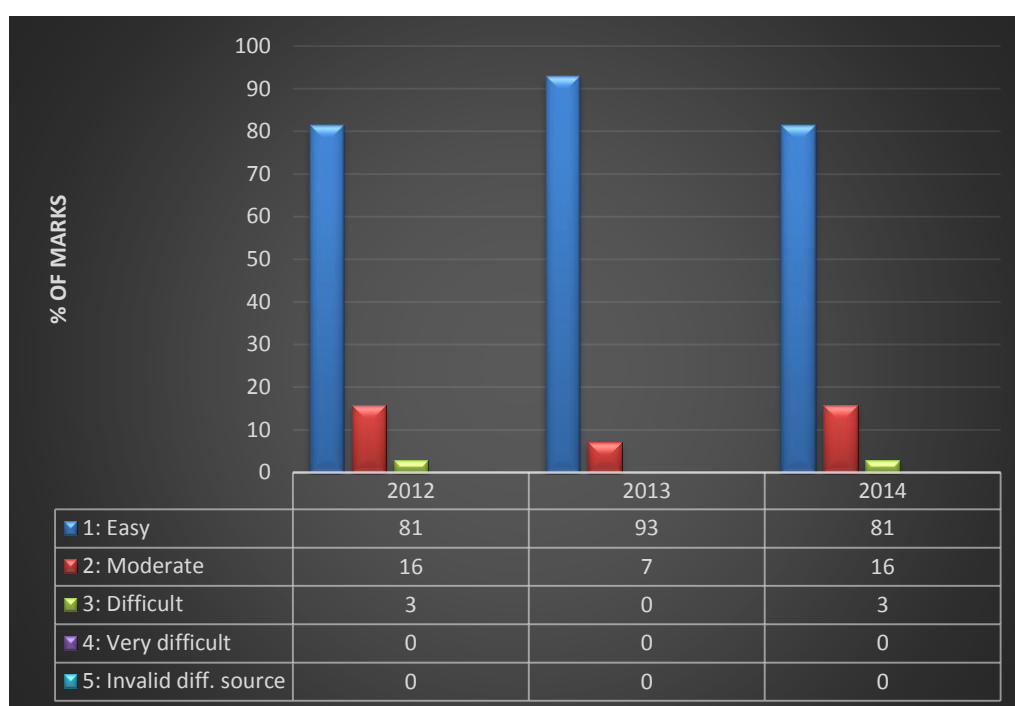


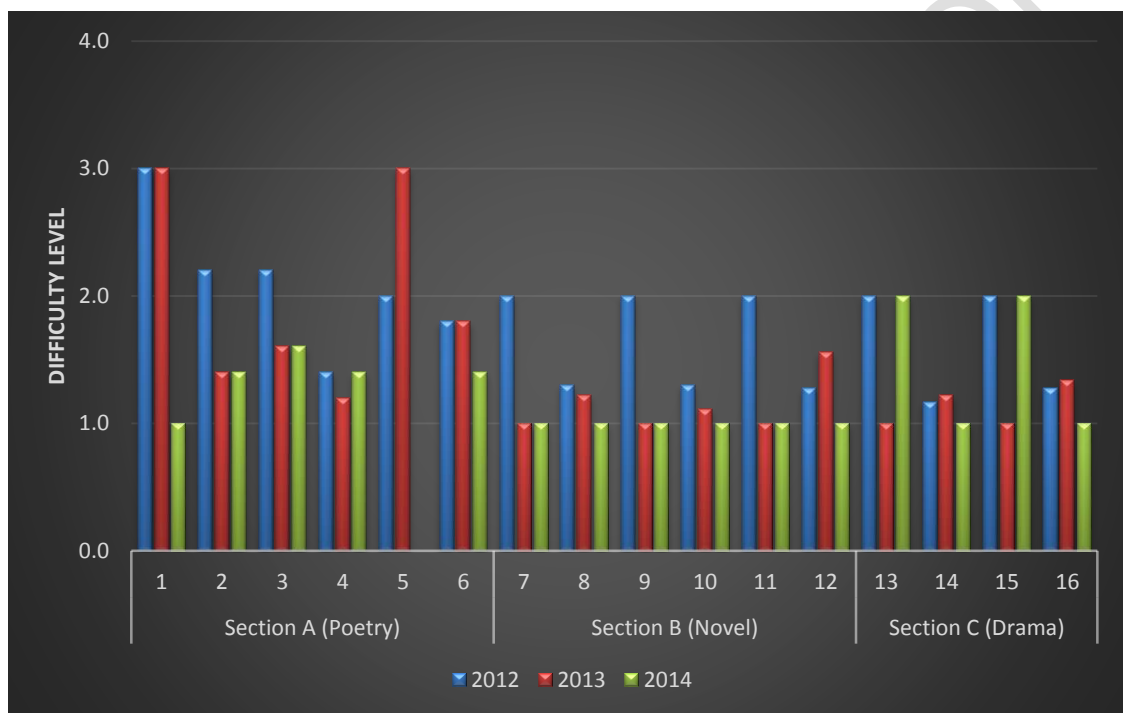
Figure 7.4: Weighting of difficulty level in isiZulu Paper 1

Of the 3 exams, the 2013 paper appears to be the easiest because 93% of its questions require lower order thinking skills. The guidance in the 2013 reading comprehension makes it easier than the 2012 and 2014 papers, in terms of directing the candidates to a specific paragraph. For example, Questions 1.1.1 to 1.1.7 of 2013, candidates are told which paragraph to look at for a possible answer. The 2012 comprehension does not have this type of guidance at all. The 2014 paper has only 4 questions that guide the learner to a specific paragraph, hence both the 2012 and 2014 comprehension questions are more challenging than the 2013 comprehension question in terms of time spent on looking for a possible answer.

Except for three moderately difficult questions, the 2013 paper does not have a difficult question at all, while the 2012 and 2014 papers have at least one difficult question each (Level 3). The 2012 paper has a difficult Question 5.1 '*Esikhundleni sikangwaqa obhalwe ngokugqamile egameni elisemgqeni wesi-4, susa lowo ngwaqa bese ufaka **ungwaqa ongundebembili**. Phinda ubhale lelo gama elisha emshweni ozakhele wona seliveza umqondo olethwe yilowo msindo.*' This difficult

question in the 2012 paper deals with phonology, which is normally challenging for an average Grade 12 learner, particularly now that the teachers do not focus on teaching structural phonology. The 2014 paper only has one difficult question, Question 4.2, which results in an invalid source of difficulty where even the memorandum shows that the question is ambiguous.

### 7.3.2 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 2



**Figure 7.5: Weighting of difficulty level in isiZulu Paper 2**

Question 5 of 2012 and 2013 were essays which the 2014 paper does not have, hence Question 5 is not comparable. Of the three papers, the 2012 paper appears to be the most difficult and the 2014 appears to be the easiest. Question 2 and 3, of 2012, are above moderately difficult because Question 2 has more questions on technical aspects of the poem i.e. enjambment, linking and a rhetorical question which the 2013 and 2014 papers do not have. The 2014 Question 2 poem is even friendly because it is about former president Mandela. The 2013 and 2014 questions are therefore easier than 2012 questions. Also, Question 3 of 2012 has a difficult question that requires the candidate to comment on how punctuation marks influence the meaning. This is challenging to a learner, as it is challenging to most teachers. Also, the 2012 Question 3.4 requires the candidate to comment on the reason for the

author's use of rhyme. This is a difficult question because in practice, rhyme does not affect the meaning but only influences the rhythmic sound of a poem. In general, 2012, Question 2 and 3 asked more difficult questions than 2013 and 2014, respectively.

The essays in the Novel section of 2012 are more challenging than the same essays of 2013 and 2014, because the 2012 essays assess the student on two knowledge elements, whereas the 2013 and 2014 assess a single knowledge element. '**Isizinda sinabudlelwane buni nomlingiswa osemqoka**'

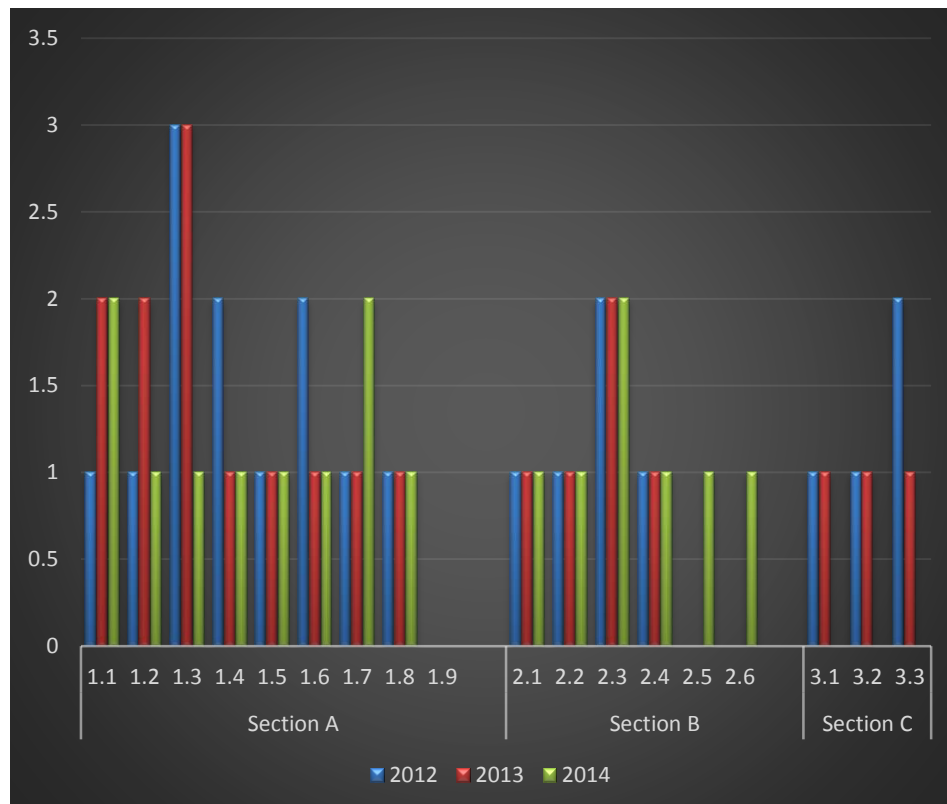
Question 12 of 2013 is slightly above easy compared to 2013 and 2014 because the 2012 and 2014 questions are easier. The Drama essays of 2012 are moderately difficult because they test two knowledge elements, which is very challenging to a learner, '**Udweshu** luhambisana kanjani **nenhloso** yomdlalo' The 2014 drama essays are moderately difficult because they may confuse the candidate as they include udweshu 'conflict' in the plot. The question is actually about the plot (isethulo, isixakaxaka, uvuthondaba nesiphetho). Only an above average student would suspect that ukubhebhetheka kodweshu is the same as the body 'umzimba' in this regard.

### **7.3.3 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 3**

#### **7.3.3.1 Section A: Longer transactional texts**

Of the three papers, 2014 is the easiest because learners can easily relate to the themes such as Question 1.4 where they have to write about 'Ubuhle Nobubi Bokuvezwa Kwemiphumela Kamatikuletsheeni'. Similarly, the graphic topic in Question 1.6.1 shows an examination session, which is something they can easily relate to. On the contrary, the 2012 and 2013 papers have difficult topics such as Question 1.3 in the 2012 paper where they learners have to write an expository essay that would require research, '**Ubuhle Nobubi Bokuba Khona Kwezimboni Zaphesheya ENingizimu Afrika**'. The 2013 essay, Question 1.3, is based on the archaic proverb of "**Amathanga Ahlanzela Abangenamabhodwe**" which is no longer frequently used and may constitute bias against urban students. The 2014 paper also has a moderately difficult topic (Question 1.1) because of the use of the word 'iqola' in its topic. *Iqola* may be

more frequently used in KZN than other provinces in South Africa. Topic 1.6 of 2013 is easier than Topic 1.6 of 2012, because the 2013 topic deals with fashion trends while the 2012 topic deals with technological advancement and how this promotes crime. The latter requires research and statistics. Topic 1.7 of 2014 is moderately difficult because it is philosophical. Learners would have to apply their minds deeply to make the connection between roots and the man standing above.



**Figure 7.6: Weighting of difficulty level in isiZulu Paper 3**

### 7.3.3.2 Section B: Shorter texts

In the 2012, 2013 and 2014 papers, Question 2.3 is moderately difficult because teachers seem to neglect the teaching of these aspects. There may be no more readily available resources and sources to facilitate the teaching of a brochure, the editorial and a magazine article. Teachers need to be more resourceful in order to be able to teach these aspects. The last question in Section C (Question 3.3 of 2012), which appears as moderately difficult is a poster which may be more challenging to write in the absence of crayons and many possible resources like a pair of scissors, glue etc. which they would normally use during lessons.



There is a high level of consistency in the setting of this paper where all questions are synthesis and create (Level 5), except for 2013 where there is reorganizing and application (Level 2) in Section C. The reason for the reorganization is that the map is already provided with sequential numbers, arrows and landmarked buildings that would assist the candidate. The candidate only has to apply the map in giving direction to a person.

#### **7.4 Are the abilities examined typically associated with the HL curriculum?**

The papers are compliant with the caps in response to specific aims of learning the language and abilities examined as contained in the Caps document (2011). In paper 3, learners are provided with a chance to “use language as a means for critical and creative thinking; for expressing their opinions on ethical issues and values.” CAPS (2011: 9). Paper three essays vary from environmental, to social, sports, political, cultural topics. Learners get a chance to critically engage with these issues as they write their essays. Setting unfamiliar transactional texts is commendable e.g. editorial 2012 paper, brochure 2013 paper, and a magazine article (2014) “They need also to write serious magazine articles about anything they take seriously, in addition to funny articles in which they can mock, ridicule, make fun of, laugh at, or criticize any suitable topic. Most of the magazine articles learners read are probably of this kind.” Caps (2011:38)

#### **7.5 Level and depth of subject knowledge**

Paper 1: Whereas Section A reflects appropriate skills and subject knowledge, Section C has become too easy over the years. Becoming too easy compromises the standard and quality of the paper. The papers seem to ask the same content and that leads to predictability of the paper e.g. all the three papers have not assessed a complex sentence, instead papers focus on the simple sentence. In 2012: Question 5.6. *Khipha imisho emibili eqondile*, 2013: no type of sentence at all. Question 5.7 in 2014 *khipha imisho eqondile*. There is neither a compound nor a complex sentence over the three years. Teachers will begin to ignore teaching complex sentences. Even

the verb moods, there is tendency to avoid the subjunctive, indicative and infinitive moods.

In 2012 the paper tested the imperative mood, in 2013: none at all, in 2014: the potential mood. The same thing applies to the morphemes. There is a tendency to fixate on the negative sense morpheme, in 2012: none, 2013: Question 5.4. *liveze ukulandula*, 2014: Question 5.3 *wokunga bongi (ukulandula)*.

Paper 2: The poetry section is becoming too easy and in the process compromises have been made to the standard and quality of the paper. Previously candidates were compelled to answer at least one essay question, but lately they answer any two questions whether they are short or long questions. The learners are future authors and poets who should know how to focus on meaning, mood, theme, and the external structure of a poem, all of which used to be long questions. The situation is worse now that Question 5 (unseen poem) has also done away with the essay (2014) only setting a short question. Inferring from this tendency, one may even suspect that in the near future, Section Band C, candidates will answer any question whether it is long or short.

Paper 3: This paper reflects appropriate levels and depth of subject knowledge. Abandoning section C for continuous assessment is commendable

## **7.6 Quality of examination papers**

### **(a) Levels of difficulty**

**Paper 1** clearly contains a preponderance of easy questions, which exceeds the required 40% mark. In the case of **Paper 2**, except for the 2012 paper, poetry is dominated by easy questions. There is clearly a shortage of difficult questions that should discriminate the high performers. The novels are also dominated by easy questions. There is a shortage of moderate and difficult questions which are crucial to discriminate the high performers. Just like the novels, questions based on drama are dominated by easy questions. There is a shortage of moderate and difficult questions that are crucial to discriminate the high performers. Likewise, **Paper 3** contains a preponderance of easy questions.

**(b) Do the exams appear to vary in terms of their degree of difficulty from year to year?**

**Regarding Paper 1**, the 2012 and 2014 papers are indicating that the examiner is becoming consistent. If 2014 can be used as a model paper, then the degree of difficulty will not vary, but where it comes short is the insufficient difficult questions. **Paper 2** Papers are becoming easy from year to year. In terms of **Paper 3**, it is clear that the papers are becoming easier from year to year. The percentage of easy questions is increasing from year to year while the percentage of moderate questions decreases. The percentage of difficult questions is decreasing from year to year.

### **7.7 Difficulty of stimulus/source material**

In Paper 2, Question 5 of 2013 (unseen poem) is too difficult as it contains archaic and complex words that would require the use of a dictionary. This is even more difficult because it is an unseen poem which they did not do in class. Such complex words are **unoxhongo, umshishilizo, ezijoli nezijolikazi, ezinzima nezinzimakazi, ezinkwazi nezinkwazikazi, ezinsansa nezinsansakazi**. In Paper 3, although Question 1.6.2 in the 2014 paper is only moderately difficult, candidates may find it difficult or even very difficult because of its highly philosophical nature. It is good to have a challenging question to discriminate the candidates but examiners need to be careful that going philosophical or psychological may be above the level of an average Grade 12 learner.

### **7.8 Concluding discussion**

With regard to **Paper 1**, the team is of the view that it can be used as a model paper but it has a shortage of difficult questions (3%). But in terms of its cognitive demands, it provides a better opportunity to discriminate the high performers from the low performers as it has the highest percentage of high order cognitive demands. It is more balanced as it shows a shift towards meeting the forty-forty-twenty principle. The skills assessed in **Paper 2** are equivalent across the years, but there should be an endeavour to go back to the old principle of confining the choice such that the learners will answer at least one essay question in poetry. As for **Paper 3**, the 2014

paper has an added advantage in that it provides three visual essays in section A compared to 2012 and 2013 which only have two visuals each.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

## **8. Siswati Results**

### **8.1 Compliance in terms of format and structure**

All the papers adhere with the Grade 12 Siswati Home Language Subject Assessment and Examination Guidelines in format, structure, mark allocation and specifications of skills and content in each section of each of the examination papers. There is, however, a discrepancy and inconsistency in as far as the number of words in the comprehension and summary texts is concerned. The length of texts for reading comprehension text for Home Language is five hundred and fifty (550-560). The findings reveal that in 2012 the length was four hundred and fifty (450), hundred (110) words shorter than what is stipulated. In 2013 it was 555 and in 2014 it was five hundred and forty eight (548), 2(two) words less than what is minimally stipulated. This concludes that the 2014 candidates had to read a longer comprehension text compared to the 2013 and 2012 candidates.

Furthermore, there is also no adherence in the length of summary texts. The prescribed length is 270 words but findings reveal that in 2012 the length was three hundred and thirty five (335), in 2013 it was three hundred and sixty seven (367) and in 2014 it was 319.

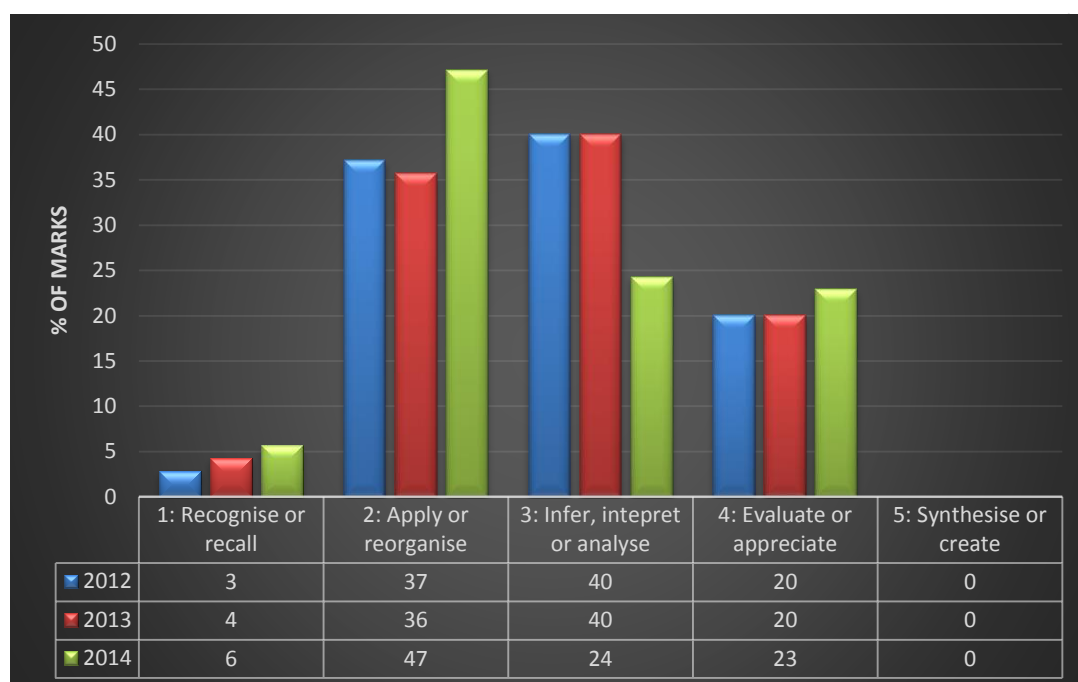
In question 5 the length is 120-150. In 2012 it has 122 words, in 2013 there are 134 and in 2014 there are 132. In all three years it is within the stipulated range but the figure varies from year to year.

It is recommended that there be consistency so that there is comparability in the length of texts because the inconsistency may advantage or disadvantage candidates.

## 8.2 Distribution of cognitive demand in the papers

### 8.2.1 Weighing of cognitive demand in Paper 1

The examination guidelines stipulate that the weighting of cognitive demand must be 40% lower order, 40% medium order and 20% higher order processes.



**Figure 8.1: Weighting of cognitive demand in Siswati Paper 1**

The findings reveal that in 2012 and 2013 Siswati Home Language Paper 1 examination the weighting of cognitive demands is 40:40:20. There is compliance with the guidelines. This means that for both years there is 40% of lower order, 40% of medium and 20% of higher order processes. There is a minimal difference in the percentage of recognize or recall and re-organization questions in both years. There is 3% of Recognize or recall in 2012 and 37% re-organize, while in 2013 is only 4% recall and 36% reorganize. In 2014, there is no adherence. The ratio 47:24:23. Lots of questions are in Recall and Apply or Reorganize level. This is attributed to the fact that the summary Section B which contributes 10 marks is at Re-organize level and Section C language and usage which contributes 30 marks is dominated by level 2 Apply or Re-organize questions where candidates apply grammatical rules and Re-organize information. The more demanding cognitive can be assessed in the comprehension questions.

## 8.2.2 Weighing of cognitive demand in Paper 2

In both the 2012 and 2013 (question 1-5) and 2014(question1) poetry essay questions are assessed at Synthesis Cognitive demand, whereby candidates synthesize ideas and concepts and present them in a logical and coherent manner. In 2014, there is no essay questions as the new guidelines prescribe.



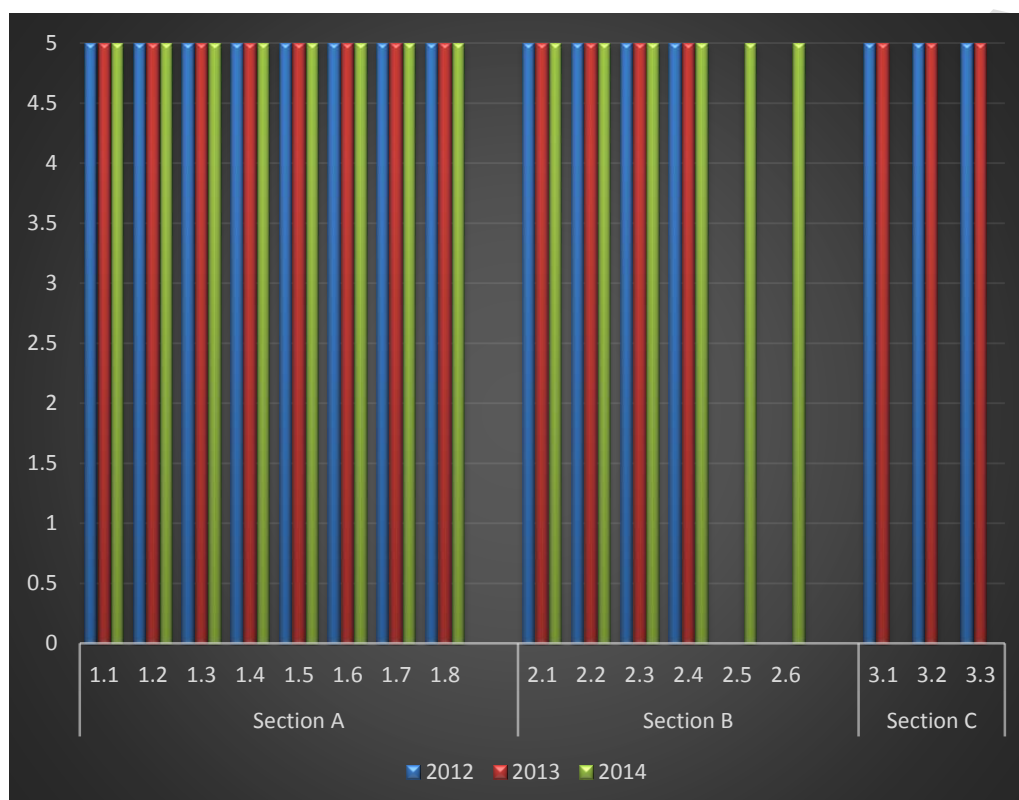
**Figure 8.2: Weighting of cognitive demand in Siswati Paper 2**

The novel and drama essay questions are also at Synthesis level of cognitive demand in all three years: 2012, 2013 and 2014. The findings reveal that candidates have been equally assessed cognitively in these three years. Regarding contextual questions (Question 2, 4, 6, 10, and 14), there is a minimal difference in cognitive demand in all three years both in poetry, novel and drama. However question 3, 8, 12 and 14 are more cognitively demanding in 2014 compared to 2012 and 2013. The choice of contextual questions in all three sections are not as cognitively demanding as the essays, disadvantaging those who chose the questions, particularly in poetry where there is no obligation to answer the essay. In section B and C they are obliged to answer one essay and one contextual.

In conclusion 2014 is more cognitively demanding than 2012 and 2013, thus more challenging the learners who wrote this year compared to the previous years.

### 8.2.3 Weighing of cognitive demand in Paper 3

The analysis reveals that Paper 3 Section A, B and C in 2012, 2013 and Section A and B in 2014 had assessed the choice questions at the same level of cognitive demand.



**Figure 8.3: Weighting of cognitive demand in Siswati Paper 3**

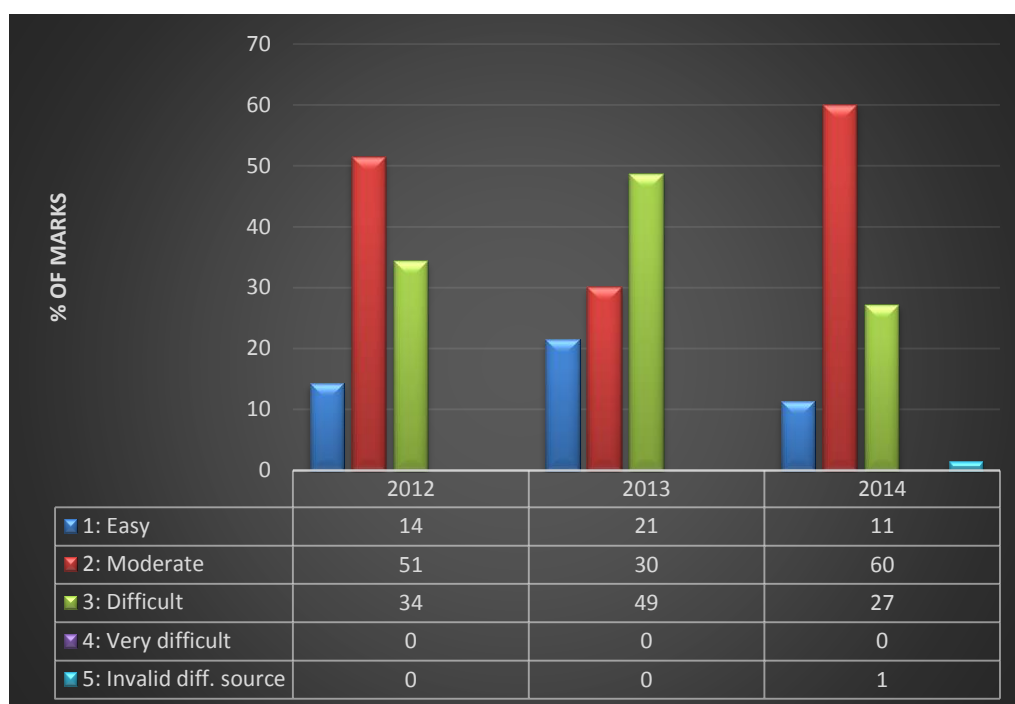
In Section A, all essays are cognitively demanding, as candidates create and synthesize. In Section B and C candidates were assessed at Cognitive level 5 which is also create. The 2014 paper is different from 2012 and 2013 because it does not have section C, in addition candidates have to choose two out of six choices in Section B. Like in 2012 and 2013, the choices for 2014, are of the same cognitive demand, which means learners are fairly assessed. Therefore, there is comparability in these papers in across sections and years as this a creative writing paper, the questions demand that learners create the end product.



## 8.3 Distribution of levels of difficulty

### 8.3.1 Weighing of difficulty level in Paper 1

In 2012 and 2014, Paper 1 is dominated by moderate questions while 2013 is dominated by difficult questions.

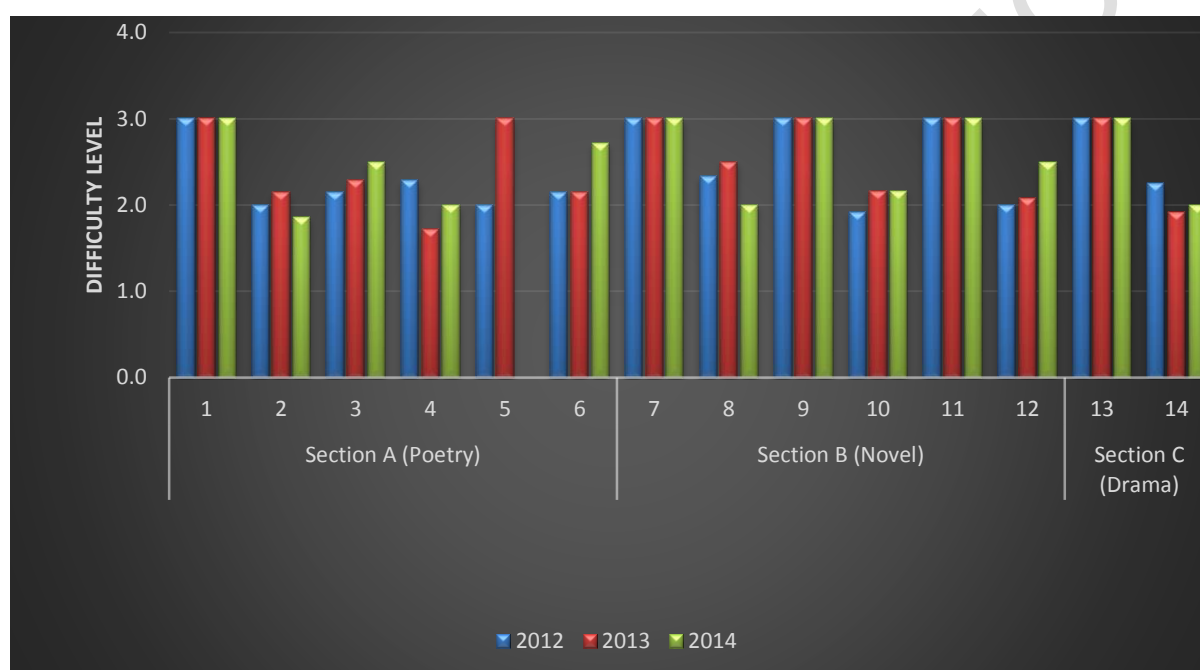


**Figure 8.4: Difficulty level weighting in Siswati Paper 1**

There is 51% of moderate questions in 2012, 60% moderate questions in 2014 and 49 % of difficult questions in 2013. This concludes that the 2013 paper was more difficult as compared to the 2012 and 2014 papers. This is attributed to the fact that difficult questions are covered across all the cognitive demand levels (lower, medium and higher order processes) in the 2013 paper. Furthermore, 2014 paper 1 had more moderate questions than 2012 and 2013 papers. There are 51 moderate questions in 2012, 30 in 2013, and 60 in 2014. It is only in year 2014 where there is 1% invalid source of difficulty. This concludes that 2014 was a moderate paper as compared to the two years.

### 8.3.2 Weighing of difficulty level in Paper 2

All essay questions across the three years, have been assessed at the same level of difficulty which is Level 3, with the exception of question 5, the poetry essay. In 2012 question 5 was at difficulty level 2 because candidates had to write on the literal meaning of the poem whilst in 2013, they were required to write an essay on the lesson learnt. In 2014 there is no essay question 5 because of the changes that have been effected in the SAG that the unseen poem has no choice questions.



**Figure 8.5: Weighting of difficulty level in Siswati Paper 2**

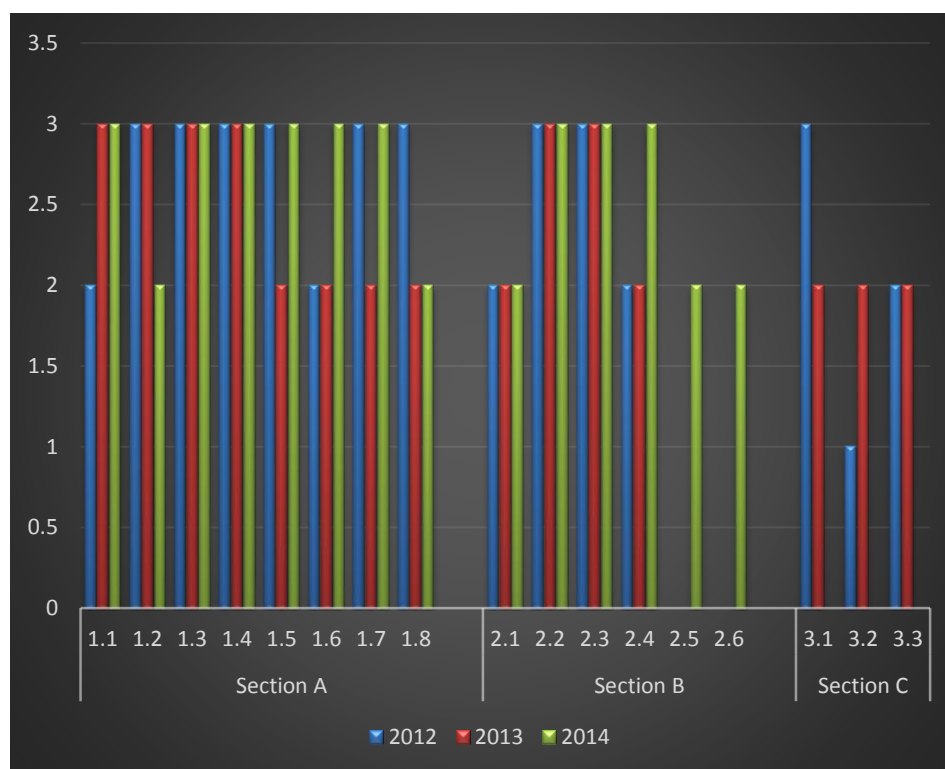
Compared to 2012 and 2013, the 2014 poetry contextual question is the most difficult. This is informed by the dominance of stimulus difficulty questions which assessed comprehension and interpretation of figurative language while in 2013 there is one question on figurative language, and 2012, there are two questions on figurative language. The rest of the questions required simple responses.

Furthermore, across the years, the contextual choice questions are moderately difficult as compared to the essay choice questions which are all difficult. The difference in difficulty among the contextual questions is minimal with the exception of questions 3 and 12 which are noticeably more difficult than the others with the average difficulty of 2.5. This is informed by the fact that the questions demand the

candidates to explain and interpret not to give one word or simple responses. It can be concluded that in across the three years, Paper 2 has been consistently difficult.

### 8.3.3 Weighing of difficulty level in Paper 3

There is no section C in the 2014 paper as the new assessment guidelines stipulate.



**Figure 8.6: Weighting of difficulty level in Siswati Paper 3**

In the above figure in 2012, out of the eight choice questions, six were assessed at difficulty level 3 while the other two were assessed at difficulty level 2. In 2013 four topics were difficult and four were moderate. In section B for both 2012 and 2013 there are three difficult questions and one moderate question in the four choices. In section C, the first choice questions for 2012, the three choices are not tested at the same level of difficulty, namely, 3.1 is difficult, 3.2 easy and 3.3 is moderate. In 2013 all three choices are moderately difficult. In 2014, Out of eight topics, 6 were difficult, 2 were moderate, in section B three topics are difficult and three choices are moderate.

The above findings conclude that the levels of difficulty of choice items is not comparable over the years. This is informed by the level of complexity and

candidate's familiarity with the field of knowledge of the topics assessed in each year. The 2014 paper 3 is moderate compared to the 2012 and 2013.

#### **8.4 Level and depth of subject knowledge and quality of examination papers**

All the papers are highly commendable, they are appropriate for grade 12 candidates, although they vary in their levels of difficulty across the years.

**Paper 1** covers a wide range of language skills as outlined in the National Curriculum Statement in depth and at a level appropriate for Grade 12 candidates. Like Paper 1, **Paper 2** also covers the subject knowledge in depth as specified in the National Curriculum Statement. The variety and choice of questions demand that the candidates have a deeper understanding of literary concepts, analytical and critical ability, and to apply learnt knowledge in real life situations and be fully functional and competent in areas where their language competence is needed. The questions assessed in **Paper 3** show an in-depth knowledge of the subject. The topics in all sections, expose learners to real life issues that they have to discuss, debate, narrate, describe etc. The variety of skills tested ensure that a candidate would be a functional member of society when he exits the school system.

#### **8.5 Levels of difficulty of source or stimulus material of the optional questions**

All essay questions in 2012 and 2013 and 2014, have been assessed at the same level of difficulty with the exception of question 5, the poetry essay. In 2012 question 5 was at difficulty level 2 because candidates had to write on literal meaning of the poem whilst in 2013, they were required to write an essay on the lesson learnt. In 2014 there is no question 5 due to amendments in the Subject Assessment Guidelines. Furthermore the contextual choice questions are moderately difficult as compared to the essay choice questions which are all difficult. These papers are comparable because the differences in levels of difficulty of the contextual questions is minimal. It can be concluded that across the three years paper 2 has been consistently difficult.

## **8.6 Other points regarding the standard of the examination**

It has been observed that the examination papers are getting more cognitively demanding, more difficult and discriminate high achieving from low achieving candidates. The adherence to the 40: 40:20, with regard to paper 1 ensures that even the low achieving candidates are able to pass as there are questions catering for their cognitive ability. However, the level of difficult is still not proportional in some years.

In paper 3, 2014 section B, question 2.1 is sensitive as it may emotionally affect a candidate who is a real orphan. It begins with the phrase Njengentsandzane bhalela sonhlalakahle... 'As an orphan write a letter to the social worker...' It is recommended that a topic like this one be avoided as it may trigger bad memories and affect the candidate's performance.

## **8.7 Comparing the extent to which each of the paper(s) reflect appropriate levels and depth of subject knowledge**

A moderate paper is a fair paper as it ensures that candidates of all abilities are accommodated. Cognitively, the 2014 paper is not as demanding as the 2012 and 2013. In the fact that it is dominated by lower order processes as the weighting is 53: 24: 23. Cognitively comprehension questions were not demanding. Whereas it is the section where higher order processes could have been assessed. Section B and C by their nature, assess mainly Apply and re-organize, thus resulting in the high proportion of Lower order processes.

Across the three years, all three papers reflect an appropriate level and depth of subject knowledge. In paper 2, across the three years, the knowledge level gets deeper and there is no predictability of questions. There is a lot of innovation and originality when it comes to the phrasing of questions. Comparatively, each of the papers across the three years are of an appropriate level and they cover the subject knowledge in depth but vary in levels of difficulty.

## 8.8 Concluding discussion

In conclusion, the findings reveal that there were no exam question papers that were seriously out of line with the SAGS. The papers are now stable except for the changes that come with CAPS, there is no essay in the unseen poem in paper 2 and there is no section C in paper 3. There are, however some issues that are worth noting with regard to paper 1. The comprehension texts were not of consistently equal length, 2012, the reading comprehension text was 450 words long, in 2012 and in 2014 the words were within the stipulated range. In 2012 Candidates read a text shorter by 100 words from the others. The words in the Summary question are above 300 yet the prescription is 250-270. In 2013 candidates summarised the longest text that was 367 words long while in 2012 it was 319 and 2014 it was 335 words long.

The levels of difficulty of the choice of words in the texts are not the same. In 2012, the text is full of words that are not commonly used in daily spoken language like 'Sihhonaahonca', 'emshayweni', 'lutsi lwekuvungula, emagonso', 2013 is full of idiomatic expressions and proverbs as well as the words that are not commonly used. In 2014, the paper is dominantly commonly used words with a few unfamiliar words. There is nothing wrong in using rich language, but it must be consistently done throughout the years. The 2014 paper reading comprehension is moderate compared to the other two years. In Paper 2, the set work choices are at the same level in each literary genre (poetry novel, or drama) are at the same level of difficulty. But where there is a choice between contextual and essay question within each genre, the essay questions are more cognitively demanding and are of a high level of difficulty. So candidates who choose contextual questions could be advantaged over those who choose the essay.

In all three papers (paper 1, 2 and 3) there is nothing that could have disadvantaged learners. Not even one question was analysed as too much difficult. Even though, paper 2, 2014 is considered to be the most difficult of the three, it did not have very difficult questions or unexpected questions instead it had more items that were difficult compared to the other papers.

In paper 1 there is a likelihood of getting more candidates at 60% and a few at the 80% at 30 because the paper is moderate. In paper 2, there is likely to be very few learners at 80%, few at 60% and more at 40% level as the paper is cognitively challenging and has a lot of difficult items. With paper 3, as much as the papers are at a high cognitive demand, the topics are familiar, so depending on the learner's abilities and choice of questions, there is likely to be more learners at 60% and fewer at 30% and a considerable number of the high achieving learners can score 80%.

### **8.9 Recommendations for improving the quality and standard of Siswati HL examinations**

The quality and standard of the papers have improved greatly, and there is consistency and comparability of the papers with regard to Cognitive demands except where the structure of the paper has changed. There are minimal differences in paper 1, but paper 2 and paper 3 are cognitively comparable across the three years. The findings reveal that in 2014 paper 1, Re-organization dominates in section B and C because learners apply grammatical and language knowledge, and re organize information, instances where they evaluate and synthesize are minimal. These two sections contribute 40 marks out of 70 marks. This is worth noting as it might impact in the non-adherence to the 40:40.20 ratio prescribed in the SAG. Choice questions have improved greatly with regard to Cognitive Demand, but consistency of levels of difficulty still needs improvement, particularly in paper 2 essay questions and contextual questions choices. It is therefore recommended that specifications of the proportion of levels of difficulty must be included in the Assessment Guidelines.

## 9. Sepedi Results

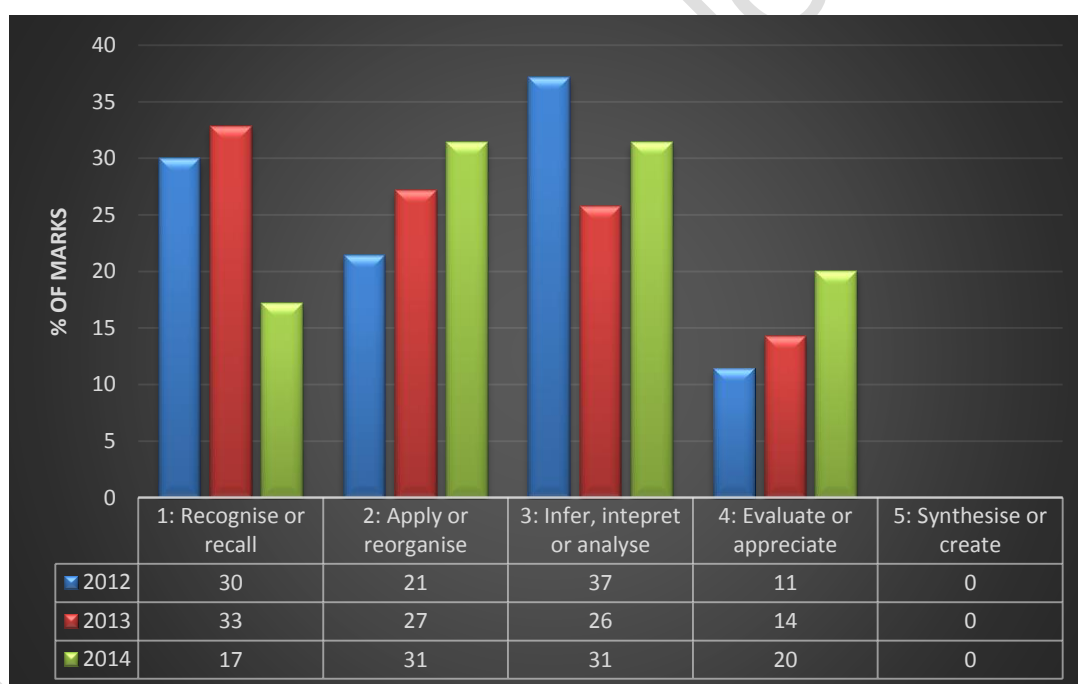
### 9.1 Compliance in terms of format and structure

The 2012 - 2014 papers comply with the SAG in terms of format and structure.

### 9.2 Distribution of cognitive demand in the papers

#### 9.2.1 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 1

The following graph indicates the cognitive weighting of paper 1 of 2012, 2013 and 2014.



**Figure 9.1: Weighting of cognitive demand in Sepedi Paper 1**

All of these papers do not comply with the SAG cognitive demands weighting although the CAPS paper; 2014 is far much better compared to the other two.



## 9.2.2 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 2

### 9.2.2.1 Section A: Poetry

All long questions; which are question 1 and 5, require higher order thinking skill. The CAPS paper, the 2014 exams, did not have the unseen long question.

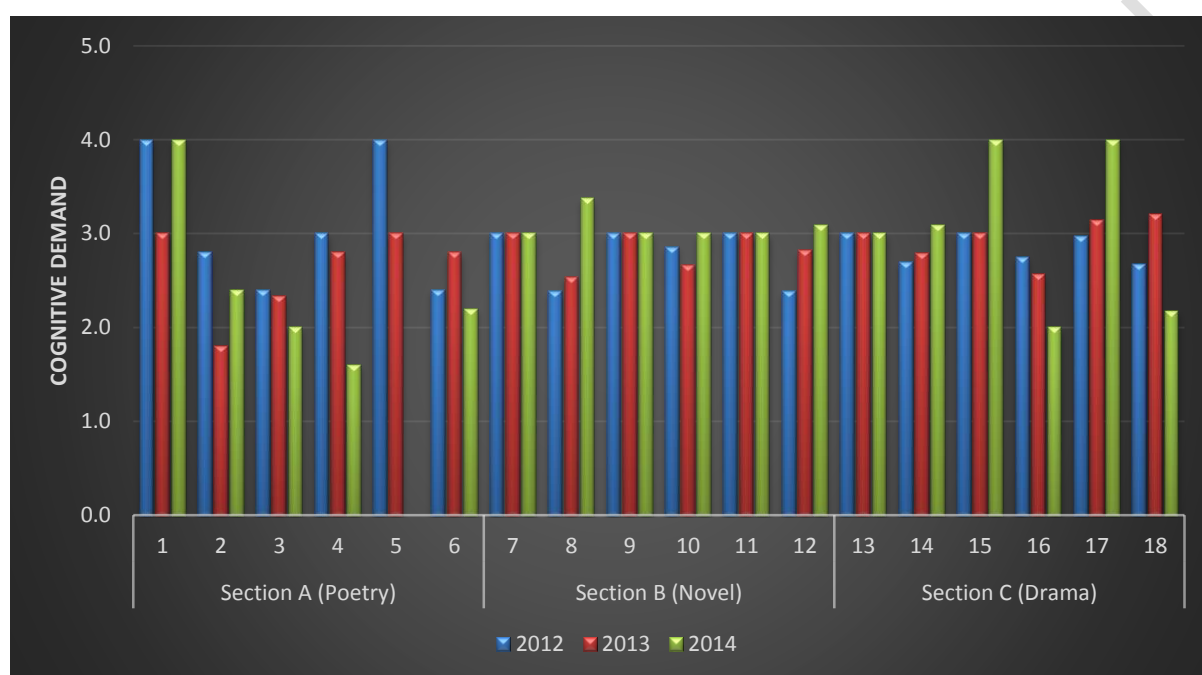


Figure 9.2: Weighting of cognitive demand in Sepedi Paper 2

### 9.2.2.2 Section B: Novel

All the questions across the three years require lower to medium order thinking skills for candidates to score optimum marks, irrespective of whether the question is an essay or a short question.

### 9.2.2.3 Section C: Drama

Section C of 2012 and 2013 also range between lower level and medium level. The 2014 long questions of this section require high order thinking skills while the contextual questions are of low order.

## 9.2.3 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 3

### 9.2.3.1 Section A: Essay

All questions across the three years require high order thinking skills for candidates to score optimum marks, except questions 1.1 and 1.5 of 2012 and 1.7 and 1.8 of all three papers which are of medium order.

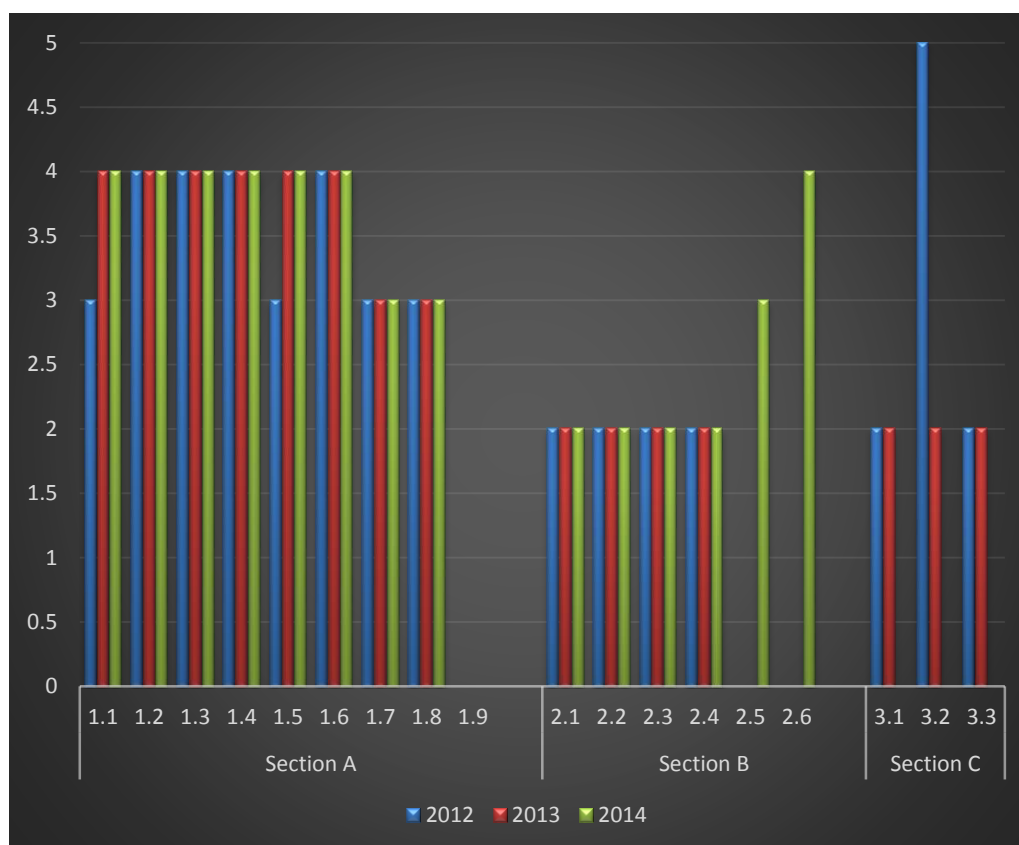


Figure 9.3: Weighting of cognitive demand in Sepedi Paper 3

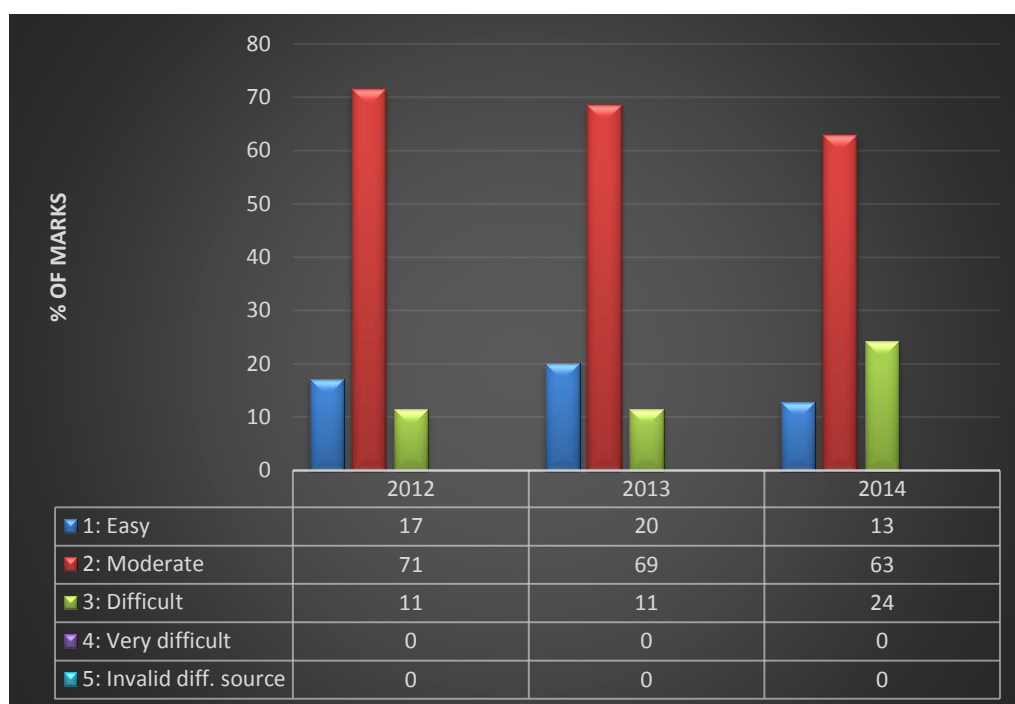
### 9.2.3.2 Section B and C: Transactional Writings

Most questions across the years require low level of skill. Some choices of the transactional writings needed the skill of synthesis and appreciation where a learner had to create an advertisement which needs his/her creativity and originality.

## 9.3 Standard of the examination papers.

### 9.3.1 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 1

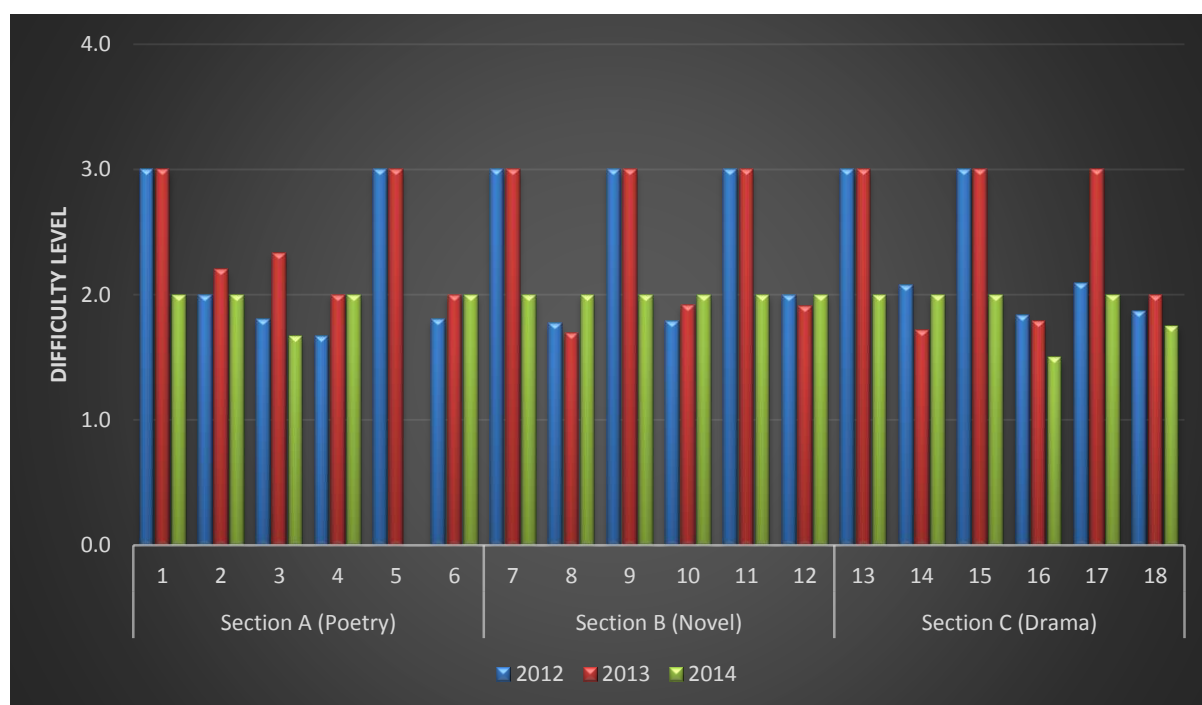
The level of difficulty of all three papers is based on the number of easy, moderate, difficult and very difficult questions.



**Figure 9.4: Weighting of difficulty level in Sepedi Paper 1**

**Paper 1:** All three were moderate with 2014 being a bit challenging for average grade 12 learner. 2012 has 71% moderate questions. This can advantage the above average learner to score up to 80% or more. 2014 paper 1 has 63% average and 24% difficult which reduce the number of learners who can score 80% or more. There are reasonable number of questions in 2014 which demands several steps and more reasoning. All three Papers do not have very difficult questions. They do have invalid source of difficult questions which make the papers challenging than expected. Mark allocation presented a problem in all three exams.

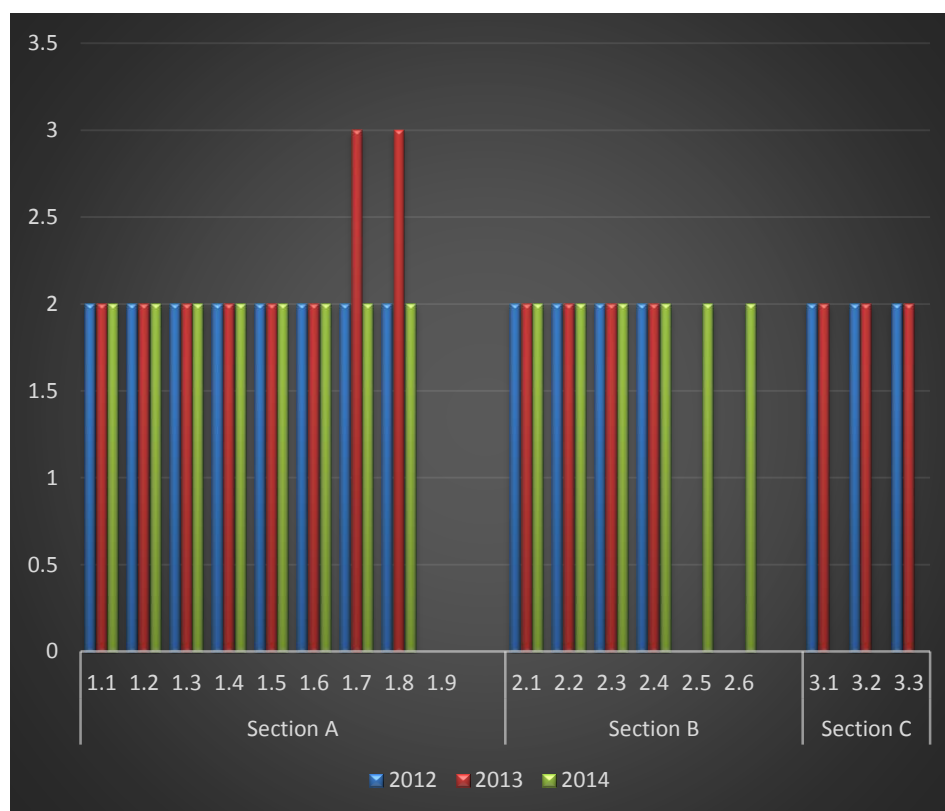
### 9.3.2 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 2



**Figure 9.5: Weighting of difficulty level in Sepedi Paper 2**

**Paper 2:** All long choice questions are at the same level of difficulty. They are all difficult due to the steps taken to answer the questions. The contextual questions rate from between easy and moderate across all the papers. These papers discriminate fairly on all learners.

### 9.3.3 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 3



**Figure 9.6: Weighting of difficulty level in Sepedi Paper 3**

**Paper 3:** All three exams are moderate which discriminate fairly to all learners. Question 1.7 and 1.8 of 2013 are difficult due to unintended source of difficulty. The pictures are not clear and make it difficult for the learners to interpret.

### 9.4 Topic or content and/or skills area weightings

**Paper 1** of all papers covered all the skills and abilities examined for HL paper. The Comprehensions have the cover the comprehension based questions, multiple-choice and open ended questions. The questions range from easy to difficult questions. Varieties of skills e.g summarize, evaluate, interpret etc., are tested as stipulated by SAG. All papers did not have a good example of questions that test the skill of synthesis and showing creativity. These types of skills are mostly found in creative writings like in paper 3.

In **Paper 2** most long questions test the skill of inferring, interpreting and application. The 2012 poetry had two of its questions testing the skill of evaluation and appreciation. The higher percentage of contextual questions tests the skills of inferring, interpreting, application, and analyzing.

In **Paper 3**, Section A of 2012 has half of its questions testing the skills of medium order while the other half is testing high order questions. Both 2013 and 2014 Section A questions are mostly on medium order and higher order which are inferring, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating and appreciation. All three papers have questions on lower order skills. Essay type questions were demanding in terms of skill and thinking in 2013 paper. A question might be a narrative in nature but differ in terms of skill. For example:

- Question 1.1 in the 2013 paper: **"Ditaba tše tša ka tša go leša dihlong e bile thuto ye kgolo bophelong bja ka."**

Whatever happened to the narrator, the judgment must be made to reach the conclusion that it was a disgrace thing and the lesson learned must be given. This demands higher skill.

- Question 1.1 in the 2012 paper: **"Ra tla ra ipshina ka morutiši wa Sepedi wa ngwaga wo."**

The learner had to have that teacher in mind and be able to analyze him/her and narrate the story. This demands the medium order skill.

These are the type of questions that made 2012 paper to have more of medium order questions than the other two.

## **9.5 Difficulty of stimulus/source material**

The following source materials were used in all three exams in rating difficulty of Stimulus /source material.

- **Unclear resources:** The 2013 paper presents a factor of stimulus difficulty on visual text for example question 1.1.7 and 1.1.8 of paper 3. The pictures are not clear and this may impact negatively on the learner as there will be no fair discrimination among them.
- **Dense presentation:** The 2014 paper 1 section A, the text is very long and present a dense information in such a way that it may not be easy to interpret.
- **Ambiguous questions:** Again in 2014 paper 1, question 3.5 is ambiguous as the learner must explain how does the prints of the camel attracts customers whereas is the car that is being advertised. This might cause a confusion on the side of the learner.

## 9.6 Invalid source of difficulty or ease.

As for **Paper 1**, the 2014 paper has a number of questions which do not make sense in terms of mark allocation. For example, Question 1.7 requires of the learner to give the meaning of this phrase “**E be e le mabu le mallakala**’. The answer is: There were many people. This is allocated 3 marks.

**Paper 2** of 2013 has the most Invalid source of difficulty with 2014 having the least of them. These are also based on mark allocation and ambiguity.

In terms of **Paper 3**, the 2013 is the only one which have Invalid source of difficulty based on the clarity of the pictures used. The pictures are not clear and it makes interpretation very difficult.

## 9.7 Other points regarding the quality of the examination

It has become a concern that Sepedi Paper 2 is the only language that has a choice of 4 novels. This makes this paper to be the longest in all 11 languages. This might cause the confusion on the side of a learner. The learner might choose the book which was not prescribed at their school. To the learner who did all four novels, it might be the

waste of time to attempts to go through all four novels to try to find out which one he/she prefers.

### 9.8 Rating the quality of the examination papers

Rating the papers from average, good and very good in terms of quality, the 2012 paper1 was rated average based on the following:

- It has the longest comprehension text than the other two.
- Picture's message not clear. . e.g. 2012 Question 4. That police uniform is not South African. Other learners may not see it as police uniform.

2013 is rated better with the following reasons:

- The comprehension is longer.
- Pictures not proportionally placed within the frames and not clear.

2014 is good based on:

- Although the pictures and the comprehension are better, it has most of invalid sources of difficulty questions due to mark allocation and ambiguity.
- The comprehension is also difficult based on the fact that more figurative language is used than the other two.
- The use of the camel on question 3 picture/advertisement is just an isolated data. Nothing connects it with the car and the questions are more confusing as well. E.g question 3.5 "Shows how the use of prints on the camel attracts the buyer" There is no relation between the camel's prints and the car which is advertised.

**Paper 2:** These papers compare favourable in all questions that is, across the sections. The omission of unseen long question makes 2014 paper easier compared to the other two.

**Paper 3:** All three exam papers compare favourably in section A except 2012 which is a bit easier than the two. The combination of section B and C makes 2014 paper easier because of the better choice within the section.

All three examinations have a number of invalid source of difficulty based on mark allocation, ambiguity and picture clarity more especially in paper I and 2.



## **9.9 Recommendations for improving the quality and standard of Sepedi Home Language examinations**

Provision needs to be made for better quality of pictures used.

- Use of full colour scale pictures with better pixels. This is applicable to all three examinations.
- Pictures need to be relevant to South African learners' environment and current trends
- Scaling of pictures need to be according to proportion, for example in the 2013 Paper 1 the picture for question 1.2 and question 3.
- Attention should be paid to mark allocation by allocating one mark to a one point answer. Alternatively, the paper should clearly state how many points are needed for a learner to score maximum marks.
- The number of choice questions in the Section B of Paper 2 (novels) should be reduced from four to two.

## 10. Sesotho Results

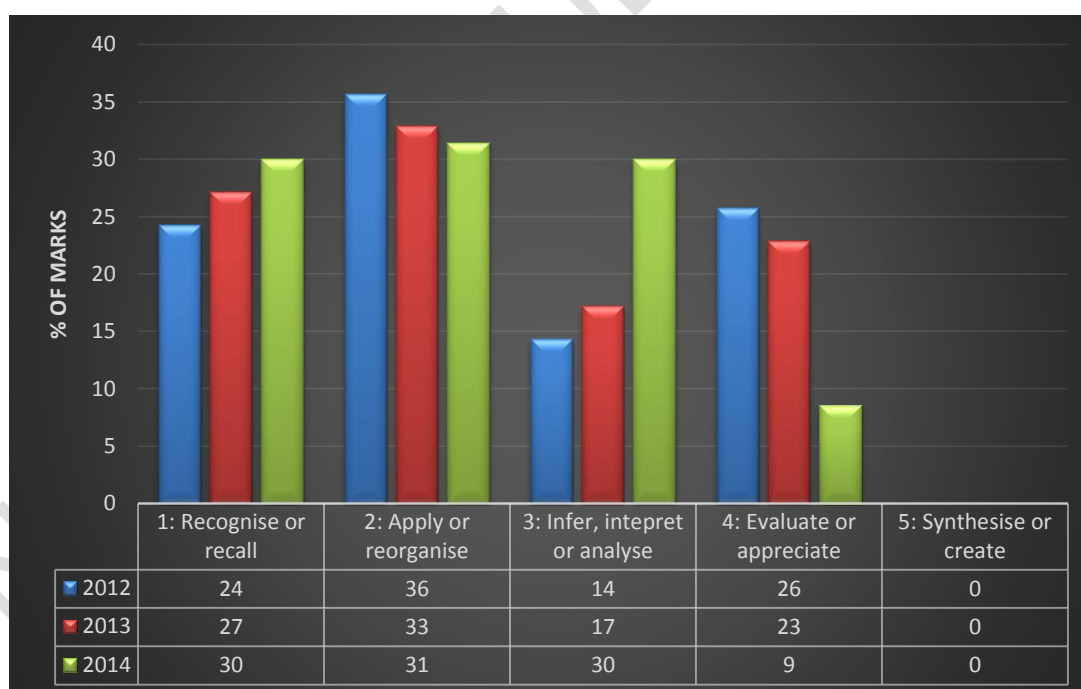
### 10.1 Compliance in terms of format and structure

All the papers (1 - 3) across the years (2012 - 2014) align themselves with the SAGs prescribed layout and structure. The general impression of the Sesotho group is that the 2012 and 2013 papers (1 - 3) comply with the examination guidelines of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) whereas the 2014 exam papers comply with those of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The basis thereof is that there were no examination papers in Sesotho Home Language that were seriously out of line with the SAGs/examination guidelines.

### 10.2 Distribution of cognitive demand in the papers

#### 10.2.1 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 1

The graph hereunder represents the range of Paper 1 cognitive demand scores:



**Figure 10.1: Weighting of cognitive demand in Sesotho Paper 1**

Based on the 40-40-20 specification by the NCS and CAPS, it is crystal clear that the Sesotho papers do not comply. The group opines that maybe the clustering of scores

at lower cognitive retards a fair distribution of scores at various levels. This therefore implies that the papers do not actually conform to the standard examination guidelines stipulated.

For 2014, consistency is maintained in terms of low and middle order questions. However, there is a dramatic decline of scores in terms of high order questions. The decline is brought about by concentration of scores at lower and middle order levels. The pattern assumed by the 2012 and 2013 scores appears to be a zig-zag movement as it moves from low to high and from high to low continuously. The overall impression realised is that in 2014 paper, the average learner is more advantaged than those in 2012 and 2013.

### 10.2.2 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 2



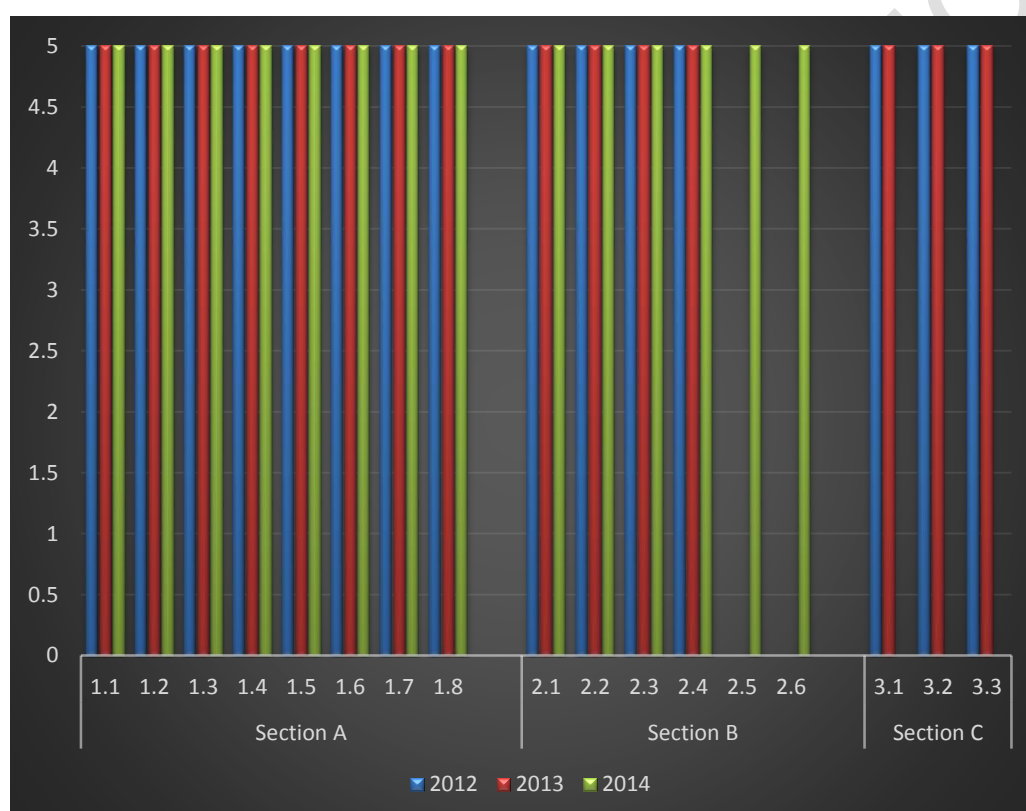
**Figure 10.2: Weighting of cognitive demand in Sesotho Paper 2**

The long questions (essay type) questions are assessed the same level. They all require high order cognitive skills. The short contextual questions range at lower cognitive level. However, the 2014 paper (in relation to 2012 and 2013 papers) appears to be slightly lower. This affords the 2014 average learner more advantage over the 2012

and 2013. Example, question 4.3, or 4.4. These questions are comparatively speaking easier than other choice questions in 2014 paper (as well as those in 2012 and 2013).

In the same vein, the 2012 average learner is reflected as being disadvantaged in comparison with the 2013 and 2014 as the choice questions require slightly higher cognitive skills than those in 2013 and 2014. We should, however, stress that the difference is not much to be outside the borders of the lower cognitive demands.

### 10.2.3 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 3

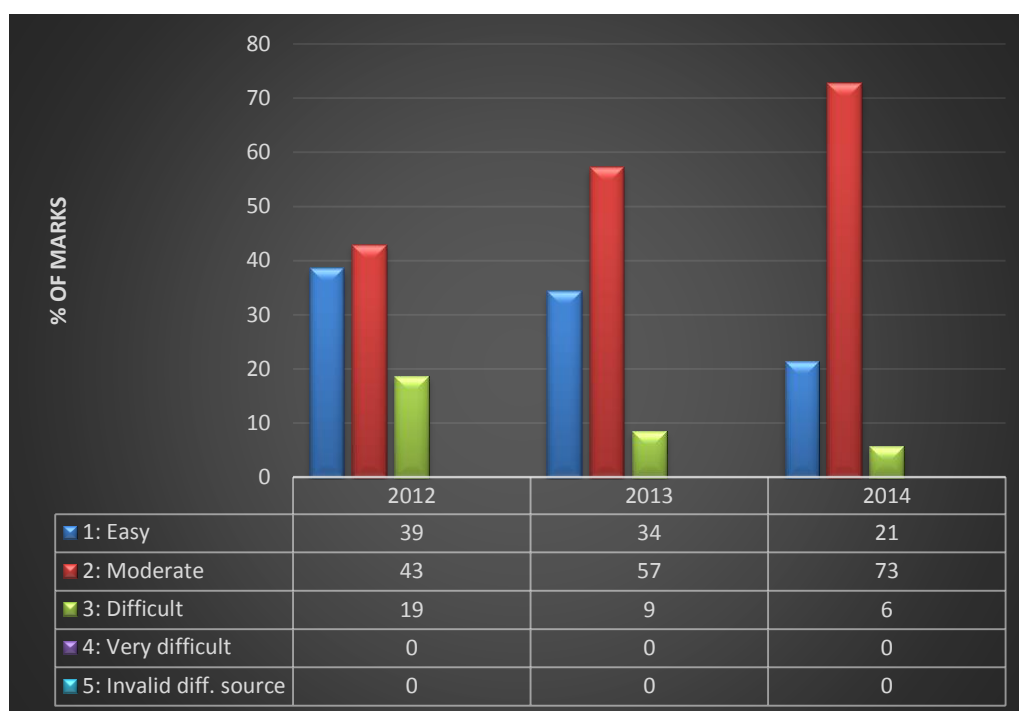


**Figure 10.3: Weighting of cognitive demand in Sesotho Paper 3**

All the questions in all these years from 2012 to 2014 are pitched at high cognitive level. This affords every learner the same advantage and it characterizes a balanced paper. However, the 2014 paper, is slightly different from 2012 and 2013 as it has only sections A and B (i.e., essay type and transactional papers). In other words, even though the assessed content is not the same as in other papers, the papers test the available content at the same level.

## 10.3 Distribution of levels of difficulty in the papers

### 10.3.1 Weighting of difficulty levels in Paper 1



**Figure 10.4: Weighting of difficulty level in Sesotho Paper 1**

Comparing 2014 scores with 2012 and 2013, the graph confirms that the 2014 paper 1 was the easiest paper. The graph also reflects two sets of patterns in terms of the range of scores at difficulty level. The moderate scores across years assume an upward movement (rising up from the year 2012 to 2014). This particular movement seems to suggest the rise of difficulty level. The downward movement is captured by the decline status of the easy scores as well the scores at difficulty level. Taking the downward movement of the easy and difficulty scores from 2012 to 2014 as background, the impression that the Sesotho group can draw is that the passing of years presupposes that examinations become relatively easier. The general impressions underpinning the overall observations drawn in this regard are that:

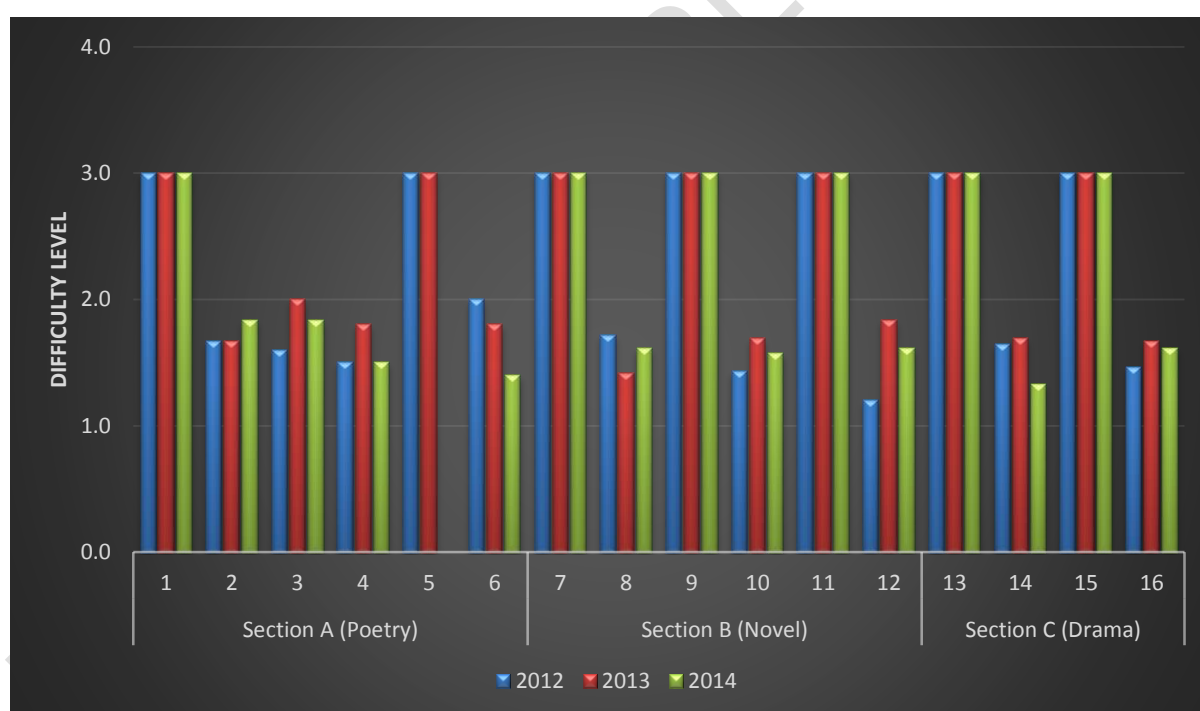
The 2014 paper 1 was the easiest than the 2012 and 2013. This implies that the 2014 learners were afforded a better advantage than the 2012 and 2013 learners. The 2012 paper was the most difficult than the papers in 2013 and 2014. It therefore speaks on

its own as it reflects learners as being disadvantaged than in other years. There is no consistency maintained in the setting of paper across years.

The moderate scores reflected on the graph show that 2012 to 2014 assume an upward movement. This implies that there is a significant increase of scores at moderate level from 2012 to 2014. The downward movement is reflected by the pattern assumed by the easy and difficult scores, though not so significant. By implication this means that the 2014 learner was more advantaged than the 2012 and 2013 and the 2012 learner was significantly disadvantaged than the 2013 and 2014 (will be explicated later).

Let us now focus on the distribution of scores reflected on the relevant graph.

### 10.3.2 Weighting of difficulty levels in Paper 2

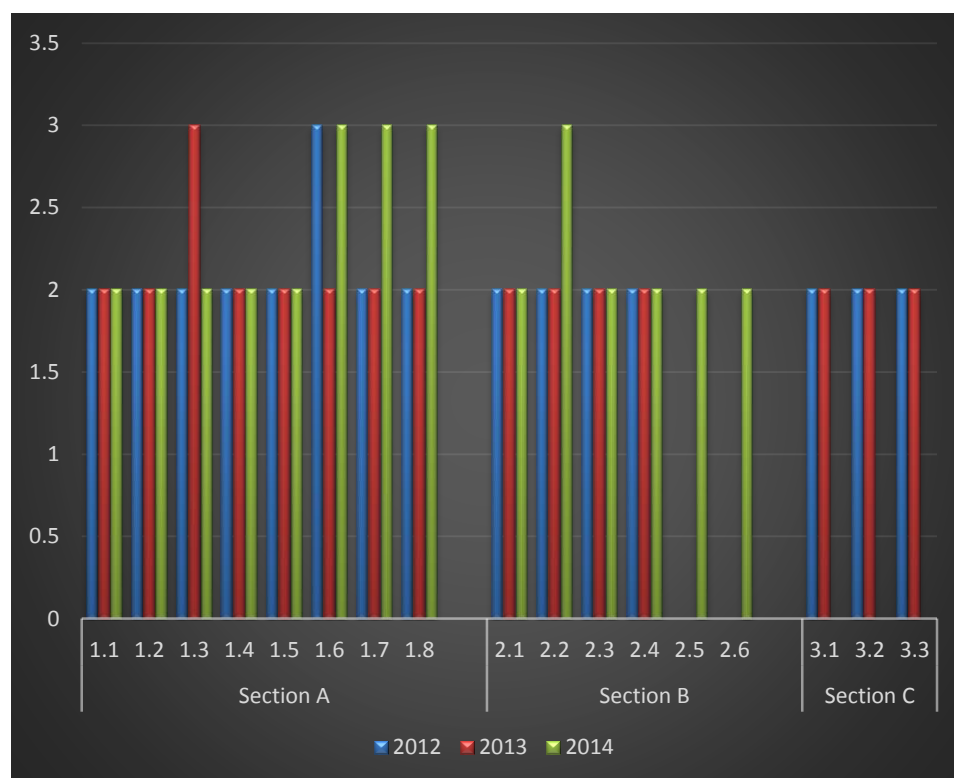


**Figure 10.5: Weighting of difficulty level in Sesotho Paper 2**

Based on the essay type questions, the graph reflects consistent distribution of scores at the same level of difficulty (across the years). However, question five (5) is not available for 2014 (as a long essay type question) in terms of the new SAGs but replaced by question 6 as a contextual choice question. In terms of contextual

questions, the distribution of scores ranges between easy and moderate levels across all the years. This paper can therefore be said to be balanced in terms of the distribution of scores.

### 10.3.3 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 3



**Figure 10.6: Weighting of difficulty level in Sesotho Paper 3**

Most of the scores are based at moderate level across the years. However, question 1.3 for 2013 is based on difficult level because it presents an unfamiliar content to the most of the learners. Learners are expected to reflect on the Basotho traditional marriage “*tjhobediso*” (*eloping with someone*). This particular subject is generally unknown to most of the learners and is currently an unethical practice within the South African dispensation. However, learners are required to write an essay on the subject:

*“Tjhobediso ke tsela e amohelahileng ya ho nyala, ka lehlakoreng le leng ha e a amohelaha.” (To elope with someone is an acceptable form of marriage, but on another hand, it is not acceptable).*

For 2012, the scores are ranged at high because there is a discrepancy between the memo and the question paper. The question is open-ended, yet the memo is close-ended. Question 6 in 2014 is a three-in-one type of question, unlike 2012 and 2013. It is three in one because it involves three topics that learners have to choose from. It is based on too many instructions that can confuse the learner. It even involves a choice of visual texts that are debatable in terms of their level of accessibility. Question 2.2 in 2014, ranges at high because of the use of idiomatic expression that confuses the learners.

#### **10.4 Invalid sources of difficulty**

There are very limited cases of invalid sources of question difficulty across years (2012-2014). However, the 2014 papers 1-3 even contain fewer instances of invalid sources of difficulty as compared to 2012 and 2013. What appears to have reduced the number of invalid sources of difficulty is that the 2014 questions seem to be phrased in such a manner that an average learner would not be confused to understand the gist or essence of the question itself. As a form of example, in the 2012 and 2013 paper 3, it was common to use a super-ordinate or general term instead of the hyponym or a specific term. In a stricter sense, the word “*padi*” refers to prose (that is an umbrella term that encompasses novels, drama and poetry. In many instances, this particular term has been used where “*pale*” novel was actually supposed to be used. For a learner who happens to distinguish between “*padi*” as prose and “*pale*” as a novel, the question becomes confusing.

#### **10.5 Comparability of quality**

Across years, all the Sesotho papers at different levels (papers 1-3), appear to maintain the same standard and are of the same quality. However, there are quite minimal cases where the language applied in formulating questions sacrifices the quality of the paper. As an example on the above statement: Question 2.2 Sesotho paper 3 – 2014 the question is phrased as follows:



*“Ngola puo eo o tla e tshetleha moketjaneng wa tumedisio ya mosuwehlooho wa sekolo sa heno, kaha o beha meja fatshe.” (Write a speech that you will deliver during the farewell function of your school principal as he/she goes on retirement”).*

The read-marked part of the question, namely, *“kaha o beha meja fatshe”*, is really redundant and just causes unexpected level of difficulty. It is a typical Sesotho idiomatic expression that refers to the act of retiring. It could have been presented in a plain, easy-flowing Sesotho that would be accessible to every learner. In this way, the question becomes confusing to those learners who do not know the Sesotho idiomatic expression in this regard. Most seriously, such formulations of questions culminate in downgrading the quality and standard of the examination paper. The question deviates from what it intends to test.

Notwithstanding the concern raised above, the Sesotho papers across years maintain almost the same standard. There are limited cases that make a paper in one year to be absolutely distinct from others. It is this form of balancing of the standard of question papers that characterizes the entire examination process as meaningful and quality assured.

## **10.6 Concluding discussion**

All the exam papers are aligned to the Standard Assessment Guidelines as prescribed by the NCS (for 2012 and 2013) as well as CAPS (for 2014). A slight difference in terms of the structural outlook of papers 2 and 3 does not make a significant change that can necessarily be realised in terms of quality and standard.

Even though there are questions that require higher cognitive demands than others (as in paper 1 and 2 for 2014), there are limited cases where such a difference of scores is realised (see the graph of 2014 paper 3 regarding the levels of difficulty scores). Though the Sesotho group confirms that such instances where some questions are more demanding from the learner, either cognitively or in terms of the level of difficulty, the group, however, opines that such cases are at a very moderate level. By implication, the Sesotho papers are set at almost a similar level across years.

All the questions in all the papers in all the years require particular skills from the learner as well as critical thinking. There were no questions that could give allowance to every learner either to get them right or wrong or discriminating between learners.

Based on the examination guidelines, the Sesotho group confirm that the selected texts in the examination were of the same length, not too difficult or too easy. In other words, the specifications of the length of the texts were strictly adhered to. In this way, there is no specific examination period (year) that appears to have longer and more difficult questions than others. All the set-works chosen were of the same standard. They never created a room to advantage or disadvantage any learner at all.

In contextual questions, particularly in 2012 and 2013 Sesotho Paper 2, there are questions (question 3 and 6 in Section A – Poetry) that identify themselves as more difficult than others. Otherwise, the rest of the contextual questions in all the sections, are consistently distributed between easy and moderate levels of difficulty. This implies that though we can generally conclude that contextual questions (across years) are based on the same standard in terms of the level of difficulty, there are some questions that tend to more difficult than others.

In the Sesotho examination situation, there were no cases where learners could be totally retarded to respond to any question on account of the instruction given, the picture that goes along with it or an extra-ordinarily difficult question.

### **10.7 Recommendations for improving the quality and standard of HL examinations**

One of the basic observations of the Sesotho is that some questions involve Setswana words when the commonly known Sesotho words are still available. The group therefore recommends that preference should always be given to the use of commonly known Sesotho words and terminology rather than the snippets taken from other languages. The setting of questions should not be based on the understanding that other languages will still be accessible to the learners.

One strong recommendation is that a question should be asked for its own sake. This means that if a learner has to recall information, the question should test recall of information. The use of typical Sesotho idiomatic expressions when a simple recall skill is required is rather confusing on the part of the learner.

Visual texts should at least provide a clue for the learner to create a story. Sometimes the quality of the photocopied text is not conducive for the learner to create logic out of it. The scaffolding as relevant instructions that go along with a given text, has to be verified as to whether it would be relevant to yield the intended objective of the question. It would be preferable that, funds permitting, all the visual texts should be colour coded.

The cognitive skills required or tested in any paper should be diversified. Where possible and relevant, cognitive skills should be varied in order to test the learner in totality. Otherwise the scores would also be skewed in one direction as a result of which the paper would not be balanced. This will also be an easy mechanism to ensure the 40-40-20 distribution of scores with a view to balance and standardise the paper.

Extra care should be made on action words in the phrasing of questions. However the context within which such action words are used is also of great importance. This implies that the evaluation of examination question papers should not only be limited to the use of action words but be extended to the context within which those action words have been used. In this way, the ultimate scores may not cluster at one level simply because a specific action word has been applied more than others. Too many instructions at the beginning of paper 2 are threatening on the part of the learner even before the learner commences with the writing of an examination.

## 11. Setswana Results

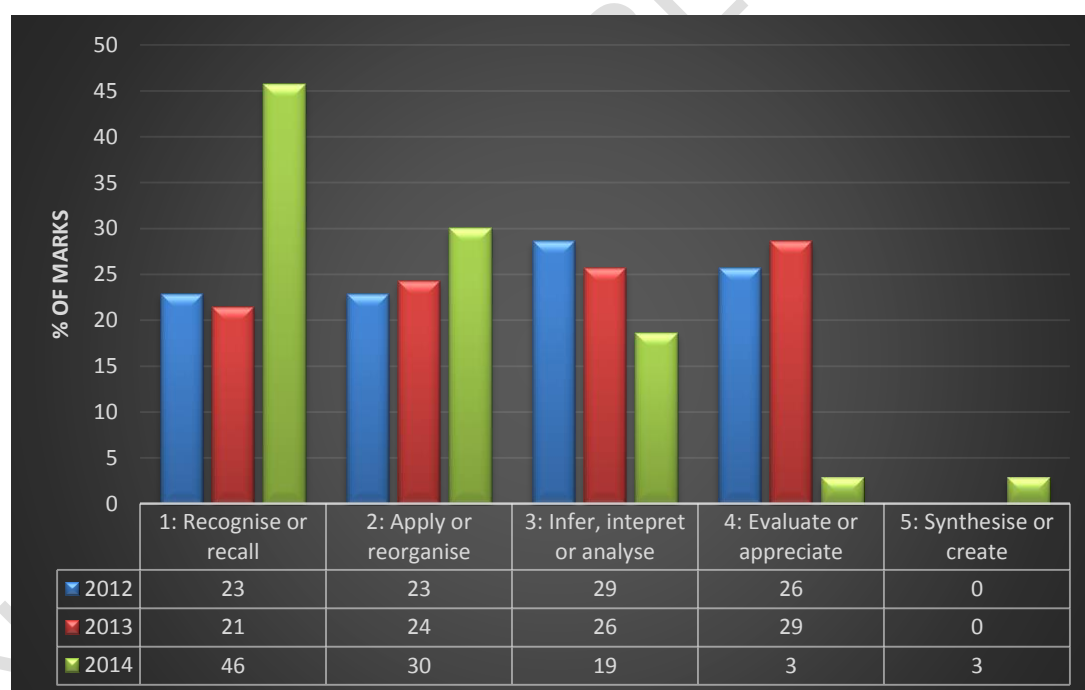
### 11.1 Compliance in terms of format and structure

All papers analysed complied with Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAG) and the guidelines for the setting of Grade 12 examination papers in languages.

### 11.2 Distribution of cognitive demand in the papers

#### 11.2.1 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 1

SAG prescribes that cognitive demand weightings should be as follows: 40% for lower order processes 40% for middle order processes and 20% for higher order processes. The graph below presents the comparison of the cognitive demand weightings as analysed.

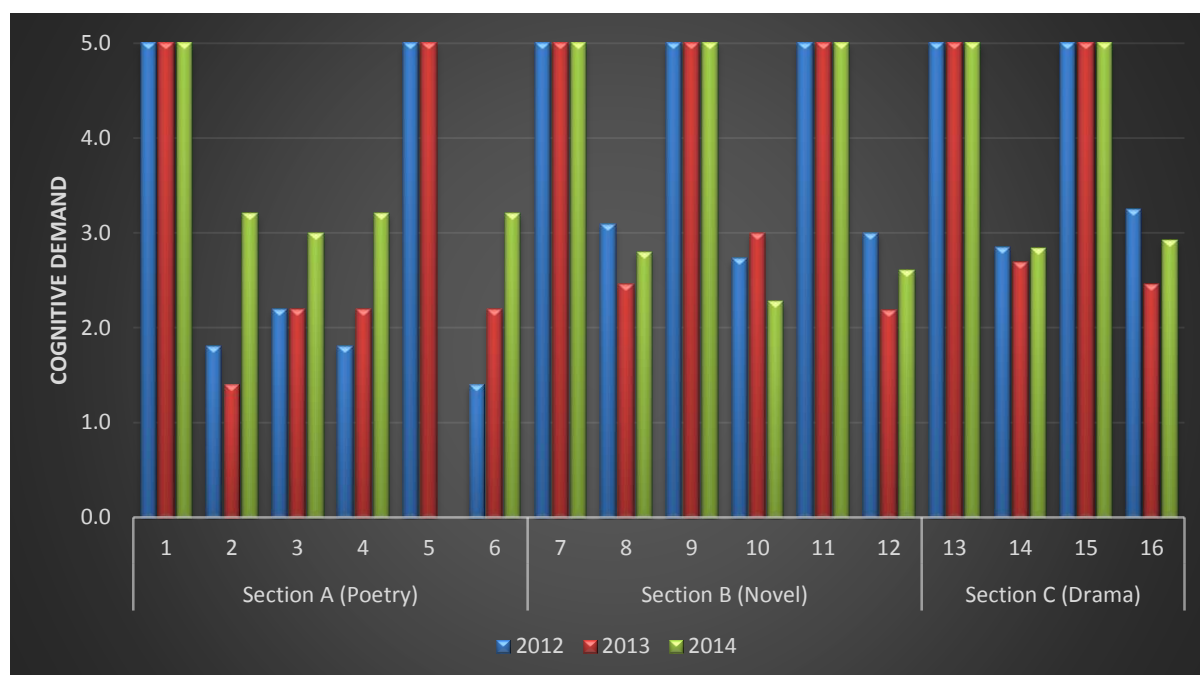


**Figure 11.1: Weighting of cognitive demand in Setswana Paper 1**

The 2012 and 2013 papers had more medium order questions than 2014 and higher order questions on evaluate or appreciate and synthesize or create at 26% and 29% respectively when compared to 2014 which only has 6% of higher order questions. The 2014 paper 1 presents itself easier because it has high percentage (76%) of lower order

questions nevertheless an attempt on synthesise and create as high order questions was made. This analysis suggests that learners who sat for the 2014 paper 1 were at an advantage compared to the 2012 and 2013 learners.

### 11.2.2 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 2

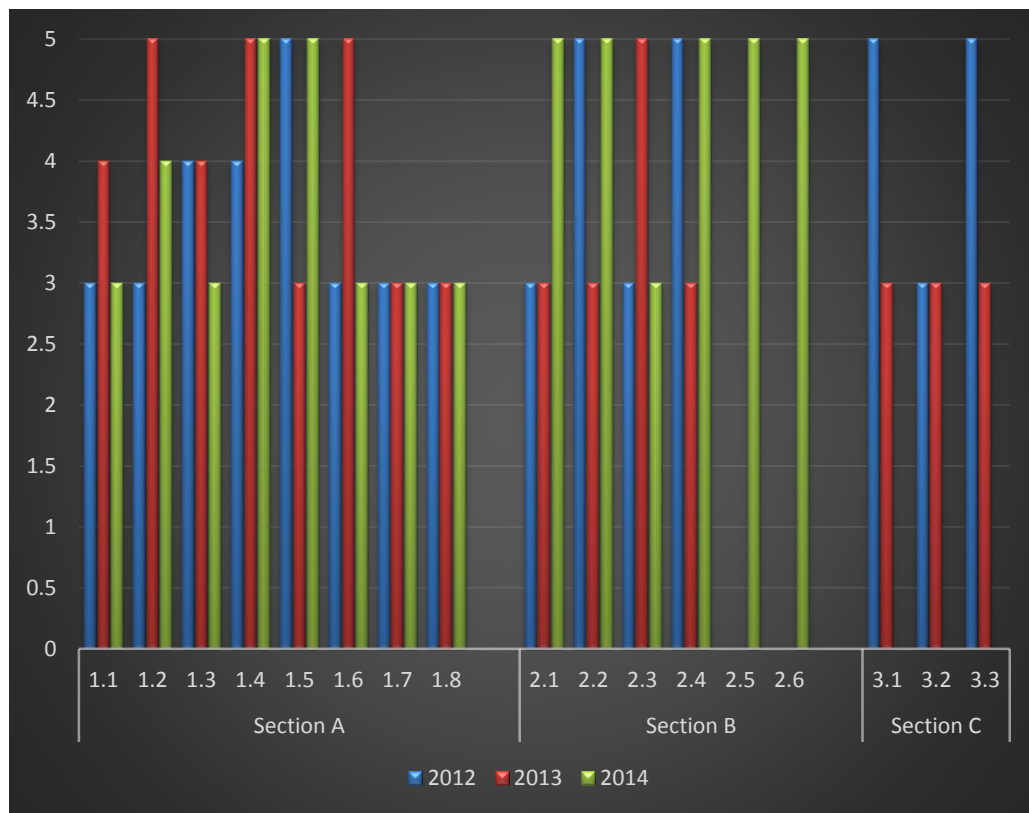


**Figure 11.2: Weighting of cognitive demand in Setswana Paper 2**

It should be noted that the above graph reflects nothing for **Question 5** because of the changed structure indicated in the introduction above. As far as the cognitive demand of choice is concerned, all essay type questions are higher order, which is Synthesise or Create in all the three years. The above graph therefore presents Section A in 2012 and 2013 at lower order questions in question 2, 3 and 4 while in 2014 the same questions were all at medium order. Both Section B and C contextual questions in 2012 and 2013 ranged between lower order to medium order questions while the 2014 managed to make an attempt at the high order questions.

The above indicates that learners who sat for the 2012 and 2013 were more advantaged because most of the questions were lower and medium order questions while the 2014 learners had a more challenging question paper due to the high order questions. The 2014 paper 2 is therefore more advanced than the previous two years.

### 11.2.3 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 3



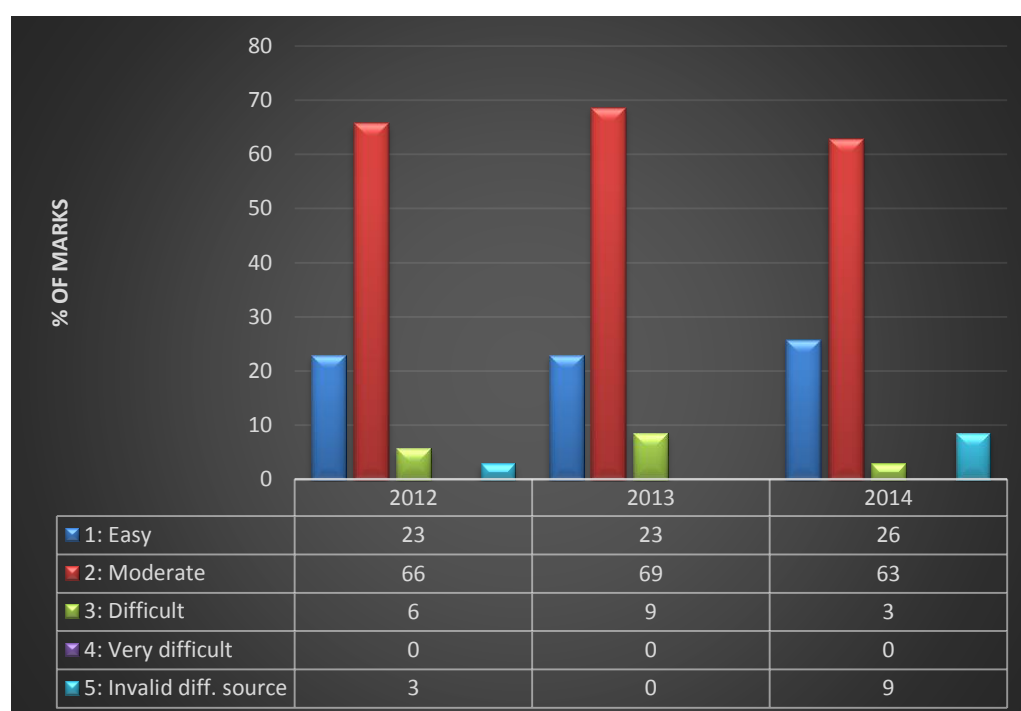
**Figure 11.3: Weighting of cognitive demand in Setswana Paper 3**

The above graph presents changes on the structure of the question papers, section A is the same in all the analysed years while in the 2014 question paper, section B has 6 questions and do not have section C. The weightings of cognitive demand in paper 3 shows that in all the years analysed most of the questions were higher order though 2014 cannot be fairly compared to 2012 and 2013 due to the change in structure.

In conclusion, learners who sat for the 2012 and 2013 papers were at an advantage compared to those who sat for the 2014 which was more challenging with higher order questions. The 2014 question paper is therefore difficult when compared to the 2012 and 2013.

## 11.3 Distribution of levels of difficulty in the papers

### 11.3.1 Weighting of levels of difficulty in Paper 1

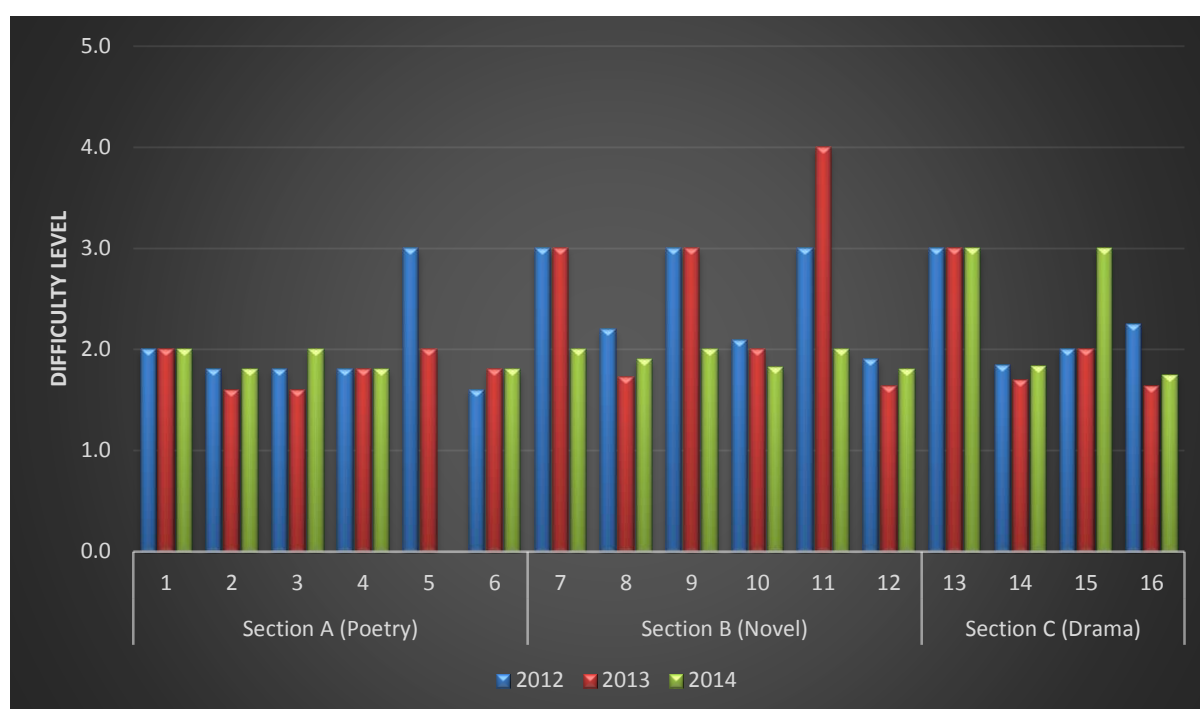


**Figure 11.4: Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 1**

In all the three years analysed the moderately difficult questions were all above 60%. In 2012 question 5.3 was rated difficult due to an invalid source identified where learners were asked to identify an **adjective** from a sentence that did not have an adjective instead had an **adverb**, for example "*nako e telele*" is an adverb and not an adjective. The question was therefore misleading and this can lead to learners losing marks unnecessarily. In 2014 the terms '*Mefutakwalo*' is wrongly used and therefore mislead learners as according to CAPS the term refers to 'types of genres' and not 'type of fonts'.

In conclusion all the three year papers were moderately difficult even if the 2013 paper registered more difficult questions than the other two years, the 2014 paper disadvantaged the learners because of the invalid sources identified. The 2014 paper can thus be seen as the difficult.

### 11.3.2 Weighting of levels of difficulty in Paper 2

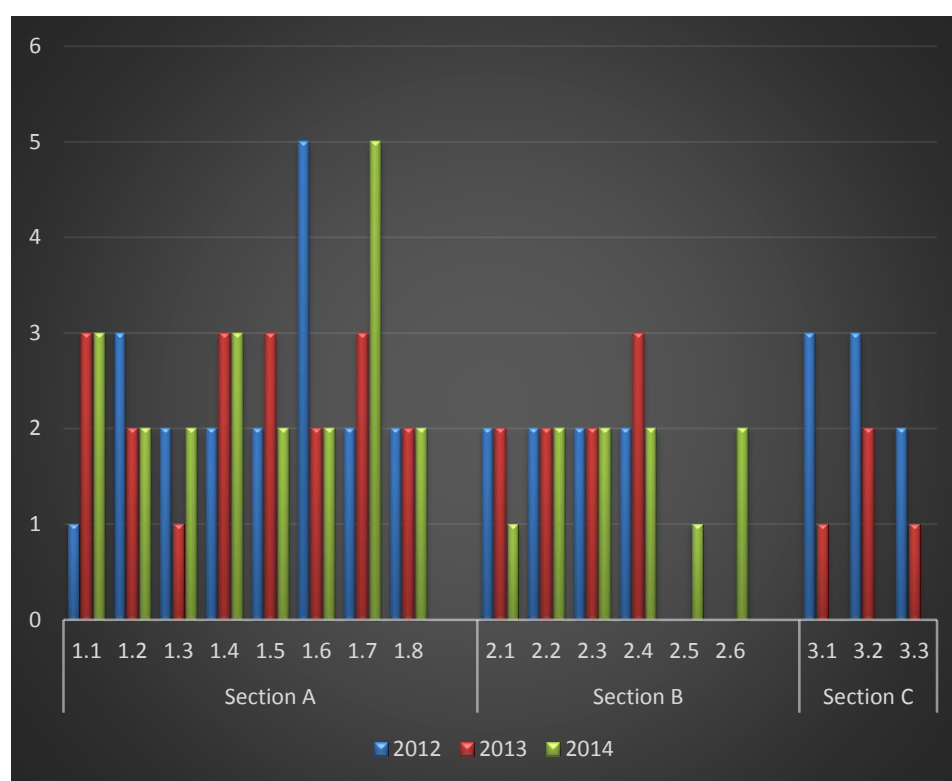


**Figure 11.5: Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 2**

Comparing the level of difficulty of choice in contextual questions has presented all the papers analysed as moderately difficult. Essay questions were mostly difficult in exception of question 11 of 2013 which was very difficult(task difficulty), it assessed learners on two knowledge elements, they had to tackle two major literature techniques, theme and message in one question. They still had to maintain the strategy for formulating a response. In conclusion the 2013 question paper was therefore difficult as compared to 2012 and 2014.



### 11.3.3 Weighting of levels of difficulty in Paper 3



**Figure 11.6: Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 3**

All the papers analysed are moderate because most of the questions are moderately difficult. However the essay type questions in 2012 and 2014 attempted to challenge learners with very difficult topics. For example, question 1.6 of the 2012 paper requested learners to write an essay based on the whole map of Africa which is a subject specific topic and too broad for a Grade 12 to answer. This made the question very difficult as a result it was rated as an Invalid source not intended by the examiner. In conclusion the 2012 and 2014 were equally difficult when compared to the 2013.

### 11.4 Topic or content and/or skill area weightings

**Paper 1:** In as far as content is concerned; Questions based on language in the 2012 and 2013 papers were only covered in Question 5 of both papers. This is a major concern because language and style was highly difficult in both texts and contained enough aspects of grammar, idioms and proverbs which the examiner overlooked to ask questions from. In 2014 language structures and usage are adequately covered in Section C, an improvement that warrants it commendable.

**Paper 2:** In all the papers analyzed, the content is highly predictable and formulaic. For example in poetry, questions which address the different types of poems such as sonnet are not assessed. They deny learners an opportunity to demonstrate their skill of analyzing poems. Poetic devices such as enjambment, rhyme and rhythm are also not assessed though they are part of the curriculum. In section B and C questions such as setting, aspects of characterization and types of conflict are never assessed. Paper 2 in all the years analyzed, covered language structures and usage well for example questions on poetic devices always touch on figures of speech such as metaphor, personification, simile etc. Examiners still have to pay attention to all aspects of the curriculum in order to reduce the predictability of the question paper.

**Paper 3:** There is a common concern regarding the quality of pictures which are not clear and stimulating enough to allow learners arrive at a convincing response. In all the years analyzed, content, topic and skill were at least adequately covered. Essays are always topic based but it takes one's skill to answer them well because the knowledge and content of a specific topic is needed in order to be able to produce a convincing response. However, in Paper 3, questions that are subject specific such as *global warming* should be avoided because an assumption is made that all learners have enough information at their disposal, which is not the case. This makes the question difficult.

### 11.5 Comparability of examination papers in terms of quality and standards

Generally all the papers are of quality even though there are some indications of invalid sources. The 2012 paper 1 had 3% of invalid sources while in 2013 there was none. The 2014 raised the invalid sources bar to 9%. Therefore, the 2014 paper 1 could in this regard have disadvantaged the learners as compared to the other two years. For example, in the 2014 paper, question 1.2.4 had a picture that depicted seasons which would not be obvious for the learners to spot. The question was allocated 3 marks which are high to be lost hence a disadvantage. All the three year papers were of quality but were here and there spoiled by the invalid sources identified, an aspects that needs careful attention from the examiner.

In terms of standards, the standard of all the three papers were are at moderate level. It is advisable that the ratio of the difficult and very difficult questions be balanced. All types of learners need to be catered for so that they express themselves accordingly in demonstrating their knowledge, insight and their skills.

### **11.6 Concluding discussion**

The 2014 paper was of a higher quality and standard when compared to the 2012 and 2013, it assessed learners adequately on many aspects of the curriculum that were never assessed in the past two years. It had more higher order questions than in the past two years, thus challenging the highly gifted learners but still catering for the medium and less gifted learners.

The setwork prescribed for Grade 12 need to be balanced as in choice of set books for example the school that reads Omphile Umphi Modise by Monyaise, D.P.S cannot be seen to be on par with those reading Masego by Mokae G. because of the difficulty of the idiomatic language and style used in Monyaise's books.

Encouraging marking process to accommodate non-standard languages and dialectal words which are not standardised as mentioned in the Paper 2 memorandum is detrimental to language proficiency in Setswana. The skill of asking questions based on visual texts needs to be refined because only easy ones are asked. The examiners do not ask challenging questions based on the given stimuli.

Lastly, we submit that learners who sat for the 2014 paper will do well and emerge more knowledgeable and fairly challenged than those of the past two years - an assumption that they will do better in 2014 is high. The 2014 seem to have prepared learners well for the academic world ahead of them.

### **11.7 Recommendations for improving the quality and standard of the HL examinations**

In terms of **Paper 1**, all the visual stimulus questions such as pictures, cartoons and adverts should be readable. Questions assessed from these visual texts should be

relevant to the picture. The improvement observed on language structure and usage in 2014 should be maintained. One negative feature that was observed in the 2014 memorandum is that the standard language be compromised in favour of the non-standard language should be discouraged. The memorandum further suggests that markers should ignore dialectal differences which are not standardized as well as foreign words which encourage code-mixing as a result bring down the standard of the Home Language.

Regarding **Paper 2**, the concern of the team is that the questions in all the analysed years are formulaic and very predictable. For example:

- *Tshwaela ka ga setaele sa mokwadi sa padi e.*
- *ithutile eng go tswa mo go moanelwa .....?*
- *Tiragalo ya go tllhasela Kgabo ga ga base Schalk e thusa jang mo tsweletsong ya ditiragalo tsa padi e.*
- *Morero wa leboko le ke ofe?*
- *Naya mosola wa ponagalo ya poko e e dirisitsweng mo go mola ... le mosola wa yona [just to name a few].*

It is recommended that other aspects of literature such as sonnet be assessed. Poetic devices such as enjambement, rhyme and rhythm which were never assessed are considered in order to break the monotonous way of asking questions. In section B and C questions such as setting (place and time), aspects of characterization and types of conflict should be noted as their absence in all the analysed years is highly noticeable.

The set work choices are at a similar level in all genres. However the content, language and style of each genre differs especially in the 5 novels of D.P.S. Monyaise. They are classics in their own right and one of them is prescribed (*Omphile Umphi Modise*), however, it is relegated to the same formulaic questions as the others. It is suggested that such classics form part of the compulsory genres to be answered in all the levels of cognitive demand, that is, high, medium and low order processes.

Finally it is recommended that in Paper 2, instruction no. 5 that refers to the selection of questions in Novel and Drama should come before the actual Section B and C are

introduced. The sequence of instructions can lead learners to make wrong decisions because the main explanation on the selection of questions based on the two genres is given at the wrong place.

With regard to **Paper 3**, all the visual stimulus questions, that is pictures should be readable. The questions asked should also be relevant to the picture because some are detached from the picture they are based on.

### 11.8 General suggestions on the setting of questions

It is suggested that all the language papers come together and work out item banks. Questions that are on a high order and medium order could be exchanged from other languages and be adapted to the level of each paper. For example:

*"Fa go nang le bontle, go na le lefufa." Supa bonnete jwa tiragalo e, mo pading ya Omphile Umphi Modise ka D.P.S. Monyaise.*

*("Where there is beauty there is jealousy." Confirm the validity of this statement in the novel Omphile Umphi Modise by D.P.S. Monyaise.)*

*"Dikwalo ka gale di rotloetsa kutlwelobotlhoko fa go leng makoa mme di leba maatla ka leitlho la pelaelo." Sekaseka ka kelotlhoko ditsela tse bokoa le maatla di tlhagisiwang ka gone mo pading ya Masego ka Mokae G.*

*("Literature always encourages sympathy for weakness and treats power with suspicion." Analyse closely the ways in which weakness and/or power are portrayed in Masego by Mokae G).*

## 12. Tshivenda Results

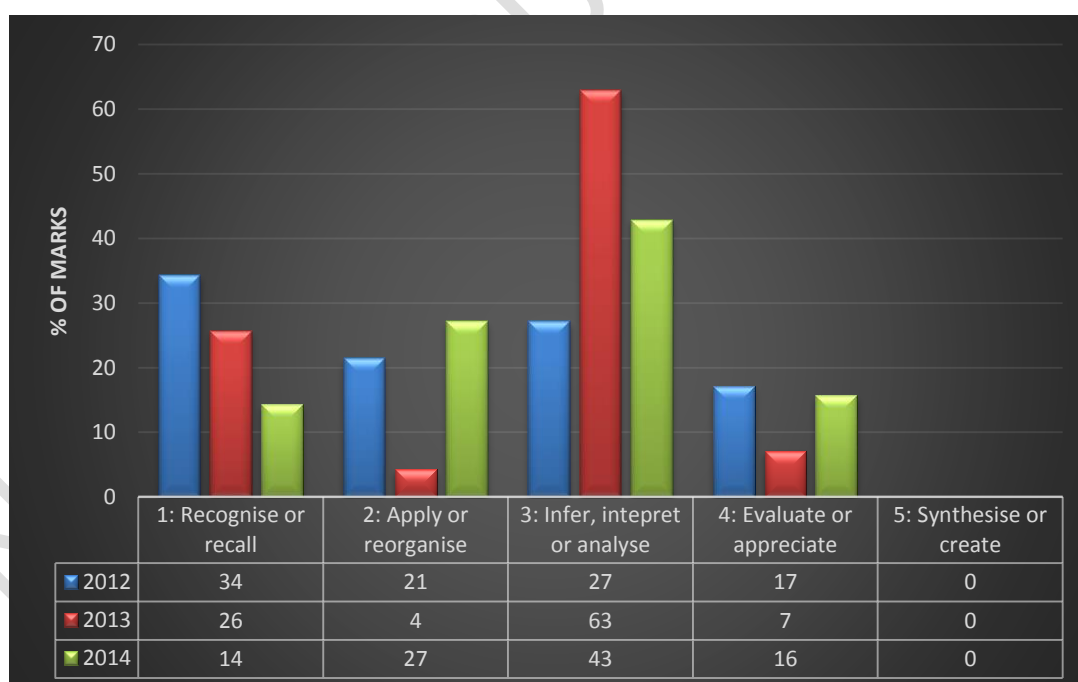
### 12.1 Compliance in terms of format and structure

Both three papers complied with the Subject Assessment Guidelines. The Novel and the Drama sections also complied with SAGs requirements. However, the 2012 Paper 2 is slightly different to the other two.

### 12.2 Distribution of cognitive demand in the papers

#### 12.2.1 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 1

The three examination papers complied with the cognitive demand and difficult levels required by SAGs. According to assessment guidelines (SAGs), questions set from comprehension passage should be distributed into the following cognitive demanding levels: Levels 1 and 2 should comprise 40 percent, Level 3, 40 percent and Level 4 and 5, 20 percent. The cognitive demand levels are shown in the figure below:



**Figure 12.1: Weighting of cognitive demand in Tshivenda Paper 1**

The table above shows that the 2012 examination paper had more questions (55 %) on low cognitive demand level than the required 40 percent. There were fewer

question items on moderate and high cognitive demand levels than expected. The 2013 and 2014 examination papers had more questions at moderate and high cognitive demand levels than the 2012 examination paper. The 2014 examination paper may be regarded as a model paper compared to the other two.

The three examination papers failed to meet the requirement that questions in a comprehension should follow the sequence of the text and should be arranged in order of difficulty with easy questions first and difficult questions at the end. The 2012 and 2013 examination papers tried to comply with this requirement, but the 2014 examination paper completely ignored this requirement and, as result, most of the sections started with questions that are on high demanding cognitive levels.

### 12.2.2 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 2

To show comparability of choice questions, the contextual questions were compared genre by genre. In other words, the four poetry questions were compared across the three years. The same was done for two novel and two drama questions. The analysis is presented in a summarized form in the following figure:

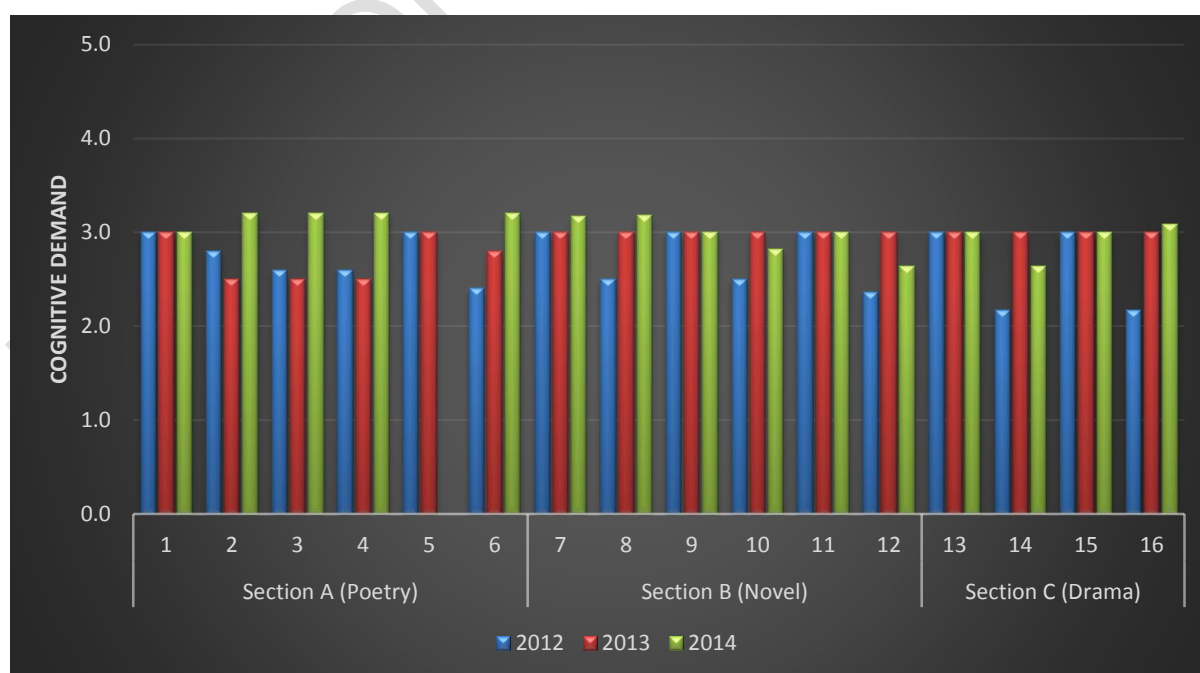
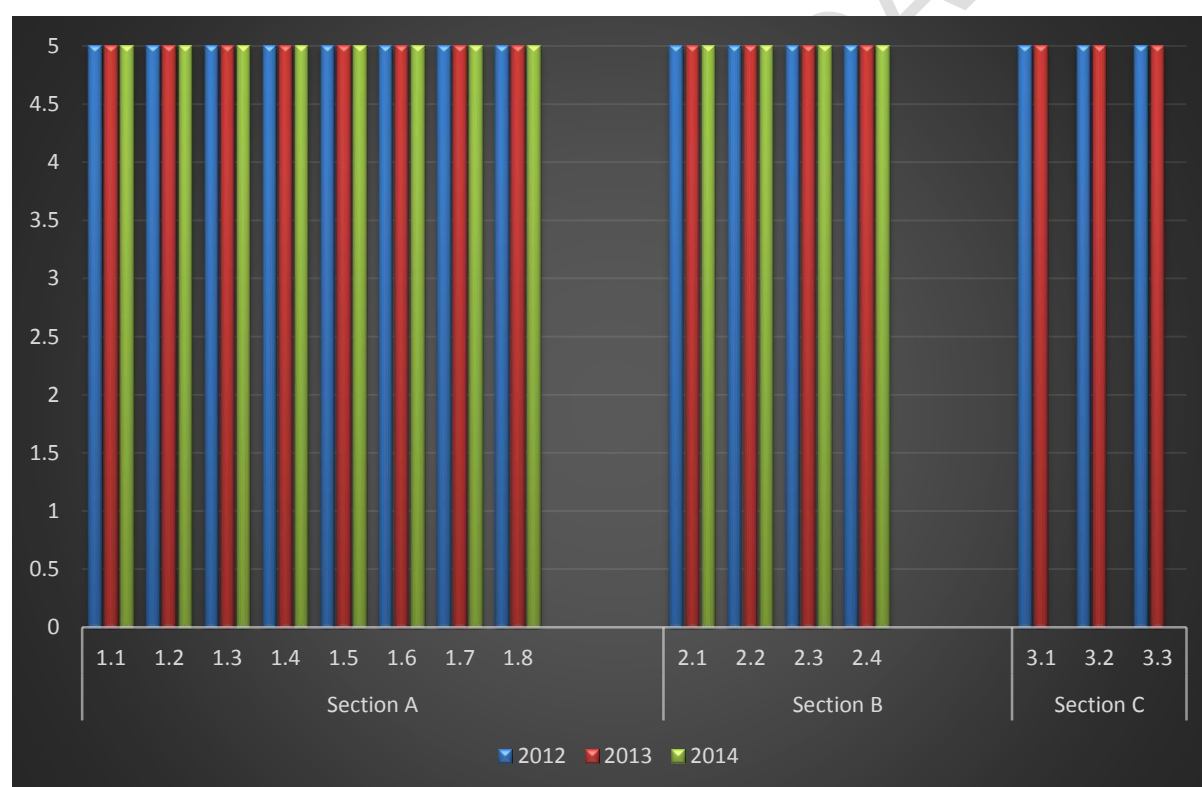


Figure 12.2: Weighting of cognitive demand in Tshivenda Paper 2

The Figures above show how questions in the three papers were distributed across different cognitive demand levels. It is interesting to note the comparability of the three years. The cognitive demand levels are quite similar in the three examination papers. The essay questions are also on the same cognitive demand levels in both the two examination papers.

### 12.2.3 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 3

The following Figure shows the different cognitive weightings of the Tshivenda examination papers for 2012 - 2014:



**Figure 12.3: Weighting of cognitive demand in Tshivenda Paper 3**

From the table above, it may be observed that all the essay questions in Section 1 were on cognitive demand level 5, which is synthesis or creating. The cognitive demand levels for question 1 were the same for both the 2012 - 2014 Tshivenda examinations. All the questions were on cognitive demand level 5 which is creating and synthesis. Some differences may be observed in Section C, question 3.3 where

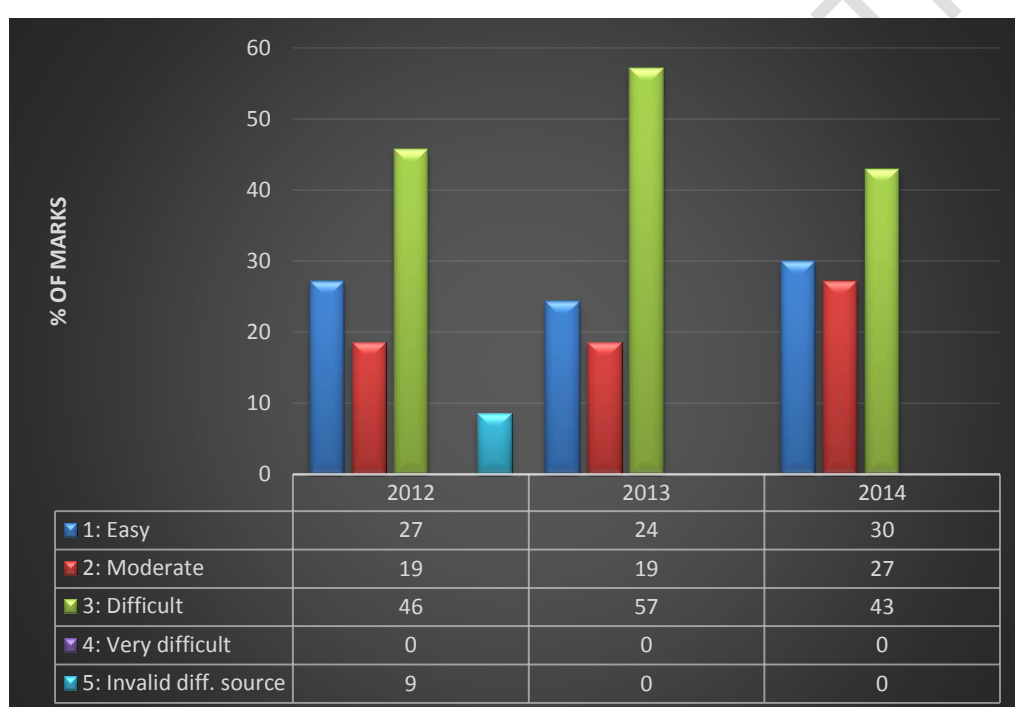


the 2012 question item is on cognitive demand level 2, and the 2013 question item is on cognitive demand level 5.

Overall, the three examination papers are well balanced in terms of cognitive demand levels. Most of the question items are on creative or synthesis level which is suitable for the examination paper that seeks to assess creative writing skills.

## 12.3 Distribution of levels of difficulty in the papers

### 12.3.1 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 1



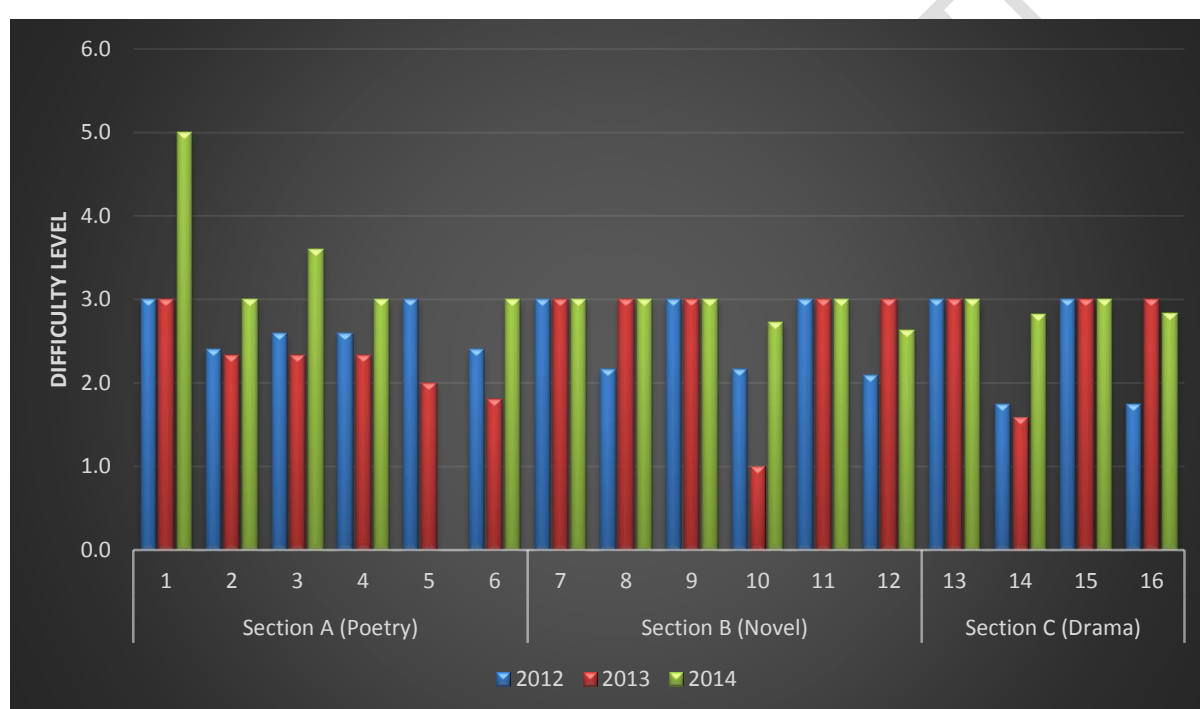
**Figure 12.4: Weighting of difficulty level in Tshivenda Paper 1**

From the table above, it can be observed that the three examination papers were not well balanced in terms of difficulty levels. More questions were at easy and difficult levels rather than moderate level. A well-balanced paper should have more questions at moderate level. It is also important to note that there were no questions on very difficult level. The 2012 paper is the only one which contained 9% of questions with invalid sources of difficulty.

Overall, the 2013 examination paper may be regarded to be the most difficult of the three since it has more questions (57%) on difficult level. It is also a better examination paper in terms of balance as it has more questions on moderate level than easy and difficult levels.

### 12.3.2 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 2

The three examination papers have question items that were on different levels of difficulty as shown on the figure below:



**Figure 12.5: Weighting of difficulty level in Tshivenda Paper 2**

From the Figure above, it is clear that most of the question items set for 2012 - 2014 were mainly on easy and moderate difficulty levels. It was mainly essays that were on difficulty level 3. The difficulty levels of essay questions were the same across the three papers, with the exception of the first question in 2014 which was made invalidly difficult.

The following graphs show that the 2014 examination paper was more difficult than the 2012 and 2013 examination papers, especially the contextual papers. In terms of consistency across the choice questions, the 2012 and 2013 examination papers

complied with the SAGs requirements. The 2014 examination paper was not consistent in respect to choice questions as shown in the tables below:

### Consistency across choice questions (Novel)

|     | Novel 1           | Novel 2            | Novel 3              |
|-----|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1.  | Conflict (type)   | Conflict (sources) | Characterisation     |
| 2.  | Plot (aspect)     | Plot (development) | Setting (background) |
| 3.  | Setting (backgrd) | Setting (backrd)   | Sources of problem   |
| 4.  | Characterisation  | Characterisation   | Characterisation     |
| 5.  | Plot              | Irony              | Irony                |
| 6.  | Characterisation  | Theme              | Theme                |
| 7.  | Plot (climax)     | Plot (climax)      | Plot (denou)         |
| 8.  | Irony             | Consequences       | Consequences         |
| 9.  | Multi choice      | Multi choice       | Multi choice         |
| 10. | Judgement         | Judgement          | Judgement            |
| 11. | Personal opinion  | Personal opinion   | Personal opinion     |
|     |                   |                    |                      |
|     |                   |                    |                      |

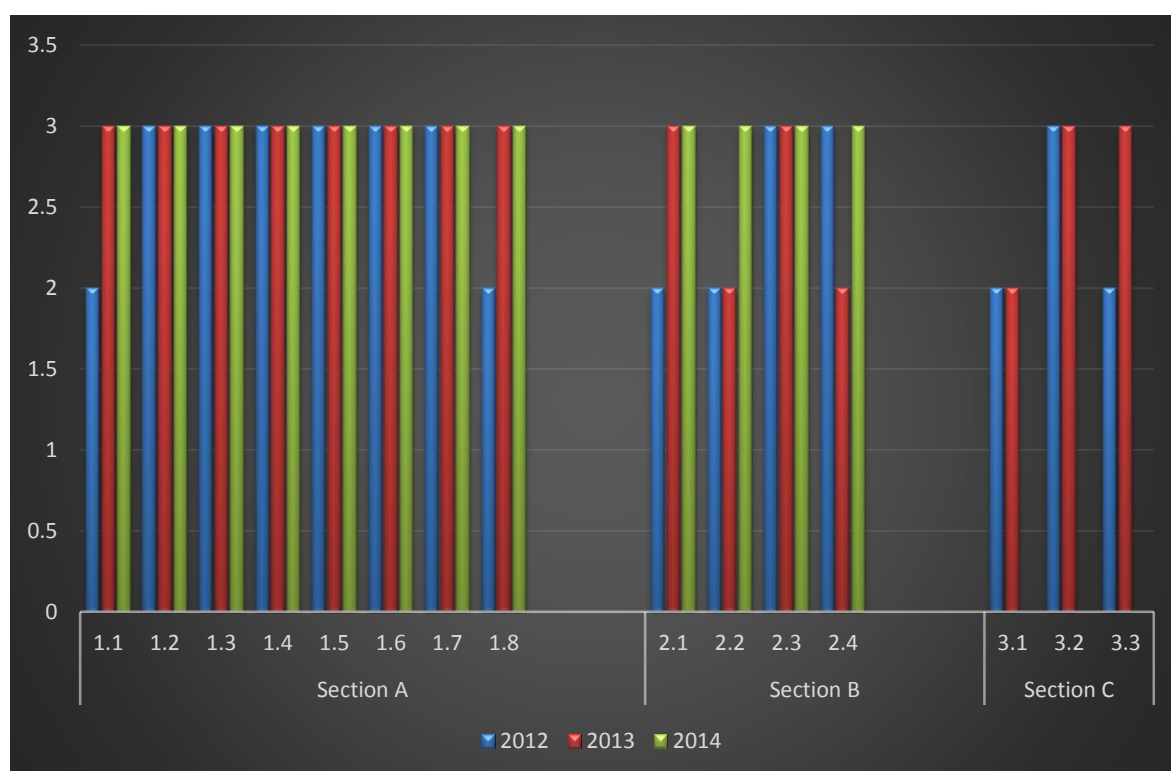
### Consistency across choice questions (Drama)

|     | Drama 1                      | Drama 2                      |  |
|-----|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1.  | Time                         | Milieu                       |  |
| 2.  | Biasness                     | Language/ authority          |  |
| 3.  | View of things               | View of life                 |  |
| 4.  | Characterisation             | Plot                         |  |
| 5.  | Characterisation             | Plot                         |  |
| 6.  | Theme                        | Characterisation             |  |
|     |                              |                              |  |
| NB. | The section has 11 questions | The section has 12 questions |  |
|     |                              |                              |  |
|     |                              |                              |  |
|     |                              |                              |  |
|     |                              |                              |  |

The tables above clearly show that the examiners were not consistent with the way in which the choice questions on novels and dramas were given. Consistency ensures that no learner is advantaged or disadvantaged because of their choice of set works. Although the 2014 questions were not consistent across choice questions, they were of similar in terms of cognitive demand types and difficulty levels.

### 12.3.3 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 3

The following graph shows the levels of difficulty of the different question items on the three Tshivenda examination papers:



**Figure 12.6: Weighting of difficulty level in Tshivenda Paper 3**

Most of the essays question items on question 1 were on difficulty level 3. Only a few question items in the 2012 examination were on moderate difficulty level. In question 2 and 3, the question items were on moderate difficulty level and difficult level. Although the three examination papers were closely related in terms of difficulty levels, the 2014 paper was slightly more difficult than the 2012 and 2013 papers. Most of the question items on the 2014 examination paper were on difficulty level 3. Both examination papers had no questions on very difficult level.

From the analysis of the three examination papers, it is clear there has been a marked improvement of the examinations compared to the previous years, especially with respect to cartoons.

## 12.4 Invalid sources of question difficulty or ease

In **Paper 1**, there were a few questions on the three examination papers which were judged to be having invalid sources of difficulties:

- 2012 (1.4): Use of the word "vhekanyani" (arrange instead of "neani" (name)
- 2012 (1.9): Use of "vhasadzi vhe vhasadzi..." instead of "vhasadzi vhe si vhasadzi"
- 2012 (1.12): Use of the word "vhekanyani" (arrange) instead of "neani" (name)
- 2012 (4.4): Use of idiom in a sentence whereas the idiom is already used in a sentence.
- 2012 (5.1): Use of an adjective in a sentence whereas the word has already been used in the passage.
- 2014 (1.1): Use of the word 'sola'
- 2014 (3.6): Use of the loan words such 'phurophaganda', rethoriki (mbudziso dzi sin a phindulo), sitereothaiphi (4.2).

Regarding **Paper 2**, very few questions with invalid sources of difficulty were identified in all the three examination papers. The use of difficult language in the 2014 examination questions is a serious problem as learners may fail to answer the questions because of difficult key words in the question. For example, the examiners use archaic words such 'lundwa', 'nyethe' and so forth which are no longer in common use.

In terms of **Paper 3**, the examination papers were well prepared except for the 2014 paper which had essay topics written in idiomatic and figures of speech language. On one question there was an instruction that the picture is on page 5 whereas the picture was on page 6; thereby resulting in confusion on the part of the learners.

## 12.5 Evaluating difficulty of stimulus/source material in the papers

**Paper 1:** About 20 percent of the stimulus material in the three examination papers was created by examiners. The problem the source material created by the examiners was that these material have not gone through the process of review as

normal published material would be subjected to, and as a result the quality of some of the texts were questionable. In some instance, the texts in stimulus material were translated from English, and the translations were not really good as the examiners are not translators themselves. So, the stimulus material were not authentic as they were artificially created.

**Paper 2:** The question items in both the three examination papers were based on the set works or the grade. Of the three genres, poetry seemed to pose more challenge than the other two genres and may therefore be regarded as a difficult content. Contextual questions were based on extract taken from the set works and some of the passages were numbered to provide easy access to learners. The wide choice of set works from which learners can choose questions to answer, makes the examinations slightly easier as learners have a wider choice.

The 2014 Paper 2 had a few editorial mistakes, and one of them created an invalid source of difficulty. In question 7.09 on p.14, the examiner used the word 'mbumbo' instead of 'mvumbo'. This error is likely to cause confusion to learners as the meaning of the two words is different.

**Paper 3:** The standard or quality of the stimulus/source material is quite satisfactory. The visual texts used in the three examination papers are of high quality and standard. Most of the stimulus materials were of moderate difficult level except one cartoon set for 2014 examination paper (Section B) which could be interpreted as a school office or any work place office. The questions on this cartoon seemed to suggest that it is a school office. Some texts on the cartoon could have helped to mitigate the difficulty level of the stimulus material.

## 12.6 Coverage of examination curriculum

The team is happy that **Paper 1** over the period provides a full coverage of the examinable curriculum. As for **Paper 2**, its three papers cover the following topic or content and skills areas: Analysis of wide range of texts, finding relevant information from texts, giving and motivating personal opinion, usage of figurative language and analysis of wide range of texts. Regarding **Paper 3**, the three examination papers have

fully covered the examinable curriculum. To avoid predictability, the examination paper for 2013 avoided repeat of some of the curriculum aspects set in 2012, especially in questions 2 and 3. As the structure of the 2014 examination paper was reduced into two sections, learners could answer two questions on letter writing, which raises the question of learners being credited twice for the same skill as some aspects of formal and non-formal letters such as addresses and salutations are the same.

### **12.7 The standard, quality of the language and format of the questions in Paper**

The standard and quality of the 2012 - 2014 examination papers was quite satisfactory. The papers were well-edited and the language used was standard. The formulation of questions was very clear in all three examination papers except in few cases where the examiner used wrong key words on questions such as 'tandavhudzani' (elaborate) instead of 'tikedzani' (support or justify). The format of the papers was of high standard. The problem with the use of these key question words is that a learner may choose to elaborate on his or her answer rather than giving reasons to support the answer.

### **12.8 Recommendations for improving the quality and standard of Tshivenda Papers**

The quality and standard of Tshivenda **Paper 1** examination papers can be enhanced and improved in the following ways:

- The examiners need to use the correct language in setting question items. They should not use action words in the questions which create invalid sources of difficulty ( e.g. *vhekanyani* 'arrange' instead of *neani* 'name'), 'tikedzani ' instead of 'tandavhudzani', and so forth.
- The examiners should also avoid redundant questions such as requiring learners to use words in sentences which are already in passages. This type of question is invalid as the respective word is already in a sentence and its meaning can be easily inferred from this sentence. The learner may also just slightly modify the sentence already given in the passage instead of giving a whole new sentence.

- The layout of Question 1 in the Tshivenda Paper 1 2013 examination is confusing to the learners as the questions do not follow immediately after the respective texts. The texts of Section A & B follow each other and then the questions later. Learners might confused the texts and base their answers on the wrong text.
- The examiners should also limit the number of the stimulus material created by them as such material have not gone through the review process undergone by published texts.

The problem with some of the stimulus material created by examiners is that they present to learners biased ideologies on certain issues, for example, politicians are criticized in most of the stimulus material created by the examiners.

The quality and standard of **Paper 2** across the three years is very satisfactory and the papers can be used as good model for setting future examinations.

Regarding **Paper 3**, the change of the 2014 structure into two sections may results in learners choosing two letters in section 1. The problem with this is that learners may be credited twice for the same skills for letter writing. Furthermore, the examiners should desist from using inaccessible language such as idioms and figures speech on essay topics. Where this occurs, such language should be limited topics.



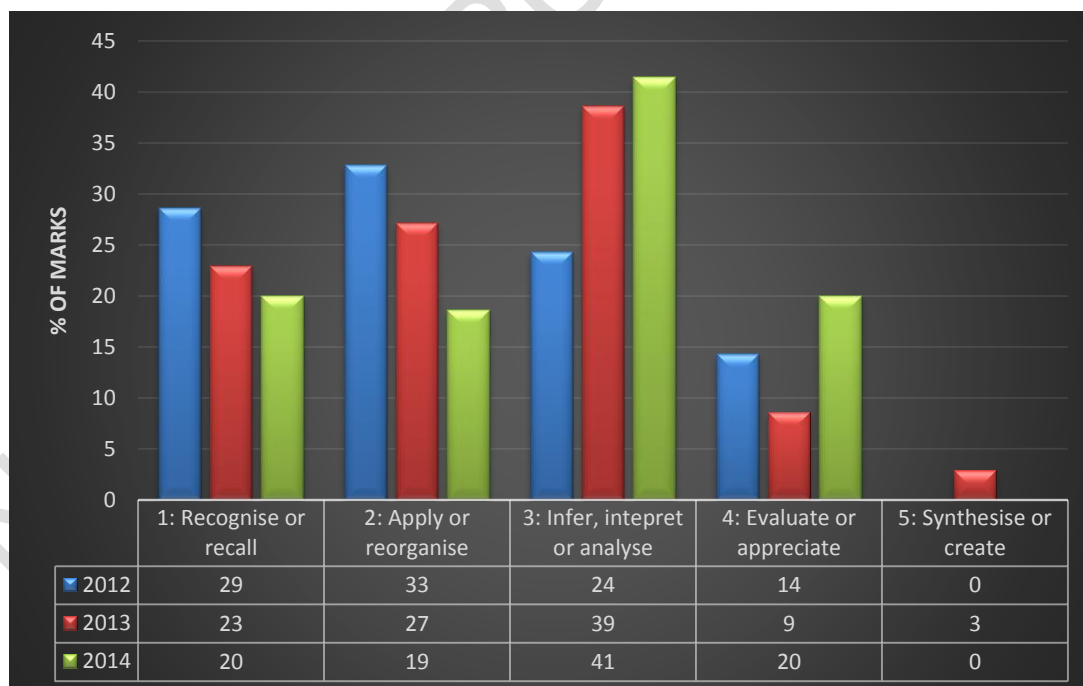
## 13. Xitsonga Results

### 13.1 Compliance in terms of format and structure

The format and structure of all the question papers (2012, 2013 and 2014) complied with the Subject Assessment Guidelines. The analysis made during this research found that there are no significant differences among the question papers, although there was a minor structural change of Paper 3 in 2014 as compared to the previous years' papers. However, with these changes, learner performances could not be impacted because there are no changes in terms of content as well as mark allocations. The format, structure and layout of all the question papers across the years are of good quality. Technically and typologically the question papers are very good. The processing and layout including the subheadings are clear and neatly written.

### 13.2 Distribution of cognitive demand in the papers

#### 13.2.1 Weighting of cognitive demand in paper

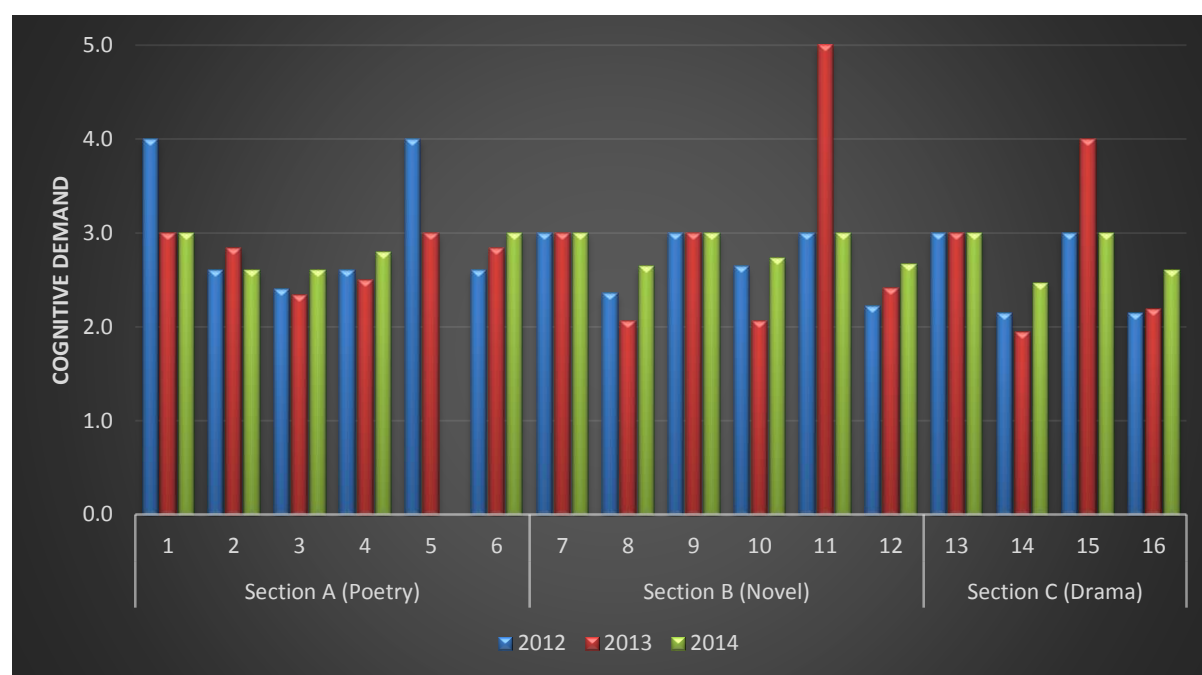


**Figure 13.1: Weighting of cognitive demand in Xitsonga Paper 1**

The analysis provided above shows that across the years, more questions were loaded in the medium order processes in 2014 (41%) as compared to 2012 and 2013. This

situation shows that the 2014 question paper was well balanced considering the average grade 12 learner across the country.

### 13.2.2 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 2



**Figure 13.2: Weighting of cognitive demand in Xitsonga Paper 2**

In the light of the graph above, the analysis shows that across the years the question papers are dominated by lower to medium order questions. This situation applies to both essay type and short questions.

### 13.2.3 Weighting of cognitive demand in Paper 3

According to the next graph, the choice questions in Section A across the years are assessed at the highest level of cognitive demand as opposed to those in Section B and C which all require lower thinking processes.

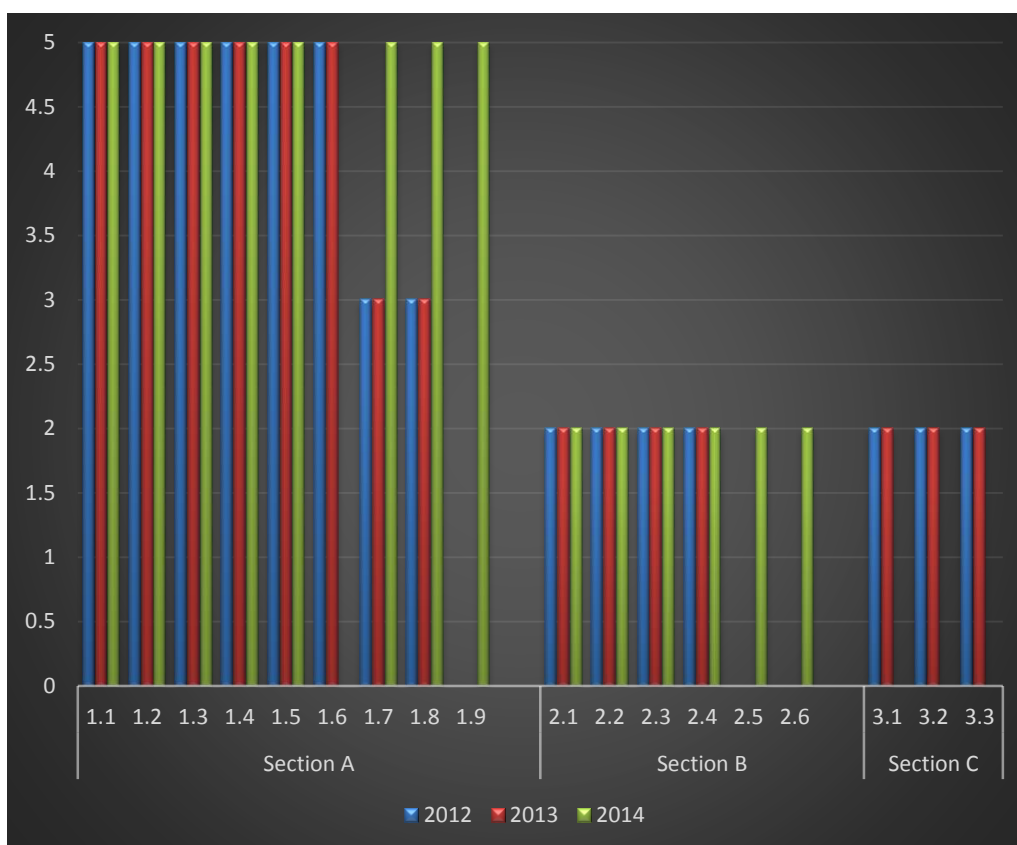


Figure 13.3: Weighting of cognitive demand in Xitsonga Paper 3

### 13.3 Distribution of levels of difficulty in the papers

#### 13.3.1 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 1

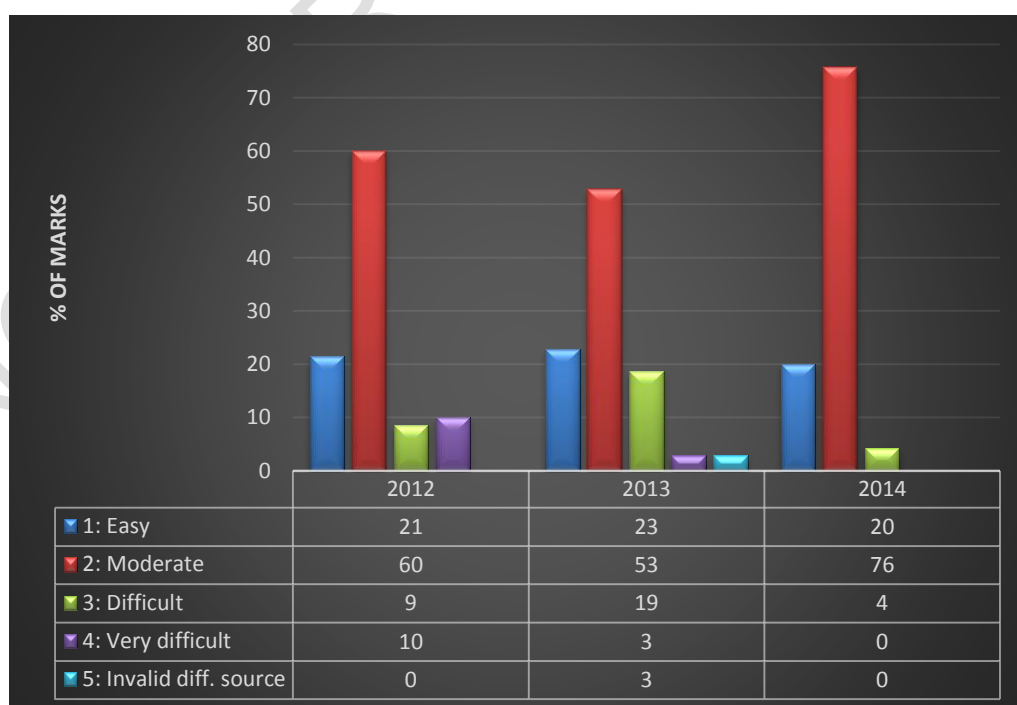


Figure 13.4: Weighting of difficulty level in Xitsonga Paper 1

In the graph above there is a statistical significant indication that across the years high proportion of questions were loaded in the moderate weighting of difficulty level. Generally, Paper 1 is dominated by questions of moderate difficulty and few difficult questions.

Comparatively, from the above statistical analysis, considering the fact that the 2014 question paper has the most medium difficulty and the least difficulty questions, the researchers conclude that this question paper was least demanding. Hence it could be used as a good model question paper.

In terms of invalid sources of question difficulty or ease, the statistical analysis of 2013 Paper 1 shows that there were 3% of invalid source of question difficulty. Obviously, these invalidly difficult questions have impacted negatively on the learner performance in 2013 even though the quality of the papers was moderately difficulty.

### 13.3.2 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 2

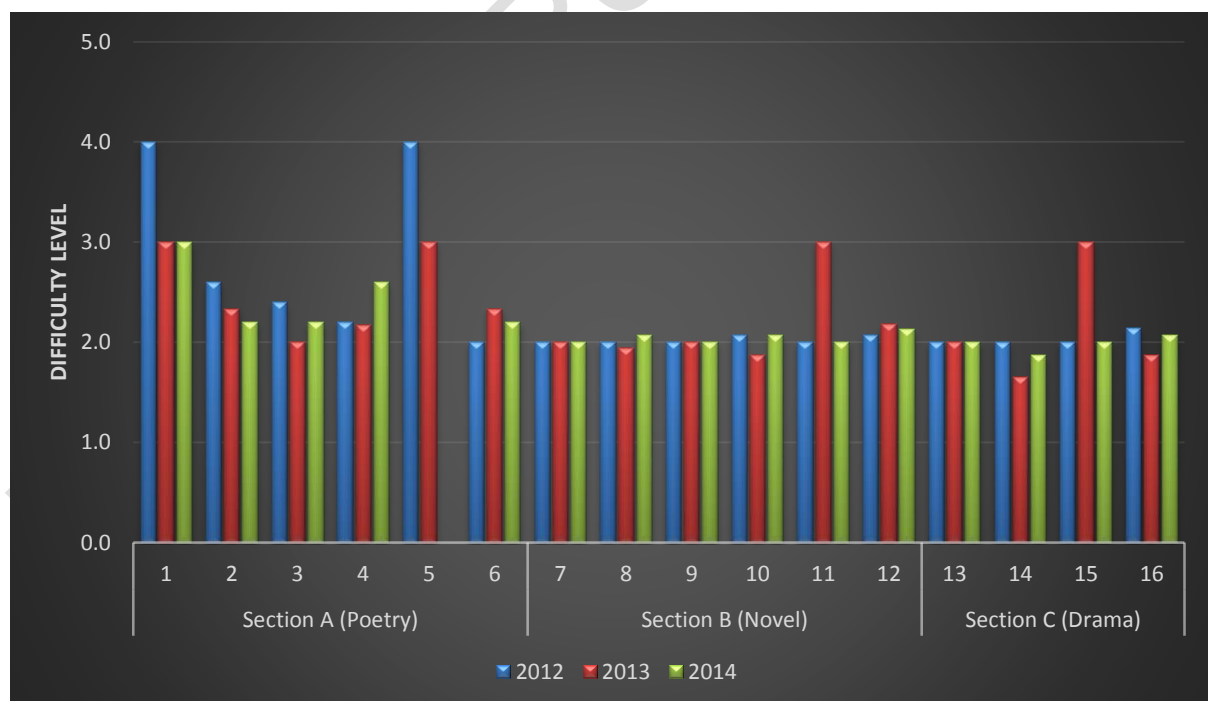


Figure 13.5: Weighting of difficulty level in Xitsonga Paper 2

The above statistical analysis shows that there are discrepancies on the essay type questions within sections and across the years with regard to weighting of the difficulty level. The analysis shows that the discrepancy is on the essay type questions in 2014 whereby one poetry essay question was difficult while the rest were moderately difficult. For section on novels all the essay type are at the moderate weighting of difficulty across the years. In section on drama, 2012 and 2014 essays are comparable while 2013 differs. Contextual questions across the years were at moderately difficult.

In summary, the essay questions across the years are not comparable. The discrepancy is within the section.. All the contextual questions are comparable across the years because they are both on the same level of cognitive demand (medium order processes) and weighting of difficulty level (moderate). Thus, no learner was disadvantaged in writing either the 2012, 2013 or 2014 question paper in contextual questions.

### 13.3.3 Weighting of difficulty level in Paper 3

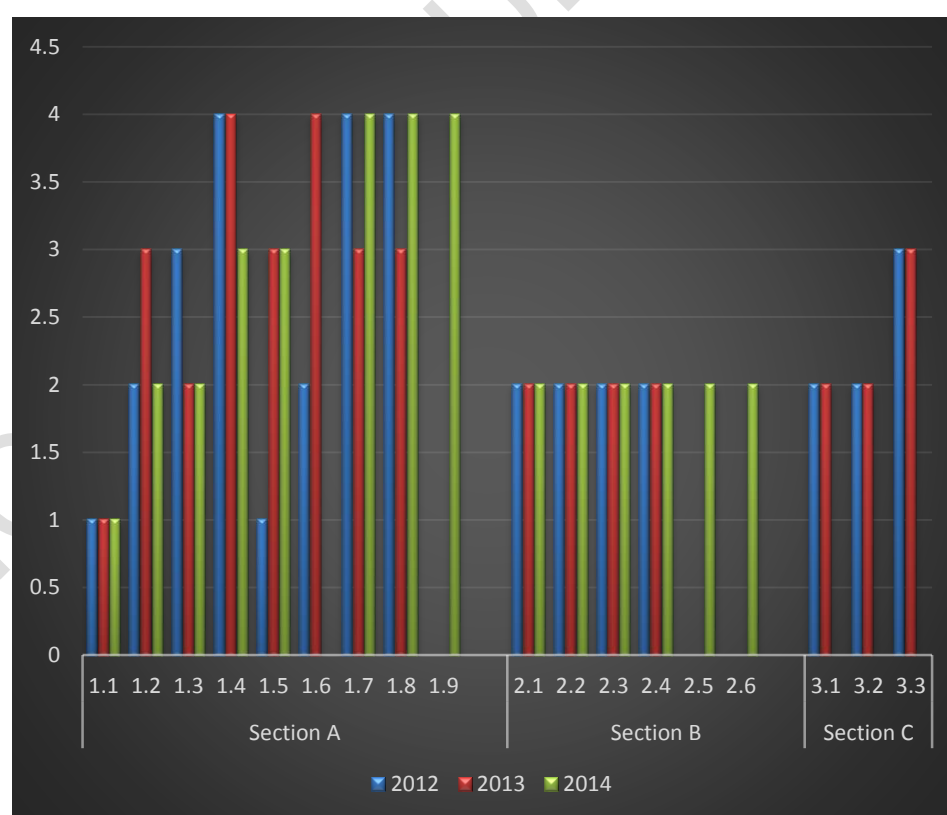


Figure 13.6: Weighting of difficulty level in Xitsonga Paper 3

The graph shows that across the years there was no consistency in the manner in which questions were set in terms of the difficulty level. The inconsistency was due to the fact that some questions were easy whereas others were very difficult within the same section. Very difficult questions were mainly on visuals which were either not very clear/visible or not familiar to an average grade 12 learners especially those who are in rural areas. For example, in 2014, question 1.6.2 (visual of electricity boiler cool) is not familiar to most average grade 12 learners who are in rural areas because the visual is mainly found in urban or industrial areas. Consistency was only maintained in section B.

Although there is discrepancy in the weighting of cognitive demand, generally, the question papers across the years are comparable. However, considering the statistical analysis of the weighting of difficulty level these question papers are not comparable across the years.

#### **13.4 Difficulty of stimulus/source material**

The statistical tables above reveal that across the years in all the examination question papers there were different stimulus/source materials analysed. Generally, in all the question papers (2012, 2013 and 2014), more questions were loaded at the medium order processes of cognitive demand and moderately level of difficulty. The conclusion drawn from this research is that generally the standard of the examination is highly favourable for an average grade 12 learner across the country.

The conclusion drawn from the above graphical analysis is that it is important to indicate that across the years, there is no question paper which was not in line with the SAGs. In the light of the analysis above, it could be concluded that across the years, there is nothing in the question papers that could have unfairly advantage learners taking a particular examination. The tables have shown that in general there were questions which discriminated between learners in terms of the standard. Thus, questions which targeted intelligent and those targeted less gifted learners. It could also be concluded that across the years all the texts were moderately difficult and their length was in line with the SAGs. In all the question papers the set work choices

was at the similar level. Therefore, no choice of set work has unfairly advantage or disadvantage learners writing a particular examination. Finally, it needs to be mentioned that in general there are nothing serious on Paper 1, 2 and 3 that could disadvantage learners taking this paper.

### **13.5 Comparability of examination papers in terms of quality and standards**

The statistical analysis based on the quality of the question papers revealed that across the years question papers are generally comparable. They are both of very good quality to the average Grade 12 learner across the country. Comparatively, the quality of both question papers (2012, 2013 and 2014) is rated very well.

The standards of the level of difficulty across the years in all the question paper are very good for an average grade 12 learner across the country. The standard of the depth of the subject knowledge across the years in all the question papers was good. The analysis further shows that papers 1 and 2 are comparable while paper 3 has discrepancies across the years. According to the tables above, across the years all the examination question papers reflect all the number of stimulus/source material analysed as easy, moderately, difficult and very difficult challenging. In rating the standard of all the question papers one could conclude that they were both very good. Comparatively, the 2014 question papers could be regarded as a model papers.

### **13.6 Recommendations for improving the quality and standard of Xitsonga Home Language examinations**

The data presented and analysed, have yielded few recommendations for improving the quality and standard of Xitsonga HL examination question papers for grade 12. The following recommendations are made:

- The mismatch between mark allocations and the difficulty level of the question need to be improved. For example, in 2013 Paper 1, questions 1.4, 1.7, 1.9 and 4.1.

- The setting/prescription of section B and C Paper 2 for novels and drama should be adjusted. In fact, there should be three novels instead of two and two drama books instead of three. This is recommended in order to be in par with other Home Languages.

The recommendations that have been made are significant because they will play a pivotal role in improving the quality and standard of Xitsonga Home language examinations.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION



## **PART IV: ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

### **14. English First Additional Language Results**

#### **14.1 Compliance in terms of format and structure**

**Paper 1:** There are no deviations with regard to the format and structure of the 2012 - 2014 Papers 1. However, certain question types are not set in accordance with the stipulations in the guidelines. For example in 2012 two open-ended questions were set in Section A in Paper 1 (Q. 1.5 and 1.15) instead of one. Also one multiple choice question and one open-ended question were set on the cartoon only as opposed to the two open-ended and three multiple choice questions stipulated for Section C. In Paper 1 of 2013 two open-ended questions in Section A were set instead of the stipulated one question. However, the rest of the questions (3 - 4) comply with examination guidelines in terms of the number of multiple choice questions and open-ended questions stipulated in the examination guidelines.

**Paper 2:** In the 2014 examination guidelines only contextual questions may be set on all genres. No essay questions may be set in Paper 2. Furthermore, the number of poems set has been reduced from four to two poems. The changes in examination guidelines based on the introduction of CAPS in Grade 12 in 2014 have resulted in the total number of choice questions being reduced from 16 questions set in 2012 and 2013 to 7 questions in 2014. A notable difference in the 2014 paper is the fact that each question has an allocation of 7 marks for open-ended questions whereas the 2012 and 2013 exam papers showed inconsistencies in the weighting of these questions from genre to genre.

**Paper 3:** One longer transactional text (30 marks) selected from a range of formal and informal texts selected from six categories in 2012 and 2013 and four categories in 2014. The obituary, brochure and editorial were excluded from the 2014 examinable texts. The prescribed word length is 120 - 150 words for content only. Candidates may

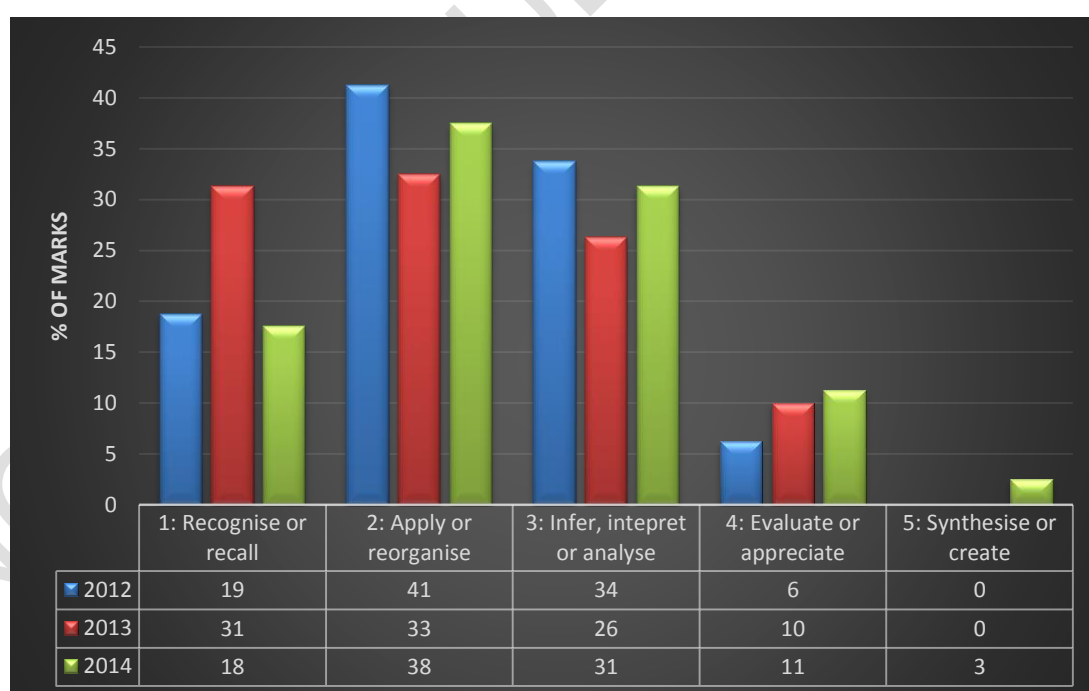
choose one out of four topics from six categories, namely; letters, speech, written interviews and dialogue, media, reports and business correspondence.

From the analysis above it is evident that there are slight deviations from the examination guidelines in 2013 and 2014 emanating from variations in the number of question types in Paper 1 and choice questions in Paper 3. The most significant deviation is the inclusion of the informal report in Question 2.3 of 2014 Paper 3. This transactional text is neither prescribed in the CAPS and in the examination guidelines and would thus significantly disadvantage candidates as they would not have been taught the format and style of an informal report.

## 14.2 Distribution of cognitive demand in the papers

### 14.2.1 Weightings of cognitive demand in Paper 1

In terms of the analysis conducted by the English FAL team on the 2012, 2013 and 2014 examination papers, the following weighting of cognitive levels were observed.



**Figure 14.1: Weighting of cognitive demand in English FAL Paper 1**

None of the three Paper 1 examinations evaluated adhered to the stipulated proportions of cognitive levels. Analysis of 2012 Paper 1, as shown in Table 1 and the

graph above, indicates an overall weighting of 60% recall and reorganization questions, 34% inference and 6% evaluation and appreciation level questions. This shows that the 2012 paper was heavily weighted towards lower order questions, namely, reorganization of information and middle order questions, namely, inference; and a lower weighting of higher cognitive demand in terms of making value or moral judgements and assessment of the aesthetic impact of texts read.

The analysis of Paper 1 of 2013 indicates 64% recognize and reorganization questions, 26% inference and 10% evaluation and appreciation questions. This suggests an increase of 4% weighting in the recall and application and reorganization of information category in 2013 and a further 4% increase in the evaluation and appreciation category in terms of the typology used in this analysis which is a combination of Barrett's and Bloom's taxonomy. Overall, the 2013 paper had the highest weighting of lower order questions.

A slight deviation of 6% in the weighting of inference questions is evident in the 2012 examination whereas a further 24% difference in the same cognitive level is evident in 2013. In 2014 there is a slight reduction of lower order questions to 56%, signaling a variance of -4% to -8% in 2012 and 2013 respectively. A 5% increase in middle order questions and a marginal 1% increase in higher order questions are evident in 2014 in comparison to 2013.

Overall, the weighting of lower and middle order questions in 2014 is more comparable to the 2012 examination as there is a slight decline of 1%-3% of these cognitive levels in 2014 in contrast with variances of up to -13% recall questions in 2013. The 2014 examination also carries the highest weighting of higher order questions equalling 14% of the paper. This increase is attributable to an additional 3% weighting of creation and synthesis questions which were not previously featured in the 2012 and 2013 papers. Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that the 2014 examination of Paper 1 was a more balanced paper and that it carried a higher cognitive demand than both the 2012 and 2013 papers.

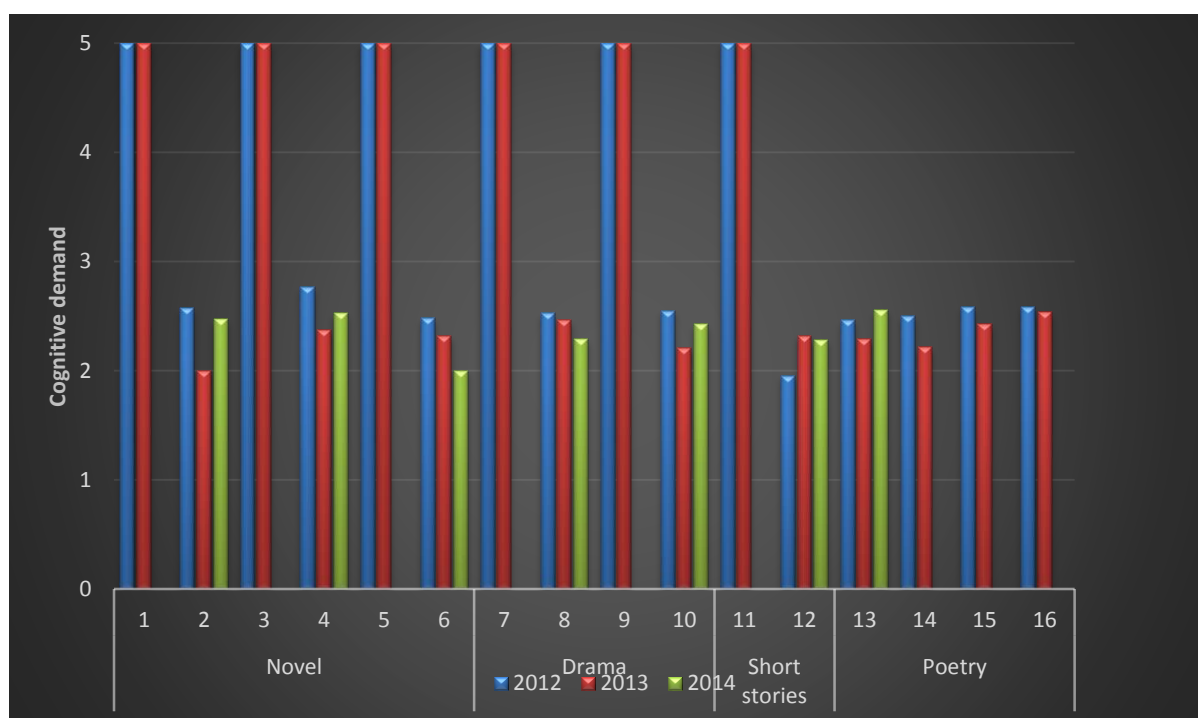
### 14.2.2 Weightings of cognitive demand in Paper 2

A comparison of the cognitive demand of choice questions conducted on Paper 2 (Literature), shown on the graph below, indicates that all essay type questions (1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11) were categorized as evaluation and creation questions in both 2012 and 2013 examinations. This is because in all essay questions there was a consistent format and style of questioning requiring candidates to display higher cognitive skills such as synthesizing, critically evaluating and creation of new texts by integrating ideas and information to an overall structure or purpose in a way that is relational. Common elements of literature study examined in the essay questions were the analysis of themes in relation to character and plot. Candidates are not only expected to recall events in the texts studied but are also required to analyse, interpret, make critical judgements and draw conclusions based on the context of the text, as well as construct a well-structured and cohesive response in the form of an essay.

The analysis of contextual questions, on the other hand, shows some disparities in cognitive demand weighting from across and within sections. The analysis shows that most of the contextual questions in 2012 are pitched at an average level 3 with the exception of Questions 6 (novel), 12 (short story) and 2 (poetry) that are weighted at an average of 2. This suggests that candidates who selected the latter questions would have been unfairly advantaged over those candidates who had selected alternative questions. In 2013 only Question 16 (poetry) was weighted at level 3 whereas the rest of the choice questions are weighted at an average level 2. On the contrary, the 2013 examination shows the highest consistency both within and across sections with most of the contextual questions at an average of 2 with the exception of question 16 weighed at an average of 3. 2014 has the second most consistent weighting of cognitive levels per question with most questions weighted at lower order level with the exception of Question 4 (Lord of the Flies) and Question 7 (poetry) at middle order level.

Overall, the 2012 paper had the highest cognitive demand with 6 middle order choice questions and 4 lower order choice questions as opposed to 9 lower order questions and 1 higher order question in 2013. 2014 has two higher order questions and 5 lower

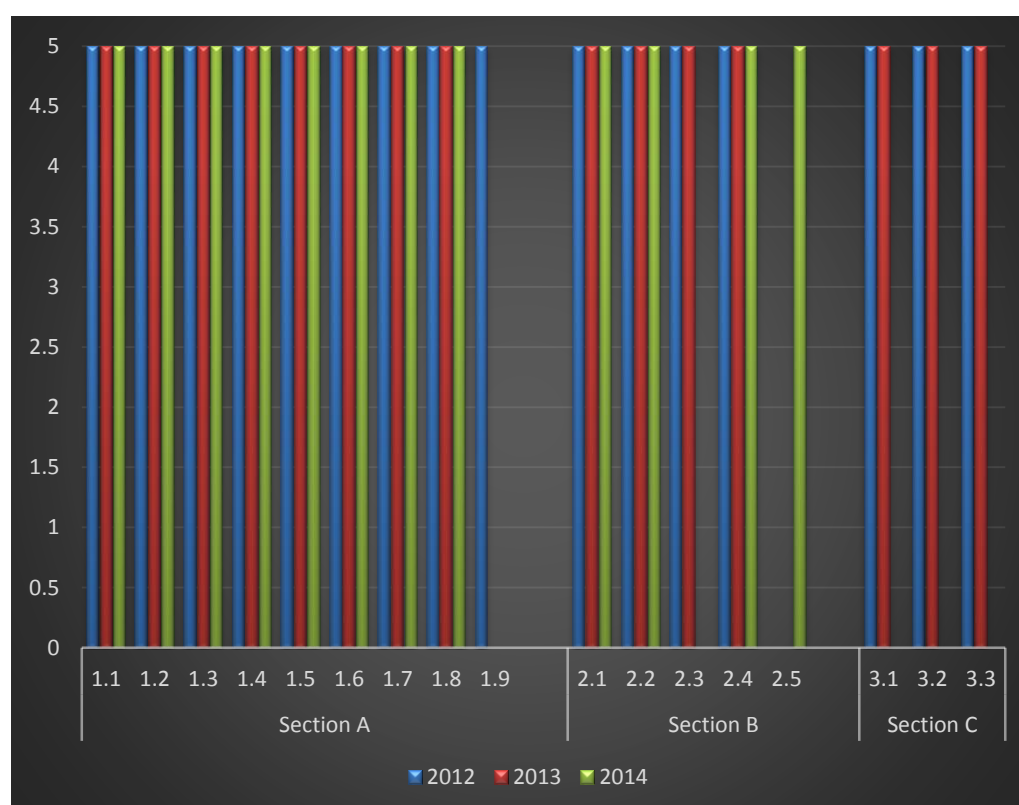
order questions out of 7 choice questions thus indicating that 71% of the paper was weighted at a lower cognitive level.



**Figure 14.2: Weighting of cognitive demand in English FAL Paper 2**

In conclusion, as shown in the graph, it is evident from the comparative analysis of the examination of Paper 2 that contextual questions are not of a comparable standard within and across years. On the contrary, essay questions set in 2012 and 2013 are of a comparable standard across sections and years. Because 2014 is structurally different from the previous year's examinations, it is not comparable to the 2012 and 2013 examinations.

### 14.2.3 Weightings of cognitive demand in Paper 3



**Figure 14.3: Weighting of cognitive demand in English FAL Paper 3**

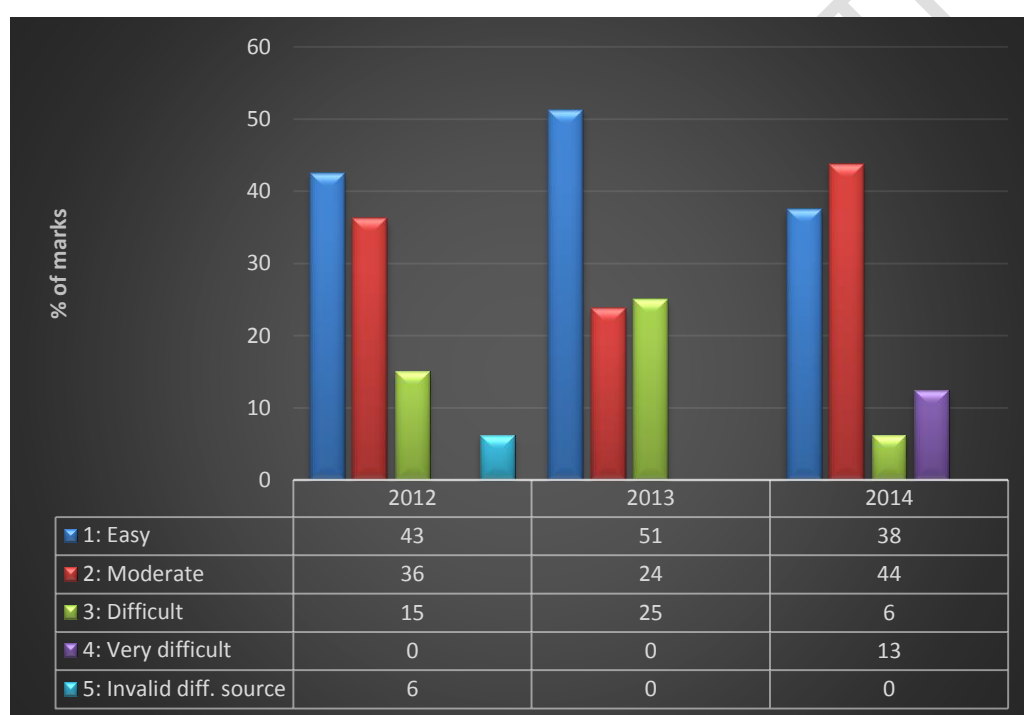
Items in Paper 3 require candidates to display higher cognitive skills such as synthesizing, evaluation and creation of new texts *by integrating ideas and information to an overall structure or purpose in a way that is relational; and to engage in original creative thought and design; putting elements together to form a coherent whole and making a new or unique product showing emotional and aesthetic sensitivity by responding to the requirements of a variety of essay, longer and shorter transactional texts.* Depending on the requirements of the topic and text type, candidates are also required to make critical value judgements on personal preferences and on socio-cultural issues using given criteria.

This high level of cognitive demand is applicable to all sections but the level of difficulty of specific texts or topics may differ despite this equivalence of cognitive demand.

## 14.3 Distribution of levels of difficulty in the papers

### 14.3.1 Weightings of difficulty levels in Paper 1

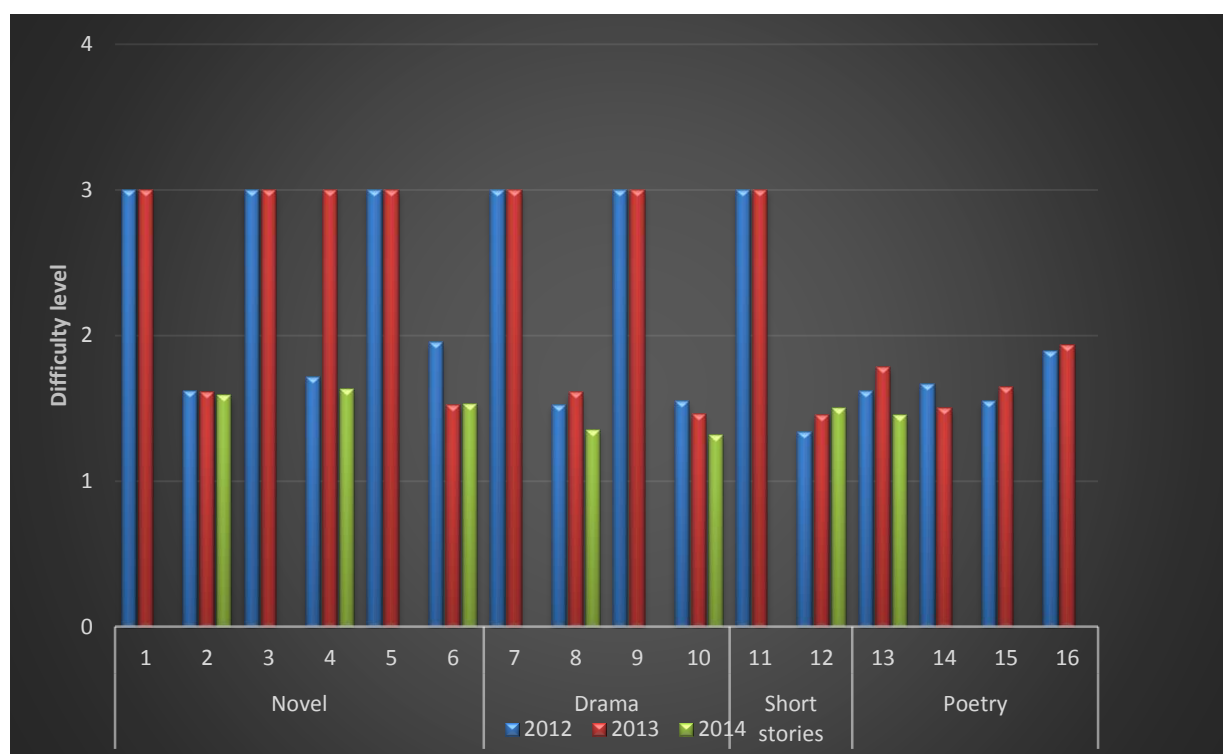
The 2013 examination had the highest percentage of difficult questions (51%) whilst the 2012 examination had the lowest (34%). There are a higher percentage of moderate questions in the 2014 examination – 44 % and 6 % difficult questions. There are no very difficult question in 2012 and 2013 and 13% very difficult questions in the 2014 exam. Based on these findings the 2014 examination can be considered to be slightly more difficult than the 2012 examination and the 2013 is the easiest.



**Figure 14.4: Weighting of difficulty level in English FAL Paper 1**

The 2013 and 2014 examinations did not have any invalidly difficult questions while the 2012 examination contained 3 items with a total weighting of 6%. The questions classified as invalidly difficult (ID) are listed in Table 14.1 to follow.

### 14.3.2 Weightings of difficulty levels in Paper 2

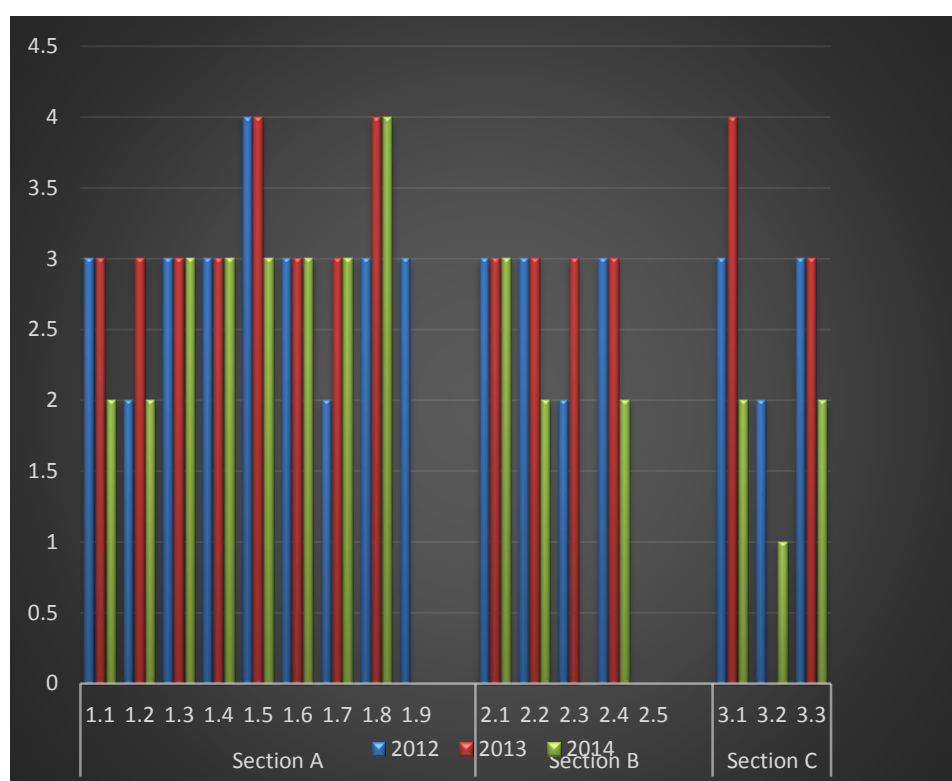


**Figure 14.5: Weighting of difficulty level in English FAL Paper 2**

Because the literary essay questions generally require an analytical or discursive response the essay option in all sections (Novel, drama and Short stories) of paper 2 always poses a task difficulty. This is consistent for 2012 and 2013. By contrast the contextual question in the novel is rated as moderately difficult across the 3 years; the drama section is rated as moderately difficult in 2012 and 2013 and easy in 2014. The short story contextual question was found to be easier than the other contextual questions in 2012 and 2013 and moderately difficult in 2014. There is overall consistency in the level of difficulty for all poetry questions in 2012 and 2013 however the poetry section was rated difficult in 2014. The difficulty level for paper 2 was moderate in 2012 and 2013.



### 14.3.3 Weightings of difficulty levels in Paper 3



**Figure 14.6: Weighting of difficulty level in English FAL Paper 3**

2013 had the highest number of three very difficult questions in Paper 3 whereas 2012 and 2014 had only one such level of difficulty. The most difficult questions are those questions that would have been very difficult for the average Grade 12 student to answer. The skills and knowledge required to answer the questions allow for A-grade candidates (extremely high-achieving/ability candidates) to be discriminated from other high ability/proficiency candidates. Such questions include the argumentative essay, designing an advertisement which required application of the AIDA principles and interpretation of pictures which require conversion of abstract ideas into a reflective or narrative essay.

The 2014 paper had the lowest number of difficult questions with 6 questions compared to 11 in 2012 and 2013 respectively. The reason for the relative moderate difficulty of the 2014 examination was the fact that topics were accessible and topical thus making it easy for candidates to respond to the requirements of a wider variety of topics. The level of difficulty of the paper was challenging and sufficiently balanced to accommodate high achieving candidates because of the range of

academic and creative texts as well as the selection of content and topics covered in the paper.

The instructions posed task difficulty because the expectation that a 17 year old write a set of instructions for staff that will be left in charge, was thought to be challenging in that it was out of the range of the learner's experience.

Questions with unintended sources of difficulty totaled 20 marks in 2013 and 30 marks in 2014. Candidates would have found it difficult to conceptualize the requirements of the expected response in the diary entry in question 3.2 in 2012. The informal report in Question 2.3 in 2014 is beyond the scope of the 2014 curriculum and was therefore an unfair option and posed a great task and content difficulty for candidates.

#### 14.4 Invalid sources of question difficulty or ease

During the analysis of the 2012 - 2014 examinations the English First Additional Language evaluation team identified a number of questions which were deemed to have invalid sources of difficulty which mostly emanated from expected response either because of the faulty formulation of the question thus resulting in candidates not being able to demonstrate what they know or that the memo was too restrictive. Items identified as having invalid sources of difficulty in each examination, together with the weighting of each question and reason for difficulty, are tabled below.

**Table 14.1.1: Questions classified as invalidly difficult in the 2012 papers**

| YEAR   | 2012     |                              |                      |   |
|--------|----------|------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| PAPER  | Item no. | Mark allocation per question | Source of difficulty | Reason for invalid source of difficulty   |
| 1 (80) | 1.5      | 2                            | Expected response    | This should be a closed question as the text provides evidence that workers can be affected emotionally. Motivation is taken from the text thus limiting personal response. |
|        | 1.7      | 2                            | Expected response    | Question suggests that the answer can be found in the text but candidates are expected to infer or  |

|                         |        |               |                   |  |
|-------------------------|--------|---------------|-------------------|--|
|                         |        |               |                   | display knowledge/awareness of environmental issues.   |
|                         | 3.6    | 1             | Expected response | Answer different from that suggested in the memo. The question could have been phrased differently - 'effective' instead of the 'best of its kind on the market' |
| <b>Total marks (80)</b> |        | <b>5 (6%)</b> |                   |  |
| 2                       | 15.4   | 2             | Expected response | Stowed' means to put away tidily hence the expected answer does not have the same connotation as suggested in the question.                                      |
| <b>Total marks (35)</b> |        | 2             |                   |  |
| <b>Total % marks</b>    |        | 5.7           |                   |  |
|                         | 16.1.1 | 0.5           | Expected response | No definite answer. All the options can be used indiscriminately.  |
|                         | 16.1.2 | 0.5           | Expected response | No definite answer. All the options can be used indiscriminately.  |
|                         | 16.1.3 | 0.5           | Expected response | No definite answer. All the options can be used indiscriminately.  |
| <b>Total marks (35)</b> |        | <b>1.5</b>    |                   |  |
| <b>Total % marks</b>    |        | <b>4.3</b>    |                   |  |

**Table 14.1.2: Questions classified as invalidly difficult in the 2013 papers**

| <b>YEAR</b>  | <b>2013</b>     |                                     |                             |   |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>PAPER</b> | <b>Item no.</b> | <b>Mark allocation per question</b> | <b>Source of difficulty</b> | <b>Reason for invalid source of difficulty</b>        |
| 2 (70)       | 2.1.9           | 2                                   | Expected response           | Mark allocation inconsistent with the expected answer |

|                         |       |     |                   |   |
|-------------------------|-------|-----|-------------------|---|
| <b>Total marks (35)</b> |       | 2   |                   |   |
| <b>Total % marks</b>    |       | 5.7 |                   |   |
|                         | 8.1.5 | 2   | Expected response | More than one response expected   |
| <b>Total marks (35)</b> |       | 2   |                   |   |
| <b>Total % marks</b>    |       | 5.7 |                   |   |
| 3                       | 3.2   | 20  | Expected response | 'after' the event - may be difficult as the event is yet to be celebrated |
| <b>Total marks</b>      |       | 20  |                   |   |
| <b>Total % marks</b>    |       | 20  |                   |   |

**Table 14.1.3: Questions classified as invalidly difficult in the 2014 papers**

| <b>YEAR</b>          | <b>2014</b>     |                                     |                             |  |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>PAPER</b>         | <b>Item no.</b> | <b>Mark allocation per question</b> | <b>Source of difficulty</b> | <b>Reason for invalid source of difficulty</b>   |
| 2 (70)               | 4.2.7           | 2                                   | Concept difficulty          | Should have been an open-ended question to allow for a critical response.  |
| <b>Total marks</b>   |                 | <b>2</b>                            |                             |  |
| <b>Total % marks</b> |                 | <b>5.7</b>                          |                             |  |
| 3(100)               | 2.3             | 30                                  | Task difficulty             | Limited guidance on the specific requirements of writing an informal report. Informal report not prescribed in the curriculum. |
| <b>Total marks</b>   |                 | <b>30</b>                           |                             |  |
| <b>Total % marks</b> |                 | <b>30</b>                           |                             |  |

Overall, the comparison of the 2012 - 2014 examination papers indicates that 2014 had the highest weighting of marks allocated to questions with unintended sources of difficulty which may have disadvantaged candidates and 2012 had the least weighting of such questions. The reason for the high weighting in 2013 and 2014 is the high mark allocation of 20 and 30 marks, respectively, in questions with unintended difficulty identified in the two years whereas shorter questions with low mark allocation were identified in 2012. 3.4% of the whole examination was affected in 2012, 9.6% in 2013 and 12.8% in 2014.

## **14.5 Other points regarding quality of examinations**

### **14.5.1 Question predictability**

Curriculum coverage in the examinations of all three years does not do justice to the depth and breadth of curriculum coverage specified in all three examinations. Repetition of question types and topics or skills lends the examination to predictability and thus encourages superficial and selective teaching of concepts. For example,

language structures such as negative form, concord, tag questions, reported speech, and passive voice are featured in all three papers to the exclusion of other sentence types and language structures that are specified in the curricular.

There are a number of questions that were identified as containing 'specific determiners' i.e. words that tend to give away the correct answer. Giving clues to candidates is inevitable in the assessment of comprehension but in some cases such clues could have been avoided.

#### **14.5.2 Quality of stimulus material**

In 2013 two questions could have resulted in technical difficulties. In 3.6 candidates were expected to interpret an advert on Huletts sugar. The picture quality for this advert was poor, which may have unfairly disadvantaged candidates. In 4.1.2 candidates were required to identify tone in the cartoon. Although the frames were numbered, the question did not indicate the frame reference for identifying tone.

All visual texts should be thoroughly checked to ascertain good visibility and to minimise reading difficulty.

#### **14.6 Recommendations for improving the quality and standard of English First Additional Language examinations**

It is recommended that the current 40/40/20 % proportions of cognitive levels of comprehension should be revised in order to significantly reduce the weighting of recall items and to increase application and inferential questions, and the evaluation and synthesis questions by 10% at Grade 12. The change in the weighting of cognitive levels could be structured incrementally in such a way that cognitive demand is increased progressively from Grade 10 to 12.

The selection of topics or issues on which the information texts in Section A of **Paper 1** are based is of a limited range. The 2012 and 2013 texts are based on the theme of charitable causes. While the texts reflect a positive message of humanitarianism they tend to create a stereotype of certain sections of society that are considered

underprivileged and needy in contrast with those in a more privileged class of society who are seen as rescuers. Such recurring themes in the English First Additional Language paper suggest certain assumptions made by examiners about the interests, identity and background of the candidate as a reader. Firstly, it is recommended that the text types selected should be more representative of the range of texts recommended in the curriculum which include web pages, opinion articles, argumentative, observational and discursive texts, editorials; and a wider range of graphic texts for the visual text in Section A. Secondly, the comprehension passage should cover a range of topics which reflect the aspirations and interests of the envisaged learner, which could include texts about career choices, workplace skills, relationships, choices and challenges faced by teens in the modern world and information age such as cyber-bullying, social networking, safety and portraying young people as capable of contributing to social change, resourceful, assertive, responsible and in control of their destinies instead of perpetuating notions of dependency and social entrapment.

The format and structure of **Paper 2** (the literature paper) may be considered a difficulty for candidates due to the various choices available as well as the total number of questions. Although the table of contents and instructions are meant to be helpful to candidates in their selection of choice questions, it may be daunting and time consuming to go through all the information thus resulting in the high number of irregular or invalid responses. For example, instruction number 3, on page 2 (2012 and 2013), is ambiguous. Whilst the instruction asks candidates to answer 2 questions from 4 sections, it goes on to explain that 1 question should be answered from each of the first 3 sections and/ or 2 questions from the last section (D). This may be quite confusing as the examiner has not made it clear to candidates that they need only answer 1 question (35 marks) or 2 questions from section D (35marks). Candidates may end up answering 5 questions instead of 2 or 3. Whilst we expect teachers to have adequately prepared candidates, there is still the challenge of reading through the entire contents page and selecting 2 questions from the 16 provided in 37 pages which can be overwhelming for a Grade 12 candidate.

The inconsistencies identified in the standard of choice questions also calls for a high item development specification to ensure an equitable distribution of cognitive levels

from year to year and to maximise an equitable standard of questions in the choice questions, especially in the setting of literature questions in Paper 2.

**Paper 3**, requires candidates to synthesise, integrate ideas and information and to recreate a unique product, demonstrating emotional or aesthetic sensitivity. This set of skills is high in its cognitive demand. Hence, the question paper has to allow for full engagement with the topics. Therefore, the topics selected must reflect the frame of reference and values that the majority of our candidates are accustomed to or may aspire to. Lastly, the rubrics for marking essays and transactional writing texts need to be revised as they have been reported to be inadequate and likely to result in inaccurate allocation of marks for open-ended questions thus compromising the reliability and standardisation of marking.



## PART V: TRENDS ACROSS LANGUAGES AND YEARS

### 15. Comparability of of Home Language examination over the period

#### 15.1 Trends in terms of professional judgement

The introductory section of this report compared the HLs in terms of the number of candidates enrolling and passing each annually over the three year period. It also compared the average performance of candidates across the languages and years. This part of the report draws all the conclusions together in a summarized form. In doing that the results of the analysis of the examination papers of the eleven HLs, each of the papers — Paper 1, Paper 2, and Paper 3—are tabulated separately, starting with Paper 1.

**Table 15.1: Comparing total percentage of marks allocated to questions judged as 'Easy' and 'Moderate' in Paper 1 across three years**

|                   | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | The 2014 paper is judged to be ...  |
|-------------------|------|------|------|---|
| <b>Afrikaans</b>  | 75   | 77   | 53   | the most difficult paper of the three.  |
| <b>English</b>    | 70   | 84   | 80   | slightly harder than the 2013 paper; but easier than the 2012 exam.                   |
| <b>IsiNdebele</b> | 71   | 75   | 67   | slightly harder than both the 2012 and 2013 papers.                                   |
| <b>IsiXhosa</b>   | 81   | 83   | 88   | slightly easier than both the 2012 and 2013 papers.                                   |
| <b>IsiZulu</b>    | 97   | 100  | 97   | slightly harder than the 2013; but at the same level of difficulty as the 2012 paper. |
| <b>Siswati</b>    | 65   | 51   | 71   | the easiest paper of the three.   |
| <b>Sepedi</b>     | 89   | 89   | 76   | the most difficult paper.   |
| <b>Sesotho</b>    | 82   | 91   | 94   | slightly easier than the 2013 exam; but much easier than was in 2012.                 |
| <b>Setswana</b>   | 89   | 81   | 89   | easier than the 2013 paper; but at the same level of difficulty as the 2012 paper.    |
| <b>Tshivenda</b>  | 46   | 44   | 57   | the easiest paper of the three.   |
| <b>Xitsonga</b>   | 81   | 86   | 96   | the easiest paper of the three.   |

**Table 15.2: Comparing questions across years in terms of evaluators' judgements (Paper 2)**

|                   | 2012        | 2013         | 2014         | The 2014 paper is ...                    |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| <b>Afrikaans</b>  | Diff   Easy | Diff   Easy  | Diff   Mod   | ± harder                                 |
| <b>English</b>    | Diff   Mod  | Diff   Mod   | Diff   Mod   | at the same level of difficulty.         |
| <b>IsiNdebele</b> | Diff   Easy | Diff   Easy  | Diff   Mod   | ± harder                                 |
| <b>IsiXhosa</b>   | Diff   Easy | Diff   Easy  | Diff   Mod   | ± harder than the other 2 years' papers. |
| <b>*IsiZulu</b>   | *Mod   Easy | *Easy   Easy | *Easy   Easy | ± similar                                |
| <b>Siswati</b>    | Diff   Mod  | Diff   Mod   | Diff   Mod   | at the same level of difficulty.         |
| <b>Sepedi</b>     | Diff   Mod  | Diff   Mod   | Diff   Mod   | at the same level of difficulty.         |
| <b>Sesotho</b>    | Diff   Easy | Diff   Easy  | Diff   Easy  | at the same level of difficulty.         |
| <b>Setswana</b>   | Diff   Easy | Diff   Easy  | *Mod   Mod   | ± easier                                 |
| <b>Tshivenda</b>  | Diff   Mod  | Diff   Mod   | Diff   Diff  | Harder than the other two.               |
| <b>Xitsonga</b>   | *Mod   Mod  | Diff   Mod   | *Mod   Mod   | ± similar                                |

+ → increased level of difficulty; - → decreased level of difficulty; = → same level of difficulty;

**Table 15.3: Comparing questions across years in terms of evaluators' judgements (Paper 3)**

|                   | 2012     | 2013     | 2014      | The 2014 paper is judged to be ...  |
|-------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Afrikaans</b>  | Moderate | Moderate | Difficult | difficult.                          |
| <b>English</b>    | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate  | at the same level of difficulty.    |
| <b>IsiNdebele</b> | Moderate | Mod→Diff | Difficult | ± harder than those of prior years. |
| <b>IsiXhosa</b>   | Mod→Diff | Mod→Diff | Mod→Diff  | at the same level of difficulty.    |
| <b>IsiZulu</b>    | Easy→Mod | Easy→Mod | Easy→Mod  | at the same level of difficulty.    |
| <b>Siswati</b>    | Mod→Diff | Mod→Diff | Mod→Diff  | at the same level of difficulty.    |
| <b>Sepedi</b>     | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate  | at the same level of difficulty.    |
| <b>Sesotho</b>    | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate  | at the same level of difficulty.    |
| <b>Setswana</b>   | Moderate | Mod→Diff | Moderate  | ± similar                           |

|                  |          |           |           |                                  |
|------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Tshivenda</b> | Mod→Diff | Difficult | Difficult | ± similar                        |
| <b>Xitsonga</b>  | Mod→Diff | Mod→Diff  | Mod→Diff  | at the same level of difficulty. |

+ → increased level of difficulty; - → decreased level of difficulty; = → same level of difficulty;

The final table below looks at how the whole of the 2014 examinations (Papers 1 – 3) compare with the previous years (2012 – 2013) in terms of difficulty level, and then conclusion are drawn in the last column of the table.

**Table 15.4: Overall impressions (Papers 1 – 3)**

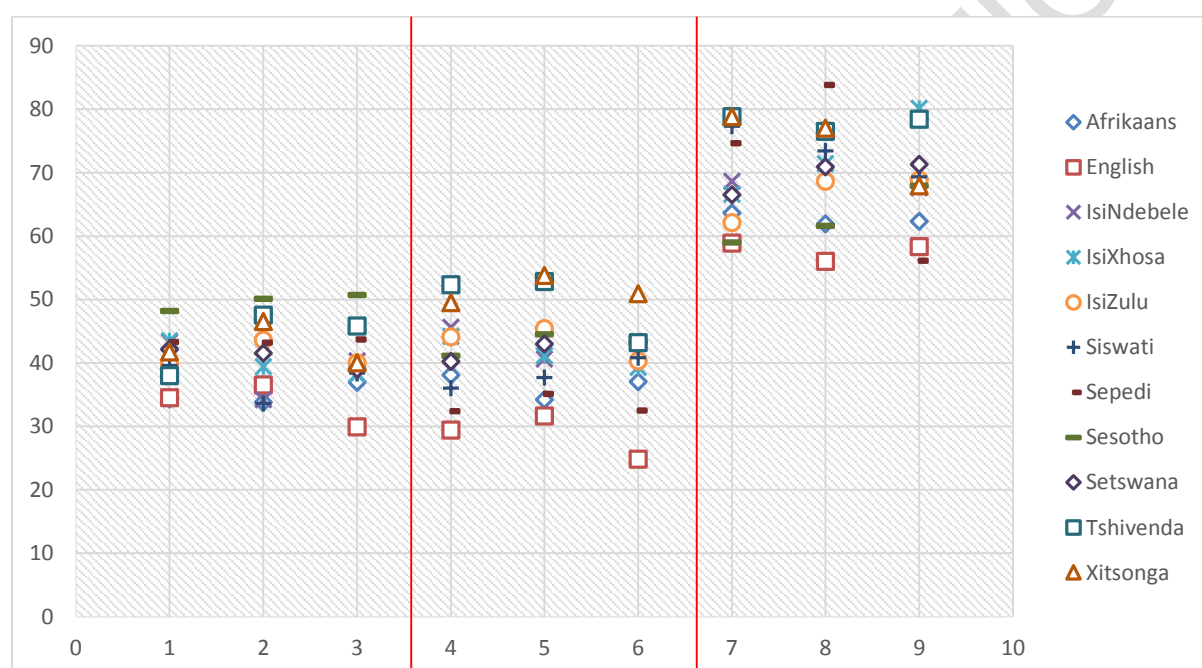
|                   | <b>Paper I<br/>(17.5%)</b> | <b>Paper II<br/>(20%)</b> | <b>Paper III<br/>(25%)</b> | <b>Compared to the 2012-2013 papers,<br/>the 2014 paper is judged to be...</b> |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Afrikaans</b>  | Harder                     | Harder                    | Harder                     | the most difficult exam of the three.  |
| <b>English</b>    | Easier                     | Similar                   | Similar                    | ± at the same level of difficulty.   |
| <b>IsiNdebele</b> | Harder                     | Harder                    | Harder                     | the most difficult exam out of the three.                                      |
| <b>IsiXhosa</b>   | Easier                     | Harder                    | Similar                    | at difficulty level similar to other years.                                    |
| <b>IsiZulu</b>    | Similar                    | Similar                   | Similar                    | at the same level of difficulty.   |
| <b>Siswati</b>    | Easier                     | Similar                   | Similar                    | at the same level of difficulty.   |
| <b>Sepedi</b>     | Harder                     | Similar                   | Similar                    | at the same level of difficulty.   |
| <b>Sesotho</b>    | Easier                     | Similar                   | Similar                    | at the same level of difficulty.   |
| <b>Setswana</b>   | Easier                     | Easier                    | Similar                    | the easiest exam of the three.   |
| <b>Tshivenda</b>  | Easier                     | Harder                    | Similar                    | at similar level of difficulty to other years.                                 |
| <b>Xitsonga</b>   | Easier                     | Similar                   | Similar                    | at the same level of difficulty.   |

+ → increased level of difficulty; - → decreased level of difficulty; = → same level of difficulty;

The foregoing trends from the evaluations showed that there is no consistency across the languages from year-to-year in how the different cognitive domains and levels of difficulty are allocate marks. Thus, the standard of the HL exams is, as yet, not consistent. Another way of studying variability in HL performance is to look at the distribution of marks across the three examination papers. The difference between the average mark of HLs at low and high achievement levels is often used as a measure of equity in the standards and quality of examinations. As such, the relative distribution of marks or the gap that exists between HLs with the highest and lowest levels of performance within each HL is examined in the next graph.

## 15.2 Trends in terms of actual candidate performance

The difference in average marks between lowest and highest average marks in HLs by exam paper and year are shown in Figure 15.1. The first three sets of symbols, to the left of the red line, represent mean scores for Paper 1 HL across the three years; the second three sets represent Paper 2 means scores, whilst the last three sets of symbols display Paper 3 mean scores. Essentially, the graph presents the rankings of the eleven HLs by papers and year.



**Figure 15.1: Three year average HL exam marks by paper, 2012 – 2014**

For the whole examination, **Paper 1** in 2012 showed the smallest gap between the highest and lowest average marks. For example in 2012, the candidates in the highest category of achievement scored 13.7 points higher than those in the bottom category. Contradictorily, the general trends seems to be of a steady increase from 13.7% to 20.8% in 2014. At the individual language level, Sesotho was the top-performing HL over the period, whereby in 2013 and 2014 it was the only HL for which the average marks was at approximately or above 50%. Conversely, English came out last in 2012 and 2014.

**Paper 2** yielded lowest and highest average marks comparable to Paper 1's. This paper also shows a fairly consistent pattern of differences between the smallest and highest average score across the three years. Tshivenda and Xitsonga appear to be consistent over the period in terms of being the top-performing HLs in Paper 2 examinations. Whereas English was the only language for which the average marks were consistently at or below 30%, Tshivenda and Xitsonga recorded the highest average marks at 50% or above between 2012 and 2014.

The highest average marks across the three examination papers can be observed in **Paper 3**. In this paper, the lowest average mark was 56% in both 2013 and 2014, a decline of 3 percentage points from 59% in 2012. Furthermore, this paper has the largest gap which ranges between 19.8% and 27% thereby suggesting that the HLs are miles apart from each other in terms of standards. This is also the Paper where the gap exceeds that of the other two papers by the greatest margin (27.8%), and the only paper where all HLs are above the 55% mark. For example, the Sepedi paper yielded the highest average mark of 83.8% in 2013, which made it the only HL to perform above 80%. The question that arises is whether or not this should be a concern to Umalusi since Paper 3 contributes the most marks (25% or 100 marks) towards the final HL examination.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Typology of cognitive demand

Table A.1: Typology of cognitive demand

| Level of cognitive demand | Type of cognitive demand       | Explanation of categorization. Question which require students:   | Examples   |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Lower order processes     | 1. Recognize or recall         | To locate, identify and retrieve any kind of <b>explicitly stated</b> information, ideas, facts or details in reading material provided, or from memory of previously learned or read material (for example, names of places), and recognition of the relevance of the information, ideas, facts or details in relation to the question   | <p>The contextual questions on Shakespeare's drama <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>:<br/>Complete the following sentence by filling in the missing words. Write down only the question number and the words.<br/><i>Juliet sends the Nurse to Friar Lawrence's cell to take Romeo a ... and tell him to come to her that night and say ...</i></p> <p>The comprehension question:<br/>Give two reasons why children become overweight. Refer to paragraph 3 (of the given passage).</p> |
|                           | 2. Apply or reorganize         | To use or <b>apply a basic procedure</b> (for example, a basic grammatical rule), <b>to replicate a model or version</b> (for example, a basic visual representation, a report, memo, invitation in a highly scaffolded way where students have to recreate rather than create), or to <b>reorganize explicitly stated information</b> , ideas, facts or details from reading material or from memory of previously learned or read material <b>in a different way or form from what was presented</b> (for example, to sort, classify, match, categorize, compare, contrast, summarise or paraphrase, or consolidate <b>explicitly stated</b> information, ideas, facts or details.) | <p>Rewrite the following sentence in the passive voice starting with the given word: The 18-year-old had developed an illness causing paralysis. Start with: An ...</p> <p>Rewrite the following sentence so that it is grammatically correct. 'When wearing their apparently sprayed-on outfits, it gives them a false sense of being stylish.'</p>   |
| Medium order processes    | 3. Infer, interpret or analyse | To engage in <b>more abstract (inferential) reasoning and interpretation</b> , and use conjecture, background knowledge, clues or <b>implicit information</b> , ideas, facts or   | The contextual questions on Shakespeare's drama <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> : <i>Juliet sends the Nurse to Romeo. What does this show the audience about</i>   |

|                        |                           |   |   |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
|                        |                           | <p>details in reading material provided or from memory of previously learned or read material as a basis of forming hypotheses, interpreting, inferring or analysing details, relationships or ideas (for example, the significance of a theme, the motivation or nature of a character) which are <b>not explicitly stated</b> in reading or other source material</p>   | <p><i>the relationship between Juliet and the Nurse?</i></p> <p>The question on an extract from the novel <i>Animal Farm</i>: Refer to lines 12–13: 'the animals <u>crept silently</u> away.' What do the underlined words convey about the animals' feelings at this stage of the novel?</p>   |
| Higher order processes | 4. Evaluate or appreciate | <p>To make critical <b>judgement</b> (for example, on qualities of accuracy, consistency, acceptability, desirability, worth or probability) using criteria provided by other sources or authorities, or students' own values, experiences, or background knowledge of the subject</p> <p>To show emotional and aesthetic or literary sensitivity or a <b>reaction to the worth of psychological and artistic elements</b> of reading material (including literary techniques, language, forms, styles, and structuring). (For example, commenting on the effectiveness of a poetic device or image).</p> | <p>The question on a <i>Madam and Eve</i> cartoon: The cartoonist does not show the mother-in-law in any of the frames. Do you think that this is an effective technique? Justify your response.</p> <p>The question on an unseen poem, <i>An Abandoned Bundle</i> by M. O. Mtshali: Discuss how the poet employs <b>diction</b> and <b>imagery</b> to reveal his state of mind to readers.</p> |
|                        | 5. Synthesise or create   | <p>To <b>integrate</b> ideas and information and relate parts of material, ideas, or information to one another and to an overall structure or purpose in a way that is <b>relational</b>.</p> <p>To engage in <b>original creative thought</b> and design and put elements together to form a coherent whole and make a new or <b>unique</b> product <b>showing emotional, aesthetic or literary sensitivity</b></p>   | <p>You are selling a second-hand item (e.g. a Walkman, a CD player, an item of clothing). Create an advertisement which will be placed on the notice board at school. Write an essay of between 250 and 300 words titled 'As I looked at that photograph...'</p>  |