

ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATIONS DIRECTORATE

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NSC 2015 CHIEF MARKER'S REPORT

SUBJECT	GEOGRAPHY
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PAPER	1
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DATE OF EXAMINATION:	29-10-2015	DURATION:	3 HOURS
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This section of the instrument is aimed at providing valuable feedback to schools, subject advisors, teachers and learners about common errors committed by candidates in the answering of questions, to assist teachers and subject advisors to identify areas that need to be given special attention in the teaching and learning of the subject in 2016.

Your responses will be based on two parts:

Section 1: General overview of Learner performance in the question paper as a whole

Section 2: Comment on candidates' performance on individual questions (Detailed explanations must be provided **per question** as follows: (You may include sub questions where necessary))

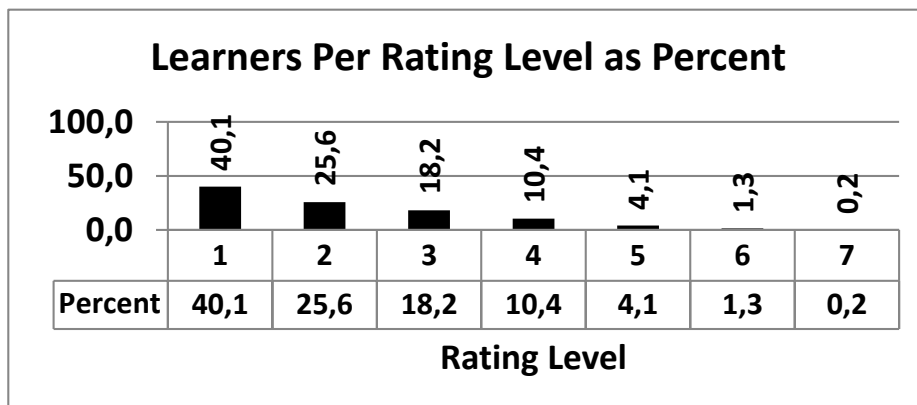
- General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
- Why the question was poorly answered?
- Provide suggestion for improvement in relation to teaching and learning
- Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners
- Any other comments useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development

SECTION 1: (General overview of Learner Performance in the question paper as a whole)

The 2015 Caps compliant Geography question paper was generally accepted as a fair question paper. The instructions were clear and there was a good balance within all questions. Diagrams in the annexure were clear and in context with the questions asked. The scaffolding of questions progressed from lower order to more challenging geographical issues. All content in the Caps document and examination guidelines was covered. The 'language of geography' was used and there was no bias towards any province, region, cultural group etc.

This question paper subscribed on a deeper level to many of the aims of geography. Candidates were asked to explain and interpret the dynamic interrelationship between both the physical and human worlds.

The marks processed after one third of the total scripts had been marked pointed to a wide range of achievement levels. These achievement levels were again fractured along city and rural centres. The graph below illustrates learners performance :



Total Wrote		14722
% Passed		59.4
Levels	Total	Percent
1	5976	40.6
2	3758	25.5
3	2645	18.0
4	1481	10.1
5	626	4.3
6	197	1.3
7	37	0.3



It is evident that 59,4% achieved a pass percentage of 30% and above while 40,6% have percentages below 30%, which constitutes a fail for Geography Paper 1. Only 1,6% of candidates achieved a percentage of above 70% when this sample was taken.

The Rasch analysis together with input from 147 markers, 28 senior markers, 5 deputies, a chief marker, an internal moderator will provide an in depth account of the problematic areas that candidates encountered. Here is a brief overview of the areas that our candidates struggle with :

- Paragraph questions continue to be problematic to our candidates. They cannot express themselves in FULL sentences and misinterpret questions. They tend to LIST when paragraph questions ask them to 'discuss' or 'evaluate'. The fact that paragraph questions constitute 21% of the question paper (64 marks) and candidates score on average 2.7 marks out of a possible 8 marks per sub-section clearly shows us that this is a weakness of most candidates.
- Reading, understanding and analyzing written texts is another area of concern for candidates. This made up for 60 marks in the question paper. Candidates attained on average of 21,8 marks (36.3%).
- Interpreting diagrams and graphs presents a major challenge for our candidates. An example of this would be Fig 1.4 (cross-section of a cold front) where our candidates scored the lowest marks in the entire question paper. The candidates averaged 2,9 marks out of a possible 15 marks. There are other such examples in the question paper which I will present in the question by question analysis.
- This question paper also presented candidates with a different challenge. They were asked to draw labeled diagrams of different physical geography features. They were unable to perform this symbolic skill. The candidates average a score of 1.84 marks out of a possible 8 marks.
- Candidates still struggle to grasp powerful geographical concepts like 'economic', 'environmental', 'physical', 'natural' and sustainable. Questions directly related to these concepts made up for 42 marks of the question paper. Candidates could only average 17,4 marks (41.4%) when tested with these concepts.



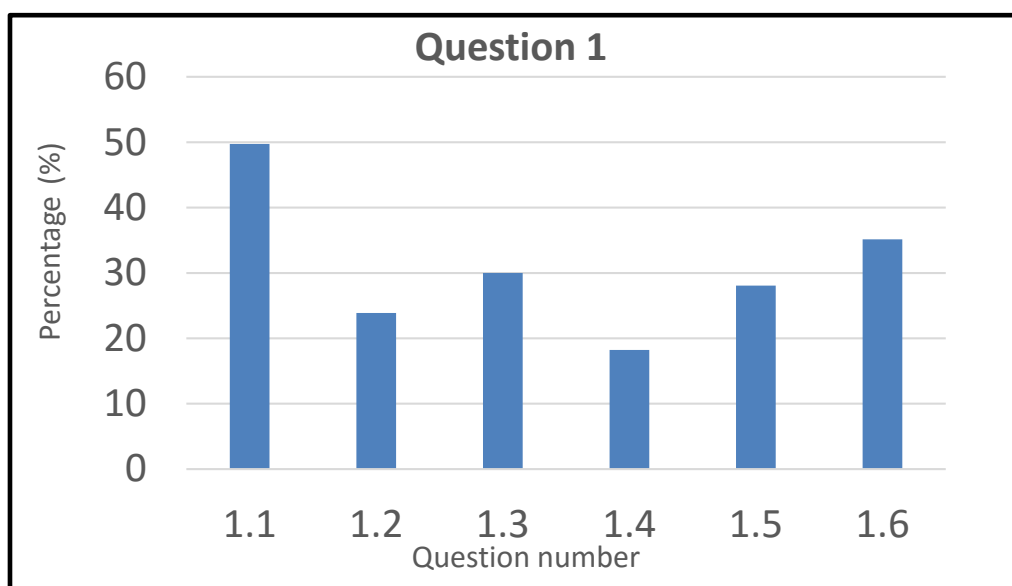
The issues that were raised possibly explain the poor performance by our candidates. These issues are not new to our subject and continually raise their head. A more introspective question by question analysis will show how these issues that I highlighted continually affect the success of our candidates.

SECTION 2: Comment on candidates' performance in individual questions

(It is expected that a comment will be provided for each question on a separate sheet).

QUESTION 1

- (a) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?



According to the Rasch analysis, this question was not as popular a choice as it had been in previous years. The average mark was 22,8(30,1%) out of a possible 75 marks. Candidates struggled with question 1.2 (the short objective type question). This sub question produced the lowest average mark of 2,2 out of a possible 8 marks for all the short objective questions in the question paper. This type of short objective question was different in the sense that candidates were not provided with choices. The lower order questions in 1.3 were well answered but candidates were found wanting in 1.3.3 and 1.3.4 when more detail was required. The concept of 'visibility' and the need to

provide an annotated diagram confused candidates. The data stimulus question in 1.4 produced the lowest average percentage (19,3%) in the entire question paper. Question 1.5 which required candidates to identify the different types of rivers and then explain their characteristics was not a difficult question. However candidates still struggled to score well. Question 1.6 tested the contextual analysis capabilities of candidates. Candidates achieved the highest percentage (35,5) in this sub section of question one. This was partly due to the fact that candidates could extract answers from the text.

(b)Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.

This question was poorly answered as the physical geography section of the syllabus requires candidates to have strong conceptual knowledge. They were unable to differentiate between 'fluvial processes' and the features in 1.2. In sub question 1.3, candidates could not relate the meaning of the word 'visibility' to a valley floor. They confused 'radiation fog' with a 'frost pocket'. This surfaced again in the labeled diagram that candidates were required to sketch. Candidates were not 'helped' by an incorrect label in question 1.4. Figure 1.4 should have been labelled 'cross section of a mid-latitude cyclone' instead of 'cross section of a cold front'. The paragraph question in 1.4.4 was poorly answered as candidates explained the formation of a 'mid latitude cyclone' instead of a 'cold front occlusion'. In most cases, candidates had no idea what they were writing about. This pointed to massive content gaps in candidates. Sub question 1.5 was badly answered by candidates as they could not identify different types of rivers. Hence they could not answer questions pertaining to their characteristics. A common misconception that surfaced among most candidates in sub question 1.6 was that all answers can be extracted from the newspaper article. While the lower order questions can be found in the text, the middle and higher order questions needed to be answered using analytical skills. The newspaper article prompts candidates to draw on their geographical knowledge but does not give all answers away. Candidates are required to apply their knowledge.

(c) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

Educators with content gaps will be found out in this section of the work. This section of the work must be brought 'alive' to the candidates by virtue of pictures, models, sketches and telematics. Physical processes are extensive or abstract and teachers need to be resourceful to make candidates understand the work. Candidates need practice in past question papers. School based assessment tasks should be of a high standard and always attached to stimulus data and contextual extracts.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners

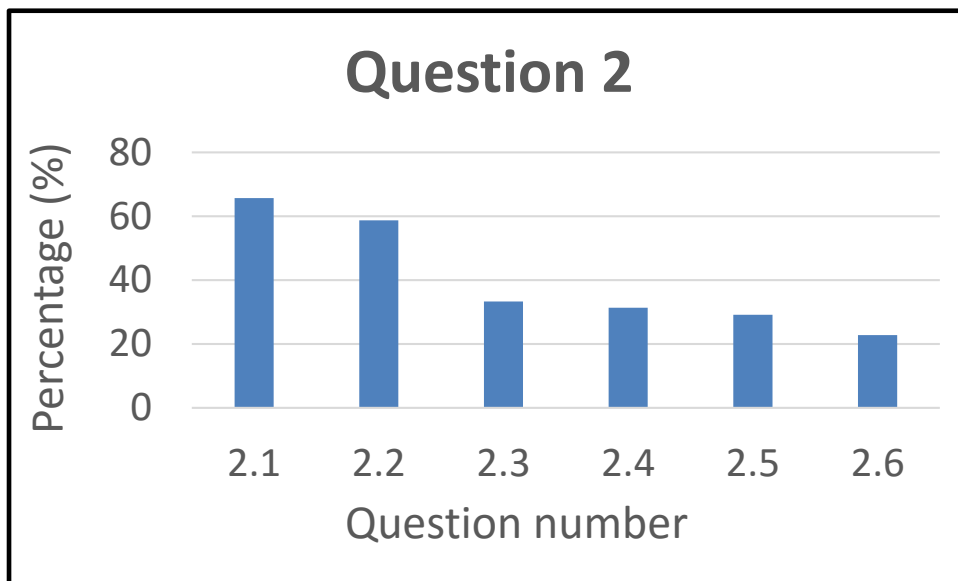
The correct geographical terminology is still not instilled in our candidates. This is clearly evident in their responses. Another specific observation in this question was that candidates struggle with the interpretation of diagrams.

(e) Any other comments useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

Teachers and subject advisors should take note of the new trends that surfaced in questioning techniques in this examination paper. This examination paper should be used as a teaching tool in the districts. Subject advisors should identify and make sure that content gaps in teachers are dealt with. Common assessment tasks set to the standard and style of this question paper should be made available to schools. This would enable candidates to practice answering these type of questions throughout the year.

QUESTION 2

- (a) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?



Candidates analysed in the Rasch analysis averaged a mark of 27(36.7%) out of a possible 75. This question proved more popular than question one and candidates averaged a better mark than in question one. Sub questions 2.1 and 2.2 were well answered by candidates and they averaged above 60% in these sub questions. However, the same cannot be said about questions 2.2.3 through to 2.3.6. The question on 'cyclones' in 2.3 required a deeper understanding. Sub question 2.3.4 was poorly answered(15,6%). Candidates also failed to distinguish between 'economic' impact and 'environmental' impact in question 2.3.5 and lost marks despite understanding what the question required of them. An inability to interpret a simple sketch on 'city climates' and its associated terminology resulted in an average mark of 4,5(32%) in sub question 2.4. Candidates were particularly poor in sub questions 2.4.3 and 2.4.4. Simple concepts like 'groundwater', 'infiltration' and 'run off' were answered well but candidates struggled in 2.5.3, 2.5.4 and 2.5.5 when they had to apply these concepts. The lowest mark of 3,5(23.3%) was attained in sub question 2.6. Candidates answered this sub question poorly.

- (b) Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.

This question was poorly answered because candidates could not fully explain



interpret both physical and human geographical processes. This is one of the AIMS of geography and candidates need to be prepared in this regard.

Candidates could not relate the movement of air and why it is dry in the 'eye'. Candidates misinterpreted sub question 2.3.4. They place emphasis on evacuation purposes rather than why satellite images are effective for 'tracking' cyclones. Again, candidates misinterpreted questions in sub question 2.4.4 Their answers ranged from 'pollution domes' to how 'artificial heat' contributed to higher temperatures. Application of concepts cost candidates in sub questions 2.5.3 and 2.5.4. Candidates could not comprehend that 2.5.5 simply wanted them to discuss the factors that affected 'infiltration'. The common error that that most candidates made was to relate all drainage patterns to the 'dendritic' pattern. Candidates could also not state characteristics and describe rock types of the relevant drainage patterns.

(c) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

Teachers must not teach all topics in a pedantic, rigid and structured way. This question clearly showed the need for teachers to integrate both physical and geographical features. Emphasis should be placed on exploring issues and connections in topics that go beyond the Caps document.

School based assessment must give candidates the practice of answering questions structured along these lines. All national senior certificate question papers enquire beyond conceptual knowledge of the syllabus, hence the need for candidates to be continually tested at school level in this manner.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners

Candidates do not analyse questions properly. They have in some cases the geographical knowledge to answer particular questions, but because they do not how and when to apply their knowledge they give the incorrect answers.

Language remains a barrier to a large percentage of candidates. It affects candidates interpretation of 'action words' in questions, and how they express themselves. That is why we find so many candidates listing instead of writing in full sentences.

(e) Any other comments useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.



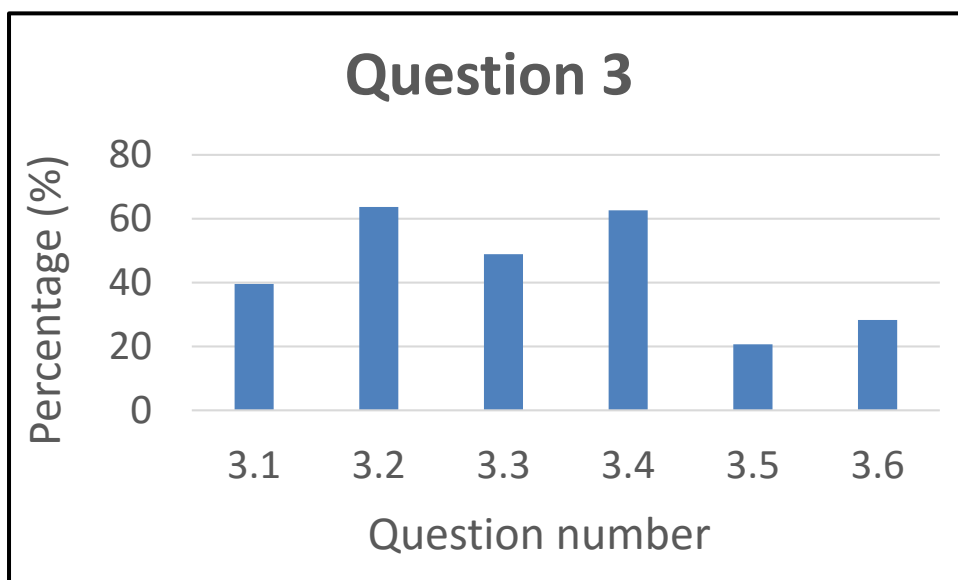
Descriptive terms and slant of questions needs to be adhered to urgently. Special attention needs to be given to 'DALR' and its effect when air rises and sinks from grade 10 level already. 'Heat islands' have proven to be a popular topic and subject advisors need to emphasize this in teacher development workshops. Content gaps in certain topics in geomorphology like 'drainage patterns' and 'underlying rock' structures' must be addressed by subject advisors. These topics may seemingly come across as obscure but examiners explore them and candidates should be prepared in this regard.

Teachers should use past exam papers and memoranda as a teaching tool. Teachers should also explain to candidates the meaning of action words such as 'discuss', 'describe', 'explain' and 'state' in the question paper.

QUESTION 3

- (a) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?
- (b)

GRAPH SHOWING PERCENTAGES (RASCH ANALYSIS)



The Rasch analysis shows that this was the most popular question and candidates averaged 31,3 marks (41,8%) out of a possible 75. This was the highest average mark attained in all FOUR questions. Candidates averaged 2.8 marks (40%) in Question 3.1.

This question was poorly answered, despite candidates having a choice of options to choose from. Candidates performed better in question 3.2, where they had the match concepts in Economic Geography. The question on 'traffic congestion' was reasonably well answered (average of 6,6 marks out of a possible 14 marks). Candidates related positively to the question on informal settlements (question 2.4). They averaged a total of 9,8 marks out of a total of 16 marks. Candidates used their experiences as a frame of reference to score marks from this question. Sub-questions 3.5 and 3.6 were poorly answered. Candidates could not relate the concepts of secondary industry to a bakery and failed to understand the difference between 'food security' and 'food insecurity'. An average mark of 7,2 marks out of possible 30 marks bears this out.

(b) Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples, indicate common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.

Sub-question 3.1.1 was poorly answered because candidates showed a lack of understanding of urban land-use zones. A misconception was that candidate's categorized 'recreational zone' as a land-use zone. Candidates struggle to interpret graphs and connect them to concepts that they have studied. In sub-question 3.3 they did not understand the word 'trend' and advocated 'built more roads' as a possible way to reduce 'traffic congestion'. This is a popular misconception and costs candidates valuable marks. Reading and comprehending extracts are poor. Candidates merely quoted phrases/sentences from the extract on informal settlements'. Candidates could also not distinguish between 'infrastructure' and 'services' and repeat them by giving examples of them. Candidates generally showed no understanding of the complexities of issues and management strategies. In sub-question 3.5 candidates could not fully understand the example of 'light industry'. They in some instances, probably had the knowledge but could not apply it. The term 'food security' is synonymous with the South African context, yet candidates cannot explain it correctly and understand it's related cases and measures to improve it. Educators should spend more time on this topical issue so that candidates have a better sense and understanding of it.

An error that is important to also highlight in this question is the candidate's use of 'pollution' in answers. 'Pollution' is synonymous with many topics in the CAPS syllabus and is an issue that regularly surfaces, year in and year out. Candidates continually use the word/term 'pollution' without qualifying the specific type of pollution. They can only score marks (when 'pollution' is a viable answer) by specifying the specific type of



pollution.

(c) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

Educators must explain and relate concepts. These concepts provide the basis for the 'language of geography'. This will improve the candidate's grasp of concepts and how to apply them.

Geography teachers need to expose candidates to contemporary extracts where they can practice the art of comprehending and synthesizing information from extracts.

Fieldwork for all grades must be compulsory – hence candidates have primary information regarding land uses, issues and solution/ strategies.

More practice of writing paragraph questions must be administered during the course of the year.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners

An observation in this question and something that actually occurs in all questions is that candidates do not follow instructions. In this respect I want to highlight the problem of numbering and answering sequentially. The candidates lose unnecessary marks through this careless practice.

Another observation worthy of mentioning is the fact that candidates do not make the correct question choices. This is due to the fact that they rush through the reading of the question paper.

(e) Any other comments useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

Many educators at the marking centre are of the opinion that common text books would remedy many of the inconsistencies in teaching. This is possibly something that subject advisors need to look into.

We cannot over emphasize the need for workshops, to gain a common understanding of processes and the way it should be taught.

Contemporary and up to date resource material must be compiled and redistributed to all schools for immediate use.

Although the Eastern Cape is mainly rural, we need to make sure of multimedia forums eg 'whatsapp' groups, 'facebook', 'twitter' etc. These social networks can disseminate



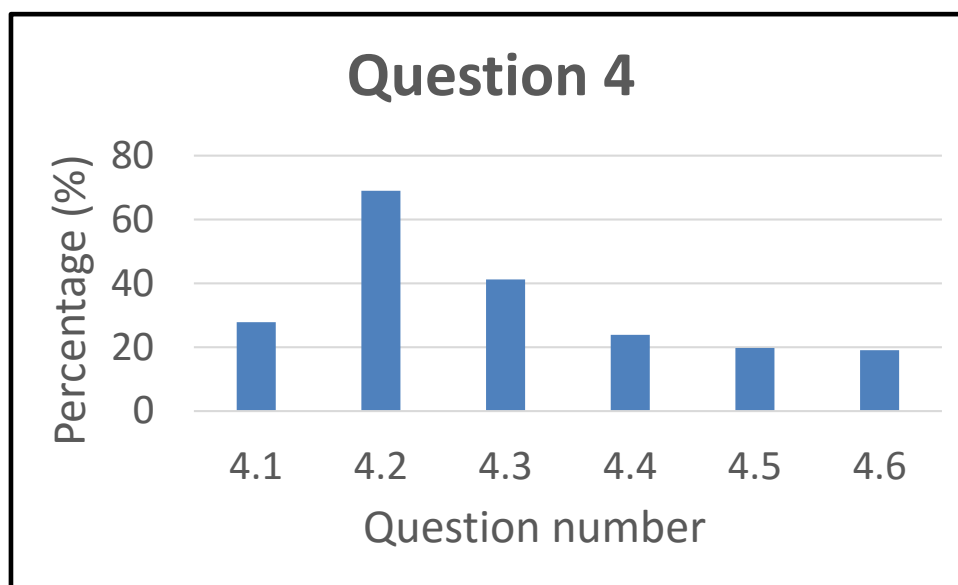
visual information and candidates can then use them when they revise work.

Local radio stations and newspaper agencies can be approached for regular slots or articles to broadcast the work in the syllabus regularly.

QUESTION 4

- (a) General comment on the performance of learners in the specific question. Was the question well answered or poorly answered?

GRAPH SHOWING PERCENTAGES (RASCH ANALYSIS)



According to the Rasch analysis candidates scored an average of 23.1%(30,9%) marks out of a possible 75. Only the short objective question in 4.2 was answered reasonably well. The multiple choice question(four options) in 4.1 confused candidates. Candidates tend to struggle with short objective questions with more than two options. Sub question 4.3 on 'rural depopulation' was surprisingly poorly answered. One would have expected candidates of the Eastern Cape to thrive on this question. Candidates also struggled with the concept of 'urban renewal' and its effects in sub question 4.4. However, the most damning statistics was reserved for sub questions 4.5 and 4.6 Candidates achieved marks of below 20% for these two sub questions. Sub question 4,5 was based on a newspaper extract on 'cattle farming'. This was an example of a primary economic activity. Eastern Cape candidates were 'favoured' by sub question 4.6 which included the Eastern Cape industrial region and the Wild Coast SDI. However, the Rasch analysis tells a story to the contrary.

- (b)Why was the question poorly answered? Also provide specific examples,



common errors committed by learners in this question, and any misconceptions.

The wider the choice, the more the candidates are prone to error. This was the case in sub question 4.1 Candidates do not consider the options carefully and 'guess' the answers. Language proved to be a barrier to candidates in sub question 4.3 The meaning of the word 'stagnation' and the term 'ghost town' stymied candidates. Candidates tended to perform adequately over the years in this aspect of the work but this year proved an exception. 'Listing' in the paragraph question instead of writing in full sentences added to their woes. Candidates answered the sub question(4.4) on 'urban renewal' poorly because they did not understand the process and hence could not comprehend the text. They quoted phrases/sentences from the extract which had no relevance to the questions asked. Cattle farming in sub question 4.5 is not a topic many educators explore in depth during teaching time. This possibly explains why candidates struggled with this question. The same comment applies to sub question 4.6.2 which required candidates to evaluate the role of the Wild coast SDI. SDI's are taught in general in our school and many educators do not examine the 3 case studies of SDI's in our country as stipulated in the Caps. This was raised in last year's report but the same problem has surfaced again. Sub question 4.6.2 was a higher order question and required candidates to probe how SDI's uplift 'people' economically. A common error picked up in this question was that candidates attempted to answer the question from a personal frame of reference and not the theoretical knowledge they were supposedly taught in the class.

(c) Provide suggestions for improvement in relation to Teaching and Learning

Economic geography requires candidates to be up to speed with local and international news. Hence teachers should teach this this section using newspaper articles and maps. Candidates respond better to teaching and learning when they can visualize spatial patterns on maps. Maps are an important teaching tool and no geography teacher should teach without it. GIS must also be used in tandem with maps to give candidates that extra edge.

The Eastern Cape has two SDI's on its doorstep. If and when possible excursions should excursions should be undertaken so that candidates can 'live' the subject.

(d) Describe any other specific observations relating to responses of learners

These observations apply to all other questions and the question paper as a whole. Candidates must be made aware of mark allocations especially when more than one issue is addressed. Candidates must be trained to answer a question paper in an organized manner. They must pay particular attention to the question choices that they make. They must answer questions sequentially and number correctly.

(e) Any other comments useful to teachers, subject advisors, teacher development etc.

Subject advisors should explore other ways of assisting teachers and candidates. A possible teaching and learning tool would be lessons broadcast on local radio stations in the Eastern Cape which all candidates have access to. Geography lessons on DSTV channel 319 should be recorded and made available to candidates. In other words, subject advisors must look at ways that candidates can be assisted through the media. Geography Associations in districts should be functional and connect to other associations both locally and nationally. Attending national conferences broadens the networking channels and result in greater accessibility to different electronic sources. Telematics is a tool used in many provinces that has helped candidates. I also want to encourage teacher to mark this subject at matric level as it exposes them to what is actually required for candidates to be successful.

NAME OF THE CHIEF MARKER:

SIGNATURE

DATE