

Judging the grade: an exploration of the judgement processes involved in A level examination grading decisions

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Abstract

Examiners' grading judgements are central to the maintenance of examination standards. This research investigated the judgement processes underpinning examination grading. Operating under a think aloud protocol, six examiners conducted a grading exercise for each of two geography A level examinations. They were also interviewed about their grading judgements. Previously collected data (see Crisp, 2008) on marking were used for comparison. There were substantial similarities between marking and grading in the nature of examiner behaviours. Unsurprisingly, examiners spent much less time considering individual scripts during grading although there were some exceptions. For example, examiners compared student work with previously seen work just as frequently during grading as during marking. Comparing behaviours between examiners revealed some significant differences perhaps reflecting individual differences in grading strategy. Additionally, novice graders were found to be more strongly guided by advice on which responses to consider than experts.

Reference

Crisp, V. (2008). Exploring the nature of examiner thinking during the process of examination marking. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 38(2), 247-264.