



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT

An empirical exploration of human judgement in the marking of school examinations

A paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Association for Educational Assessment, Singapore, May 2006.

Jackie Greatorex and Irenka Suto

E-mail: greatorex.j@cambridgeassessment.org.uk

Abstract

A major theme of our recent research has been the nature and use of human judgement in the marking of school examinations. In an era of innovation and rapid development, it is important to have an understanding of these psychological processes, which have the potential to impact upon modernisation. In this paper, we present an overview of our studies in this area.

Working within a popular cognitive psychological paradigm, we explored examiners' judgements in a number of marking contexts. Both experienced and newer examiners participated in the research, in which a 'think aloud' method was utilised. GCSE and A-level examinations were marked, and both paper-based and computer-based marking formats were investigated.

We identified five distinct cognitive marking strategies, which were used in all of the contexts considered. Subsequently, a quantitative analysis of strategy usage in the traditional paper format was conducted. We will conclude this paper with a discussion of the potential implications of this research for future examination marking.



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
Local Examinations Syndicate