

**Abstract – BERA 2006 – Irenka Suto and Jacqueline Greatorex**

‘Thinking aloud’ is a well-established method of data collection in education, assessment, and other fields of research. However, while many researchers have reported their views on its usage, the first-hand experiences of research participants have received less attention. The aim of this exploratory study was to obtain the perspectives of GCSE examiners on the ‘think aloud’ method as a means of investigating the cognitive strategies they use to mark examinations.

Twelve experienced examiners (six mathematics and six business studies) were asked to think aloud while concurrently marking a small sample of examination scripts. Afterwards, they participated in semi-structured interviews about their experiences of the method. Views on its validity, advantages, and disadvantages varied considerably, possibly reflecting diverse personal marking techniques. The implications of these findings for research and marking practice are discussed.