



WORKSHOP C

Criterion Referencing In an International Context 1.

Ms Roxane Vigneault
International Baccalaureate Organization, Cardiff, Wales.

ABSTRACT

The aim of these workshops is to introduce participants to IBO assessment processes, in particular, the place of assessment criteria within the IBO Language A2 course. This course is designed for students with a high level of competence in the target language, and is based on the study of both language and literature. The revision of this course was completed in 2002, with the first examinations in May 2004.

From May 2004 onwards, examiners in 16 languages will use the revised Language A2 assessment criteria. Workshop participants will have the opportunity to participate in a marking exercise using these criteria, and to discuss the challenges posed by criterion-referencing in both internal assessment and high-stakes examinations. This exercise will be followed by an overview of various assessment procedures, including moderation and standardization.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

The workshop began with an overview to the format of the International Baccalaureate examination paper and an explanation of the marking scheme. Following this, the Language A2 Syllabus Outline, which is the paper for non-native speakers of English, was explained. The paper consisted of two parts, Paper 1 and Paper 2.

Paper 1, Comparative Commentary, contained four unseen passages grouped in two pairs. Each pair of passages would be thematically linked and each passage within a pair will be different in nature. The candidates would be expected to choose one pair of the passages and to write a comparative commentary, focusing on similarities and differences between the two passages.

Paper 2, a written production, consisted of ten essay titles of a literary and non-literary nature. Five of the ten essay titles would be based on Topic Options. Three of the ten essay titles would be on literary-based questions of a general nature. Candidates must base their answers mainly on works originally written in the language A2 and studied as part of the course. Two of the ten essay titles would be on integrated or general questions, allowing candidates to base their answers either on literary works or on material studied as part of the Topic Options, or both. Candidates were expected to base their answers on material studied for Topic Options, the Literary Options, or where appropriate, both. Candidates must answer one essay question. The essay must be written in the language A2 of the examination.

For the workshop session, the course participants were asked to read Section A, Paper 1 (Texts 1a and 1b). They were to use these criteria for assessment. Criterion A concerned with the understanding and comparison of the text, Criterion B dealt with presentation, in terms of effectiveness of the organization of the commentary, coherence and balanced as well as whether the examples were integrated into the commentary, and Criterion C looked at Language in terms of fluency, accuracy, variety and the appropriateness of candidate's choice of register and style.

Each group member would be marking individually and then as a group, come to a consensus. Finally the moderation of marks followed by the final mark was given by the examiners.

For Paper 1, the similarities between comparative Texts were as follow:

- Realistic presentation of texts – things that students will face in real life
- Texts are rarely adapted-authentic
- Texts look at language and forms
- Texts never go beyond one page.

For Criterion A, Understanding of a comparison of the texts, the final marks awarded by IB markers was 8/10. The challenge was that examiners internalize marking scale differently as they come from different contexts. For Criterion B, the Presentation, the final mark awarded by IB markers was 10/10. The challenges and the issues were (i) could the candidate have done a better job looking at the criteria? and (ii) Is there a clear and well organized introduction, body and conclusion?.

The course participants felt that the introduction could be tighter in its organization. Lastly for Criterion C, the language, the final mark awarded by IB markers was 10/10. The challenges were (i) the disparity in the interpretation of the criteria/ scale, for example “high degree”, “excellent”, (ii) markers have to be apprenticed to mark, and (iii) training for IB markers? Roxanne stated that there is a need to have reorientation and moderation meeting for inter-rater reliability.

On the whole, the course participants gave lower marks than what was given by the IB markers. Roxanne reminded the course participants that the 10 was not a perfect 10 and that examiners should not be afraid to give candidates a full score.

For paper 2, the course participants looked at answers for question 6, Minor characters sometimes play major roles. Support this statement by explaining why minor characters are major in some of the literary works you have studied, and carried the procedure as they did for Paper 1. For Criterion A, the final mark awarded by IB markers was 6/10 – the candidate did not answer question although he/she displayed knowledge of content. For Criterion B, the final mark by IB markers was 6/10 – lack of integration of texts. Lastly for Criterion C, the final mark was 8/10.



Generally Paper 1 was more difficult as it involved unseen texts and candidates had to get used to the genres of the texts. On the whole, the course participants gave mark, which were quite close to the marks given by the IB markers. Some of the marks given by the course participants were on the high side.

Finally, the resolutions/recommendations were that markers and assessors should be well trained in marking, there is also a need to have reorientation and moderation for markers/assessors to ensure inter-rater reliability and lastly there is a need to look for ways of narrowing disparity in interpretation of criterion-referencing tests.