

WORKSHOP F

Criterion-Referencing In an International Context II

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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 processes, including moderation and standardization.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Contrary to the earlier session (Workshop C), Workshop F had only ten participants including the rapporteur, due to the fact that many of the previous participants were conducting parallel workshop sessions during the time slot or preparing for impending sessions.

Ms Vigneault began by explaining that the Internal Assessment Oral Component of the IBO was divided into two parts:

1) Individual Oral

- critical examination of a text studied in class (chosen by the teacher)
- length of text – 40 lines, length of test – 15 minutes, prep time – 20 minutes, date – fixed by teacher

- cassette recordings must be taken for external moderation
- candidates are given a few written guiding questions

2) Interactive Oral Activity

- one activity based on a cultural or literary option studied
- examples: structured group discussion, role play, dramatic presentation (etc)

Participants read pg 1-3 of the workshop pack followed by a discussion on similarities and differences to MUET and SPM Oral Exam. Points were made about the examiner's role as prompter when students are reluctant to speak, and yet not take over the analysis. The following oral descriptors should be used by the teacher for the internal assessment of candidates' work.

- Criterion A: Quality of Idea
- Criterion B: Presentation
- Criterion C: Language

There were discussion on whether participants thought the test was well-planned, their thoughts on the types of issues for analysis, details like the usage of bullets for numbering the leading questions to avoid students thinking that they were arranged in order of rank, etc.

After that, cassette recording of sample candidate was played and participants (in groups) assessed the candidate according to the criteria given. They also noted whether the interlocutor was helping or hindering the student. The discussion continued with the participants evaluating the interlocutor such as whether the interlocutor talked too much, increased student's anxiety, etc).

The participants, then, justified the marks awarded and compared the scores with the actual recorded scores. The facilitator pointed out that the computer chooses the samples of text (which have already been studied in class), not the teacher.

The next session is the written assignment, which carries 20% of the total marks. Facilitator gave a reasonably detailed explanation of the written component of the IBO after participants had read the relevant section of their workshop packs. In the written assignment, candidates must write two or three text productions

based on a different option. The overall length of the written production is about 1500 words. Each text production must be prefaced by a rationale and followed by a self-analysis of the text. Where appropriate, text productions must be accompanied by relevant support documentation (i.e. illustrations, stimulus materials, acknowledgement of primary and secondary sources, etc). These documents will not be included in the word count. Students may choose their own task option from a number of categories (journalistic review, written appeal, home page, manifesto, pastiche, cartoon with captions, translation exercise, questionnaire, manual, etc.). The cover letter must be signed by a teacher, verifying it as the student's own work. The written assignments are marked based on holistic method of marking.

Participants examined a number of scripts and evaluated them according to the criteria given with corresponding marking bands/boundaries (which are slightly adjustable in view of moderation). The criteria are as follow:

- Criterion A: Task and Content (10 marks)
- Criterion B: Language Production (10 marks)

The facilitator pointed out that the written assignments are essentially take-home tasks, so therefore there is no consideration given to accuracy of language in terms of grammar or spelling since it is taken for granted that every candidate has equal access to accuracy via spell-checks or editing.

The participants compared their awarded marks with the facilitator's records of actual marks. As with the oral assessment exercise, there was a high correlation of marks. The facilitator pointed out that holistic marking sometimes tends to be supplanted by an analytical method instead. The criteria for the written assignment are currently being revised. (The future version will probably have three instead of two criteria and be a little more mathematical in style as opposed to totally holistic.)