

Three trial innovations in quality assurance

Three innovations in procedure were introduced during the moderation:

- a “second moderation”
- an in-depth review of a random selection of moderated sets of LAPs
- a review of moderated sets of LAPs focusing only on handwriting

All four were considered worthwhile additions to the repertoire of moderation actions.

In the “second moderation” one or two members of a larger group of moderators gave close attention to a few LAPs in the sets already processed by their colleagues. This was unanimously hailed as very helpful. The process led to valued collegial discussions of issues arising from the few anomalies or differences that emerged. The professional interest of the work was felt to rise. There was increased confidence in the accuracy of the moderation. And each group’s verifier felt much more supported, with a somewhat lightened role.

The in-depth review was conducted only at the end of the process, and used all groups of moderators that had completed their language sets earlier than others. One or two LAPs selected at random from completed moderations were looked at in their entirety. The aim was a holistic judgement on whether each particular LAP showed convincing growth on the part of a unique learner. Three questions were paramount: was the LAP consistently authentic? Did the LAP leave an impression of steady growth? And were there signs that the learner had in some way been empowered?

Most of the 103 LAP reviews yielded in this brief exercise by 46 of the moderators are very positive indeed. The thoughtfulness of these moderators is generally impressive, with some writing little essays on what they saw in their LAPs. They refer to clear growth and improvement, to LAPs that reflect a constructive relationship between facilitator and learner, warm appreciation on the part of the learner for the opportunity to learn, and occasional detail criticisms where the LAP appears in part to be done by someone other than the learner to particular questions that the learner did not begin to cope with. One suggests that the LAP include more opportunities for the learner to reflect their own experience and identity.

The “handwriting commission” involved 52 moderators who reviewed 262 LAPs. They rated each on a scale from 0 (Very clearly inauthentic even fraudulent) through 1 (Problematic) and 2 (Broadly acceptable) to 3 (very clearly authentic).

The results are:

Very clearly inauthentic:	12	(4.6%)
Problematic:	33	(12.6%)
Broadly acceptable:	156	(59.5%)
Very clearly authentic:	61	(23.3%)

These additional procedures seem not only worthwhile in themselves, but are likely to have value in the feedback of the moderators to their regions. Should the standard moderation process continue to be used in future these procedures would be recommended.