Making judgments

Jo Genders: 
Senior Education Officer  
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

When teachers make judgments about a dimension in an individual response, they will match the evidence for that dimension with the syllabus standards. They will make an on-balance decision about the best match of the qualities of the student work with the standards descriptors at a particular standard.

Satu Cooper: 
Senior Education Officer  
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

When we set assessment, we would design an instrument-specific standards matrix or a criteria sheet. What that means is that we would identify the general objectives that are being covered by that particular assessment instrument, remove the ones that are not pertinent to that particular assessment instrument. Then we look and see which elements we can identify within the task that we can include into that standards matrix. So, for example, if we were talking in science about motion, then, instead of just saying concepts, we could say concepts to do with motion.

David Madden: 
District Review Panel Chair  
Physics

The starting point is to look at the standards at, at the A, B and C level and to look at the different words or the words that discriminate between one standard and another. So, for example, I know in one of … about standards and conceptual understanding, there’s a difference between ‘complex and challenging’ for A standard and ‘complex or challenging’ in the B standard. Now through my professional experience and discussion, I’ve come to understand that that indicates a level of depth in the response and a breadth in response. So by looking at that particular discriminating word I find I gain, I guess, a mental concept of what the difference between an A and a B response looks like, and then I look for that difference in the student response.
Kevin McAlinden:  
State Review Panel Chair  
Modern History  
I would take the student’s response, and as I am reading that response I would have alongside me the stated criteria. And then I am looking for really ‘point-at-able’ evidence of each aspect of the criteria being met by the student at the level at which the student is, is meeting it. So, particularly when looking at VHA … A quality work or VHA standard work, really trying to identify clear examples in student work of where I can see corroborating of evidence, evaluating of evidence, different perspectives being referred to and insightful judgment being made.

Peter Antrobus:  
State Review Panel Chair  
Mathematics B  
I’d like to have a look at this student here. He seems to be getting a pretty good result in knowledge and procedure, but it’s only at a B standard about here. And as you go through there, you can see that the level of work that they’re doing and the sorts of things that he’s been asked to do, the complexity’s getting more and more. As you go along there a bit further, I can see that that sort of model he’s trying to deal with there is at a fairly complex level. Would you agree with that?

Bevan Penrose:  
State Review Panel Chair  
Mathematics C  
Ah, Peter I saw this pretty much the same. When I started to read it I thought ‘OK, rectangular distribution, this is going to be pretty straightforward. It’ll be a solid B’. But like you, as I kept reading the complexity started to come out later on in these pages here. So I think in terms of applying the mathematical definitions to a complex task, in that life-related situation, I think that definitely meets the dimension — the standards required.

Peter Antrobus:  
State Review Panel Chair  
Mathematics B  
So you’re happy for me to give him an A in that particular area?

Bevan Penrose:  
State Review Panel Chair  
Mathematics C  
Yeah, I think so.

Peter Antrobus:  
State Review Panel Chair  
Mathematics B  
So if we just give an A in that particular criteria, which was being developed at that particular one, about a standard A there.

Bevan Penrose:  
State Review Panel Chair  
Mathematics C  
Well I think so. I think there’s no doubt it’s a B — absolutely no doubt. But I think you could argue that this work here definitely meets the requirements of the A standard when it comes back to that complex task in a life-related situation. That’s exactly what the student’s produced there, I believe.

Peter Antrobus:  
State Review Panel Chair  
Mathematics B  
Good. Well, if we go on to standard in the criteria: Modelling and problem solving. You can see that the student has actually dealt with the assumption and their effects. And I think they’ve done a pretty good job with respect to explaining themselves, showing what has happened as a result of the assumption being changed, and moving on from there. So, I would say that while the identification’s happened, they’ve also looked at the effects.
Bevan Penrose:
State Review Panel Chair
Mathematics C

I would agree. As a matter of fact this would be one of the better examples of a student response to that particular dimension. Because often students will list what they believe is the assumptions, but not actually talk about the effects and how that would change the model.

Peter Antrobus:
State Review Panel Chair
Mathematics B

Good.

Bevan Penrose:
State Review Panel Chair
Mathematics C

And I think that’s what the student’s done here. If you look through here: ‘If the cars are allowed to travel …’ etc. ‘Finally it was assumed that …’ and so on.

Peter Antrobus:
State Review Panel Chair
Mathematics B

Yes.

Bevan Penrose:
State Review Panel Chair
Mathematics C

So all of the parts of the problem have been addressed in that solution. Then he goes on to talk about the strengths and limitations. And lists a clear strength and a clear limitation. Again, without just making a bald statement, it actually reflects the mathematics of the situation that the student’s using. So I think that I agree. I think it’s definitely A standard.

Peter Antrobus:
State Review Panel Chair
Mathematics B

There’s also an aspect of the refining of the model, probably not as effective as the other two areas, but nonetheless he’s made an attempt at dealing with that particular area. So I think there is some refinement that’s being added to in this particular one. So I’d be looking at being an A standard in that particular area as well. Would you agree?

Bevan Penrose:
State Review Panel Chair
Mathematics C

I would agree, because sometimes what you don’t want is the student writing three pages that have not much meaning because they believe that ‘Oh, well, I’ve got to put a lot down here to meet this A standard’. Where it’s not about that. It’s actually meeting that attribute, which the student’s done, even though it’s only a couple of sentences.

Peter Antrobus:
State Review Panel Chair
Mathematics B

Yes. Good. Okay. Shall we have a look at the Communication and justification as well?

Bevan Penrose:
State Review Panel Chair
Mathematics C

Yes. What, what were your thoughts?

Peter Antrobus:
State Review Panel Chair
Mathematics B

Well it’s fairly concise and coherent. So I think that they’re working towards that A standard again. Certainly with respect to the reasoning that they’ve been applying. It’s not too verbose. There’s certain aspects that could be maybe a little bit smaller, but not much. And I certainly see that they’ve actually responded to the levels that might be in there from the complexity and non-routine sort of stuff that they need to deal with there. So the justification of those is dealt with in an appropriate way. The decisions were quite clearly laid out, and there seems to be a process and a modelling of what we would have seen in our classroom discussions as well. So I would suggest it’s also about an A level.
Bevan Penrose: State Review Panel Chair Mathematics C

I’m very comfortable with an A standard for this work in Communication and justification. And I take your point about the conciseness of the logical justification that the student’s put into this work.

Peter Antrobus: State Review Panel Chair Mathematics B

Yes.

Bevan Penrose: State Review Panel Chair Mathematics C

So, I agree entirely.