



Consistency & Moderation

Purpose:

To explore the use of a range of strategies to make more valid and consistent judgements.

What you need:

- people grouped in planning or teaching teams of 3-6 people
- 1 copy of pages 1 - 3 (back-to-back & stapled) for each teacher.

Step 1:

- In pairs, READ and DISCUSS pages 2 and identify which strategies you currently use for making consistent judgements.
- ADD three (3) additional processes you can - or do - use, to the Table on page 3.

Step 2:

- AGREE on the top 4 ways of making consistent judgements from the Table (page 3) that suit your context best.

Do you use these now?

How could you go about implementing them?

Step 3:

- READ page 3 on Moderation Processes.
- Reach AGREEMENT on how you will create a process that will provide space for consistency right from the beginning of the assessment decision-making process. (Note: Activity 5-5 looks at building a Consistency Protocol.)

Consistency Strategies Table

| Strategy/Protocol | Focus |
|---|---|
| Collaboration through the whole process of making Assessment Planning Decisions | To reduce variations in validity and consistency, as collaborative decision-making processes achieve alignment of purpose and approaches to assessment. |
| Collaboratively creating common assessments | To build common understandings of the standards across domains and expectations of students' learning potential |
| Collaboratively defining shared criteria | To create consistent ways of judging student work across domains (the same criteria can be used in more than one task - e.g. for "working in teams" in 2 assessments). |
| Triangulation - 2 or more assessors | To gain more than one judgement of the product/performance (self, peer, teacher). |
| Triangulation - 2 or more assessment tools | To generate evidence of learning in 2 or more ways to see if we get consistent data. |
| Moderation processes - extended and across-schools | To work in clusters or other networks to maximise consistency across schools. |
| Moderation processes - simplified and within a school | To work with teachers across Domains and Levels to maximise consistency in a school |
| Exemplars off-site (comparing to external samples at specified standards) | To clarify features of work in annotated exemplars at specific standards - and to compare your students' work to exemplars - e.g. such as shown in the VCAA assessment maps (and in the progression points). |
| Exemplars on-site (comparing to internal samples at specified standards) | To compare your students' work to annotated exemplars from other classes - or other years - within your school or cluster. |
| Verifier visits (e.g. cluster educator, Level or Domain coordinator) | To influence the process at any point in the assessment cycle, so that consistency is taken from a bigger perspective than a single planning/teaching team. |
| Cross-marking of samples | To compare how different assessors (maybe self, peers, and/or 2 or more teachers) interpret the criteria and have more than marker assess students' work samples. |
| Re-marking by same assessor | To verify that time of first marking didn't prejudice the assessment process (e.g. assessed late at night? First piece looked at was downgraded but then teacher changed their marking process part way through). |
| The Tuning Protocol | To follow a set routine for looking at student work. (See activity 5-5) |
| Collaborative Assessment Conference (Harvard) | To follow a set routine for looking at student work. (See activity 5-5) |
| Consistency Circles | To follow a set routine for looking at student work. (See activity 5-5) |
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Moderation Processes: Overview

Moderation is a process for improving the consistency of judgements. It is not a form of accountability for teachers but a form of quality assurance for assessments. Moderation can also be a form of professional learning, where teachers can share ideas about assessment processes, rubrics and Standards. Moderation has a key role to play at several critical stages of the assessment process, as shown in the Assessment Planning process, not just at the end, after students' work has been submitted. The critical stages are:

1. Developing a common understanding of the Standards to be assessed and the purpose of assessment
2. Drafting the assessment task requirements
3. Drafting the criteria - or marking scheme
4. Sample assessing
5. Final assessing

Moderation undertaken at any or all of these stages will be valuable and will lead to greater "inter-rater reliability" (consistency between assessors) and "intra-rater reliability" (consistency of a particular assessor's judgements from one learner to another). The following notes clarify what can be done at each of these four stages, two of which precede the assessment being undertaken by the students and two of which follow the assessments completion.

1. Developing a common understanding of the Standards, Assessment Maps and Progression Points:

Do all the teachers have a common understanding of the specifics of the particular Standards that will be assessed through this process? It will be important to talk this through to check.

2. Drafting the assessment task:

Moderation can commence when the assessment is first drafted. Do all potential assessors using that process agree on the structure and the wording? Do they all share the same understanding of what the students are going to be required to do? Do they agree that the assessment comprehensively covers or samples the dimensions across domains?

3. Drafting the criteria (or scoring scheme):

Criteria for assessment can be developed concurrently with, or following, the assessment construction. Do the potential assessors agree on the wording of the criteria? Do they all share the same understanding of the terms used? If a rubric is being used, is the structure and the method of use clear? Is it easy and clear to use the rubric when looking at a student's performance/work? Are you sure there aren't too many different interpretations for each word/criteria? Have students had input into its design?

4. Sample assessing:

After students have completed the assessment, it is helpful for each assessor to sample-assess several pieces of work, then have the assessors meet together to discuss any queries or concerns, and perhaps to cross-mark two or three of somebody else's pieces of work. Once there is consensus that all assessors are of a like mind, and any necessary adjustments have been made, then the rest of the assessment can proceed. At this point it could be helpful to look at the Progression Points and/or the Assessment Maps as demonstrations.

5. Final assessing:

If all or even one or two of the preceding moderation steps have been taken there should be little need for this final step. The process is similar to that of the Sample Assessing stage – assessors meet together, discuss queries or concerns, and perhaps cross-mark other's pieces. An additional activity might be to discuss borderline or special circumstance cases.

The eventual outcome of moderation should be that all assessors can feel comfortable that:

1. their assessment of that task is internally reliable - that is, the assessment itself is clear, unambiguous, etc. (task/criteria reliability)
2. they have assessed the work consistently with other students' work (intra-rater reliability)
3. their assessment of that task is consistent with that of the other assessors (inter-rater reliability) and
4. that for each student the assessment was fair, accurate and appropriate (valid from appropriate perspectives).

Of course, this satisfaction should, in turn, be felt by the students if they are aware that such a moderation process has been followed to ensure that judgements of their work are valid and consistent.