



PTAS Project Report (for SMALL PROJECT GRANTS)

Project Title:

Enhancing assessment literacy amongst PGT students and scorer reliability amongst PGT staff

Principal Investigator : Claudia Rosenhan

School / Department : Moray House School of Education

Team members : Farah Akbar, Takuya Numajiri

For further information, please contact: Claudia.Rosenhan@ed.ac.uk

Grant recipients are expected to submit a brief report at the conclusion of their project which outlines briefly the following : nature of work completed; outcomes; benefits to student learning/student experience; dissemination activity (where relevant – actual and planned) and how the activity could inform future work or be transferred to other subject areas in the University. The brief report will be published on the IAD web pages.

Brief Report (maximum 500 words)

What did you do? We designed a questionnaire to survey the cohort on a large PGT programme at Moray House. The questionnaire was designed according to an extensive literature synthesis, to find the current and relevant strands in the literature pertaining to research on assessment criteria in HE. The survey was intended to find out about the students' views on salient aspects of assessment, feedback and assessment literacy as encoded in the level descriptors used on that programme. The students were surveyed at two points, towards the beginning of their study, and at the end of their study. We also initiated a pilot focus group of markers on the programme, to elicit their views in relation to the same topic.

What did you find out? The findings from the survey spoke of the students' inherent confidence in the fairness of the assessment as encoded in the level descriptors, especially at the beginning of the study. This validated the level descriptors on that programme. However, results also indicated that this confidence was shaded by a belief that markers may also draw on knowledges that are not explicitly stated in the level descriptors, and in which students, therefore, had no share. This concern grew with increased familiarity with the assessment process. The focus group provided some confirmation of that belief, in that markers occasionally referred to 'common knowledge' or 'common sense' when assessing a piece of writing, rather than the explicit level descriptors. Both data sets were small and therefore not generalizable. The statistical measures were robust but not significant in all instances, and the focus group only reported on the views of four markers. Hence the findings of this study must be considered merely indicative rather than conclusive.

How did you disseminate your findings? We are currently seeking to disseminate the finding in an open seminar, with invitation to colleagues at the school, or university wide, as it is felt that this is a topic relevant to the wider university community.



What have been the benefits to student learning? The findings can inform the behaviours of markers on the relevant programme, and it is hoped that this will encourage markers to resort more directly to the language of the level descriptors rather than draw on knowledges invisible to the students. It is hoped that this practice will enhance assessment literacy and reliability amongst the stakeholders. It is thought that assessment literacy cannot develop if knowledge and understanding of the marking process is not shared amongst markers and students. Due to the high stakes nature of HE assessment of PGT programmes, the benefit will be directly the ability for students to position themselves in relation to the explicit level descriptors to achieve better outcomes. In addition it will sensitise markers more explicitly to the needs of students to share in their understandings, and thus allow students to enhance their learning experience.

How could these benefits be extended to other parts of the university? As issues about assessment literacy and reliability of marking would be shared across PGT programmes at any school, the findings provide useful feedback for staff on other programmes how PGT students may perceive marking and feedback processes. It can help with marker training sessions, as well as involving students more actively in their own assessment.

Who can be contacted for further details? Claudia.Rosenhan@ed.ac.uk



Financial statement (please delete as appropriate):

This project has remaining funds unused and we require details of how to return the balance. The Principal Investigator or School Administrator appropriate can provide financial statements showing the funding usage as and when required by the UoE Development Trusts who may require it for auditing purposes.

Please send an electronic PDF copy of this report to:

Email: iad.teach@ed.ac.uk