Cultures of testing, cultures of cheating... many or one?

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Over to you (1):

Cheating in language assessment

What does it mean for you?
Why talk about cheating?

• Threat to accuracy & dependability ➔ threat to test validity
• Lack of fairness
• Loss of reputation and credibility
• Economic loss
• Skewed washback
• Impediment to learning
• Reduced protection to society
• Distress and tention
Malpractice in language assessment in culturally heterogenous classes

1. Dear language teachers,

Please spare a moment to respond to a short survey on the malpractice in language assessment and how it affects students from various backgrounds.

The results of the survey will be addressed during the TEASIG Webinar on this topic which will be held soon. If you are unable to attend the webinar, please check the website http://tea.iatfl.org/upcoming-teasig-events/ for more information.

Thank you!
Anna Soltyska

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Our webinar is today!!! Our presenter, Anna Soltyska, was the winner of the Trinity College TEASIG scholarship and gave a very interesting and informative presentation on the TEASIG Day at the 2017 IATEFL Conference.

This webinar Malpractice in Language Assessment: who are you kidding? takes the opportunity to explore the subject of her presentation further. Anna will detail a number of reasons for assessment-related malpractice and show various instances of cheating in high-stake and low-stake testing, together with some possible detection methods. Participants will be invited to share their experiences on these and discuss solutions on how to reduce the risk of malpractice.

She is also conducting research into this often neglected, but vitally important area, particularly where it is related to learners' cultural backgrounds and is inviting those interested to take part in an online survey. The survey can be accessed at: https://www.surveymonkey.de/r/KSY8R.
Learners‘ and teachers‘ own perspectives on learning (and assessment) influence expectations about what *should* happen in the classroom; this affects the interpretations and evaluations of what *does* happen... and of one another...

(Jin & Cortazzi, 1997)
Theory of cultural intelligence (CQ)

- CQ Drive
- CQ Knowledge
- CQ Strategy
- CQ Action

(Earley & Ang, 2003)
Over to you (2a):

Learners’ and teachers’ own perspectives on learning (and assessment) influence expectations about what *should* happen in the classroom; this affects the interpretations and evaluations of what *does* happen... and of one another...

(Jin & Cortazzi, 1997)

**Brainstorm and identify culture-dependent aspects of learning, teaching and assessment**
Example:
Learning & teaching in higher education

Two approaches to the transfer of knowledge:
“discursive & interactive” vs. “monologic presenting” approach

→ interaction in seminars & tutorials (discussions)
→ critical thinking and self-study skills expected
→ no hierarchical distance between lecturers and students;
→ improvement/development of knowledge thanks to students’ contributions
→ variable canon of knowledge (Schumann, 2012)

→ teacher/lecturer as a central source of knowledge
→ reception and memorisation of knowledge is expected
→ preference for traditional frontward teaching
→ hierarchical relations between students and teachers
→ clear distinction between acquiring knowledge and its critical analysis
→ established canon of knowledge
Theory of cultural intelligence (CQ)

CQ Drive
CQ Knowledge
CQ Strategy
CQ Action

(Earley & Ang, 2003)
Over to you (2b):

Brainstorm and identify culture-dependent aspects of learning, teaching and assessment. How are these reflected in students’ attitudes towards cheating?

Discuss!
Why do your learners cheat during language tests?

- Learners need better grades than those they can obtain in an honest way.
- Learners are unable to prepare for the test.
- There is no or too little punishment even if cheaters get caught.
- Cheating is commonplace where I work - everybody does this.

Other reasons
...cheating is a natural part of human character; there will always be people who cheat in life...

...marketising of education: a degree / test result as a commodity...

...cheaters are often first grade students who have just come from secondary school where cheating is regular practice...

...students are interested in getting credits rather than learning language...

...some foreign cultures are more lenient on cheaters...
Do the attitudes towards test malpractice differ according to cultural background of your learners?
Attitudes towards cheating differ across countries/cultures

- grading system
- selection procedures
- severity of punishment, number of students in classes
- existence of study groups
- existence of code of honor, etc.

the system is free of cheating => the cheating costs are high

- collectivistic and individualistic cultures/values
- different attitudes to the law and to officials

Attitudes towards cheating (in educational assessment)

(Magnus et al, 2002)
Attitudes towards cheating differ across countries/cultures - examples

US: cheating = unfair instrument of competition among students

non-US: reliance on a variety of groups (peer loyalty); thin borderline between collaboration and collusion

Asian cultures: knowledge = shared property; memorising and reproducing seen as a form of respect, insurance of earning high grades

Russia: teachers = representatives of the state, thus enemies; cheaters: ok, traitors condemned

(Magnus et al, 2002; Smithee, 2009; Velliaris, 2017)
Theory of cultural intelligence (CQ)

CQ Drive  CQ Knowledge  CQ Strategy  CQ Action

(Earley & Ang, 2003)
Over to you (3):

You are asked to perform a SWOT analysis of a particular approach to testing. Do you know this tool?

**SWOT Analysis**

is a useful technique for understanding your **Strengths and Weaknesses**, and for identifying both the **Opportunities open to you** and the **Threats you face**.
Over to you (3):

Should assessment procedures be developed that accommodate for culture-dependent needs of test takers, or should standardisation and unification be pursued?

Work in three teams.
Perform a SWOT analysis of a “one-culture-fits-all” approach to language assessment in various contexts (low-stake to high-stake).
Consider (among others) issues of validity, reliability and feasibility.

Collect your ideas on the three posters!
Recommendations

Do not accept culture alone as an excuse for cheating.

„When in Rome do as Romans do“ approach to (non)cheating is not enough.

No matter in which context: give clear instructions, formulate expectations and (whenever possible) individualise assignments.
Further reading


Schumann, A (Hg) (2012) Interkulturelle Kommunikation in der Hochschule. Zur Integration internationaler Studierender und Förderung Interkultureller Kompetenz, transcript Verlag, Bielefeld


Soltyska, A (2016) Malpractice in language testing – Why and how should we care? ETAS Journal, 34/1

Thank you for your attention!

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Watch this space:
http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/sprachetesten/