Assessment Literacy for Language Teachers

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Overview of Session 1

- Introducing assessment literacy
- Who needs assessment literacy?
- Focus on you as a teacher
INTRODUCING ASSESSMENT LITERACY
What is Literacy?

Definition: *The ability to read and write.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What aspects of assessment should be included?</th>
<th>Is there a minimum level?</th>
<th>How do we define this?</th>
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Assessment Literacy
Towards a Definition...

For the purpose of this presentation, assessment literacy can be defined as the level of knowledge of assessment concepts required by individuals to interact with assessment in a meaningful way, depending on their situation.
What is assessment literacy?

The literacy continuum [theoretical]

No knowledge | Full knowledge

The literacy continuum [reality]

Little knowledge | Extensive knowledge
ASSESSMENT LITERACY

Davies (2008)
Skills + knowledge + principles

- Technical skills
- Scores and decision-making
- Language pedagogy
- Local practices
- Knowledge of theory
- Principles and concepts
- Socio-cultural values
- Personal beliefs/attitudes
WHO NEEDS ASSESSMENT LITERACY?
Who is assessment literacy for?

Developers
- Designers
- Item writers
- Test makers
- Analysts
- Academics

Direct Users
- Test-takers
- Teachers
- Parents
- Admissions’ officers
- Delivery staff

Indirect Users
- Policy makers
- Employers
- Educational administrators
- Training providers
And the contexts?

- Embed AL in the organisation
- Embed AL in teacher and learner training
- Base policy on knowledge
Who needs what, and to what level?

- Core
- Intermediary
- Peripheral

- Policy makers
- Language teachers
- Test makers
- Researchers
- Course instructors
- General public

Taylor (2013)
5 (theoretical) levels of assessment literacy

- **LEVEL 0**: Illiteracy
- **LEVEL 1**: Nominal literacy
- **LEVEL 2**: Functional literacy
- **LEVEL 3**: Procedural and conceptual literacy
- **LEVEL 4**: Multi-dimensional literacy

These levels represent increasing levels of literacy, with LEVEL 0 being the lowest and LEVEL 4 being the highest.
Professional language testers

Knowledge of theory

Scores and decision making

Technical skills

Personal beliefs/attitudes

Principles and concepts

Local practices

Language pedagogy

Sociocultural values

Scores:
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Taylor (2013)
Test writers

Knowledge of theory

Scores and decision making

Technical skills

Principles and concepts

Language pedagogy

Sociocultural values

Personal beliefs/attitudes

Local practices

Scores and decision making

Taylor (2013)
University administrators

Knowledge of theory
Scores and decision making
Technical skills
Principles and concepts
Language pedagogy
Sociocultural values
Local practices
Personal beliefs/attitudes

Taylor (2013)
Classroom teachers

- Knowledge of theory
- Technical skills
- Principles and concepts
- Language pedagogy
- Sociocultural values
- Local practices
- Personal beliefs/attitudes
- Scores and decision making

Taylor (2013)
Assessment literacy for teachers involves developing...

- Skills in identifying and evaluating appropriate assessments for specific purposes within specific contexts
- Skills in analysing empirical data in order to improve one’s own instructional and assessment practices
- The knowledge required to assess learners effectively and maximise learning
- The knowledge and understanding to interpret and apply assessment results in appropriate ways
- An understanding of the principles and practice of sound assessment
- The wisdom to be able to integrate assessment and its outcomes into the overall pedagogic process
FOCUS ON YOU AS A TEACHER

What are five things you need to know about assessment?
(explain what you mean by each one as best you can)

- Individually (5 minutes)
- In groups (10 minutes)
- Consensus to report (15 minutes)
Overview of Session 2

- British Council teachers’ survey
- Your perspectives
- Feedback and discussion
SURVEY OF BRITISH COUNCIL TEACHERS
Survey Sections

1. Personal information
2. Purposes of assessment
3. Classroom focused activities
4. General language assessment activities
5. Additional language assessment topics
Basic Survey Question:

Do you need more training in these activities?

- Yes, I need more training
- No, I have adequate training
- No, it is irrelevant to my job
10 topics most requested for further training:

1. Defining assessment criteria
2. Writing items for tests
3. Developing core skills tests
4. Developing basic skills tests
5. Developing integrated skills tests
6. Developing rating scales
7. Establishing the reliability of tests
8. Collecting validity evidence for tests
9. Evaluating language tests
10. Using basic statistics to analyze tests
Additional assessment topics most teachers are interested in:

- Standard setting
- Ethical considerations in language testing
- Washback in the classroom
- The use of tests in society
- Principles of educational measurement
- Affective factors in language testing
- The effect of local learning cultures
Topics they are NOT interested in:

- History of language testing
- Use of advanced statistics
- Large-scale testing
- Test administration
FOCUS ON YOU AS A TEACHER: Topics YOU are interested in

1. Scoring and/or rating (including rater reliability)
2. Technical skills and theory
3. Test criteria
4. Washback effect
5. Practical training on producing/developing tests
6. Writing items
7. Validity and reliability
8. Evaluating tests for usefulness
9. Fairness
10. Understanding test purpose
FOCUS ON YOU AS A TEACHER: Additional topics mentioned

1. Setting tasks that are achievable and challenging
2. Adapting existing tests to local contexts
3. Identifying the construct of test tasks
4. Defining assessment objectives
5. Awareness of local contexts
6. Technology and language testing
7. Statistics
8. CEFR
9. Using test results for curriculum development
References


Thank you

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