

IDEAS & ISSUES OF ESL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT
ECIS ESL/MT Conference/Rome
K. Oppenheim/March 2005

"Tread cautiously when drawing conclusions from any evaluative measure; children's futures are at stake." (C. Uzua, 1994)

I. PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

- Initial (placement, grouping)
- On-going (assess progress)
- High-stakes (making students, teachers, schools accountable)

II. GOALS OF ASSESSMENT (from Navarette & Gustke, 1996)

- Assess the achievement of ALL students' attainment of high standards
- Support teaching and learning (from Porter 1995)
 - i. Help teachers better evaluate their own classroom practices and instructional procedures, and how they affect student achievement
 - ii. Help teachers collect valid, reliable data to inform their instructional decisions
 - iii. Help administrators support and work with teachers
 - iv. Help students be involved in goal-setting, self-evaluation, criteria to view assessment as an appropriate reflection of what they're learning
- Provide process and product information that is useful to parents, students, and teachers
- Determine placement
- Serve as tool for accountability

III. CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENTS

- Reliability
- Validity
- Fairness
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"Historically assessment has played the role of legitimizing the disabling of minority students." (Cummins 1986)

IV. PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES (from CAL Resource Guides)

- Identify the purpose of the assessment and the learning that is being assessed
- Choose assessment tools that reflect the program's learning goals

- Use a variety of measures

"Language proficiency...is important in one way or another to nearly everything that takes place in education—whether at school or elsewhere." (Oller 1992)

V. **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN CHOOSING AN APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST** (from LAB at Brown and from English Language Learner KnowledgeBase)

- Theoretical basis
- Cultural and linguistic suitability
- Practical issues
- Diagnostic/placement info

VI. **THE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY HANDBOOK** (Illinois State Board of Education & Bilingual Advisory Panel/Language Proficiency Committee)

VII. **TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS**

- Traditional
 - i. TOEFL/SLEP
 - ii. CTB McGraw-Hill: LAS Links K-12 Assessments
 - iii. Mac II (www.tasaliteracy.com), K-12
 - iv. BEST (Basic Elementary Skills Test)/Los Amigos Research), K-12, has tests in Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Khmer, Spanish, Vietnamese)
 - v. *Handbook of English Language Proficiency Tests* (Del Vecchio and Guerrero 1995)
 - vi. ESL Standards (Short 2000)
- Portfolios
- Performance-based

"If, then, we attempt to reinforce a student's native language in our instruction, we cannot do less in our assessments. Evaluation which allows only for the use of the English language sends a message quite contradictory to that being portrayed through instruction, and the 'louder' message will be that sent through assessment. Whether we like it or not, assessment drives curriculum, or, more specifically, assessment drives students' perceptions of what is important in the curriculum. Further, assessment procedures inconsistent with instructional procedures also create an invalid test." (French 1992)

VIII. **CHECKLISTS & RUBRICS**

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