

## Quiz Questions:

Claudia Harsch – Introduction to Basic Issues in Foreign Language Assessment

### 1. Basic concepts (00:02:38)

#### 1.1. Define the concept of 'assessment':

- Assessment “refers to the general process of monitoring or keeping track of learners’ progress; [...] it is part of the whole educational process of teaching and learning [...]. (...) It is a means by which students’ language learning development and achievements are monitored over time.” (Rea-Dickins, 2001: 376)
- Assessment is done for different purposes: (a) formative assessment for pedagogical purposes; (b) summative assessment for measuring learner achievement; and (c) assessment for formal certification (usually as external assessment).

#### 1.2. Define the concept of 'evaluation':

Evaluation is the structured interpretation ... of results. It looks at original objectives, and at what is either predicted or what was accomplished and how it was accomplished (cf. Wikipedia).

#### 1.3. Name the three pillars of evaluation:

- a. Informal assessment, e.g. Informal tests, Feedback (peer/teacher), Achievement, Curriculum, Norm- /criterion- orientation, Planning, Diagnosis, School grades;
- b. self-assessment, i.e. Individualised, Portfolio, Proficiency / achievement, Planning, Processes, Reflection, Self-regulation, Autonomy;
- c. external assessment, e.g. Standardised Tests, Empirical basis, Proficiency, Criterion-orientation, Comparison, Educational monitoring, Planning)

### 2. Assessment purposes, use and interpretation (00:20:53)

#### 2.1. What is formative assessment?

- a. assessment that is pedagogically motivated and takes place during teaching;
- b. assessment that serves the purpose of formal certification and takes place before teaching;
- c. assessment that aims at measuring learner achievement and takes place after teaching

#### 2.2 Name at least three purposes of assessment in EFL teaching.

- to measure development;
- to diagnose where learners are;
- to measure proficiency;
- to gain feedback on our teaching;
- to give feedback to our learners;
- to report to external bodies for evaluation, monitoring;
- to certify language proficiency;
- to regulate entrance to programmes (high stakes);
- to compare learners;
- to maintain standards;
- to improve teaching

### 3. Educational frameworks and reference criteria (00:34:45)

#### 3.1. What are the core functions of educational frameworks like the CEF? (35:48)

- to provide reference criteria,
- to link curriculum, learning goals and assessment criteria,
- to help communicating and interpreting assessment results by providing a qualitative description of results (rather than a numerical score)
- etc.

#### 3.2. How can the CEF be employed for reporting language proficiency?

- a. quantitatively by use of numerical scores relating to individual proficiency levels;
- b. qualitatively by use of ability statements relating to individual proficiency levels;
- c. qualitatively by relating target knowledge to individual proficiency levels

#### 3.3. Name at least three examples/contexts in which the CEF is already being used in Germany.

- Curriculum development;
- Educational standards;
- Reference for external assessment tools;
- Planning teaching;
- Textbooks use CEF as orientation;
- Self-assessment;
- European Language Portfolio

### 4. Principles of 'good' assessment practice (00:42:07)

#### 4.1. The so-called wash back effect is...

1. the effect of teaching and learning on test results;
2. the effect of tests and test formats on teaching and learning;
3. the effect of tests and test results on test construction

#### 4.2. Name examples for positive and negative wash back.

- Positive: motivation, learner investment, structure, transparency of grades etc.
- Negative: Teaching to the test, lack of individualization, learning to the test etc.

#### 4.3. Should wash back be the purpose of a good test? Provide your reasons briefly.

#### 4.4. Name and explain at least three principles of good assessment practice in EFL classes.

- Fairness/transparency
- Objectivity (clear guidelines for marking)
- Use approaches/instruments which are **fit for purposes** (Types and formats aligned to aims and purposes; Familiarity: Preparation; Right level)

- Reliability and validity of instruments and approaches (Construct, Instructions, Marking)
- Do assessment regularly and **systematically**
- Attend **training** to produce appropriate tasks
- **Evaluate** the quality of an external instrument (fitness for purpose, look at research)
- Think of how to **interpret** and **use** the assessment

#### 4.5. What is the difference between external assessment and classroom-based assessment?

- **“External assessment refers to standardised examinations that are designed and marked outside individual schools and normally take the form of a written test.** The major advantage of external assessment is its high reliability. It ensures that all students are assessed on the same tasks and that their results are measured by the same standards. Moreover, external assessment is usually conducted in supervised conditions which ensure that the work being assessed has actually been done by the student.

However, external assessment is often criticised for having lower validity than teacher-based assessment. It tends to be in the form of a written test under supervised conditions, so that only a limited range of curriculum goals can be covered. It can also have detrimental effects on teaching and learning. The risk is that teachers may end up focussing on test-taking skills, especially when high stakes for their students are attached to the test results.”

(OECD (2013): *Evaluation and assessment frameworks for improving school outcomes*. URL: <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/46927511.pdf>. 4.)

- **Classroom-based assessment (or internal assessment) comprises teacher assessment, peer assessment and self-assessment (according to who is undertaking the assessment).** All forms focus on learner knowledge and skills, but they may also include attitudes, understanding and motivation. Classroom assessment should be part of both teaching and learning, and it should provide detailed information for teachers, learners, parents, and sometimes even stakeholders beyond the classroom, e.g. funding authorities. Classroom assessment should contain more than just simple grades; it should give a clear insight into the students’ weaknesses and strengths, their achievements and development in the foreign language. (cf. Rea-Dickins, P. (2000): “Classroom Assessment.” In: Hedge, Tricia (ed.): *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: OUP. 375-401.)

#### 4.6. Name at least three differences between tasks for learning and tasks for testing.

- Focus on processes (*learning*) vs. focus on products (*testing*)
- Cooperative learning (*learning*) vs. individual performance (*testing*)
- Interaction between learners and teachers-learners, individualized or co-operative (*learning*) vs. standardized conditions (*testing*)
- Errors as possibilities for learning (*learning*) vs. avoidance of errors (*testing*)
- Complex tasks, allowing for diverse ways of solving them, subjectively scored (*learning*) vs. tasks focusing on rather specific (sub-)skills with unambiguous solutions, objectively scored (*testing*)

## 5. Assessment tools and approaches (01:03:35)

### 5.1. Name at least four different assessment tools and define which purposes they serve (in the EFL classroom).

- Tests; ... for measuring student achievement, reporting results to parents, school authorities etc.
- Portfolios... for self-assessment, raising learner awareness, reflection, process evaluation etc.
- Feedback (written or oral); ...for highlighting specific strengths and weaknesses of students’ work, assisting them in monitoring their own development, identifying aspects for further training, distinguishing future priorities for teaching etc.
- Role plays... for intercultural communicative competence, empathic learning, speaking and listening, improvisation, pragmatic and discourse competence
- Projects... learner autonomy, process- and product evaluation, co-operative learning etc.
- (Drama) performances;
- Presentations; ...
- Interviews; ...
- Questionnaires; ...
- Exams; ...
- Student observations; ...for gathering information of communicative language skills that are difficult to capture in traditional paper-and-pencil-based approaches, for describing language learning development with reference to both language and content.

## 6. Integrating teaching, assessment and evaluation (01:19:30)

### 6.1. What is the relationship between assessment and evaluation?

Evaluation is the structured interpretation of assessment results

### 6.2. Give a brief example of how you plan to make use of tests and assessment for evaluating your own teaching