



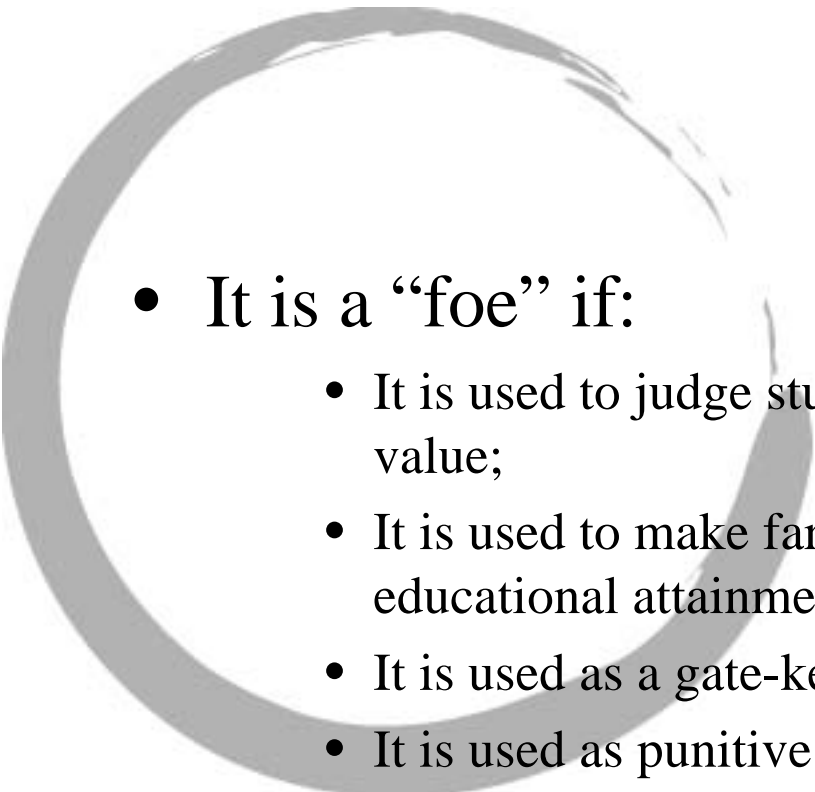
Assessment

Why Assessment?


--A friend or foe?--

It is a “friend” if:

- It is based on how second language learners best learn – considering their language learning and literacy skills processes;
- It is part of the instruction and is used to help teachers and students in improving teaching and learning;
- It uses multiple sources for assessing student learning;
- It is culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate; and
- It is fair, valid and reliable.



- It is a “foe” if:

- It is used to judge students without any educational or instructional value;
 - It is used to make far-fetched decisions that affect students’ educational attainment;
 - It is used as a gate-keeper;
 - It is used as punitive measure for students who are learning a second language; and
 - It is used as a “weapon” to avenge or project one’s negative or prejudiced feelings toward others.
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Purpose of Assessment

Assessment is the process of collecting data about what students know and what they can do for the purpose of making appropriate curriculum decisions.

Kinds of Assessment

- criterion-referenced (describes a student's performance according to an established criteria),
- norm-referenced (measures how well a student has learned specific concepts and skills compared to others),
- performance-based assessments (where students are assessed by how well they apply what they have learned),
- authentic assessment, also known as alternative assessment,
- classroom-based assessments (traditional or **declarative knowledge** tests v. student-centered or **procedural knowledge** tests, p.329)

VALIDITY

- “Validity is based on *how* a test is used because tests are not inherently valid without regard to *how* the results are used.” (National Research Council)
- It responds to the question: *Does the test assess what it purports to assess?*
- Kinds of validity -content, consequential, & face validity
- Validity is threatened by systematic bias: cultural (and language) bias, test bias such as high-stakes testing, norming bias in norm-referenced assessments

RELIABILITY

- *Reliability responds to: Is the test consistent in that it produces the same results with the same student in different testing settings or at different points in time or when being evaluated by different teachers or raters? -*
- High levels of reliability requires the use of objective tests, multiple measures, multiple raters, and clearly specified scoring criteria.
- Reliability requires: inter-rater reliability when using multiple raters.

Developmental or relative standards v. absolute standards

- Developmental standards - Specific standards for individual students based on their developmental level, for example, in a mixed-ability level ESL classroom.
- Absolute standards - All students are expected to meet these, for example, “students will ask for and give directions for getting from one place to another...”

Operating Principles in Assessment (p. 334)

- Effective practices in assessing students: set clear criteria, use scaffolding, use exemplars, involve the learner, and linking grades to performance criteria. Also, link assessment to instruction - assess what you teach, assess as you teach, and look for key assessment opportunities (pp. 338-339).

More Effective Practices

- Use strategies to help students reduce or eliminate the obstacles associated with second language learning and focus on concept development: use checklists, rubrics, scaffolding (p.336), models, self-evaluation, silent reading, explicit instructions, collaborative learning, personal responses to reading (p. 340), process writing, portfolio assessment, etc.

Content Area

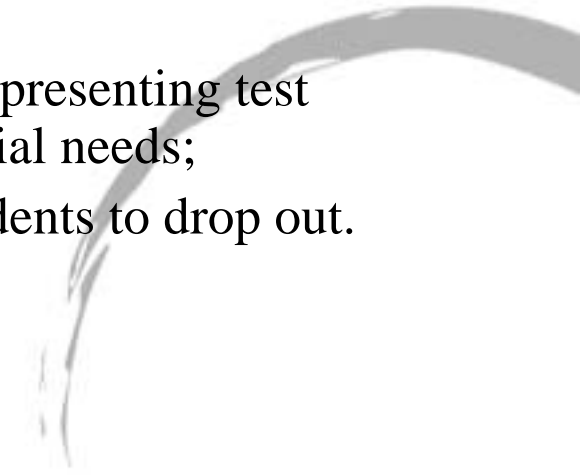
- Content area assessment: monitor both language development and learning of concepts, use differentiated scoring (p. 346)

Standardized Testing

- Strategies for standardized testing – teaching reading strategies, key test-taking skills, and practicing essential test study skills (p. 348-350)



ISSUES

- Impact of No Child Left Behind Act – example of ineffective assessment measures (p. 311) – from an Education Week editorial by Sternberg, 2004.
 - NCLB’s standards for accountability are arbitrary and punitive; it penalizes schools with higher numbers of poor students and ELLs;
 - It uses one yardstick for all students, even those with learning disabilities;
 - It encourages cheating, including misrepresenting test results by excluding students with special needs;
 - It inadvertently encourages weaker students to drop out.
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MORE ISSUES ON NCLB

- **NCLB** assumes that what matters most is what students know rather than how they can use it;
- ...squeezes subjects not tested out of the curriculum;
- ...mandates politically based definitions of education as a science.
- ...views standardized testing as a panacea for closing the achievement gap and turns schools into test-prep programs.
- ...mandates testing that neither the federal nor the state governments can afford.
- ...promotes divisiveness between and among legislators, teachers, administrators, and teacher educators.

Comparison of Student-centered and Traditional Teaching

From: Chapter 8 - Assessment (Valdez-Pierce in Ovando)

Rubrics,
scale

Checklists

Cooperative Learning

Self-Assessment

Performance
Assessment

100% grading

Paper/Pencil tests

End of unit tests

Cover the
Curriculum

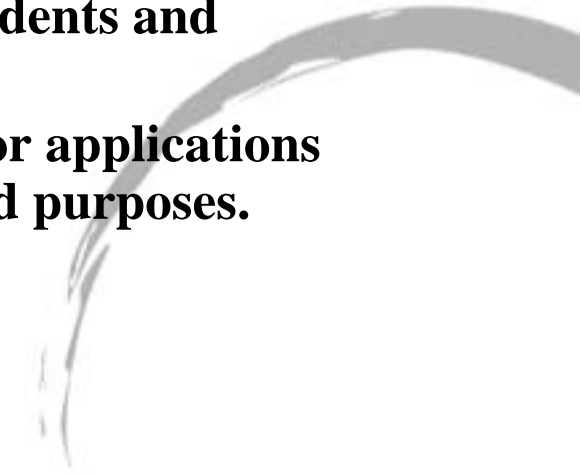
Student-centered Teaching
Teaching

Traditional



Assessment Accommodations for Classroom Teachers Herrera, Murray, & Cabral - 2007

Alternative Assessment or Authentic Assessment

- **Are developed from instruction, group work, and provide alternative to traditional assessments;**
 - **Genuinely assess a student's classroom performance;**
 - **Students participate in their own evaluation process;**
 - **Includes information relevant to both students and teacher;**
 - **Emphasizes real-world problems, tasks, or applications that are relevant to the students' lives and purposes.**
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Assessment Activities

- **Performance-based assessments: Discovery and how students store and apply information**
- **Portfolios: Samples of self-evaluations and objectives met**
- **Interview-based assessments**
- **Play-based assessments: Demonstrate knowledge**
- **Cooperative group assessments**
- **Dialogue journals and scaffolded essays**