

Developing an EAP Exam for an Irish Context*Miriam Hallissey, TIE Examinations, Ireland**Sue Hackett, The Advisory Council for English Language Schools, Ireland*

Why a constructivist approach? In an academic setting students are expected to build knowledge based on the input they receive through lectures and reading. As they process this input they make it their own and reformulate it in writing or speaking as evidence that learning has taken place. Our exam aims to reflect this reality. This presentation will describe the process of developing an EAP exam following a constructivist approach. We will briefly outline the stages, and focus specifically on the design process with particular reference to the integration of the four skills, to reflect the academic context and the cognitive processes underpinning effective learning. We will demonstrate how the test is designed to assess the candidates' ability to process input in the form of spoken and written text, and to select and synthesise this input in order to produce written text relevant to the task requirements. The design incorporates procedures and systems to ensure key considerations such as validity and equity are an integral part of the assessment framework. Adopting a constructivist approach raises a number of significant issues and there will be an opportunity to discuss some of these at the end of the presentation.