

The 6th Annual EALTA Conference, 4 - 7 June 2009

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Finland



Practices, policies and tensions in classroom-based assessment

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Overview

- **Literature**
- **Purpose of the study**
- **Results**
- **Recommendations**

Classroom Assessment:

‘process of obtaining information which is used to make educational decision about students, and to judge instructional effectiveness and curricular adequacy’

American Federation of Teachers, National Council on Measurement in Education , American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education & National Education Association

<http://www.unl.edu/buros/bimm/html/article3.html>

Teachers should be skilled in:

- **choosing and developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions.**
- **administering, scoring and interpreting the results of both externally-produced and teacher-produced assessment methods.**
- **using assessment results when making decisions about individual students, planning teaching, developing curriculum, and institutional improvement.**
- **developing, using and evaluating valid student grading procedures which use student assessments.**
- **communicating assessment results to students, educational decision makers and other concerned stakeholders.**

'Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students' 1990,
American Federation of Teachers, National Council on Measurement in Education ,
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education & National Education Association

<http://www.unl.edu/buros/bimm/html/article3.html>

Literature review

- **Studies have yielded contradictory results depicting teachers**
- **heavy users of tests (Gullickson, 1984)**
- **showing preference for informal assessment methods (Brindley, 1989; Mavrommattis, 1997; Stiggins and Conklin, 1992).**

Literature review

- **Studies depict teachers as ‘assessment illiterate’, e.g.**

Teachers

- **had superficial knowledge of test use, esp. in interpreting standardized tests (Goslin, 1967; Gullickson, 1984)**
- **reported using a variety of assessment methods but their most frequently used formats corresponded to those used by formal external examinations (Rogers, 1991; Wilson, 1998; 2000).**
- **did very little reflection on what was being assessed and were unaware of the assessment work of their colleagues (Black and Wiliam, 1998; Harlen & Deakin-Crick, 2002; 2003).**
- **had little knowledge of assessment frameworks and adapted whatever assessment activities were in their disposal to suit their own teaching contexts (Breen et al., 1997; Arkoudis and O’Loughlin, 2004; Davison 2004).**

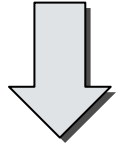
Literature review

- **Teachers' assessment practices vary according to teachers' experience, their views of the role of assessment in the curriculum, collegial expectations and external reporting demands (McCallum et al, 1995; Breen et al, 1997).**

Literature review

- **Studies also highlight the tensions between administrative and educational purposes for the use of assessment instruments and state-mandated assessment policies on teacher assessment (Rogers, 1991; Breen et al., 1997; Wilson, 1998; 2000; Arkoudis and O'Loughlin, 2004; Davison 2004).**

Conclusions of the literature review

- The role of the EFL teacher in classroom-based assessment has received little attention in the research literature, e.g.
 - What are the purposes of classroom-based assessment?
 - What assessment methods do teachers use for classroom-based purposes?
 - How do they choose and develop their assessment methods?
 - How do they use them in the classroom?
 - Are teachers sufficiently trained in classroom assessment?
- 
- These issues remain largely unproblematized and unresearched

Aims of the study:

To investigate the

- a) purposes**
- b) methods**
- c) procedures**
- d) training needs**

of EFL teachers' classroom assessment in state schools Cyprus

Types of data

- ***Survey questionnaires***
 - a. Biographical Information***
 - b. Purposes of LTA***
 - c. Methods of LTA***
 - d. Procedures of LTA***
 - e. Training in LTA***

Types of data

- *Survey questionnaire*
- *Test Samples*

A. Biographical information

<i>Gender</i>	Teachers (n=191)
Female	90%
Male	10%

A. Biographical information

<i>Types of schools</i>	Teachers (n=191)
Primary Schools	13%
Junior High Schools	33%
Senior High Schools	47%
Technical & Vocational Schools	7%

A. Biographical information

<i>Age range</i>	Teachers (n=191)
21-30	14 %
31-40	16%
41-50	48%
51+	22%

A. Biographical information

<i>Teaching experience (years)</i>	Teachers (n=191)
0-1	4%
2-5	12%
6-10	14%
11+	70%

A. Biographical information

<i>Professional Qualifications</i>	Teachers (n=191)
BA	100%
MA	37%
Other	10%

Test samples

Tests	262
Sections	696
Tasks	1513
Teachers	78
Schools	45

B. Purposes of LTA

1. *Do you assess your students' language skills at your school?*

Yes 100%

No -

B. Purposes of LTA

2. Why do you assess your students?	Teachers (n=191)
Student-centred purposes	
b. To obtain information about my students' progress	88%
d. To motivate my students to learn	66%
e. To make my students work harder	54%
f. To prepare my students for external tests	50%
Instruction-based purposes	
c. To plan my teaching	69%
Administration-based purposes	
g. To determine students' final grades	61%
a. To place students at appropriate levels	44%
h. To provide information to central administration (e.g. school, Ministry)	24%

B. Purposes of LTA

<i>3. What kind of tests do you use?</i>	Teachers (n=191)	Tests (n=262)
b. Progress tests	88%	72.2%
c. Achievement tests	75%	11%
a. Mini-quizzes	72%	16.3%
d. Diagnostic tests	54%	-
e. Placement tests	26%	0.3%

C. Methods of LTA

- **Teacher-oriented assessment methods**
(methods designed and administered by the teachers)

C. Methods of LTA - Reading

Do you assess reading in your tests?

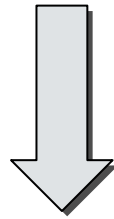
Yes **92%**

No **8%**

C. Methods of LTA - Reading

<i>6.1 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test reading?</i>	Teachers (n=191)	Test tasks (n=278)
True-false items	84%	26%
Matching items	74%	2.5%
Short answer questions	68%	48.2%
Multiple-choice items	64%	21.2%
Sentence completion items	60%	0.35%
Fill in forms	49%	0.35%
Jumbled sentences	63%	-
Cloze	50%	-
Information transfer	33%	-
Visual representation	9%	-

- Integrating Reading + Vocabulary + Writing = 41% tests



- English paper of the School leaving exam (university admission)

C. Methods of LTA – Reading/Writing

<i>Follow-up writing tasks</i>	Test tasks (n=42)
Summary writing	26%
Extended follow-up writing	74%

C. Methods of LTA – Reading/Vocabulary

<i>Vocabulary task types</i>	Test tasks (n=160)
Find words in text	38%
Match words from text with definitions	29.3%
Find opposites of words in text	10%
Explain the meaning of underlined words in text	5.6%
Fill in discrete sentences with words from text	8.7%
Other	8.4%

C. Methods of LTA - Reading

<i>6.8 Do you use other methods to test your students' language skills?</i>	Teachers (n=191)
Reading	
Ask oral questions based on text	76%
Reading aloud	44%

C. Methods of LTA - Writing

Do you assess writing in your tests?

Yes 97%

No 2%

No answer 2%

C. Methods of LTA - Writing

<i>6.2 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test writing?</i>	Teachers (n=191)	Test tasks (n=62)
True-false items	80%	-
Matching items	77%	-
Joining sentences	57%	-
Multiple-choice items (to identify grammar errors)	53%	-
Editing a piece of writing	53%	-
Writing short paragraph	83%	27.5%
Writing composition/essay	81%	72.5%

- Task environment (audience, purpose, word limit...)
- Task types (limited)
- Marking criteria (rare)

C. Methods of LTA - Listening

Do you assess listening in your tests?

Yes **93%**

No **7%**

C. Methods of LTA – Listening

<i>6.3 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test listening?</i>	Teachers (n=191)	Test tasks (n=6)
Short answer questions	72%	-
True/False	65%	-
Multiple-choice	61%	2
Order jumbled pictures	57%	-
Retelling a story	52%	-
Taking notes	48%	-
Following directions	42%	2
Filling in forms	41%	-
Dictation	37%	-
Summary writing	35%	2

C. Methods of LTA - Speaking

Do you assess speaking in your tests?

Yes 84%

No 15%

No answer 1%

C. Methods of LTA – Speaking

<i>6.4 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test speaking?</i>	Teachers (n=191)	Test tasks (n=0)
Oral descriptions (event/object/photo)	43%	-
Oral directions	37%	-
Sentence response cues	2%	-

C. Methods of LTA - Speaking

<i>6.8 Do you use other methods to test your students' language skills?</i>	Teachers (n=191)
Speaking	
Interviews	62%
Oral discussion with each student	59%
Oral presentations	53%
Oral reading	39%
Role plays	35%
Group discussions	35%
Public speaking	29%
Info gap activities	28%

C. Methods of LTA - Grammar

Do you assess grammar in your tests?

Yes **97%**

No **2%**

No answer **1%**

C. Methods of LTA – Grammar

<i>6.5 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test grammar?</i>	Teachers (n=191)	Test tasks (n=504)
True/False	81%	8%
Sentence Completion	76%	42%
Sentence Transformations	72%	13.5%
Multiple-choice	66%	5%
Cloze	64%	4%
Identify grammar errors	63%	0.2%
Re-writing sentences	41%	2.6%
Editing a piece of writing	38%	3.6%
Put words of a sentence in order	33%	3.2%
Other	-	18%

C. Methods of LTA - Vocabulary

Do you assess your students' vocabulary skills?

Yes 98%

No 1%

No answer 1%

C. Methods of LTA – Vocabulary

<i>6.6 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test vocabulary?</i>	Teachers (n=191)	Test tasks (n=504)
True/False	82%	5.8%
Sentence Completion	76%	34%
Crosswords	67%	0.4%
Cloze	65%	14.5%
Multiple-choice	64%	6%
Matching	57%	5.2%
Derivatives	57%	21.3%
Synonyms/Antonyms	52%	2.4%
Labeling	41%	0.4%
Translation from L1 to L2	17%	-
Other	-	10%

C. Methods of LTA – Language Functions

Do you assess language functions in your tests?

Yes 83%

No 15%

No answer 2%

C. Methods of LTA – Language Functions

<i>6.7 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test language functions?</i>	Teachers (n=191)	Test tasks (n=0)
Multiple choice	80%	-
Responding to situations	46%	-
Matching	43%	-
Filling in gapped dialogues	33%	-
Discourse chains	26%	-

Content of teacher-made tests

Language areas	Teachers (n=191)	Test Tasks (n=1513)
Vocabulary	98%	41%
Grammar	97%	33.3%
Writing	97%	7%
Reading	92%	18.3%
Listening	92%	0.4%
Speaking	84%	-
Functions	83%	-

C. Methods of LTA

- **Teacher-oriented assessment methods**
(methods designed and administered by the teachers)
- **Student-oriented assessment methods**
(methods that directly involve students' participation in the assessment process)

C. Methods of LTA

6.8 Do you use other methods to test your students' language skills?	Teachers (n=191)				
	Diaries/ Journals	Peer- assessment	Self- assessment	Portfolios	Projects
Reading	20%	28%	33%	23%	-
Writing	22%	28%	31%	23%	49%
Listening	20%	27%	27%	20%	-
Speaking	20%	25%	25%	20%	-
Grammar	21%	26%	27%	20%	-
Vocabulary	21%	26%	27%	19%	-
Functions	4%	7%	9%	2%	-

Other interesting characteristics of teacher-made tests

- **Parallel versions (59%)**
- **Odd scoring (tasks & test papers)**
- **Errors in aggregating final scores**
- **(Parts of the) tests comprised photocopied samples of external test papers & test booklets**
- **Handwritten (15%)**

D. Procedures of LTA – Sources of test items

<i>7. Which of the following represents your primary source for test questions/items?</i>	Teachers (n=191)
a. Items developed by myself	85%
c. Items from published textbook materials	70%
b. Items prepared together with other teachers	49%
d. Items found on the Internet	41%
e. Items from external exam papers	33%
f. Items from test booklets (textbooks)	22%

External Test papers

<i>Language areas</i>	Teachers (n=191)
Vocabulary	26%
Writing	23%
Listening	23%
Reading	22%
Grammar	20%
Speaking	14%
Functions	-

D. Procedures of LTA - Feedback

<i>8. When you give feedback to your students after a test, how do you do so?</i>	Teachers (n=191)
a. Verbal feedback	82%
c. Written comments	72%
e. Total test score	62%
d. Conference with student	39%
b. Checklist	29%
f. A letter grade	28%

D. Procedures of LTA - Feedback

<i>9. When you give final evaluation feedback to your students, how do you do so?</i>	Teachers (n=191)
c. Total test score	61%
b. Written comments	61%
d. A letter grade	43%
a. Checklist	22%
Other	2%

D. Procedures of LTA - Stakeholders

<i>10. Who will see the test results?</i>	Teachers (n=191)
a. Students	100%
b. Parents	74%
c. Head teachers	33%
d. Inspectors	26%

E. Training in LTA

<i>a. During your pre-service or in-service teacher training, have you learned something about testing and assessment (theory and practice)?</i>	Teachers (n=191)
Yes	72%

E. Training in LTA

<i>b. Types of training</i>	Teachers (n=191)
Completed a full course on testing and assessment	-
Completed a course in which testing and assessment were topics	54%
Completed a workshop on testing and assessment	39%

E. Training in LTA

<i>c. Who organised your training in LTA?</i>	Teachers (n=191)
Pedagogical Institute	31%
University Department	28%
School Advisors/Inspectors	13%
External Examination Boards	6%
Teacher's Associations (e.g. CyTEA...)	4%
Publishers	4%

E. Teachers' training needs in LTA

- **classroom-focused LTA**
- **purposes of LTA**
- **content and concepts of LTA**
- **the use of the CEFR as the basis of test design**

E.1 Training of teachers in classroom-focused LTA

<i>1.1 Please specify if you need training in the following domains</i>	Yes	No
g) Using the European Language Portfolio, an adaptation of it or some other portfolio type	60%	16%
a) Preparing classroom tests	49%	26%
d) Using self/peer-assessment	48%	21%
c) Giving feedback to students based on information from tests / assessment	43%	25%
f) Using informal, continuous, non-test type of assessment	43%	23%
b) Using ready-made tests from textbook packages	34%	32%
e) Using diary/journal assessment	27%	11%

E.2 Training of teachers in purposes of LTA

<i>2.1 Please specify if you need training in the following domains</i>	Yes	No
c) To place students onto courses, programmes, etc	49%	24%
a) To give grades	44%	26%
b) To find out what needs to be taught / learnt	41%	29%
d) To award final reports (at school)	41%	24%

E.3 Training of teachers in content and concepts of LTA

<i>3.1 Please specify if you need training in the following domains:</i>	Yes	No
e) Testing aspects of culture	52%	22%
f) Establishing reliability of tests / assessment	52%	20%
g) Establishing validity of tests / assessment	52%	19%
h) Using statistics to study the quality of LTA	49%	18%
d) Testing integrated language skills	44%	24%
a) Testing receptive skills (reading / listening)	44%	26%
b) Testing productive skills (speaking / writing)	42%	27%
c) Testing grammar & vocabulary	41%	26%
f) Testing language functions	28%	7%

E.4 Training of teachers in other LTA activities

<i>4.2 Please specify if you need training in the following domain:</i>	Yes	No
Using the Common European Framework as the basis for your tests or assessment practices	81%	7%

Overall - Teacher training in LTA

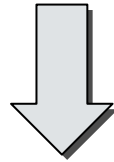
<i>Areas of training in LTA</i>	Teachers (n=191)	
	Positive	Negative
d) use of the CEFR	81%	7%
c) content and concepts of LTA	45%	21%
b) purposes of LTA	44%	26%
a) classroom-focused LTA	43%	22%

Major issues



Purposes of classroom-based assessment

- are diverse and give rise to different teacher positioning in assessment
- tensions arise: need for summative and formative assessment data



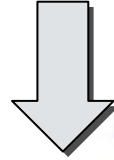
- create imbalance in the range of assessment opportunities that teachers provide for their learners

Practices and procedures of classroom-based assessment

Teachers

- **rely on the paper and pencil format to more informal, student-oriented approaches to assessment**
- **do not seem to vary their testing methods very much**
- **are not always efficient in scoring or setting their test papers**
- **do not easily share their assessments among them**
- **report using a variety of feedback mechanisms (?)**
- **favour external examination, textbook and test booklet formats**
- **test a limited range of language skills**

Practices and procedures of classroom-based assessment



Classroom-based

- is operationalised as the testing of part of students' linguistic knowledge by presenting students with a series of summative mini-achievement tests
- places emphasis on language 'product' rather than 'process'
- is limited to assessment of learning rather than assessment as learning

Training in classroom-based assessment

Teachers

- **are not sufficiently competent in classroom assessment**
- **teacher education programmes do not provide adequate training in classroom assessment**

Recommendations

- **Clear assessment guidelines and specifications – Ministry Education/Pedagogical Institute**
- **Pre-/in-service LTA training courses: regular/relevant**
- **Teacher assessment teams**
- **Collaborative assessment projects**
- **Assessment training booklets**
- **Self-access materials**
- **Technology (internet, online tutorials)**
- **Teacher publications and presentations in LTA**
- **Formal LTA courses in University programmes**

Further research

- **Follow-up questionnaires**
- **Classroom observations/recordings (discourse analysis)**
- **Assessment documents**
- **Follow-up interviews with teachers, school advisors/inspectors, parents and students**
- **CBA research projects in other contexts**

**To give feedback or for further details please
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Thank you!