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**SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES, CULTURES AND LINGUISTICS**

**APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES AND LINGUISTICS**

**LANGTCHG 742: Language Assessment**

**Semester 2, 2017**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Convenor**

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**Course Aims**

This is a course on current concepts, procedures and issues in language assessment. By the end of the course, students should have:

1. an awareness of various approaches to language assessment and current issues in the field
2. an ability to evaluate particular testing or assessment procedures, with particular references to their purpose and context of use
3. experience of developing a small-scale test or assessment procedure.

**Course Topics**

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| **Week** | Topic |
| 1 | Introduction: What is a language test?  Principles and purposes of assessment |
| 2 | Models of language ability and their implications for test design |
| 3 | Stages of test development |
| 4 | The assessment of listening and reading skills |
| 5 | The design of speaking and writing tests |
| 6 | The rating process |
| 7 | Validity and the process of validation |
| 8 | Statistical analysis of tests |
| 9 | Alternative forms of assessment |
| 10 | Formative assessment in the classroom |
| 11 | The educational and social impact of language tests |
| 12 | Computer-based testing and other innovations |

**SET READINGS**

The required text for this course is: McNamara, T. **(**2000). *Language testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Each week, there will be additional articles and book chapters as required or recommended readings. You can access the set readings through the Reading Lists tab in Canvas.

### RESOURCES

### Recommended Books

Alderson, J.C. (2005). *Diagnosing foreign language proficiency: The interface between learning and assessment*. London: Continuum.

Alderson, J.C., Clapham, C., & Wall, D. (1995). *Language test construction and evaluation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bachman, L.F, & Palmer, A.S. (2010). *Language assessment in practice.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brown, H.D., & Abeywickrama, P. (2010). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*, 2nd edn. New York: Longman.

Brown, G.T.L., Irving, S.E. & Keegan, P.J. (2014). *An introduction to educational assessment, measurement and evaluation: Improving the quality of teacher-based assessment*, 3rd edn. Auckland: Dunmore Publishing.

Carr, N.T. (2011). *Designing and analyzing language tests*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Clarke, S, Timperley, H., & Hattie, J. (2003). *Unlocking formative assessment: Practical strategies for enhancing students’ learning in the primary and intermediate classroom.* Auckland: Hodder Moa Beckett.

Coombe, C., Davidson, P., O’Sullivan, B., & Stoynoff, S. (Eds.) (2012). *The Cambridge guide to second language assessment*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Davies, A., Brown, A., Elder, C., Hill, K., Lumley, T., & McNamara, T. (1999). *Dictionary of language testing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Douglas, D. (2010). *Understanding language testing*. London: Hodder Education.

Fulcher, G. (2003). *Testing second language speaking.* Harlow: Longman.

Fulcher, G. (2010). *Practical language testing*. London: Hodder Education.

Fulcher, G., & Davidson, F. (2007). *Language testing and assessment: An advanced resource book*. London: Routledge.

Fulcher, G., & Davidson, F. (Eds.) (2012). *The Routledge handbook of language testing*. London: Routledge.

Green, A. (2014). *Exploring language assessment and testing: Language in action*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Green, R. (2013). *Statistical analyses for language testers*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hughes, A. (2003). *Testing for language teachers* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kunnan, A.J. (Ed.). (2013). *A companion to language assessment* (4 vols.). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. [E-book]

McNamara, T., & Roever, C. (2006). *Language testing: The social dimension*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

O’Malley, J.M. & Valdez-Pierce, L. (1996). *Authentic assessment for English language learners: Practical approaches for teachers*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Read, J. (2015). *Assessing English for proficiency for university study*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Shohamy, E., & Hornberger, N.H. (Eds.) (2008). *Language testing and assessment*. *Encyclopedia of language and education* Vol 7, (2nd ed). New York: Springer. [E-book]

Stoynoff, S., & Chapelle, C. (2005). *ESOL tests and testing: A resource for teachers and administrators*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

Weir, C. (2005). *Language testing and validation: An evidence-based approach*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. [E-book]

Plus the volumes in the Cambridge Language Assessment series from Cambridge University Press:

Alderson, J.C. (2000). *Assessing reading*.

Bachman, L.F. (2004). *Statistical analyses for language assessment*.

Buck, G. (2001). *Assessing listening*.

Chapelle, C.A., & Douglas, D. (2006). *Assessing language through computer technology.*

Douglas, D. (2000). *Assessing languages for specific purposes*.

Luoma, S. (2003). *Assessing speaking*.

McKay, P. (2006). *Assessing young language learners*.

Purpura, J.E. (2004). *Assessing grammar*.

Read, J. (2000). *Assessing vocabulary*.

Weigle, S.C. (2002). *Assessing writing*.

**Journals**

The three specialist journals are *Language Testing*, *Language Assessment Quarterly* and *Assessing Writing*, all available electronically through the Library website. Other journals that regularly publish articles on language testing and assessment include *Applied Linguistics, ELT Journal, English for Specific Purposes, Language Learning, Modern Language Journal*, *TESOL Quarterly* and *System*.

**Website**

Language Testing Resources, <http://languagetesting.info> , has several valuable features:

* Videos featuring leading language testers talking about a range of testing topics
* Links to a wide range of other sites related to testing and assessment worldwide.
* Links to articles and papers published in full text form on the Web.
* Current news items on testing and assessment issues.

### COURSE ASSESSMENT

**Assignment 1** (30%)

**Due Monday 18 September**

Length guideline: about 2000 words

Write a *concise* review of an existing test. The review should include an analytical description of the test and an evaluation of how good it is for its intended purpose. It should be a test that you can obtain adequate information about, from sources such as a test manual, user handbook, research report, your own involvement in the testing programme and/or an interview with someone else with direct involvement. (It is not sufficient to base the review simply on a sample test paper.) The main options to choose from are:

* a major international proficiency test, such as TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC, MELAB or one of the Cambridge Main Suite Exams (FCE, CAE, CPE, etc)
* a published test such as the Oxford Placement Test or the Quick Placement Test
* a test administered on a reasonably large scale by a university, school or other institution (not one for a particular class or course).

If you choose one of the large-scale tests, you should focus on just one component, eg IELTS Reading, the TOEFL writing test, FCE listening.

Here are some points to include (don’t try to cover all of them – be selective):

## Background Information

The purpose of the test (for what kinds of decisions?)

The educational and/or social context

## Test Design and Procedures

The content and format of each part of the test

(types of text, items, tasks)

The scoring or rating procedures

The adequacy of the information about the test available to teachers and learners

## The Quality of the Test

Validity

The suitability of the test for its intended purpose(s)

The relevance of the test to language teaching objectives

Reliability

What evidence there is that the test produces consistent, dependable results

(if subjective judgements are involved, how well trained are the raters/markers?)

Practicality

Whether the test can be administered and scored adequately, given the resources available

* Do not just describe the test; add as many analytical and evaluative comments as you can.

**Assignment 2 (50%)**

**Due Thursday 2 November**

Length guideline: about 3000 words

This involves the design and development of a test or assessment for a specified purpose, preferably for a group of learners you are working with or are familiar with. If you are able to arrange it, the work for the assignment can include the trialling of at least some of the test material with a suitable group of learners, plus an analysis of the results. However, this is not a requirement for the assignment.

**Note:** If you do conduct a trial of the test, this is considered a research activity by the University and it must use documents and procedures approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee for this purpose. Before setting up a trial, you must contact John first to get the relevant information and documentation, as well as their approval for what you propose to do.

The written assignment will include:

1. Introduction:  relevant background information about the educational context, the test-takers and the purpose of the assessment
2. Rationale for the test: a discussion of the decisions you made about how to design the test, what items/tasks to use and how the test will be administered
3. Test specifications: a summary of key features of the test
4. The test
5. The results of any review or trial of the test, including revisions
6. Conclusion: a discussion of how you might further develop, implement and validate the test
7. References: a list of sources you have referred to in the assignment

**In Course Contributions (20%)**

**To be completed by Friday 27 October**

It is important for you to participate in discussion related to the various course topics through the chat sessions and also the Discussion Forum, in order to show that you have mastered the course material and can apply it to your own situation. Therefore, this part of your final grade will be based on the contributions that you make to the Discussion Forums during the semester. You should make a minimum of 10 posts to the forums. I will be monitoring your input to discussions weekly throughout the semester and you will be assigned a mark out of 20 based on a review of the number and quality of your contributions overall. Please note that your contributions to the forums are part of an ongoing discussion and you will need to post your response before the end of the week in which each topic is 'taught'. Retrospective postings will not normally count towards your participation grade. If you find yourself unable to make a contribution, due to circumstances beyond your control, please contact John.

**SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

You should submit the assignments electronically to Canvas by midnight on the due date.

If you may need an extension because of serious personal circumstances, you must contact Rosemary before the due date to explain your situation and get explicit permission to submit the assignment at a later date. A marks penalty may apply if you send the assignment late without negotiating an extension. See the document CLL Assignments Policy: Extensions, Deadlines and Penalties, available in the Files section of the LT742 page on Canvas.

**Presentation**

In preparing the text of your assignment, use 11- or 12-point font, and 1.5 or double line spacing. Submit the text as a Word file, rather than in pdf.

You should follow a consistent style for citations and references in your assignment. The recommended one is the APA style, which you can find in summary form on this Library webpage: <http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz/index.php?p=quickcite&style=1> ..

For help with referencing and avoiding plagiarism, you can access the university’s Referen©ite at [www.cite.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz) . This provides students with a one-stop online resource for academic referencing needs. Referen©ite includes practical tools to help students reference correctly, use references effectively in writing, and gives fast access to some major reference formats with examples.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Plagiarism**

The University of Auckland will not tolerate cheating, or assisting others to cheat, and views cheating in coursework as a serious academic offence. The work that a student submits for grading must be the student's own work, reflecting his or her learning. Where work from other sources is used, it must be properly acknowledged and referenced. This requirement also applies to sources on the world-wide web. A student's assessed work may be reviewed against electronic source material using computerised detection mechanisms. Upon reasonable request, students may be required to provide an electronic version of their work for computerised review.

Students may not translate work from another source without proper acknowledgment and referencing. The use of translation machines to translate and copy texts into the target language of an assignment constitutes academic dishonesty.

The penalties for plagiarism are severe and can range from gaining no marks for the assignment to disciplinary action under the terms of the Examination Regulations.

For further information and advice on University regulations and how to reference appropriately, see:

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/teaching-learning/academic-integrity/tl-about-academic-integrity.html> .

This webpage provides links and information about various aspects of academic integrity: sources of information and advice (e.g. Referen©ite) as well as University regulations (the Student Academic Conduct Statute), and Turnitin.

All students entering the University are required to complete the Academic Integrity Module.

**Use of Information and Communications Technology (eg Class Facebook Pages)**

If students in any course wish to set up a Facebook page for the course or to use any other form of ICT, they need to be aware that the University of Auckland Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Statute sets out rules governing use of any ICT hardware or software at or for University activities. It forbids using ICT “to store, display or communicate… files containing any text, image that is deceptive or misleading, is abusive or defamatory, contravenes anyone’s privacy… or that reproduces all or part of any work in breach of the Copyright Act 1994”. The Statute refers students to the relevant University Disciplinary Statute and the penalties that may apply. It can be found at: <https://policies.auckland.ac.nz/student-undergraduate.aspx>