DEVELOPING QUALITY FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT IN A HE CONTEXT: REALITY, CHALLENGES, AMBITIONS

Dr Chiara Cirillo and Mrs Daniela Standen, University of Reading
UK ALTA – Language Testing forum
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CONTEXT – THE IWLP @ READING

- 11 languages (CEFR A1-B2)
- Communicative competence
- 4 skills
- High stakes assessments
- 74 exam papers every year
- 1,000 students
THE WIDER CONTEXT
**DRIVERS**

- Practicability
- Fairness
- Consistency
CHALLENGES

Standardisation of 10 languages (Nunan 2014)

CEFR based

University marking system

‘Testing is more than a technical activity, it is also an ethical enterprise’
(Fulcher & Davison 2007: xix)

Arabic
BSL
French,
German
Italian
Japanese
Mandarin Chinese
Modern Greek
Russian
Spanish

LIMITLESS POTENTIAL | LIMITLESS OPPORTUNITIES | LIMITLESS IMPACT
CHALLENGES (2)

1) Lack of time
2) Little value
3) Amount of contextual change
4) Lack of knowledge
DEVELOPING COMPETENCE

Four stages for Learning Model: Noel Burch (GTI), 1970

https://mindwerx.com/four-stages-learning-enough-make-innovation-happen/
DEVELOPING COMPETENCE (2)

- **Learning**
  - Testing and Teaching Fluency
    - Colin Campbell, Joan McCormack and Parvaneh Tavakoli
  - Testing and Teaching Listening—Jane Ward
  - Testing Reading—John Slaght
  - ISLI Assessment SIG

- **Assessment Manual**
  - From Oral Tradition to a Written Constitution
  - Harmonisation
  - Good practice

LIMITLESS POTENTIAL | LIMITLESS OPPORTUNITIES | LIMITLESS IMPACT
NEEDS ANALYSIS

Lack of alignment with CEFR and Module descriptions

Learning Outcomes repeatedly tested

All 4 skills tested

Feedback

Lack of test specifications

No test analysis

Tests being reinvented every year

Fairness

Consistency

Practicability
PROGRESS - HARMONISING

Foundation Test Results 2014

- Arabic
- Chinese
- French
- German
- Italian
- Japanese
- Russian
- Spanish
PROGRESS SO FAR - CHANGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 assessment points with defined criteria</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>10% (1/3 reading, 2/3 language knowledge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>40% (Writing 63%, reading 37%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Overall:
- Language knowledge: 10%
- Listening: 21%
- Reading: 20%
- Speaking: 24%
- Writing: 25%
GOING BEYOND

Write a reply to the five text messages below max 20 words per text:

Ho saputo che è nato tuo nipote. Congratulazioni! Come sta la mamma?

Come è andato il colloquio? Hai avuto il lavoro??

Read the forum post below and write a reply, based on one of the adverts in Reading D. Ensure your answer covers all questions, justify your answer and describe your experience in sufficient detail. Write 150 words in ITALIAN.

Ciao ragazzi, sono norvegese ma ho una nonna italiana. Quest’estate vorrei migliorare il mio italiano e studiare in Italia. Qualcuno ha una buona esperienza e può darmi un consiglio? E meglio una scuola piccola o una grande? In una grande città o in un piccolo centro? Quanto tempo siete stati? Avete avuto qualche problema? Raccontatemi della vostra esperienza e, se è possibile, ditemi dove andare.

Susa88

You have recently been to Café Royal in Rome and want to leave a review on a website called www.lenottodiroma.it

You have been provided with an INFORMATION SHEET containing the details of the restaurant in Rome. You must use the information provided in the INFORMATION SHEET to:

1) Complete the form below
2) Write a review about your experience at the restaurant (100 words).

FORM

IL RISTORANTE:

Che tipo di ristorante è? (tick 2)

- Rustico
- Semplice
- Etnico

- Caro
- Semplice
- Economico

Offerta valida per tutto le stagioni.

- Sì
- No
- Non lo so

Alcolici compresi nei menu fissa.

- Sì
- No
- Non lo so

Il ristorante offre uno sconto studenti.

- Sì
- No
- Non lo so

Parcheggio gratuito

- Sì
- No
- Non lo so

Locale centrale

- Sì
- No
- Non lo so

Party bus da prenotare in anticipo

- Sì
- No
- Non lo so
AMBIITIONS

Want to do:
- Specifications
- Marking criteria
- Administration
- Evaluation
- Literacy

Can do:
- Immediate gains
- Champions
- Policies
- Relevant literacy
- Links with broader sector
QUESTIONS UNANSWERED

Should we specialise and create a testing team?

How can we mobilise more resources?

Are our priorities the right ones?
REFERENCES


IATAFL TEASIG (n.d.). Building Practical Assessment Skills for Teachers (online) Available at: https://tea.iatefl.org/recent-teasig-events/ [Accessed 21 November 2017]

REFERENCES 2


