

UKALTA-sponsored Online Symposium on “Learner-Centred Approaches to Language Assessment”

This online event followed a call for chapter proposals for an edited volume on “Learner-Centred Approaches to Language Assessment”. The volume was being edited by Dr Sin Wang Chong (Queen’s University Belfast) and Prof Hayo Reinders (Anaheim University) and appears in the New Language Learning and Teaching Environments series published by Palgrave Macmillan.

The two-day online symposium was held on 21 (Thurs) and 22 (Fri) October 2021 via Microsoft Teams. The event aimed to disseminate and evaluate learner-centred language assessment practices in the UK. The symposium focused on innovative (e.g., the use of technologies) and current (e.g., COVID-proof) language assessment practices which take place inside and outside the classroom. Invited presentations were underpinned by the following learner-centred notions in language assessment: assessment for learning, assessment as learning, learning-oriented assessment, alternative assessment, dynamic assessment, technology-mediated assessment, teacher/learner assessment literacy, teacher/learner feedback literacy, and learning beyond the classroom. A learner-centred approach to language assessment can be conceptualised as both a *process* and a *product*, so presentations in this symposium underscored not only the outcome of the assessment but also the process of developing the assessment and/or evaluating the assessment (e.g., using innovative research methods).

The two-day event included: two keynote presentations by leading scholars in the fields of educational assessment (Prof. David Carless, University of Hong Kong) and language assessment (Prof. Antony Kunnan, Duolingo Inc.); 12 invited presentations by language assessment researchers and professionals internationally; and two roundtables to enable critical and reflective dialogues among presenters and the audience.

The list of topics covered in the symposium included:

- Assessment feedback
- Formative language assessment
- Learner-centred assessment
- Dynamic assessment
- Self-assessment
- Online/technology-mediated language assessment
- Assessment literacy
- Scenario-based language assessment

In total, 49 people registered for the event including: 19 Standard Professional Registration, 17 Standard Student Registration, and 13 UKALTA Member Registration. Recordings of all the sessions were made available to the registered participants.

Income from registration fees fully covered the cost of the 2 keynote speakers and also allowed a surplus of £395 to be transferred to UKALTA funds.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Prof. Lynda Taylor and her UKALTA team, my QUB colleague Ms. Eileen Gray, and my research assistant, Dr. Hui Ma, for their wonderful administrative support.

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