

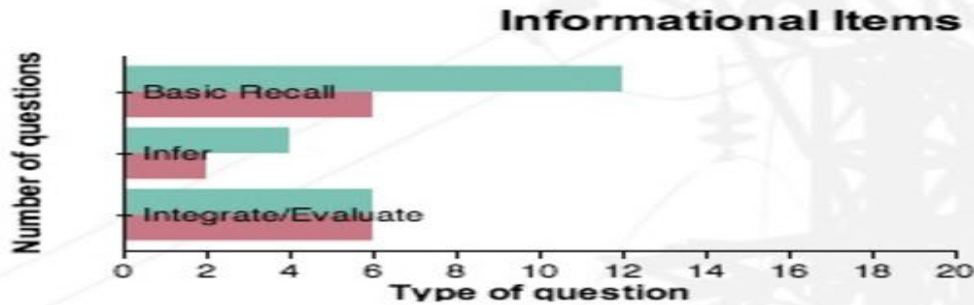
***Enhancing teacher assessment
literacy in English language
education: A closer look at TEAL***

Chris Davison,
University of New South Wales, Australia

- This workshop first presents some key concepts underpinning teacher assessment literacy and the development of an assessment *for* learning culture, then focuses on a case study of the Tools to Enhance Assessment Literacy for Teachers of English as an Additional Language (TEAL) project, <http://teal.global2.vic.edu.au/>.
- The workshop concludes with an exploration of some of the practical ways the TEAL resources can support the development of teacher assessment literacy in English language education.

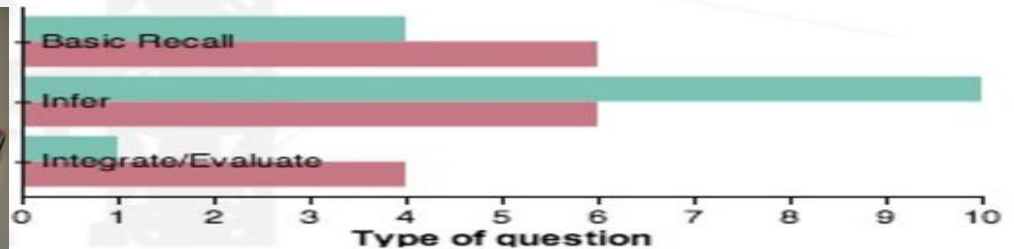
- When you think of assessment literacy, do you think of this ?

NAPLAN VS. PIRLS



On informational items...NAPLAN asks more basic recall questions

Fiction Items



PIRLS

59 countries


2 stories, ~ 800 words

Fiction text below grade level

Non-fiction above grade level in Year 5

- Or this?

Consider



▶ Research suggests that teachers spend from **one-quarter to one-third** of their professional time on assessment-related activities.

▶ **Almost all** do so without the benefit of having learned the principles of sound assessment.

Eddy White, PhD (May, 2012) (Stiggins, 2007) 5

“Assessment literacy is the possession of knowledge about the basic principles of **sound** assessment practice, including its terminology, the development and use of assessment methodologies and techniques, and familiarity with standards of quality in assessment.”

<http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Assessment-in-the-classroom/Assessment-for-learning-in-practice/Assessment-literacy>

Or this?



Reading Level Assessment Summary

Student: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____
 Purpose of Assessment: _____ Recorder: _____

[See item numbers below for details]

| | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | |
|---------------|-------|-------|----------|---------------|---------|-----|
| | Level | % Acc | s/c Rate | Comprehension | Fluency | WPM |
| Independent | | | | | | |
| Instructional | | | | | | |
| Frustrational | | | | | | |

1 & 2) Accuracy

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Select problem solves words using <input type="checkbox"/> pictures <input type="checkbox"/> beginning letters/sounds <input type="checkbox"/> letter-sound clusters <input type="checkbox"/> blending letters/sounds <input type="checkbox"/> onset and rime <input type="checkbox"/> knowledge of spelling patterns (strategies) <input type="checkbox"/> syllables <input type="checkbox"/> rereading <input type="checkbox"/> no observable behaviors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words identified with assistance <input type="checkbox"/> none <input type="checkbox"/> at times <input type="checkbox"/> often <p>Words included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> omissions <input type="checkbox"/> insertions <input type="checkbox"/> substitutions that were <input type="checkbox"/> visually similar <input type="checkbox"/> not visually similar |
|---|---|

Background

Why is assessment literacy the “new” holy grail?

ASSESSMENT LITERACY: A BONA FIDE “MAGIC BULLET” FOR EDUCATION

W. James Popham
University of California, Los Angeles

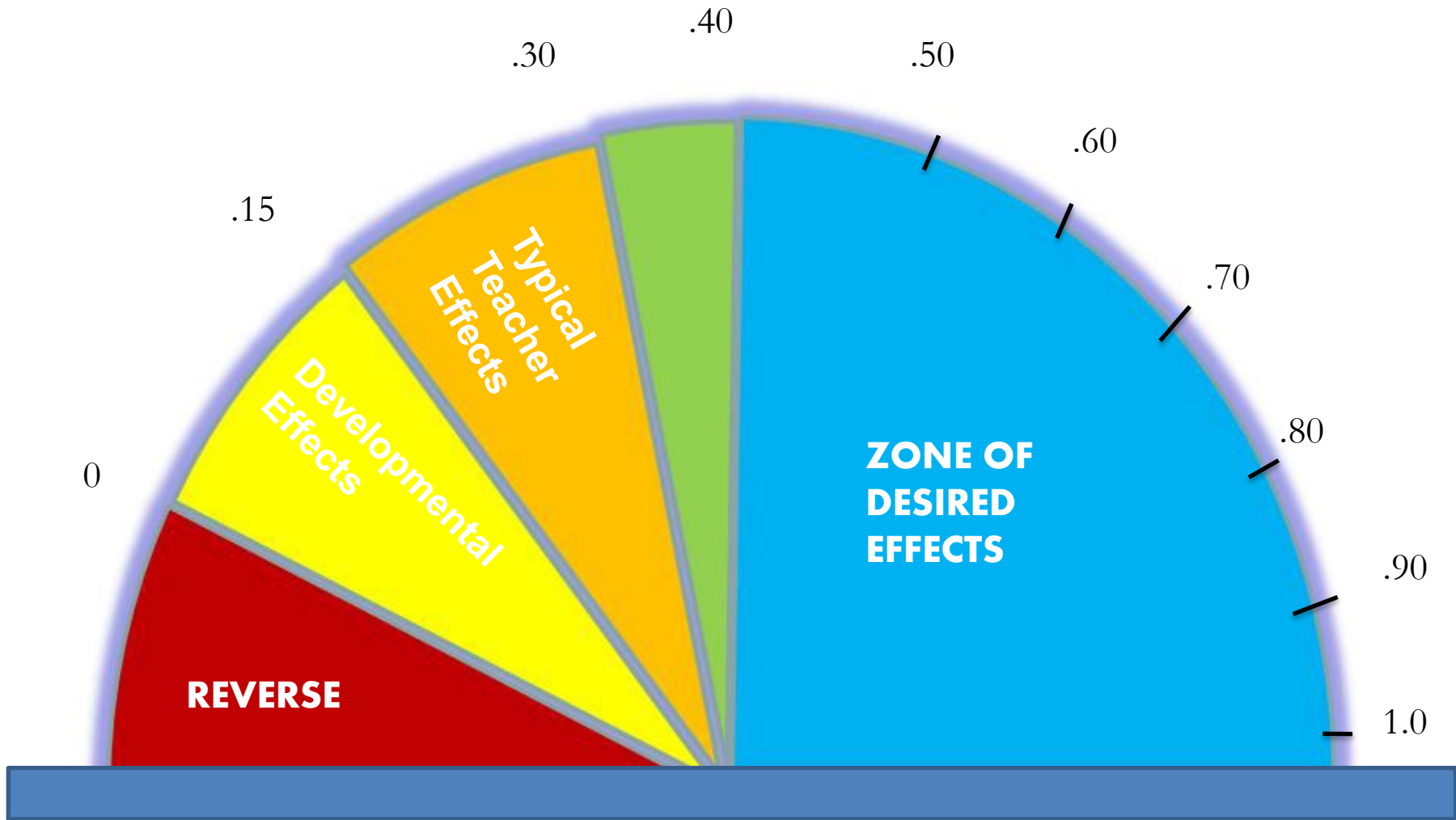
California Educational Research
Association 88th Annual Conference
San Francisco
November 18-19, 2009

- At the intersection of two major ideological and educational fallacies:
 - *If you measure it, it will improve.*
 - *If you improve it, it will be measured.*

However, much research evidence suggests assessment **is** a key to improvement in learning ...

- Black & Wiliam (1998) convincingly demonstrated the learning gains that can be achieved through well focused teacher-based formative assessment enhance students' learning more than any other strategy across age levels and in different contexts.
- Hattie (2009) in a study of major influences on educational achievement (using 800+ meta-analyses) found that formative practice, in particular self–assessment and feedback, had the highest effect sizes (i.e., impact on student outcomes) out of more than 100 different instructional and contextual factors.

Influences on student achievement (Hattie, 2009)

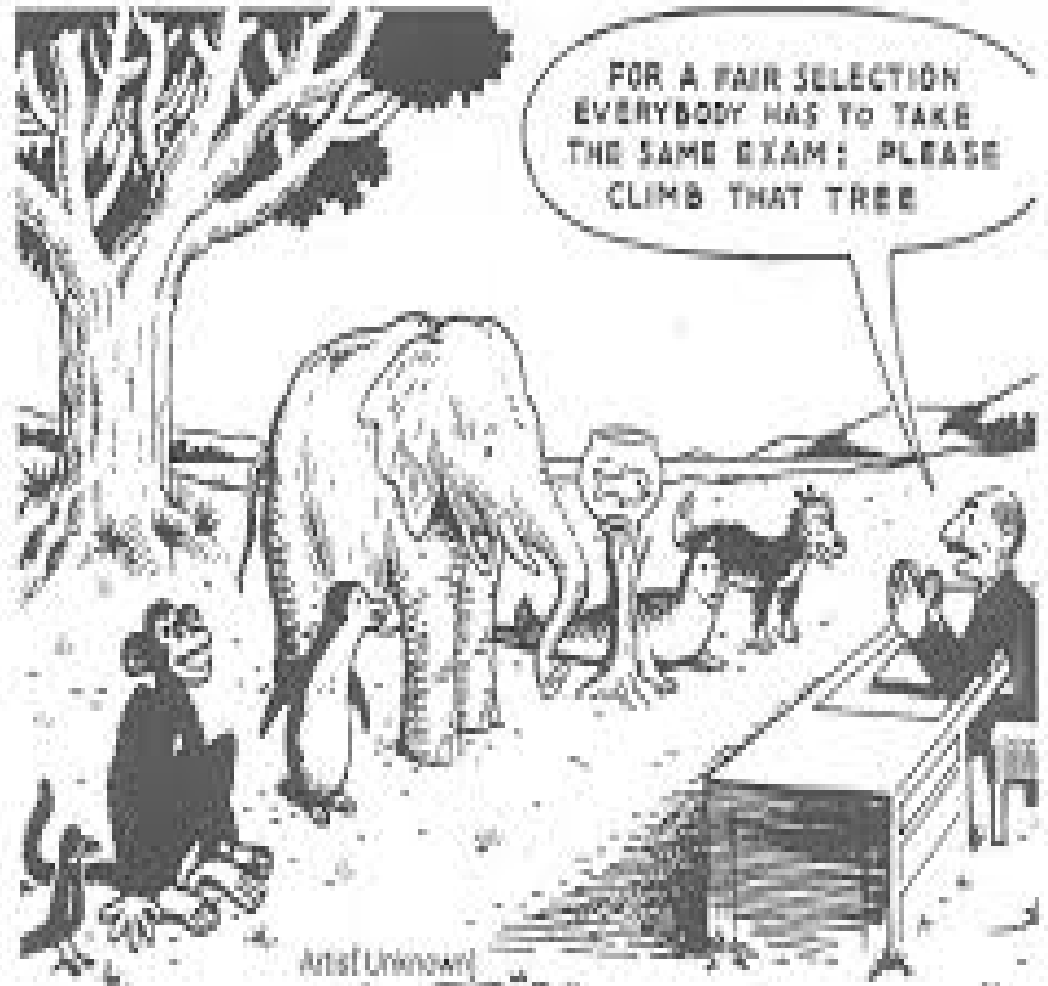


| Role of assessment? | Effect Size |
|--|--------------------|
| Self-reporting/self-assessment | 1.44 |
| Reciprocal teaching | .74 |
| Feedback | .72 |
| Providing formative evaluation to teachers | .70 |
| Teaching student self-verbalization/meta-cognitive strategies | .67 |
| Teaching test taking skills | .22 |

This raises the question of what kind of “assessment” we want teachers to be literate in ?

- Researchers do not agree on how assessment literacy should be defined (Walters, 2010) nor what it might comprise (Fulcher, 2012, p. 115). Although [many](#) have attempted to define this construct (Fulcher, 2012; Malone, 2011; Popham, 2009), no existing definitions suit the Australian school context, with teacher-based assessment accounting for most evaluation that takes place.
- The EAL field, dominated by large-scale tests, lags far behind general education in exploring assessment literacy, with little agreement on what it means, and an over-reliance on outdated research, eg. Coombes, Troudi & El Hamly (2012) cite Hong Kong research published in 1995.

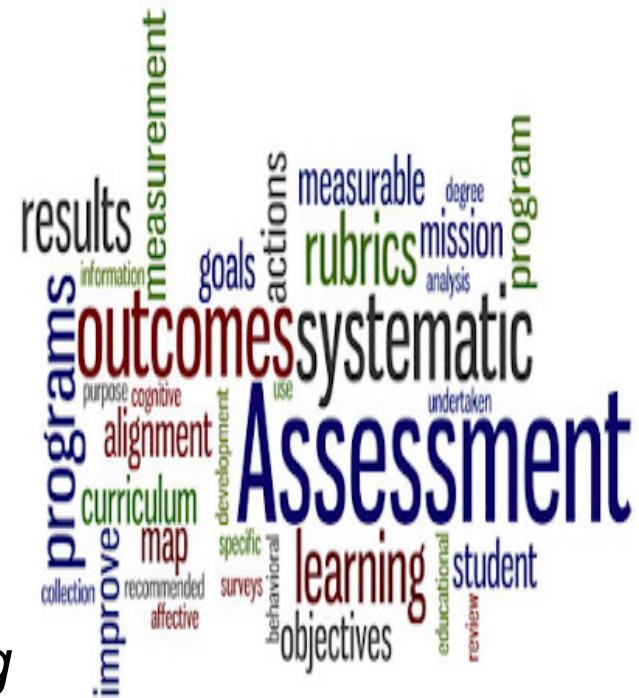
Stiggins (1991) argues that the problem is that the meaning of “assessment literacy” varies due to “the needs of the decision maker and the practical realities of the decision context” (p.537).



In terms of its assessment demands and practices, Australia is different from many other assessment contexts, see

http://www.cese.nsw.gov.au/images/stories/PDF/Re-assessing_Assessment_v6.pdf

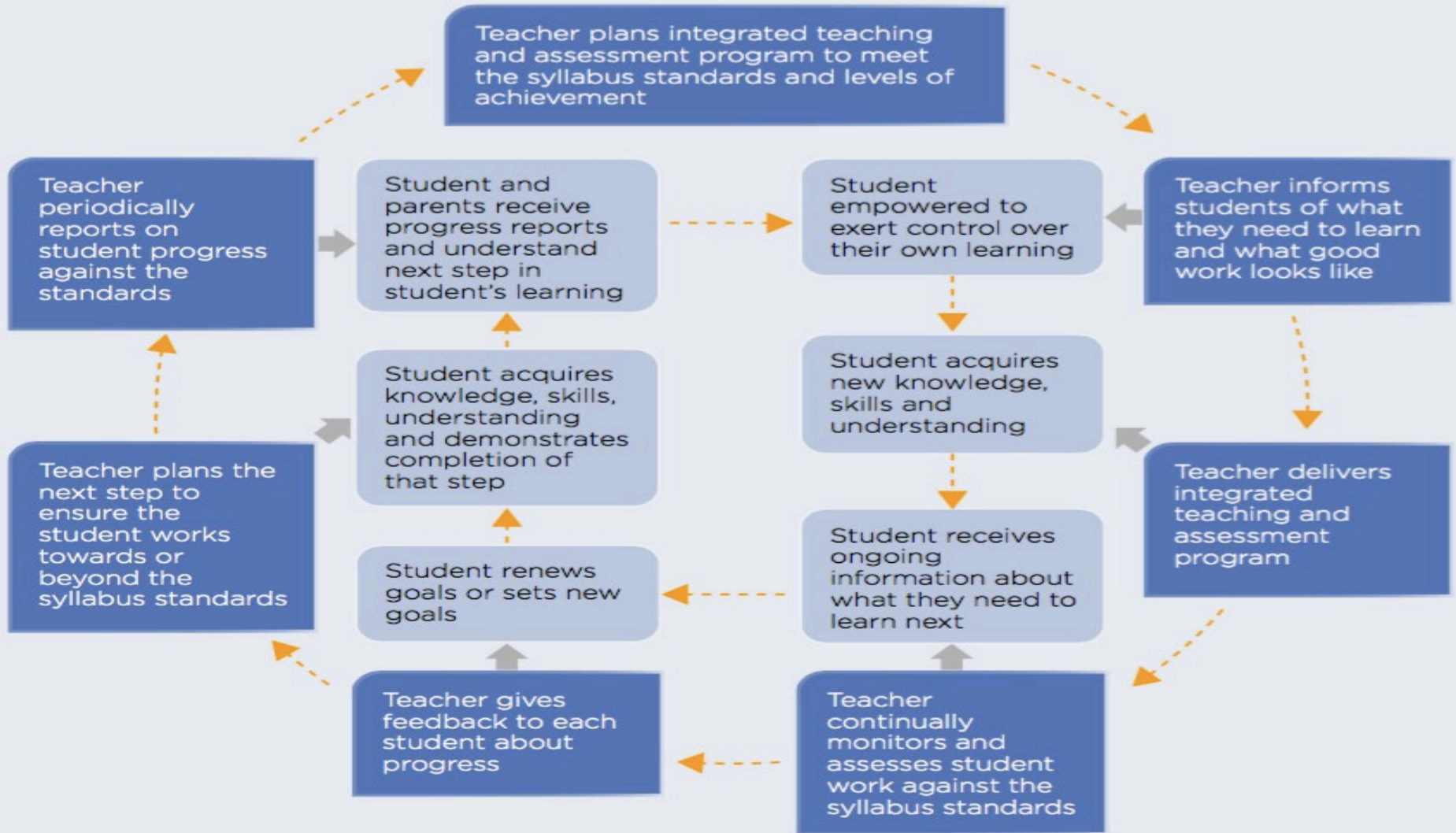
“Australia tends to sit in the middle when comparisons are made between it and other countries (with) an assessment system which is balanced between classroom level assessment and standardised assessment, with a reasonably strong focus on classroom assessment ...”



- However, critical to note that assessment is not only important for teachers, but also students, as both reap the benefits of assessment to improve learning. Thus, assessment should not be teachers' "secret business" as Sadler (1998) so eloquently puts it:

"We need to let students into the secret, allowing them to become insiders of the assessment process. We need to make provision for them to become members of the guild of people who can make consistently sound judgments and know why those judgments are justifiable" (p. 7)

Implementation Process



Source: Learning Assessment: A report on teaching assessment in initial teacher education in NSW, Board of Studies NSW 2016, p.19.

BUT NOTE ...

“It may be assumed that the teacher's responsibility for making best use of assessment to improve student learning is fully discharged by providing extensive verbal communications relating to assessment task specifications (and possibly fixed assessment criteria); information about the quality of an appraised work; and advice about how future responses to similar assessment tasks could be improved ...feedforward and feedback respectively. However, empirical evidence shows that while these communications may be appreciated by students, they often lead to little if any improvement in subsequent submissions...

The problem lies less with the quality of feedback than with the fundamental assumption that telling, even detailed telling, is an effective approach to complex learning ...A proposed alternative to the usual sequence of [task – response – appraisal – feedback] is to make intensive use of purposeful (self and) peer assessment as a pedagogical strategy, not just for assessment but for substantive aspects of the course as well”

Sadler, R (2010), Beyond feedback: developing student capability in complex appraisal. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 5 , 35: 535-550. doi:10.1080/02602930903541015

eg. The formative classroom, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rL54bfmZPzY>;
What students want (Assessment for Learning)

Assessment *for* learning:

- *emphasises the interactions between learning and manageable assessment strategies that promote learning*
- *clearly expresses for the student and teacher the goals of the learning activity*
- *reflects a view of learning in which assessment helps students learn better, not just achieve a better mark*
- *provides ways for students to use feedback from assessment*
- *helps students take responsibility for their own learning*
- *is inclusive of all learners*

<http://arc.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/7-8/assessment-for-learning-in-years-7-10/>

School of Education



What about EALD learners?

- As we know, Australia also has an increasing numbers of EALD students, with about 30+% of all students in schools now requiring systematic and regular English language support, hence all teachers of EALD students also need access to appropriate and useful assessment tools and advice to enhance assessment literacy in order to support learning and teaching.
- At the same time, a growing emphasis on benchmarking all student performance against standardized assessment outcomes has created particular difficulties for teachers working with learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as has supporting teacher-assessors with variable levels of language knowledge and assessment literacy.

- However, the main focus of EAL assessment policy in Australia has always been on developing more accurate, consistent and transparent descriptions of EAL development to improve **reporting** systems, especially definitions of the target groups for funding purposes, eg.
 - the EAL Continuum,
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/eal/continuum/Pages/default.aspx>)
 - the EAL/D Learning Progression,
http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/EALD_Resource_-_EALD_Learning_Progression.pdf.
 - And now, the EALD “measure“!
- Comparatively little attention to the development of assessment *for* learning tools and student and teacher assessment literacy

TEAL started with research into what EAL teachers already did and what they wanted (Davison & Michell, 2014)

- An examination of teacher-based practice in assessment (including relevant aspects of existing ESL/EAL assessment practices) in Victoria and NSW
- 30+ experienced EAL specialist teachers from all three systems and levels of schooling examined the suitability of a selected range of assessment tools for their teaching context, and discussed what they wanted/needed for effective assessment of EAL development

Davison, C & Michell, M. (2014). EAL assessment: What do Australian teachers want?', *TESOL in Context*, 24 (2), 51-72

Findings:

- In the absence of systematic **standardised** approaches to EAL assessment, EAL teachers' development and /or use of classroom- or school-based ESL assessments, was found to be limited, localised and ad hoc, and often not valued or recognised as “assessment”.
- Teachers' knowledge about assessment was mainly informal, and professional learning tended to be confined to informal trial-and-error implementation of classroom assessment strategies.
- Thus, clear need for more teacher assessment literacy, but also more effective standardised assessment instruments that could be tailored for the teacher's context, and stronger (online) assessment learning communities

“To have a reliable assessment tool, that we can actually use to assess the child and provide you with that information, I think, that is something that we definitely need, and is lacking. And for me, as an ESL teacher... I’m really longing for something like that to be around because it’s otherwise a bit of a guessing game ... and, I think, you know, we’re not, we’re not really supported by data, as yet.” (110505_1315 22.02-23.28)

*“I teach grade 1/2, ... and some of my children got 100%, so that the test wasn’t any good for them, but some of them couldn’t get any right answers and they’re all in the same grade, so if I were just to give them that test, it’s not going to give me any information. **I already know who might ... which children will do well and which wouldn’t. I need more information than that.** (110505_1130 36.49-37.16)*

*“(It) would be valuable to have some consistent approaches **so we have common tasks when we’re assessing, particularly in terms of transitions** when students leave our language school and they go to a mainstream school, or to an independent school, um, we have, yeah, a clear sense of where they’ve come from and the language that’s been used by the teacher in assessing them, reporting their progress.” (01.01.19-01.01.40)*

Six agreed common criteria:

- 1. Assessment tools and processes should be culturally accessible*
- 2. Assessment tools and processes should provide useful information that informs ESL teaching*
- 3. Assessment tools and processes should support ESL teacher decision-making and control*
- 4. Assessment tools and processes should be easy to understand and administer*
- 5. Assessments tools and processes should meet the unique needs of ESL learners*
- 6. Assessment tools and processes should form the basis of an ESL community of practice*

EAL teacher self-perceptions of assessment literacy (Alonzo & Davison, 2014)

| Indicators | Mean Max = 5 |
|--|-----------------|
| Conducts assessment with consideration of student background and culture | 4.36 |
| Participates in professional development related to assessment | 4.36 |
| Demonstrates belief in the ability of every student to improve | 4.14 |
| Identifies appropriate teaching methods | 3.94 |
| Maintains confidentiality in dealing with assessment results (norm referencing, inappropriate disclosure of assessment results and ranking students) | 3.93 |
| Develops an environment of trust | 3.93 |
| Undertakes further education/ training in assessment | 3.93 |
| Tailors lessons to available resources | 3.88 |
| Uses assessment to build students' interest to learn | 3.86 |
| Reinforces positive learning attitude of students | 3.79 |

| Indicators | Mean |
|---|------|
| Gathers a range of evidence of student learning | 2.36 |
| Designs English language assessment tasks | 2.45 |
| Engages students in peer-assessment | 2.45 |
| Engages in self- assessment/ reflection | 2.68 |
| Involves students in the development of learning outcomes | 2.87 |
| Gives feedback related to criteria | 2.87 |
| Assists students in using feedback to feed forward | 2.98 |
| Collaborates with family to establish home activities to support students | 2.98 |
| Informs community of school's assessment practices | 3.12 |
| Develops appropriate English language assessment strategies | 3.33 |
| Moderates feedback and results of self and peer assessment | 3.33 |
| Engages in peer-review of teaching performance | 3.36 |
| Identifies key assessment and teaching issues for review | 3.36 |
| Involves students in the development of success criteria/ rubrics | 3.4 |
| Explains the success criteria/ rubrics | 3.4 |
| Engages students in self-assessment | 3.4 |

TEAL: Tools to Enhance Assessment Literacy for Teachers of EAL

- Drawing on Assessment for Learning (AfL) principles and Vygotskian theory, TEAL is an online assessment advice and 'toolkit', <http://teal.global2.vic.edu.au/>, for use by all Victorian school teachers to help assess the stage of development for EAL students in speaking and listening, reading and writing, to improve learning and teaching
- All tools are aligned against the *Victorian EAL Curriculum*, with potential for alignment to other standards by other jurisdictions.
- Developed by and trialled with 500+ teachers and 13,000 students; used by 40,000 teachers, up to 150,000 students

Hence, our definition of teacher assessment literacy ...

*“Teacher **assessment for learning (AfL)** literacy comprises the knowledge and skills in making highly contextualised, fair, consistent and trustworthy assessment decisions to inform learning and teaching to effectively support both student and teacher learning. Teachers aim to build students’ and other stakeholders’ capabilities and confidence to take an active role in assessment, learning and teaching activities to enable and provide the needed support for more effective learning”*

(Alonzo & Davison, 2015)



Tools for Enhancing Assessment Literacy for Teachers of English as an Additional Language

[Home](#) [Professional Learning](#) [Assessment Tools](#) [Annotated Units of Work](#) [Discussion Forum](#) [Contact Us](#)

Welcome to Tools to Enhance Assessment Literacy



The TEAL web project, launched in June, is an online resource for teachers of primary and secondary level children who are learning English as a second (ESL) or additional (EAL) language in Australia. It brings together a range of tools and advice for the assessment and reporting of the English language proficiency and progress of students.

For more information on the TEAL web project, its contents and its intended use, please follow the links below to read more. If you have any further questions or comments, don't hesitate to visit our

Teacher assessment reform as an activity system

Means/tools/ instruments

Contingent scaffolding (just-in-time support)

- prompts, questions
- modeling, demonstration
- synthesizing, integrating
- discursive pressure
- positioning

'Designed in' scaffolding

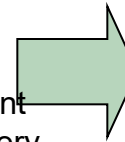
- mediating tools, texts
- meta-language
- procedural/conceptual/social

Agent

teachers,
leaders,
parents,
students

Object

Full assessment
reform & mastery
of task
operations



Outcome(s)

- learner and teacher independence and confidence
- transfer of skills to other (like ?) tasks
- Improvement in learning, teaching and assessment

Rules

- task ownership
- task challenge
- task completion
- success criteria

Community

- system
- institution
- classroom
- teacher networks

Division of labour

- expert/novice
- leader/led
- insider/outsider??

Key components:

An online teacher-mediated EAL assessment resource centre, including

1. Teacher professional learning resources

– self-directed activities re assessment principles & video and text-based resources to develop assessment literacy.

2. An assessment tools bank

– a range of assessment tools and tasks organised around macro-skills cross-referenced by text type, EAL stages, and year levels, including a computer-adaptive contextualized testing of reading and vocabulary (RVEAL), common assessment tools for assessing oral and writing language use, and strategies for evaluating students' L1 development

Log In

[Home](#) › [Assessment Tools](#) › [Common Oral Assessment Tool](#)

Common Oral Assessment Tool

Guiding Principles and Advice

1. [Preparing to Assess Students' Learning](#)
2. [Getting Students Ready for an Assessment](#)
3. [Choosing an Oral Assessment Task](#)
4. [Using the Assessment Criteria](#)
5. [Making Trustworthy Assessment Decisions](#)
6. [Aligning your Assessment with the EAL Continuum](#)
7. [Using the Assessment Data to Improve Learning](#)
8. [Glossary](#)

Assessment Tasks and Criteria

[Oral Assessment Tasks and Criteria](#)



Task 10 'The future me' Sample 4

The Future Me:

In ten year time I will be a book writer so that I could put some ideas on paper for every one to read. I will be going back to the Philippines so that I would be closer to my relatives and most of my friends. I would also live in an apartment with 2 rooms so that the other one will ^{be} come a library.

I would like to be a photographer if ~~writing~~ book isn't going well. ~~and so that if I could~~ put on display the different pictures that ~~in~~ inspire me. I would live in an apartment because I wouldn't live in a house alone and that is too big for me.

If I live I would keep in touch is Isabel because if I live I know that she would have a wonderful story to tell me and that they always think of great ideas. In the end I would still come and visit here in Melbourne, Australia.

^{no} In the future I would still like to go back in the Philippines but I would live in a place where I could work effectively according to the job I would choose. My hobby would either be baking so that I could help make food that would make everyone happy or a fashion designer so that I could design wonderful clothing.



3. Assessment for teaching and learning exemplars

– a selection of annotated units of work across a range of subject areas and year levels, including in the mainstream, showing assessment tasks with self-peer assessment and formative feedback embedded within a teaching/learning cycle.

4. An online teacher discussion forum

– a password-protected area for teachers to share problems, strategies and work samples and engage in moderation/benchmarking.

Supported by an extensive professional learning program

- 6 x 3-hour or 3 x 6 hour modules, 10 x 3 teachers, with a focus on
 - becoming familiar with TEAL, its rationale and aims, in particular, developing an understanding of the philosophy of assessment for learning, especially feedback and self/peer assessment
 - developing a clear understanding of the materials and assessment advice on the website and how to use them in assessment
 - having opportunities to interact with each other online and use the TEAL discussion forum for benchmarking and collaboration
- All sessions incorporate time for professional dialogue and for sharing of strategies to enable school-based implementation, plus action-oriented activities in the form of between session tasks, e.g. trialing and evaluating common oral and written assessment tasks, reading, reflections, etc.

- Participants provide extensive feedback on TEAL and the professional learning program which is used to continually improve both.
- Pre and post-assessments indicate significant improvement in assessment literacy, with typical comments including:
 - *As a school leader, TEAL is useful for leading other staff and delivering general EAL advice and PD. The site has some great resources for this*
 - *Strategies and awareness of assistance to EAL students will benefit the entire cohort of students by catering for all needs*
 - *The program has inspired me and helped me recognise the need to develop a whole school vision and implement less formal yet consistent and varied forms of assessment for our EAL learners*
 - *A wake up call about assessment for learning and not just data collection. I can do much better!*

Conclusions

- Unlike most assessment systems which are imposed on teachers, TEAL has been created with teachers based on a contextualised and detailed understanding of their needs.
- Thus, the TEAL model seen as an effective and sustainable resource for building teacher assessment literacy and professional learning in English language education, not just in Australia but internationally
- However, continual challenges to the integrity of the system (e.g., resisting separating tests from more teacher-mediated tools), maintaining balance between summative and formative feedback feed forward functions, ensuring sustainability through ongoing teacher development and use and ongoing adaptations required to align with system-level changes to curriculum and assessment.

Selected references

- Black, P., & William, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education*, 5(1), 7-74.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & McCloskey, L. (2008). Assessment for learning around the world: What would it mean to be internationally competitive? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 90(4), 263-272.
- Davison, C. (2013). Innovation in assessment: Common misconceptions and problems. In Hyland, K. & Wong, LLC. (Ed.), *Innovation and change in English language education*. Oxford: Routledge, 263 – 275
- Davison, C. & Leung, C. (2009). Current issues in English language teacher-based assessment. *TESOL Quarterly*, 43(3), 393-415
- Davison, C & Michell, M. (2014). EAL assessment: What do Australian teachers want?’, *TESOL in Context*, 24 (2), 51-72
- Department of Education (NSW). (2008) Assessment for Learning in the new Years 7-10. Syllabuses, <http://arc.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/sc/afl/>
- Department of Education and Early Childhood (DEECD) (n.d.). *The EAL Developmental Continuum P-10*. Melbourne, Victoria.
- Hattie, J. (2009). Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement. New York: Routledge.
- Popham, W. J. (2009). Assessment literacy for teachers: Faddish or fundamental? *Theory Into Practice*, 48(1), 4-11.
- William, D. (2001). An overview of the relationship between assessment and the curriculum. In D. Scott (Ed.), *Curriculum and assessment* (pp.165–181). Westport, CT: Ablex.