



Welcome!

New Directions in English Language Assessment Latin America Pre-Conference **Webinar #1**



Date:
Friday 28 August
2020



Time:
10:00 a.m. - 11.00 a.m.
(Colombia time GMT-5)

TOPIC 1

Professionalising English Language Assessment in Learning
Systems: what does this mean?



#NewDirectionsLatam

Topic	Speakers
Welcome and Introduction	Mina Patel Conference Chair
Conceptualising and problematising key terms - raising alarms with Q&A	Dr Beverly Baker University of Ottawa
Negotiating differences of understanding among stakeholders - the case of a reform project for university entrance examinations in Japan with Q&A	Dr Fumiyo Nakatsuhara University of Bedfordshire
Re-conceptualising LAL by identifying meaningful communication as a critical element within an integrated vision of validity with Q&A	Professor Barry O'Sullivan British Council
Group Conversation and Questions	Beverly Baker Fumiyo Nakatsuhara Barry O'Sullivan
New Directions Conference Annoucements	Mina Patel Conference Chair

Speaker 1:

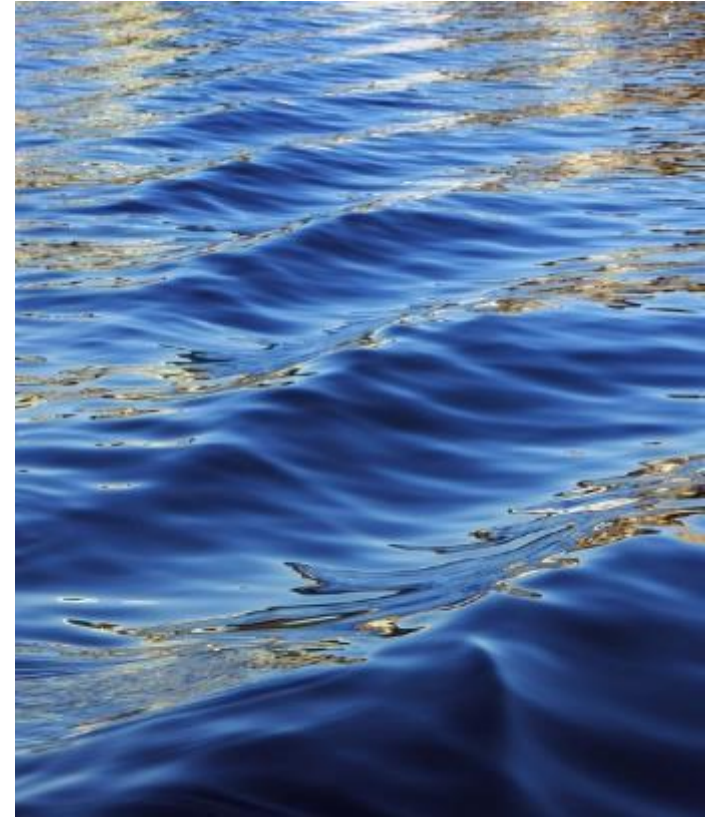
Dr Beverly Baker

Associate Professor and Director of Language Assessment at the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute at the University of Ottawa



Unpacking language assessment literacy for all key stakeholders
Beverly A. Baker, University of Ottawa
New Directions LATAM Webinar Series

Alarm 1: Issues with terminology



Language Assessment Literacy (LAL)

- Can be defined as a knowledge base, but also as competence in language assessment practices by **various professional groups**—e.g. developers, teachers, learners, or users of the results of assessment (Baker & Riches, 2018; Fulcher, 2012; Malone, 2013; Inbar-Lourie, 2008, 2013; Taylor, 2009, 2013)
- Can also be viewed as two types of knowledge :
 - 1) propositional/declarative knowledge (*i.e.*, discipline-based concepts/principles) and
 - 2) procedural knowledge (*i.e.*, technical/decision-making skills)
(Eraut, 2004; McKee & Eraut, 2012)

The danger of dichotomies

Literate ↔ Illiterate

Professional ↔ Unprofessional



Conceptions of literacy as an end state

- *Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.*

Unesco, 2018

- *What is assessment literacy? Why aren't educators already assessment literate? Why should educators **become** assessment literate? How can an educator **become** assessment literate?*

Popham, 2018

Conceptions of literacy as a developmental process instead : Indigenous education examples

- Nunavut Literacy Council: Literacy = “continuous recognition of the world around us”

(<https://ilitaqsiniq.ca/about>)

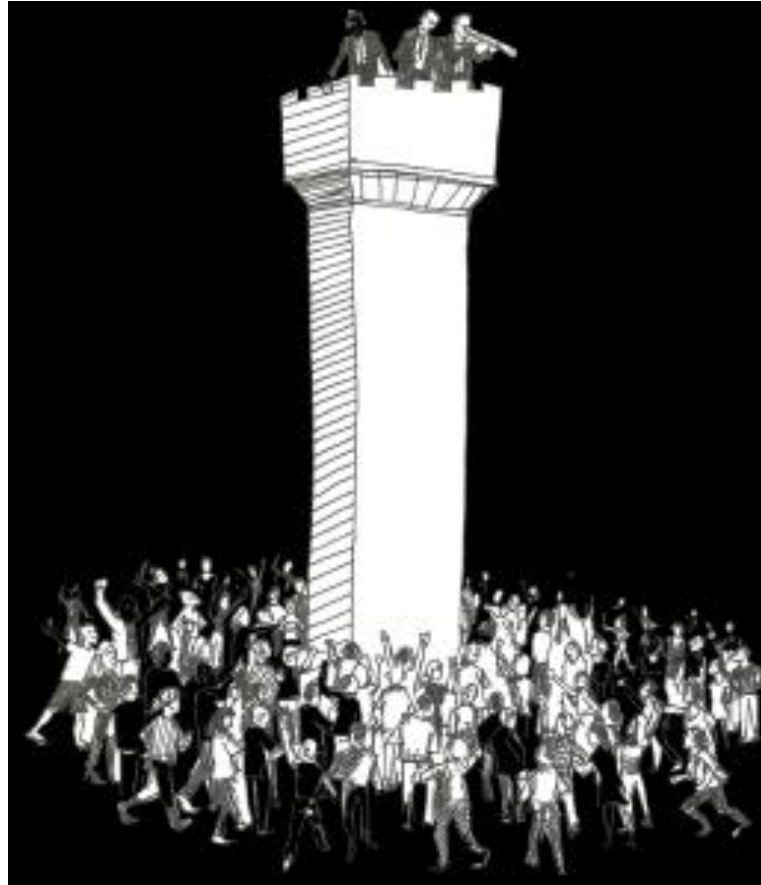
- NWT Literacy Council: “Literacy is the lifelong development of a broad range of skills with one of more of the NWT official languages...”

(<https://www.nwtliteracy.ca/index.php/literacy/nwt-literacy-facts>)

Alarm 2: Deficit
interpretations of non-
assessment specialists



Danger of deficit interpretations

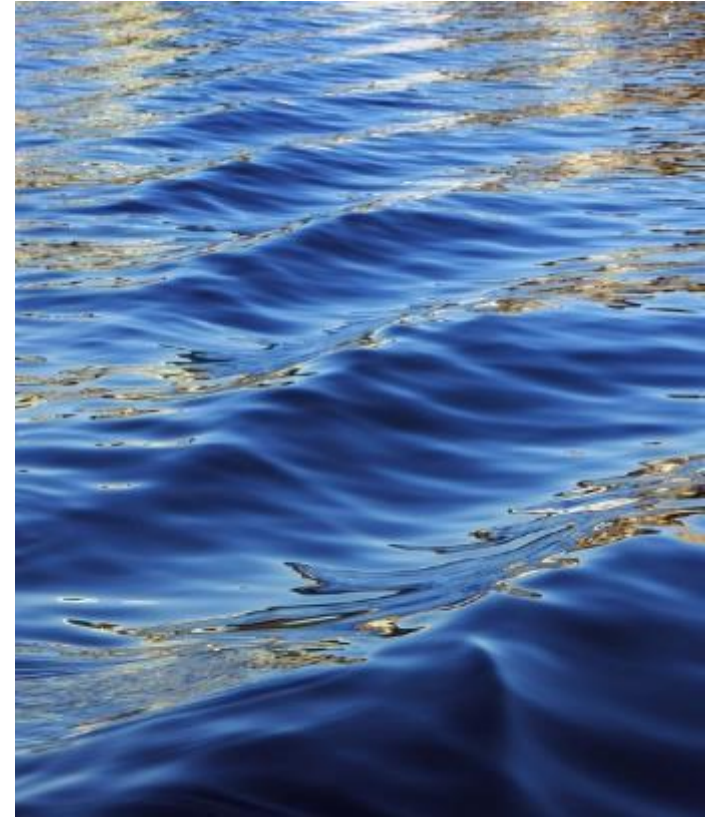


Danger of deficit interpretations

Deficit interpretations:

- **block us** from considering where we as language assessment professionals need to develop
- **insult** our professional colleagues in other domains—colleagues who have access to knowledge and skills we need for our development
- **hamper** our ability to effectively collaborate with other stakeholder groups.

Conceptualising LAL as
complementary
knowledge profiles of
professional groups



Visual representations of LAL

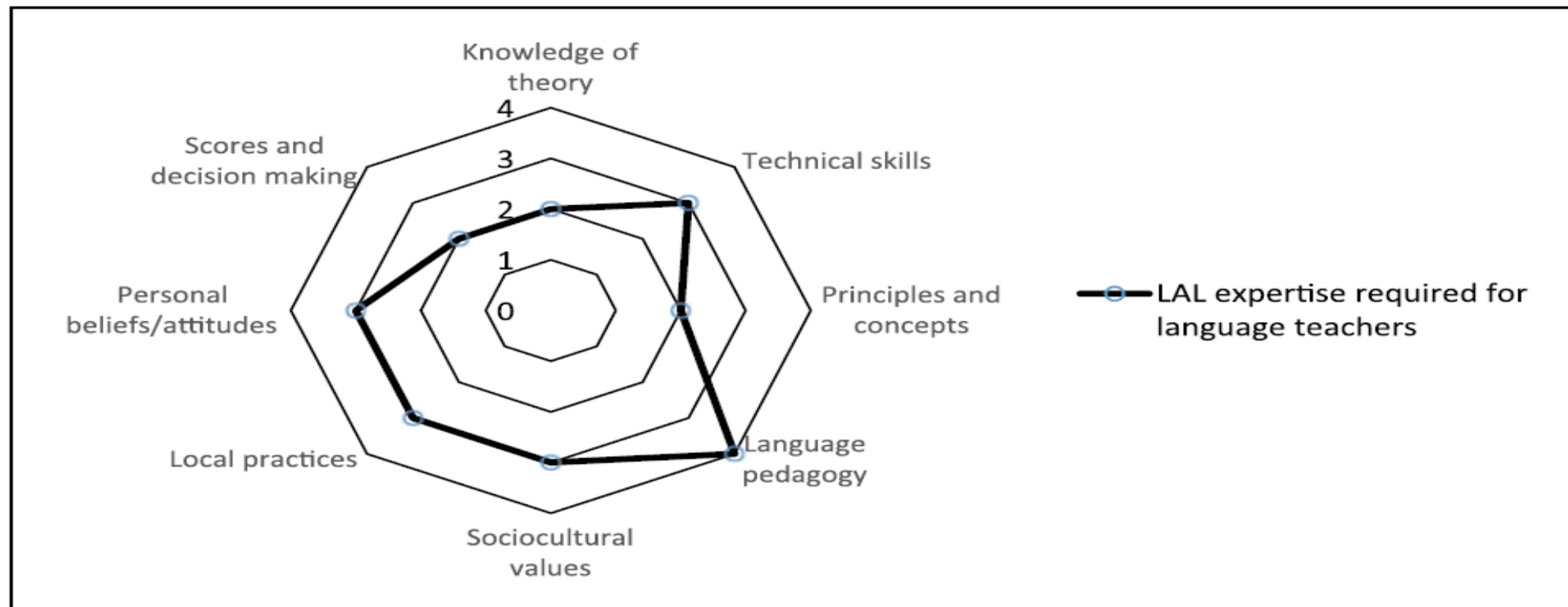
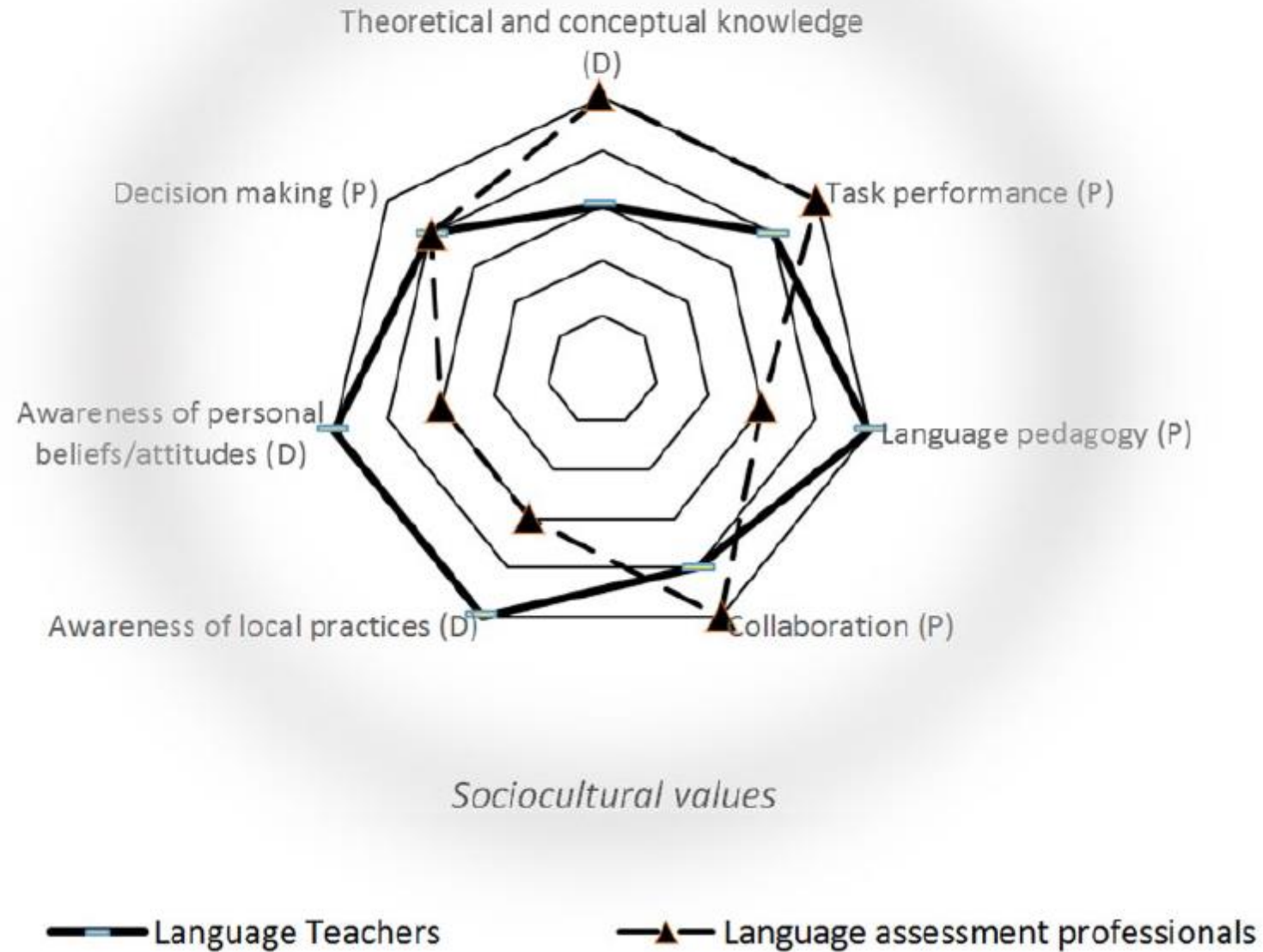


Figure 1. The LAL required for language teachers (from Taylor, 2013).



Challenges

1. Determining the language assessment literacy development necessary for each professional group;
2. Supporting language assessment literacy development *within each of these professional domains*;
3. Communicating effectively *across domains* for effective knowledge sharing and competency development.



Thank you!

Beverly.Baker@uottawa.ca

Speaker 2:

Dr Fumiyo Nakatsuhara

Reader in Language Assessment at the Centre for Research in English Language Learning and Assessment (CRELLA), University of Bedfordshire

How can stakeholders work together?

- The case of a reform project for university entrance examinations in Japan -

Fumiyo Nakatsuhara
CRELLA, University of Bedfordshire

Policy initiatives to innovate the English education system through a reform of university entrance examinations

English education & assessment tradition in Japan

“what was demanded of students was ... to demonstrate their overall intelligence through grammar and vocabulary learning and translation exercises using English” (Butler, 2007:131)

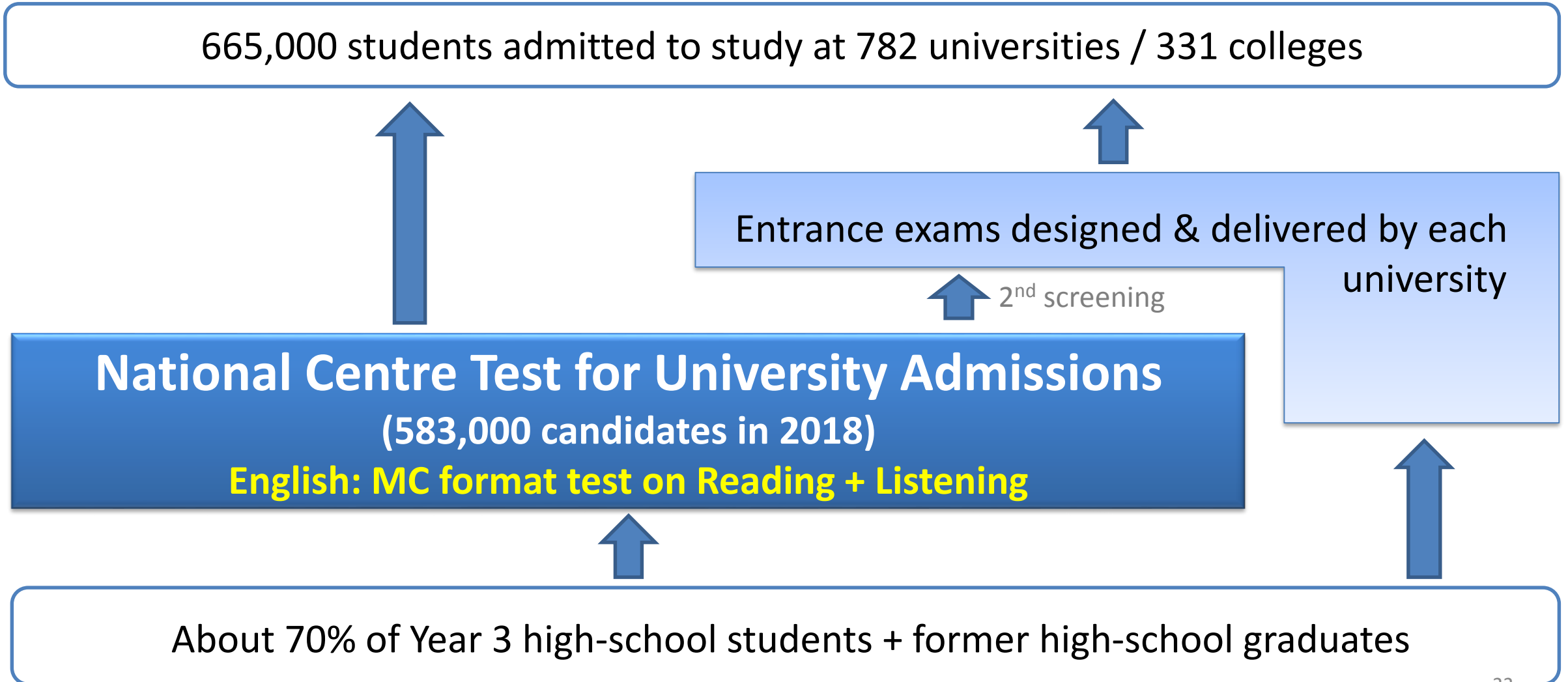
Exam-oriented culture

- Memorising **decontextualised “examination English”**
- Dominant use of the **grammar-translation** method

- **Spoken interaction in English** in the national *Courses of Study* since the 1970s (Sasaki, 2008)
- MEXT’s (2003) Action Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities: Great emphasis on ***practical communication ability***

University admission system in Japan

Based on MEXT (2020)



“If no changes are made from school entrance screening, being the thing that **teachers, parents, and students** are most interested in, it will not be possible to avoid traditional exam-oriented English study centered on grammar and translation aimed at **passing university entrance exams**” (Japan Association of Corporate Executives, 2013)

Policy initiatives

- The English component of the National Center Test to phase out from the 2020/21 academic year & to be supplemented by **4-skills private-sector exams** (MEXT, 2014).
- MEXT (2018) selected **7 exams** based on criteria (e.g. assessing 4 skills, linked to the Course of Study, aligned to the CEFR)



Growing anxieties & criticisms



Students
&
Parents

Why do **test fees** vary from 5,800 yen (about \$55) to 25,380 yen (about \$240)?

I've been **coached for success** in the current system, and I don't want the change with **unknown consequences**.

Use of the private-sector tests should be delayed. They would **discriminate** against students in remote areas.

The National Association of High School Principals



HS teachers
& Private cram
school teachers

I'm a **very experienced** teacher, and I know how best to teach and test English. But I **don't have the expertise** to prepare students for these tests. I **don't have confidence** in teaching Speaking and Writing either.



I **know** my students. Communicative tests wouldn't be good to select the brightest students with **analytic skills**.

Even if these tests are aligned to the CEFR, how can we set a **pass/fail cut-off point** based on scores from different tests? Is subjective marking (of Speaking & Writing) **reliable**?



Universities

University teachers

People should choose to compete for university places in accordance with their (financial) standing.



Education minister Koichi Hagiuda
24 October 2019

Outcry

Is he telling poor people in regional areas to know their place?

He fails to comprehend (the concept of) equal opportunity in education!

→ The government had to **put off the planned introduction of private-sector English proficiency tests** as part of standardised university entrance exams.

Ways forward

We need to work together

- **Need for greater communication among different stakeholder groups to negotiate different understandings of what “assessment literate” and “professional” may mean to each stakeholder group.**

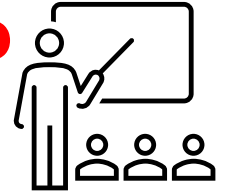
Radical changes in approaches to testing: Unlikely to deliver benefits for the education system unless they are well supported by **teacher training, new materials and public relations initiatives** (Green, 2016:135). ← *We need to **work together** to identify what resources are necessary*

- **Need for understanding a wider social context**
e.g. economic aspect, social value
- **Need for each stakeholder group to grow a sense of ownership in this reform endeavour**

Some attempts: So far 13 MEXT open committee meetings (Online broadcasting, Availability of all minutes and handouts)

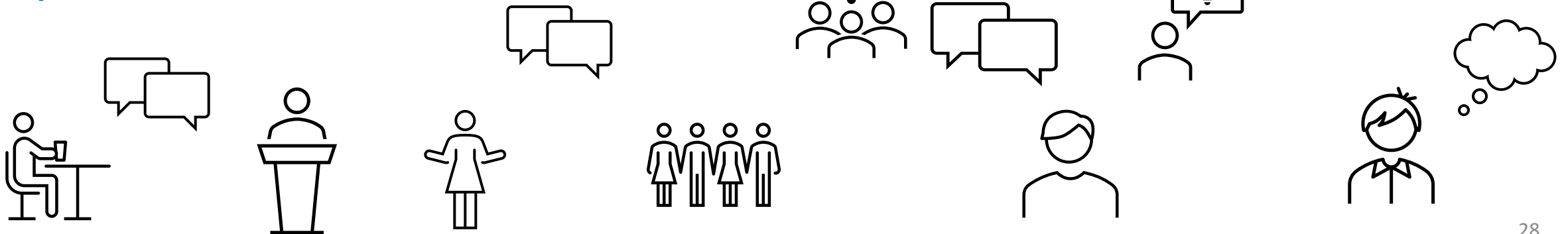
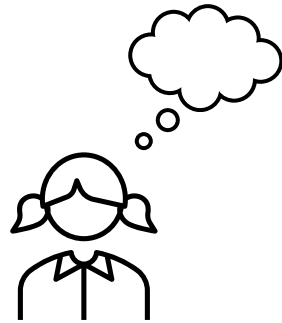


What can we learn from the experience?



Importance of communication among different stakeholder groups

- **MY** language assessment literacy is not **YOUR** language assessment literacy.
- What **I** consider professional is not what **YOU** consider professional.



Thank you!

Fumiyo Nakatsuhara
CRELLA, University of Bedfordshire

Speaker 3:

Professor Barry O'Sullivan

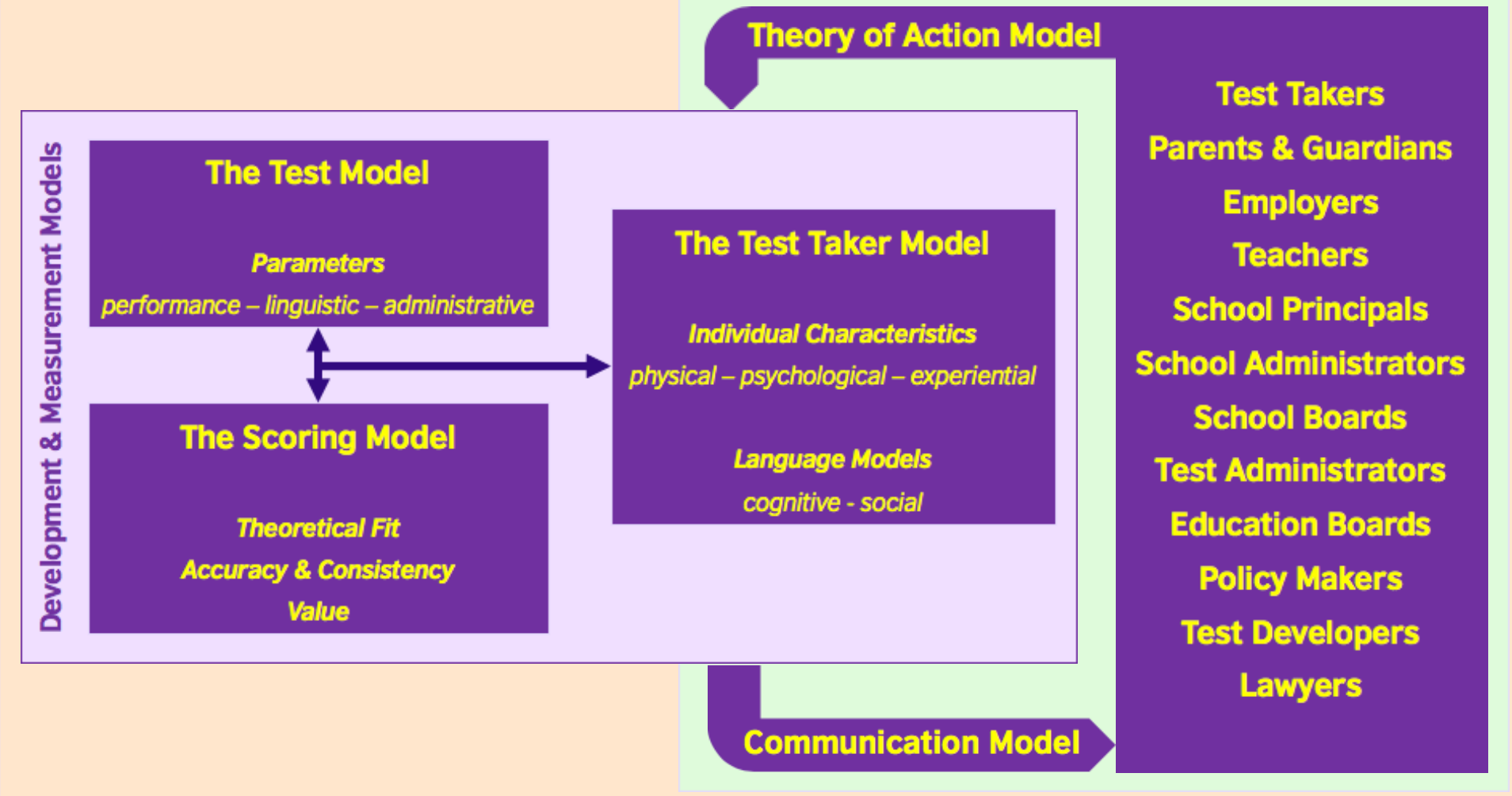
Head of Assessment Research & Development at British Council

The Importance of LAL in Test Validation

Barry O'Sullivan

Context of Use

Consequences [social – educational – personal]



Validation

Validation is an evidence-based argument that supports the interpretation of a test outcome for a specified purpose

Validation arguments have traditionally focused on academics, lawyers and policy makers

They should be for all key stakeholders

For an argument to convince it must be understood



Communication



Consequences and Responsibility



The Importance of LAL



The British Council Approach

An A to Z of Second Language Assessment



An A to Z of Second Language Assessment is an essential component of the British Council's *How Assessment Works* Project and is designed for EFL/ESL teachers and those who are involved in pre-service or in-service teacher training and development. This resource, can be used as part of a course or as a reference for those teachers who want to increase their knowledge of language testing and assessment. Learning the terminology and jargon of the field of language assessment also means understanding the concepts represented by these terms and understanding how they are interlinked and interrelated.

Written by teachers for teachers, these 285 terms and their respective definitions represent the collective knowledge of 81 teachers from 27 countries worldwide. We have made every effort to include definitions that are readable and easy to understand, even for teachers with little or no assessment background. It is hoped that this resource will be an important one in your ongoing journey to understanding 'how assessment works'.

Edited and Curated by Christine Coombe this much needed and valuable glossary of terminology of language testing and assessment consists of hundreds of definitions of terms. These have been authored by a whole range of people from those who have been recognised as being experts in the field to classroom teachers who deal with assessment on a daily basis but for some reason are not considered, particularly by themselves, to be 'expert'.

Test Development



How is a test developed? This video looks at the test development process and its different phases.

- Test Development worksheet (Adobe PDF 304KB)
- Answer Key Test Development (Adobe PDF 387KB)
- Video transcript: Test Development (Adobe PDF 109KB)

Non-Technical Summaries of ARAG Reports



Seminars/Webinars
Workshops
Conference events
Conference Talks

Animated Assessment Videos

	Test Development How is a test developed? This video looks at the test development process and its different phases.
	Assessing Reading How do you design a relevant and meaningful test? This video explores how people read and describes the steps to take when developing a reading test.
	Assessing Writing How do you design a writing test? This video looks at the factors you need to consider when you are assessing writing.
	Assessing Listening What is the difference between hearing and listening? In this video we explain the difference, and suggest ways that we can assess listening skills.
	Assessing Speaking Speaking is part of communication and is something everyone does, every day. In this video we look at some of the ways we can assess speaking skills.
	Assessing General Language Proficiency How is general language proficiency defined? This video addresses different approaches to defining general language proficiency and how these may affect testing and assessment practices.
	Assessing Young Learners How do you assess the language skills of Young Learners? In this video we explain how best to test Young Learners in different age groups.
	Assessing English for Specific Purposes Discover why assessment of English for Specific Purposes isn't just the assessment of general language proficiency with specific terminology thrown in, but a different matter altogether.
	Validity What makes a test valid? This video explains what we mean when we speak about validity in assessment and also gives you an overview of the development of test validity over the years.
	CEFR and Language Assessment What do you know about the CEFR? In this video we look at the CEFR levels and show how they play an important role in all aspects of language assessment.
	Technology and Language Assessment What's the role of modern technology in language assessment? Find out more about three important uses of modern technology in language assessment.
	British Council and Assessment How much do you know about the British Council's work in assessment around the world? This video explains what we do in English Language Assessment and how we promote many other UK examinations.

Thank you

Barry O'Sullivan

**Before finishing the webinar we wanted to share 2
exciting announcements...**

New dates for New Directions LATAM 2021!



New Directions East Asia Online

New Directions 2020
registration is OPEN!

Wide range of events taking place in October 2020

www.britishcouncil.sg/new-directions/register

#NewDirections2020

Thank you once again to our presenters!



Thank you for joining us today

Get in touch if you have any questions:
newdirectionslatam@britishcouncil.org

See you on Thursday 10th September!