

INVESTIGATING EAP ASSESSMENT LITERACY

An overview of a mixed methods research project

Dr Anthony Manning

a.manning@kent.ac.uk

www.anthony-manning.com



Outline

1- Research objectives & research questions

2- Supporting literature

3- Research design, methods & analysis

4- Findings

5- Recommendations / Actions

6- Limitations

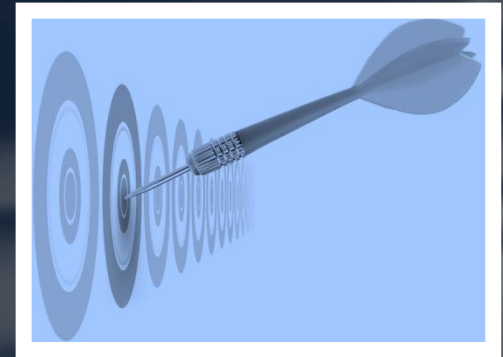
7- Extended bibliographies

**INVESTIGATING
EAP ASSESSMENT LITERACY**

Research objectives

The objectives of this project were to:

- Investigate the assessment literacy of EAP teachers, based on the good practice highlighted in relevant research
- collect data from relevant EAP practitioners which could be considered representative of the sector
- analyse the data and make recommendations for the sustenance and enhancement of EAP teacher assessment literacy, so that stakeholders can benefit from changes to EAP assessments; professional development or training
- Promote ongoing attention to the need for high-quality testing and assessment in EAP, the results of which can be used to draw trustworthy inferences.



Research questions

The research questions which drove the research project were as follows:

- To what extent do EAP teacher views on EAP testing and assessment practices reflect language testing research and practices which comprise Assessment Literacy?
- How can EAP Assessment Literacy be sustained or enhanced?

The research hypothesis which was tested was:

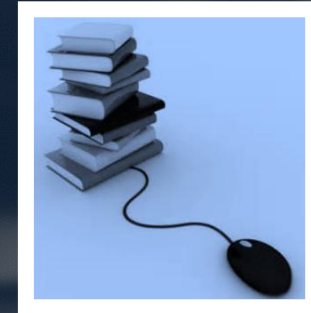
- EAP teachers who are involved in EAP testing and assessment do not have any identifiable development requirements with regard to their knowledge and ability to implement assessment good practice and recommendations stemming from research.

Null Hypothesis



Supporting literature

- Key proponents of Assessment Literacy
- Features of Assessment Literacy and examples of supporting research in Education, Applied Linguistics
- Guidance resources for the development and enhancement of EAP Assessment Literacy.
- Training for teacher Assessment Literacy through general and EAP teacher education
- University-led EAP Assessment Literacy through in-house testing



Bachman
Inbar-Lourie
Messick
Shohamy

Davidson & Lynch
Davies et al
Blue et al
Fulcher
Popham

Fulcher
Popham
Taylor
Price et al.
Stiggins

Bailey & Brown
Coniam
Sharpling
Wallis

BALEAP
O'Sullivan
Weir
U of Reading
Sharpling

Research design, methods & analysis

- Review of possible philosophies
- Adoption of a pragmatic paradigm
- Use of mixed methods of data collection
- Quantitative and qualitative
- Online survey (187 recipients)
 - *Bristol Online Surveys*
- 25 research interviews
 - *Face-to-Face & Via Telephone/Skype*

Datta, L. (1994). Paradigm wars: A basis for peaceful co-existence and beyond. In C. S. Reichardt & S. F. Rallis (Eds.), *The Qualitative Quantitative Debate: New perspectives* (Vol. 61, pp. 85-91). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Duff, P. (2002). Research approaches in applied linguistics. In R. B. Kaplan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. xxvii, 641 p.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gorard, S. (2001). *Quantitative methods in educational research : the role of numbers made easy*. London: Continuum.

Greene, J. C. (2008). *Mixed methods in social inquiry*. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass ; Chichester : John Wiley [

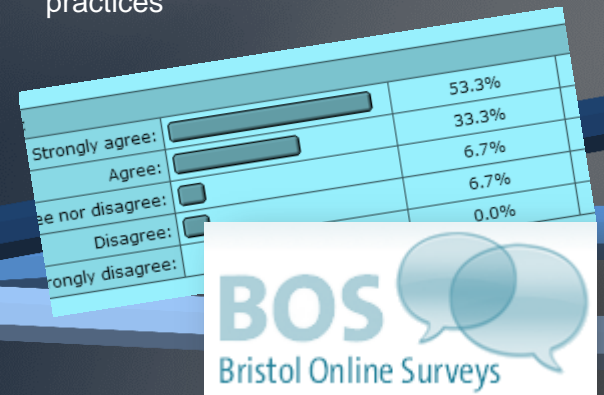
Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Controversies, Contradictions, Confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 200-201). Thousand Oaks, Calif.; London: Sage.

McNamara, T. F. (2003). Tearing us apart again: The paradigm wars and the search for validity *Eurosla Yearbook*, 3, 229-238.

Questionnaire Structure

(Page 1) Welcome Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome message Topic background overview Definition of assessment Details of incentive Context of study at the University of Leicester Instructions for survey page navigation Survey duration indication Overview of survey organisation Reminder of opportunity to opt in to survey participation Thank you message
(Page 2) Data Protection & Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation of adherence to data protection protocols (AQ1) FACTUAL MCQ single answer (yes/no) - Participant agreement request for the use of data Hyperlink to download <i>Research Information Sheet</i> providing full details of the research project (AQ2) FACTUAL MCQ single answer (yes/no) - Participant confirmation of access to Research Information Sheet Invitation to email researcher with additional queries (AQ3) FACTUAL MCQ single answer (yes/no) - Respondent's acknowledgement of voluntary participation and facility to withdraw (AQ4) FACTUAL MCQ single answer (yes/no) - Agreement request for respondent participation in the survey (AQ5) FACTUAL MCQ single answer (yes/no) - Permission request for the researcher to use the data in anonymised form
(Page 3) Personal Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (AQ6) FACTUAL MCQ single answer (male/female) Gender confirmation (AQ7) FACTUAL Drop-down selection list (6 options) Age bracket identification (AQ8) FACTUAL Drop-down selection list (all countries in the world) Confirmation of nationality (most closely associated with) and free-text 'other' option for added flexibility (AQ9) FACTUAL 4 sub items in a grid format (A-D) MCQ single answer (yes/unsure/no) investigating EAP education and assessment involvement (AQ10) FACTUAL Drop-down selection list (all countries in the world) identification of country where the participant has most recently been involved with EAP assessment and free-text 'other' option for added flexibility (AQ11) FACTUAL Drop-down selection list (6 different types of educational institution) Description of type of Institution where most recently involved with EAP assessment and free-text 'other' option for added flexibility (AQ12) FACTUAL Drop-down selection list (5 different time spans from 0-23 months to over 20 years) Confirmation of time elapsed since first started working in EAP

- Training, skills, strengths and weaknesses in EAP testing and assessment
- Approaches to EAP testing and assessment design
- Views on/ experience of validity and reliability in EAP testing and assessment
- Practices involving analysis and interpretation of the results and scores of EAP tests and assessments
- Consideration of ethics in EAP testing and assessment
- Influence of research and other resources for the purpose of EAP testing and assessment on EAP teacher Assessment practices



Interview Structure

(Section 1)

- Introduction and estimation of interview duration-
- Rationale for interview- link back to questionnaire and context of research via the University of Leicester
- Request to record the interview
- Assurance of data protection

(Section 2)

General opening field-related question as an introduction (BQ1)

(Section 3)

Interviewee training and skills in EAP testing and assessment (BQ2, BQ3, BQ4, BQ5)

(Section 4)

EAP test and assessment design processes (BQ6, BQ7)

(Section 5)

Validity and reliability in EAP testing and assessment (BQ8, BQ9, BQ10)

(Section 6)

Analysis and interpretation of EAP testing and assessment (BQ11, BQ12, BQ13)

(Section 7)

The influence of research and resources (BQ14, BQ15, BQ16)

(Section 8)

Ethical factors (BQ17, BQ18)

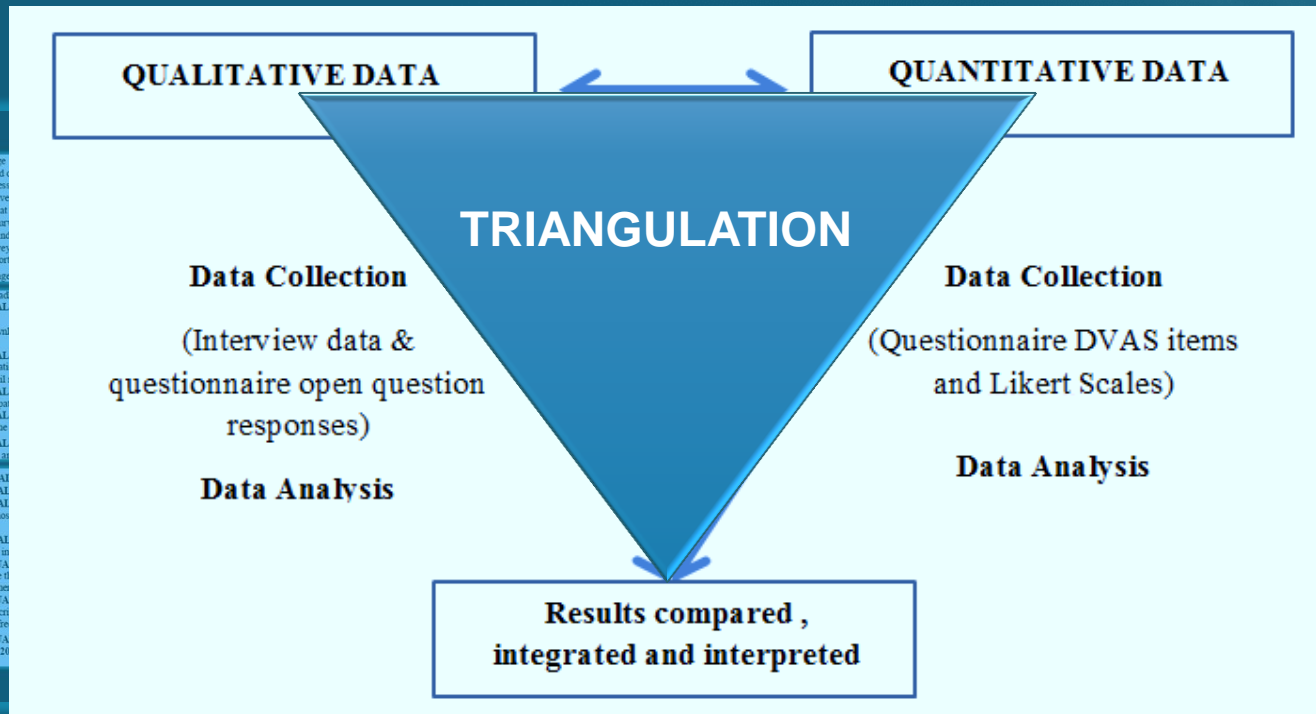
(Section 9)

Final general question inviting any further comment on the topic (BQ19)

- Training, skills, strengths and weaknesses in EAP testing and assessment
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Research design, methods & analysis



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Training, skills, strengths and weaknesses in EAP testing and assessment

Approaches to EAP testing and assessment design

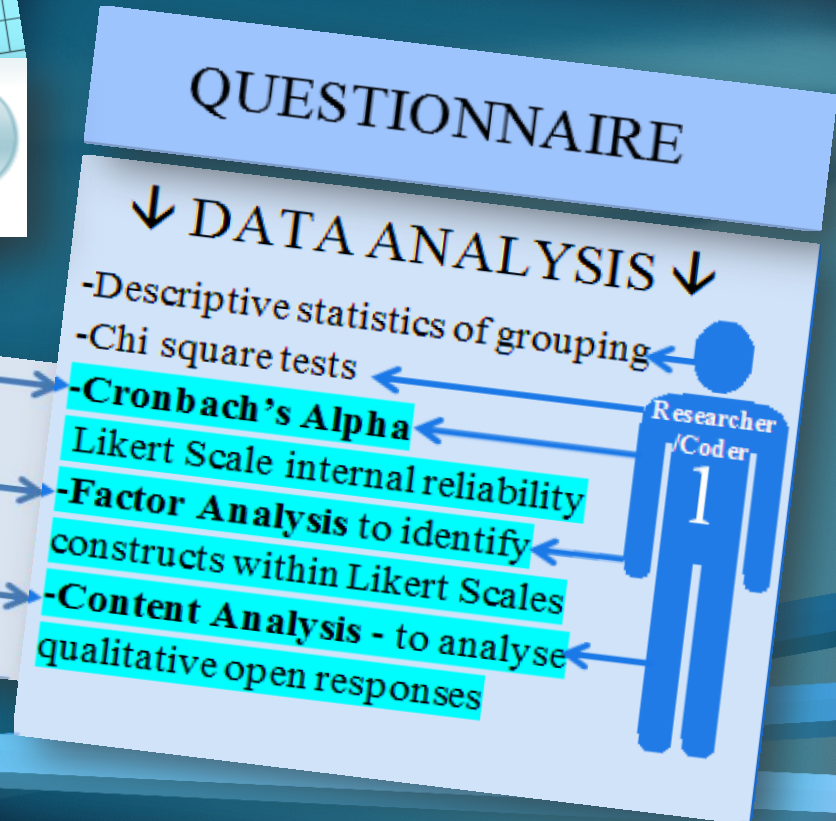
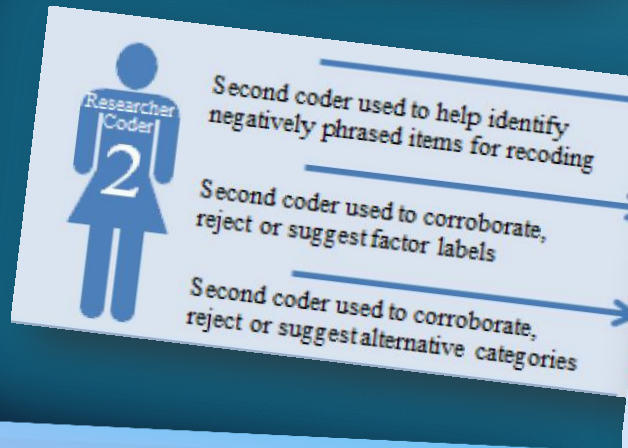
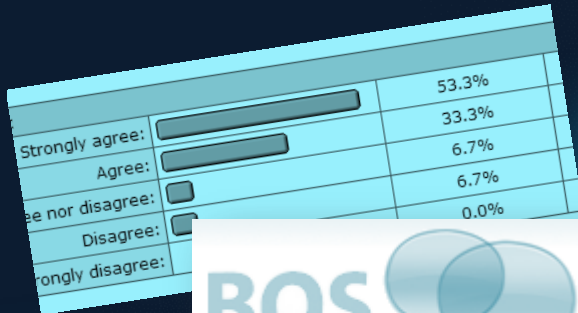
Views on/ experience of validity and reliability in EAP testing and assessment

Practices involving analysis and interpretation of the results and scores of EAP tests and assessments

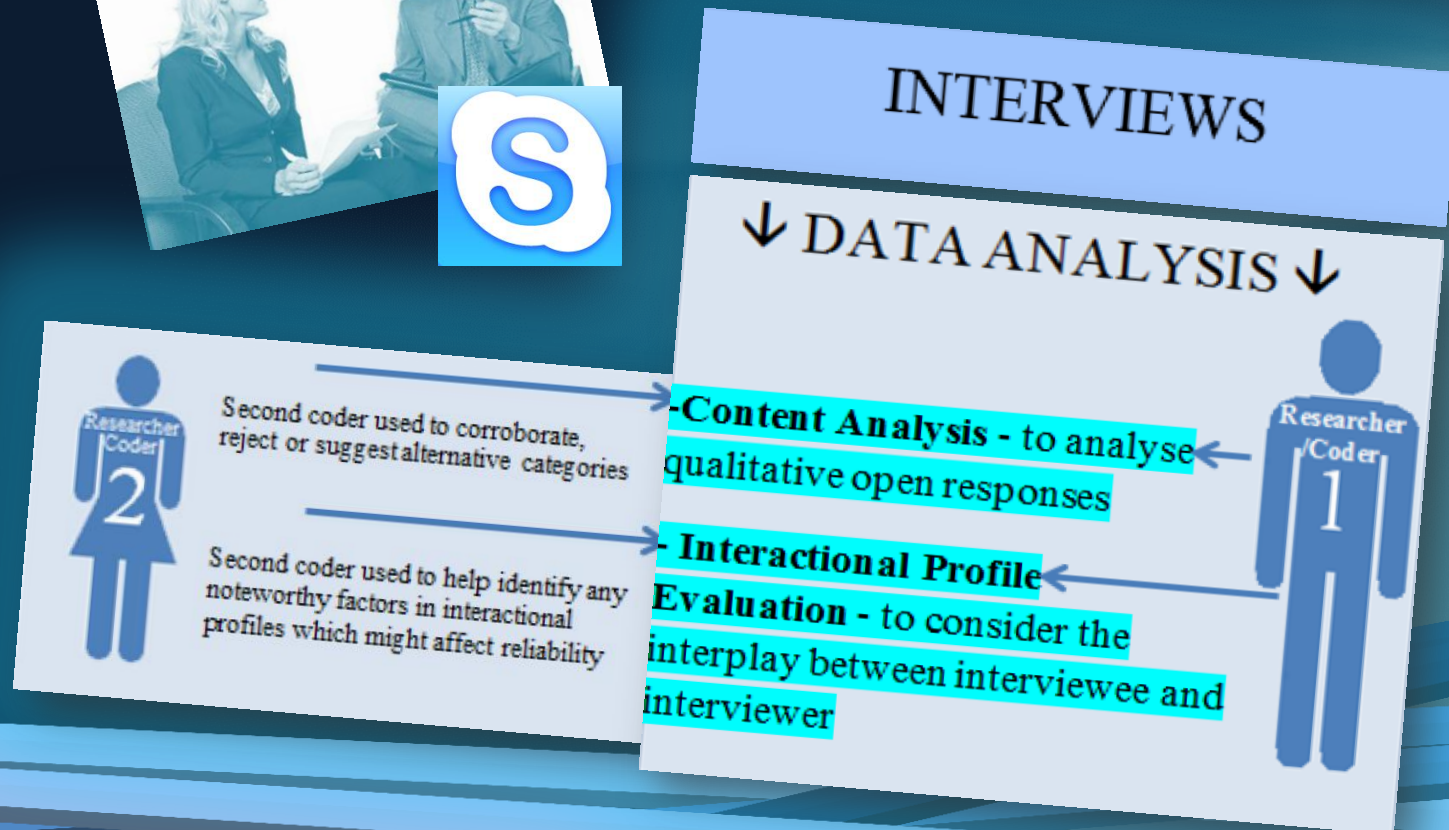
Consideration of ethics in EAP testing and assessment

Influence of research and other resources for the purpose of EAP testing and assessment on EAP teacher Assessment practices

Research design, methods & analysis

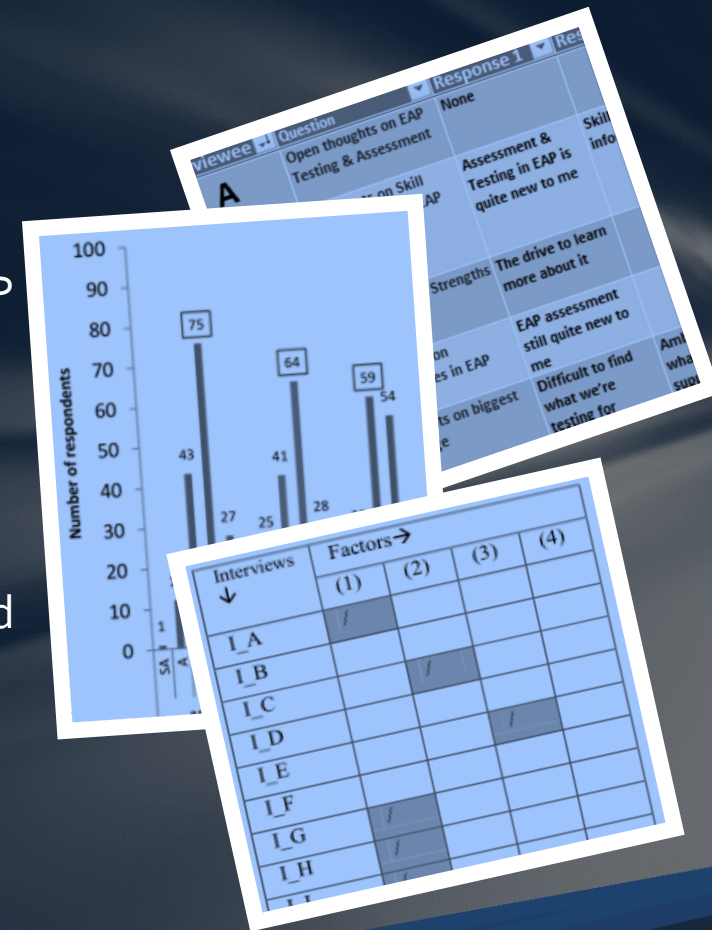


Research design, methods & analysis



Findings

- There is a need for more structured training interventions associated with EAP assessment
- There is a lack of reference, amongst practising EAP teachers who assess, to research associated with assessment
- There appears to be an interest in additional opportunities for collaboration amongst EAP practitioners both within and across institutions and with content teachers
- There is a need to extend practitioners' skills in interpretive EAP assessment, including use of statistics
- There are key concerns amongst practitioners with regard to the ethicality of EAP assessment



Return to research questions

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Null Hypothesis

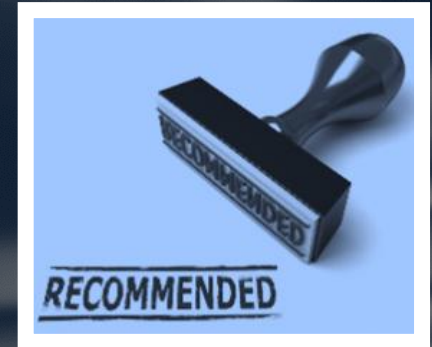
Limitations

- Opinions of EAP teachers regarding their own assessment literacy rather than a more objective measure of Assessment Literacy
- Questionnaire respondents were restricted to practitioners with membership of professional bodies, which may have excluded less engaged practitioners
- A greater number of questionnaire respondents and interviewees may have influenced the nature of the data gathered
- Additional time devoted to the piloting stage could have resulted in the honing of certain questionnaire items
- Had a trained interviewer been employed the interactions may have been of a different nature and more accurate information could have been revealed



Recommendations / Actions

- Provide a framework for in-service EAP assessment training
- Create an online annotated bibliography for EAP assessment literacy
- Promote collaborative research and learning opportunities in EAP assessment
- Develop interpretive EAP Assessment Literacy skills including user-friendly statistical analysis training
- Raise awareness about the key importance of ethicality as an aspect of EAP Assessment Literacy



Extended Bibliographies



Messick, S. (1989). Validity. In R. L. Linn (Ed.), *Educational Measurement*. New York: American Council on Education.

..., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, Calif. ; London: Sage.

& Morton, J. (2005). Dimensions of difference: a comparison of university students' perceptions of difference. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 4(1), 43-66.

spinoso, S. (2003). Vocabulary: Reviewing Trends in EFL/ESL Instruction. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 4(1), 43-66. Retrieved from [URL].pdf

Traditional testing

Traditional testing is a scientific field, with precise definitions and a well-defined and systematic body of knowledge and purpose is the creation of quality tests that measure the knowledge of those tested. Results obtained from testing scores of test takers, classifying test takers into levels, assigning grades and accepting or rejecting test takers, need to be of high quality and follow the conventions of psychometrics.

- Key proponents of Assessment Literacy:

Popham, W. J. (2001). The truth about testing : an educator's call to action. Alexandria, Va. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

An description of the flaws in testing and assessment practices and a call to action for educationalists to improve the situation

Fulcher, G. (2012). Assessment literacy for the language classroom. [Journal Article]. Language Assessment Quarterly, 9(1)

An investigation into the assessment literacy of practising English language teachers

Price, M., Rust, C., O'Donovan, B., & Handley, K. (2012). Assessment Literacy: The foundation for improving student learning. Oxford: Oxford Brookes University.

Promotes the importance of assessment literacy particularly from the position of test-takers themselves

Stiggins, R. J. (1991). Assessment Literacy. The Phi Delta Kappan, 72(7), 534.

First usage of the term assessment literacy - sets out the importance of assessment literacy from the wider stakeholder perspective

Taylor, L. (2009). Developing Assessment Literacy. Annual review of Applied Linguistics, 29, 21-36

A spotlight on the importance of developing and maintaining Assessment Literacy in the context of high-stakes language assessment

• Features of Assessment Literacy

Bachman, L. F. (2004). Statistical analyses for language assessment. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

A step-by-step approach to using statistics in interpreting results of language assessments. Includes examples and Excel templates

Inbar-Lourie, O. (2013) Language Testing, 30 (3) Special Issue on Language Assessment Literacy: SAGE

A special issue of the Language Testing Journal with a range of relevant articles related to language assessment literacy

Inbar-Lourie, O. (2008). Constructing a language assessment knowledge base: A focus on language assessment courses. Language Testing, 25(3), 385-402.

An overview of the skills needed to assess language and a critical discussion of existing language testing courses

Messick, S. (1989). Validity. In R. L. Linn (Ed.), Educational measurement (3rd ed., pp. [610p.]). New York: American Council on Education.

A seminal article on the concept of construct validity

Shohamy, E. (2001). The power of tests: a critical perspective on the uses of language tests. Harlow: Longman.

An insight into the social and political implications of assessment

- Guidance resources for EAP assessment literacy

Davidson, F., & Lynch, B. K. (2002). *Testcraft : a teacher's guide to writing and using language test specifications*. New Haven ; London: Yale University Press.

A test development tool with special focus on how to create and use test specifications for language tests

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

A dictionary explaining key terms associated with language testing and assessment

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

A practical guidance manual for developing , enhancing and interpreting language tests and their results

Popham, W. J. (2012b). *Mastering assessment: a self-service system for educators*. New York ; Abingdon: Routledge.

A series of booklets and exercises relating to different aspects of assessment literacy for teachers and educators

Blue, G. M., Milton, J., & Saville, J. (2000). *Assessing English for academic purposes*. Oxford:New York: P. Lang.

A book focusing specifically on the challenges associated with assessing EAP

- Training for EAP teachers in assessment

Bailey, K. M., & Brown, J. D. (1996). Language testing courses: What are they? In A. Cumming & R. Berwick (Eds.), *Validation in language testing* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

A review of existing language testing training courses available to teachers in 1996

Brown, J. D., & Bailey, K. M. (2008). Language testing courses: What are they in 2007? *Language Testing*, 25(3), 349-383.

An update d review of existing language testing training courses available to teachers in 2008

Coniam, D. (2009). Investigating the quality of teacher-produced tests for EFL students and the effects of training in test development principles and practices on improving test quality. *System*, 37(2), 226.

A review of in-house test development and related training for in-service teachers

Sharpling, G., P. (2002). Learning to teach English for Academic Purposes: Some current training and development issues. *English Language Teacher Education and Development (ELTED)*, 6

A discussion of training for EAP teachers in testing and assessment

Wallace, M. J. (1991). *Training foreign language teachers: a reflective approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

A more general review of training for language teachers including some reference to assessment

- University-led Assessment literacy- in-house testing

BALEAP. (2012a). BALEAP Working Party on Testing: BALEAP Guidelines on English Language tests for university entry 2012, from <http://www.baleap.org.uk/projects/testing-working-party>

Guidelines published by BALEAP to assist practitioners in understanding standardised EAP-related tests

O'Sullivan, B. (Eds) (2011). Language testing: theories and practices. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Discussions relating to the validity of in-house testing including a paper by Rea-Dickins

Sharpling, G., P. (2010). WELT Handbook Retrieved 9, August, 2012, from <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/centre/centrespecialisms/testing/tests/welt/handbook>

An insight into the development and structure of a well-known in-house test developed by the University of Warwick

Weir, C. J. (1993). Understanding and developing language tests. New York ; London: Prentice Hall.

A discussion of the research undertaken by Weir which related to the development of TEEP at the University of Reading

University of Reading. (2014). About the Test of English for Educational Purposes Retrieved 7, January, 2014, <http://www.reading.ac.uk/ISLI/english-language-courses/english-language-tests/islc-teep-about-teep.aspx>

More recent information about the TEEP test at Reading which outlines the test features and structure

Thank you
please contact me if I can help with
any queries:
a.manning@kent.ac.uk

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www.anthony-manning.com

