Can Assessment Really Drive the Curriculum and Should It?: Lessons Learned from the Integrated Performance Assessment

IUP Spring Methodology Conference

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April 19, 2024
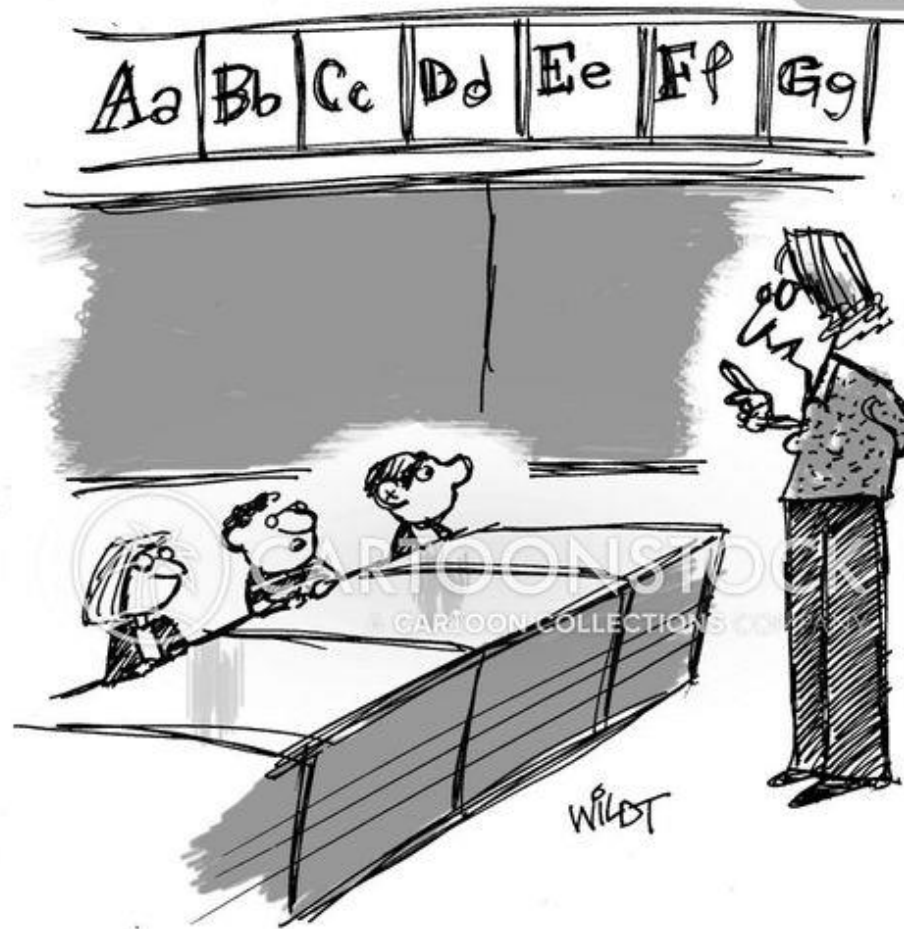
"Testing begins tomorrow and cheating is allowed. You've only got a grade to repeat. I've got a career to protect."

'Assessment should form a seamless connection with instruction.'
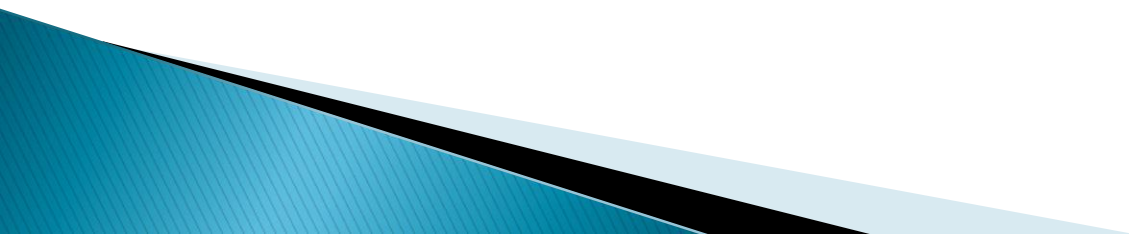
"They call them standardized tests because being terrified to take them is the standard."

TEST

- A "method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain" (Brown, 2004, p. 3)

- This is ASSESSMENT *OF* LEARNING

ASSESSMENT

- Ongoing process of collecting information about learners' progress so that learning can be improved

- This is ASSESSMENT *FOR* LEARNING
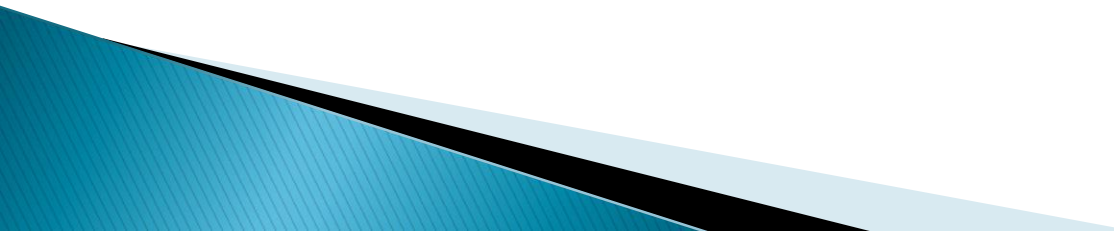
Meaning Behind 'Assessment'

- Claim by Wiggins:
  - "Assessment should *improve* performance, not just *audit* it."
  - Wiggins, G. 1998. *Educative Assessment*.

- From Latin *assidere, "to sit with"*
  - As in 'sitting with the learner'

Key Concepts

- Assessment FOR Learning

- Making learner performance better

- Sitting with the learner to:
  - Identify what the learner knows and can do
  - Set goals with the learner
  - Monitor the learner's progress
  - Provide feedback (dialogic) along the way

INTEGRATED Performance Assessment

▸ Integrated with 3 modes of communication
  ◦ Interpretive
  ◦ Interpersonal
  ◦ Presentational

▸ Integrated with instruction

Integrated Performance Assessments:
A Cyclical Approach

I. Interpretive Communication Phase
Students listen to or read an authentic text (e.g., newspaper article, radio broadcast, etc.) and answer information as well as interpretive questions to assess comprehension. Teacher provides students with feedback on performance.

III. Presentational Communication Phase
Students engage in presentational communication by sharing their research/ideas/opinions. Sample presentational formats: speeches, drama skits, radio broadcasts, posters, brochures, essays, websites, etc.

II. Interpersonal Communication Phase
After receiving feedback regarding Interpretive Phase, students engage in interpersonal oral communication about a particular topic which relates to the interpretive text. This phase should be either audio- or videotaped.
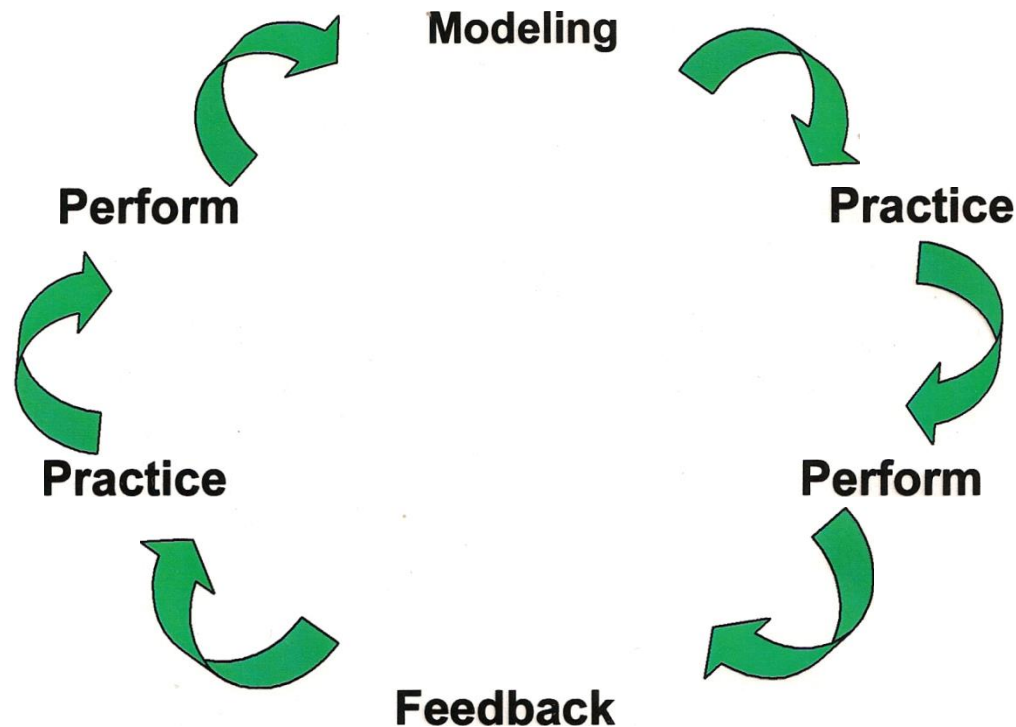
Source: Glisan, Adair-Hauck, Koda, Sandrock, and Swender, 2003, p.18.

INTEGRATED With Instruction

- IPA is situated within current paradigm for learning and teaching in which assessment has a central role that is:
  ◦ Part of the learning culture
  ◦ Dynamic and ongoing
  ◦ An ongoing feedback cycle between instructor and learners
  ◦ Feedback considered as teaching and learning
  ◦ A vehicle for transfer of knowledge and skills
  ◦ A means of student self-assessment
  ◦ An evaluative and self-reflective tool for instructors
  ◦ The locus of research

A CYCLICAL APPROACH

A Cyclical Approach to Second Language Learning and Development

Modeling → Practice → Perform → Feedback → Practice → Perform

Source: Wiggins, G. (1998). *Educative Assessment: Designing Assessments to Inform and Improve Student Performance.*

TIME FOR A COMMERCIAL TIME OUT

IPA Book Giveaway!!!

Feedback Loop

- ‘Feeding back’ of information related to performance
  - Social constructivist perspective
  - Feedback as dialogic interaction
    - Expert (teacher) and learner co-construct a performance assessment
    - Not something that the teacher ‘does *to*’ learners
- Co-construction is the essence of the feedback loop in the IPA
- What does the discourse of feedback look like?
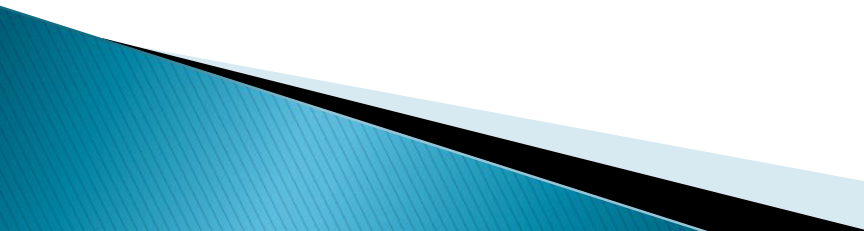
Types of Questioning
(Tharp & Gallimore, 1988)

- Assessing Questions
  - Determine the level at which the learner can perform without assistance
  - Show what the learner knows and can do
  - Serve a limited role

- Assisting Questions
  - Support the learner in reaching a level of performance that they cannot reach at this moment in an unassisted way
  - Encourage production that the learner is unable to construct alone

Features of Dialogic Feedback

- Dialogic instructor and learner talk
- Judicious use of explicit directives
- Use of first-person collective pronoun
- Sparse use of assessment questions and judgmental statements
- Abundant use of assisting questions and cognitive probes
- Use of presuppositions, ellipses, abbreviated speech

QUALITY IPA "FEEDBACK"

Quality feedback provides learners with information regarding their performance as compared to model performance.

EX. As you indicated, you are able to communicate autobiographical information, but you have difficulty asking questions. We can focus on working on various types of asking questions in German.

EX. Your magazine article provides information about two famous Hispanic artists, but you acknowledged that you did not make a comparison between the two artists. Let's explore ways that we might make a comparison of these two famous people.

Learners as "apprentices in thinking"

- Instructors & Learners as Co-Constructors
  - Learners becoming familiar with rubrics
  - Assisting questions & cognitive probes by teacher
  - Discussion of strategies for improvement and to plan for future achievement
- 3 Questions
  - Where am I going?
  - How am I going?
  - Where to next?
  - From Hattie & Timperley, 2007

WHAT LESSONS HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE IPA?

Supporting Need for Assessment to Drive Curriclum

Lessons Learned at Micro Level

- 3 modes of communication
  - Performance across modes is not parallel.
  - Growth in the interpretive mode is different from growth in the interpersonal and presentational modes.
  - Learners benefit from wide exposure to authentic texts.
    - Development of interpretation / Inferencing skills
  - Length of language study impacts performance in the interpersonal mode.
  - Learners respond positively to using the language in real-life situations.
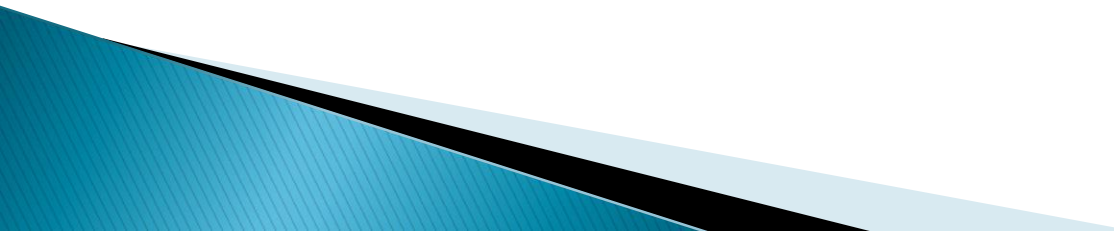
Lessons Learned at Macro Level

- IPAs are effective in classes that focus on content such as literature and culture.
  - ◦ 'Bridge the language–literature divide'
- Students learn to self–assess their language development, especially across the proficiency continuum.
  - ◦ Models of performance and performance criteria
  - ◦ Feedback loop
- Students are motivated by the IPA.
- Students see the connection between classroom tasks and IPA tasks—they don't see assessment as a separate phenomenon.

Two Types of Learner Mindsets

- **Fixed Mindset**
  ◦ Learner views intelligence as unchangeable

- **Growth Mindset**
  ◦ Learner perceives challenges as opportunities to learn by working hard to develop new areas of language use
  ◦ IPA Feedback Loop fosters the growth mindset
  ◦ IPA as the vehicle for instruction and assessment for diversity, equity, inclusion

Washback Effect: Voices of the Learners, 2013

"…I was very surprised. I spoke with shorter sentences than I thought and with fewer connectors. I need to work more on my description and speaking about more topics. I spoke with short words and I need to talk with more vocabulary and verbs."
(Reflection-college level student)

Washback Effect: Voices of the Learners, 2013

"…when I am talking, I use many details and I also have fluency, but sometimes I'm lacking grammatical accuracy and also a logical organization with connectors. If I work to improve these aspects, my oral competence will be at the advanced level."
(Reflection - college level student)

Washback Effect: Voices of the Learners, 2009

"It's good to analyze what I say and the little mistakes I make, so I can now fix them or pay more attention as I speak."

"I did pretty well because I knew what to aim for (rubrics), knew how to reach my goal, and how to improve through practice and feedback."

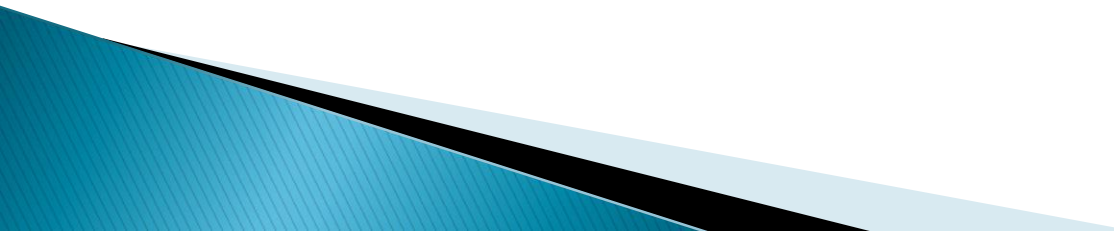"Trial speaking tasks got me used to trying to keep a conversation [going]."

(Reflections – high school students)

Lessons Learned by Instructors

▸ IPA as an impetus for:
- ◦ Using backward design in planning
- ◦ Shifting to a performance-based, proficiency-based instructional approach
- ◦ Increasing meaningful TL input and time for learner input in TL
- ◦ Integrating more culturally rich authentic materials
- ◦ Providing time for more robust feedback to learners

IPA Provides Positive Washback for Learners By…

- Helping learners focus more on proficiency levels than grades
- Setting up learners for success on proficiency assessments such as the OPI and ACTFL's Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Language (AAPPL)
- Increasing learners' proficiency so that they graduate from high school with the Seal of Biliteracy

IPA Washback

- The IPA continues to serve not only as the foundation of assessment development in Ohio, but also as the impetus for teachers to develop richer learning experiences that strive for intercultural competence in relevant and current real-world contexts.
  - Kathleen Shelton & Ryan Wertz, WL Consultants (ODE)

IPA Washback

- One of the most significant changes in using IPAs is our student feedback loop. No longer is our grading based on the quantity of vocabulary memorized, but rather on how well our students are able to use their language to complete a task. Our students now ask us, "Is this Novice-High?" rather than "Is this an A?"
  - Mary Jo Adams, Providence Day School, Charlotte, NC

IPA Washback

▸ Our students who study their language for a long sequence (6 or more years of the same language) routinely reach the Intermediate-Mid, Intermediate-High, or Advanced-Low proficiency level by their senior year of high school. This is possible because the students are accustomed to being assessed through IPAs. Right from their first experiences in language class, students use the language for communicative purposes. They read authentic texts and listen to authentic audio. They are in the habit of asking one another questions as part of every unit they study.

◦ Dr. Michele J. Schreiner, NJ, Supervisor, ELL & WLs

When Assessment Drives the Curriculum....

- Language learning and development occur within a cycle in which instruction, assessment, and feedback are so closely intertwined that it is impossible to separate them since they operate in concert.

- Learners and instructors come to view assessment and feedback as an integral part of the learning cycle that brings about improvement (and hence, better grades?) for learners.