

Assessing Communicative Competence

Communicative Language Teaching

- Authentic tasks and realia
- Language teaching is influenced by sociocultural
- A thought that a person of more ability can help another with less history
- "Weak Version": Teach students the elements of language (I.e., phonemes, vocabulary and grammar) and then provide opportunities during lessons for them to learn to communicate
- "Strong Version": Students learn the language by participation in discourse - that is by communication. Therefore, language lessons should consist of opportunities to participate in discourse. (We learn by interacting, therefore lessons should be used for interaction)

Indirect Test: the enabling skills

Emphasizes communication

Direct Test: Focusing on the things you want to test

Students only have to find "errors" and not have to say "why" it is an error

Johnson's 5 Principles of Communicative Exercise Design

(If you want to develop a test - intended to make activities more communicative)

1. Information Transfer Principle
 - Students hear language but they write it down (Transfer from spoken to written language)
2. Information Gap Principle
 - Need the info that someone else has to complete an assignment
3. Jigsaw Principle (The two way information gap)
 - Teach each other information about certain information
4. The Task Dependency Principle
 - Having students complete a task/activity rather than underline a verb form or change present tense to past tense
 - The activity depends upon the communication of a task
5. Correction for Content Principle
 - How learners achieve a task gives them feedback on how well they did

Tango Seating: sitting back-to-back but side-to-side, so partners cannot see each other.

Principles of Communicative Language Competence (Swain, 1984)

1. Start from Somewhere
 - Use a theory of language so you know what you are testing
2. Concentrate on Content
 - Make tests interesting and relevant to the test-taker. (Relevance includes issues of age appropriacy as well as subject matter)
3. Bias for the best
 - Design tests so as to encourage the best possible performance by the test-takers
 - EX. Choose a format familiar to students, clear directions, time etc. etc
4. Work for Washback
 - Design and score tests in such a way as to give optimal information to teachers and learners - to

promote learning, program development, and effective teaching

Wesche's 4 Components of a language test

1. Stimulus material
2. Task posed to the learner
3. Learner's response
4. Sociocultural

4 Criteria for which a language is evaluated

1. Validity
2. Reliability
3. Practicality - money, time to design a test
4. Washback