

Introduction to assessment literacy

Video at: www.trinitycollege.com/TESOL-AL

This video looks at what assessment literacy is and its importance for students, teachers, managers and policymakers.

0:09 – 2:33	Assessment literacy overview	9:05 – 12:05	Assessment literacy for managers
2:34 – 5:14	Assessment literacy for students	12:05 – 17:00	Assessment literacy for policy makers
5:15 – 9:04	Assessment literacy for teachers		

1. Before watching the video

What do you understand by the term 'assessment literacy'?

Now look at the list of factors below which are often used for selecting a test or exam offered by an external awarding body.

First, just tick the criteria you think are important when selecting an English language test. Leave the 'Ranking' column blank for the time being.

Test selection criteria	Important	Ranking
1. The cost of the test		
2. When the test is available (which times in the year)		
3. The frequency of the test (how often are the tests available)		
4. The length of the test		
5. What the test assesses (grammar, vocabulary, skills)		
6. Who marks the test (is it marked internally by teachers or externally by examiners appointed by the board)		
7. Exam/Board reputation (how well the test and/or the examining board is/are known)		
8. Currency (what the qualification will enable the students to do)		
9. The grading system used (eg. Pass/Merit/Distinction, A, B, C grades or a numerical score)		
10. The pass and fail rates		

Now rank the criteria from 1-10 in terms of importance in the 'Ranking' column.

2. During the video

Now watch the overview (00:09). Check your answer for the definition of assessment literacy and complete the gaps below. The answers for (a) – (d) are numbers and for (e) you just need a few words.

There are (a) _____ videos, which are approximately (b) _____ minutes long.
Each video has (c) _____ section and each section is (d) _____ long.
At the end of the video there is also a (e) _____.

Make notes on the following points and answer the questions to help build your understanding of *assessment literacy*. Cross out the incorrect word(s) in the sentences at the end of each section.

A. Assessment literacy for students (02:34)

Notes:

Q. What do students need to know about the test they are taking?

Good assessments should aim to find out what students **know/do not know**.

B. Assessment literacy for teachers (05:15)

Notes:

Q. What types of assessment questions are mentioned?

Teachers **need /do not need** to know assessment methodology.

C. Assessment literacy for managers (09:05)

Notes:

Q. What do managers need to consider when selecting a test?

*In the example given, the tests chosen by the managers **assessed/did not assess** the intended skills the managers wanted.*

D. Assessment literacy for policy makers (12:07)

Notes:

Q. What considerations do policy makers need to bear in mind when looking at and basing decisions on data?

*Multiple choice questions **are /are not** the best way to assess students' communicative language ability.*

3. Discussion points

What areas of language assessment would you like to learn more about?

How can you use your knowledge of assessment literacy help your students?

What are your views of the assessment tools used at your place of work?

Now thinking about some of the terms you heard in the video.

In the section on Assessment literacy for teachers, more specifically at 06:56 they talk about 'backwash'. What do you think this means?

In the same section 07:56 they also mention content, construct and face validity? What do you think they are?

In the section on Assessment literacy for policy makers (12:07) several references are made to the PISA rankings. What are the PISA rankings and discuss how important they are? Consider the perspectives from students, teachers, managers and policy makers.

In the same section 13:02, they refer to constructive alignment. What do you think is meant by this? (You can find the answer in the Assessment Literacy 3 video, which is all about this topic).

4. Further learning

If you want to learn more about this topic, look at these resources:

Books

Hughes, A. (2002) *Testing for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: CUP.

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

Websites

<https://tea.iatefl.org/resources/>

<https://www.altaanz.org/current-issue.html>

Journal article (both available freely on *Google Scholar*)

Popham, W. J. (2009). Assessment literacy for teachers: Faddish or fundamental?. *Theory into practice*, 48(1), 4-11.

Taylor, L. (2009). 'Developing assessment literacy'. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 29: 21-36.