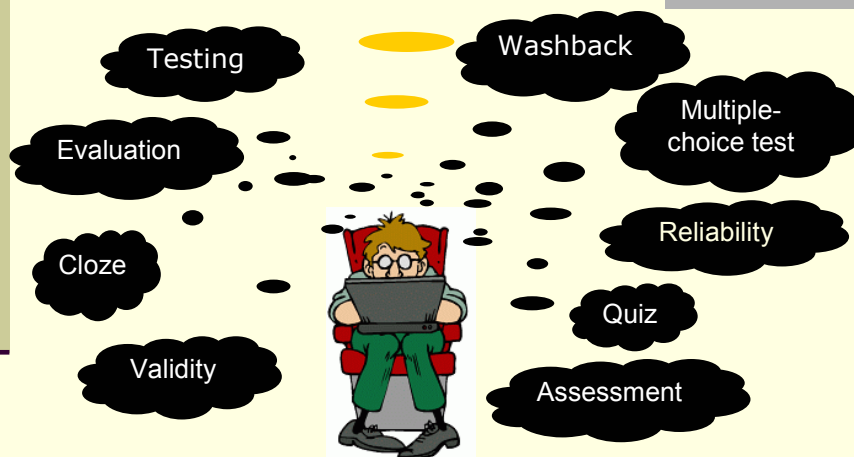


## Unit 1

# Key terms in the field of SL/FL learning assessment

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## Assessment, evaluation, testing/ 1

### I. Term correspondence

Assess, assessment Evaluate, evaluation	}	Evaluar, evaluación
Testing, test	}	Examinar, examen

## Assessment, evaluation, testing/ 2

In Spanish, we use **EVALUAR** & **EXAMINAR**.

**EXAMINAR** refers students taking an exam/test on part or all of the contents of a taught module, in the middle or at the end of it. Thus we talk about EXAMEN PARCIAL and EXAMEN FINAL, respectively.

**EVALUAR** is a wider term which refers to the teacher giving of a grade/mark, whether a label one (aprobado, sobresaliente, etc.) or a number one (3.5; 9, etc.), or both (sobresaliente, 9.2), and this is usually done at the end of the period of instruction.

## Assessment, evaluation, testing/3

We do have, however, the terms **EVALUACIÓN CONTINUA** and **EVALUACIÓN FINAL**.

**E.C.** means that student performance/knowledge is measured along the course (with exams, quizzes, papers, etc.), while

**E.F.** usually means that, at the end of the period of instruction, the students take an exam/prepare a paper, or both, and the teacher gives them a grade for the whole module based on only that final exam/paper.

## Assessment, evaluation, testing/4

We don't usually have specific words for the person who takes the exam and the person who prepares/gives/ corrects the exam at school or university.

We use **ALUMNO** and **PROFESOR**.

We do have the term **EXAMINADOR**, but it's not commonly used in academic contexts, unless the person who creates/administers/marks the exam is not the course teacher.

## Assessment, evaluation, testing/5

Other terms we use are **EXAMEN** & **TEST**. We may use them interchangeably.

By **EXAMEN** we understand a series of tasks by which student learning of the module contents is measured.

Usually, the content of these tasks is not known beforehand & no materials can be used for their completion, nor can the student consult the teacher or other students.

However, sometimes the term **TEST** can be used for a specific kind of exam —one in which the questions are of the multiple-choice kind or one which doesn't require elaborated responses.

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## Assessment, evaluation, testing/6

👉 **Assessment** can be defined as a variety of ways of collecting information on a learner's language ability, progress, or achievement

👉 **Testing & assessment** are sometimes used interchangeably. However, **ASSESSMENT** = umbrella term (it comprises **TESTING** – i.e. lg learning can be *assessed* with a *test*)

👉 **Evaluation** is usually concerned with overall language programs and not just with what individual students have learned

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## Assessment, evaluation, testing/7

👉 **Testing**, in a *broad sense*, is done by both learners and teachers alike in their learning and teaching processes and situations. Thus,

- ✓ **learners** test newly acquired lg almost everytime they speak/write, devising hypothesis about how lg works and, on the basis of feedback, make judgements and decisions
- ✓ **teachers** test in every contact with learners: as a learner speaks, writes ..., teacher makes judgement about performance and from judgement teacher infers learner's competence

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## Assessment, evaluation, testing/8

✓ This **informal type of testing** can be done just by **observing students** or, sometimes, thru informal pieces of assessment –i.e. **quizzes**. A **quiz** can be defined as *a short measure of class material, possibly informal in nature*; e.g. a quiz may just check for ability to use 10 target-language words in a sentence

This type of classroom-oriented **informal testing** is an everyday and very common activity in which teachers engage almost intuitively

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## Assessment, evaluation, testing/9

✓ **Testing**, in a more specific sense, refers to a rather formal method of assessing student ability or progress in FL/SL. It is announced in advance and requires a substantial amount of time to complete (usually no less than 1 hour)



We will deal with the characteristics and types of tests in further units.

## Assessment-related concepts/1

✎ **Formative assessment** is ongoing correction or assessment carried out by teachers during the learning process, directed at specific bits of learner-produced lg, in order to bring about improvement; it's main purpose is to "form", to enhance (not conclude) a process

✎ **Summative assessment** is done at end of course/term/school year, when teacher evaluates an overall aspect of learner's knowledge to find out: how proficient student is at certain point in time, how much student has progressed during a particular course. **S.a.** contributes little to ongoing teaching/learning process; but it is part of teacher's job.

## Assessment-related concepts/2

✎ **Authentic / alternative assessment (a/a a)** refers to the multiple forms of assessment that reflect student learning, achievement, motivation, & attitudes on instructionally-relevant classroom activities. It also reflects a change of paradigm in FL/SL teaching,

from...

- ✓ focus on lg
- ✓ teacher-centeredness
- ✓ isolated skills
- ✓ emphasis on product of lg learning
- ✓ one answer, one-way correctness
- ✓ tests that test

...to

- ✓ focus on communication
- ✓ student-centeredness
- ✓ integrated skills
- ✓ emphasis on process of lg learning
- ✓ open-ended, multiple solutions
- ✓ tests that also teach

## Alternative assessment/1

**A/A a** has 2 main advantages which, in turn, make it distance itself from traditional assessment methods:

- ✓ It is student-centered –i.e. it includes assessment instruments which **facilitate student involvement** and give them a better sense of control for their own learning
- ✓ It **provides teachers with useful information** that can form the basis for improving their instructional plans and practices



In the latter sense, it could be said that **a/a a** is closely related to another concept that has already been discussed. Which one?



Formative assessment

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## Alternative assessment/2

Different modes of **a/a a** include

- Performance assessment
- Portfolios
- Student self-assessment
- Peer assessment
- Teacher assessment (based on observation of student)
- Interviews/conferences (teacher-student; teacher-group)
- Journals, questionnaires, and interviews
- Project work
- ...

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## Alternative assessment/3

What is **performance assessment**?

- ✓ **P. a.** consists of any form of assessment in which the student constructs a response orally or in writing. This response may be elicited by the teacher in formal or informal assessment contexts or observed in class
- ✓ **P. a.** requires the student to accomplish complex and **significant tasks**, while bringing to bear prior knowledge, recent learning, and relevant skills to **solve realistic or authentic problems**
- ✓ Examples: oral reports, writing samples, projects (individual/group), ...

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## Alternative assessment/4

Some features of **p. a.** are

- ✓ **Constructed response:** students construct a response, provide an expanded response, engage in a performance, or create a product
- ✓ **Higher-order thinking:** students need to put to work the higher levels of their thinking so as to construct responses to open-ended questions
- ✓ **Authenticity:** tasks are meaningful, challenging, and engaging, mirroring good instruction or real-world contexts where the student is expected to perform



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## Alternative assessment/5

- ✓ **Integrative:** tasks call for integration of lg skills and, in some cases, even for integration of skills & knowledge across content areas
- ✓ **Process & product:** procedures and strategies for deriving correct answers or for exploring multiple solutions to complex tasks are often assessed as well as the product or the “correct” answer itself
- ✓ **Depth vs breadth:** performance assessments provide info in depth about a student’s skills or mastery as contrasted with the breadth of coverage that is more typical of m-c tests

## Alternative assessment/6

- P. a.** often requires the teacher to **judge** student responses.
- ✓ To help making this judgement accurate & reliable, a scoring scale is used, in which numerical values are associated with performance levels, such as 1= Basic; 2= Proficient; 3= Advanced. These scoring scales are known as **rubrics**.
  - ✓ The **criteria** for each of these levels must be **clearly defined** in terms of what the student actually does to demonstrate skill or proficiency at that level.
  - ✓ The **criteria** are usually made **public** and **known in advance**

## Alternative assessment/7

What is **portfolio assessment**?

- ✓ **P.a.** is a **systematic collection of student work** which is analyzed to show progress over time with regard to instructional objectives
- ✓ Examples of **portfolio entries** –i.e. what can be included in a portfolio– are writing samples, reading logs, drawings, audio or videotapes, teacher / student / peer comments on progress made by student
- ✓ Key to **p.a.** is **student involvement** in selecting samples of their own work to show growth or learning over time

## Alternative assessment/8

What is **self-assessment**?

- ✓ **S-a.** is a key element in **a/a a** and in **self-regulated learning** given that it promotes direct involvement in learning on the part of the student and the integration of cognitive abilities with motivation and attitude toward learning



## What does it mean to be a self-regulated learner?

### Self-regulated learners

- 👉 make choices about their own learning & progress
- 👉 select learning activities that suit their particular learning style
- 👉 know how to make a good use of their time & resources (in & outside the classroom)
- 👉 collaborate with other students in exchanging ideas, eliciting assistance when needed, & providing support to their peers



## What does it mean to be a self-regulated learner?



- 👉 construct meaning, revise their understandings, and share meaning with others during their learning process
- 👉 take pride in their efforts and in the new meanings they construct bc they see connection bt their efforts and learning success
- 👉 monitor their own performance and evaluate their progress and accomplishments

## Alternative assessment/9

What about **observation** as an **a/a a** method?

Informal observation of student use of the FL/SL is part of everyday teaching

- ✓ during formal instruction,
- ✓ while students work individually at their desks,
- ✓ in conferences, where the teacher can observe the student on a one-to-one basis,
- ✓ when using instructional materials,
- ✓ when interacting with others in group activities, etc.

## Alternative assessment/10

What do teachers do with observation results?

- 👉 Assess what students have or have not learned
- 👉 Infer what learning strategies students are using that facilitate or impede learning
- 👉 Assess effectiveness of particular teaching strategies
- 👉 Determine which instructional materials and activities students enjoy
- 👉 ...

## Alternative assessment/11

Information derived from the teacher's observations of student lg use is fundamental to the day-to-day functioning of the classroom in that it **provides a basis for understanding what's going on in class and for making decisions about what should be done.**

E.g. Based on one week's observations, the teacher realices that...

- a) one student has not learned what has been taught during the week, but the others have;
- b) only one student has learned what has been taught during the week, but the others haven't.

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Will the teacher make the same kind of decisions in case a) and in case b)? What kind of decisions will the teacher make in either case?



Decisions made in case a) will be different from those made in case b) ...

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## Alternative assessment/12

What **three major aspects** of student lg learning can be observed by the teacher?

- a) Language learning **processes**
- b) Language learning **strategies**
- c) Language learning **outcomes**

Teachers use observations to **make inferences** about instructional or learning processes, strategies, and outcomes.



What inferences do you think are easier to make for the teacher, inferences about lg learning processes & strategies, or about lg learning outcomes?



**Inferences about lg learning outcomes** are much **easier to make** bc these are made on the basis of observations of concrete instances of student lg use

## Alternative assessment/13

On the other hand, it is not the observation of discrete instances of lg use that provides evidence about lg learning processes; rather, it is **the observation of categories of events** (such as errors) **or fairly complex interrelationships among events** (such as the linguistic or communicative contexts within which errors tend to occur more frequently) **that are the basis for inferences about learning processes.**



Why do you think is important that the teacher makes observations of student lg learning processes, strategies, and outcomes?



These inferences affect the way teachers respond to their students



Also, observations about how a given unit worked with one group of students can affect the planning of instruction of that unit with other students (e.g. modifying it, eliminating it, etc.)



## Alternative assessment/14

Finally, **a/a a** must also meet the requirements of traditional assessment methods, namely reliability and validity

- **Reliability** is the consistency of the assessment in producing the same score on different testing occasions or with different raters
- **Content validity** is the match bt the content of the assessment and the content of instruction –i.e. between curriculum objectives and the objectives being assessed
- **Consequential validity** refers to the uses of assessment for instructional planning and improvement

## Washback (Backwash)/1

Definition: **Backwash** is the effect of testing on teaching and learning. It can be positive or negative.

**Harmful backwash:** Say that a lg test is very important for a given group of students –e.g. students whose L1 ≠ English but want to study at an English medium university. They are required to take the TOEFL.

If all lg teaching focuses on the parts of this test and the strategies the students need to apply to pass this test but all this is at variance with their lg course objectives (e.g. to prepare them to actually be able to follow courses in English), then we have harmful backwash.

## Washback (Backwash)/2

**Beneficial backwash:** However, backwash can also be positive. A case in point = an exam given at the end of an intensive English Ig course at a university in a non-English-speaking country.

Exam purpose: to determine who would be able to go on to courses taught in English at university and who would have to leave the university.

Exam was based on needs analysis of 1st year students (reading textbook materials, writing essays, taking notes in lectures, etc.).



## Washback (Backwash)/3

Introduction of this exam instead of the previous one, entirely m-c test, had an immediate effect: syllabus for the intensive English course, materials, etc. changed, classes were conducted differently. Thus, this is an instance of beneficial backwash.