TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
MA Programme

LALS 523: Language Assessment
TRIMESTER 1 2011

Course Outline

Trimester dates 28 February to 2 July 2011
Teaching dates: 28 February to 22 May 2011
Mid-trimester break: 18 April to 1 May 2011
Study week: 6–10 June 2011
Examination/Assessment period: 10 June to 2 July 2011

Withdrawal dates
Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawlsrefunds.aspx

Names and contact details
Course coordinator and lecturer

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                          PO Box 600
                          Wellington 6140
                          NEW ZEALAND

Class times and locations
Tuesdays 14.10-16.00, KP24 201

Course delivery
The class meets on the following ten dates:
March 8, 15, 22, 29 April 5, 12 [Break], May 3, 10, 17, 24.

The course is delivered in two modes: on campus and by distance. On campus classes are run as lectures plus workshops. For distance students, the course is available at http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz. Blackboard is Victoria's online teaching and learning system. In both modes, students are expected to participate actively in activities and discussions.

Before you log into Blackboard or make any use of your Victoria University programs, you will need to change your original password. Please visit here

https://password.student.vuw.ac.nz/psynch/nph-psf.exe?lang=en-us. Please login with your username and your student ID (your student number) as the initial password to change it. You can also find the link to change your password in the top of the box on the left on the Blackboard login page.

Your userID is printed in the top right section of your Confirmation of Study form that the university sends you. It typically is the first six letters of your family name followed by the first four letters of your first name. If your name results in a user ID that is the same as someone else's, there will be a number added to the end of your username. Look on your Confirmation of Study form to check your username.

Distance students are welcome to come to the class if they are in Wellington. Contact Peter Gu for details.

Communication of additional information

Announcements: MA notice board Level 2 Von Zedlitz

For other additional information, please visit the Blackboard site for this course.

LALS main office: VZ 210, 2nd floor Von Zedlitz Building, Kelburn Parade

LALS 523 Course Administrator: Kirsten Sims, Postgraduate Administrator
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                                               Email: kirsten.sims@vuw.ac.nz
                                               Web contact: www.blackboard.vuw.ac.nz

Aims: The general aim is to study the theory and practice of language assessment, with particular reference to classroom learning. Both formal tests and a range of alternative procedures are covered, having consideration for the purpose of the assessment and the requirements of the learning environment.

Objectives: By the end of the course, course members should

1   Understand various approaches to assessment and how they relate to curriculum objectives in language education.
2   Know what the qualities of good assessment are.
3   Be familiar with a range of assessment procedures and be able to critically evaluate them.
4   Demonstrate an ability to plan appropriate assessment for a learning context you are familiar with.

Course content

The following topics will be covered in the course. The reading for each topic is indicated under the topic. The full references can be found in the table of contents of the set readings.

Class date	Topic and set readings

8 March   Approaches to assessment
Notes: "Introduction"; "Approaches to assessment", pp. 1-17
Article: Brown and Hudson (1998)

15 March   The limits of standards-based assessment
Notes: "Standards-based assessment", pp. 10-17
Article: Brindley (1991)

22 March   Assessment in the language classroom
Notes: "Testing in the classroom", pp. 32-36
Article: Black & Wiliam (1998)
[Available online at www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kbla9810.htm]

29 March   Assessing language knowledge
Notes: "Describing and assessing language ability", pp. 18-24
Articles: Klein-Braley (1997); Schmitt, Schmitt & Clapham (2001)

5 April   Qualities of good assessment
Notes: "Qualities of good assessment", pp. 25-31
Article: Schmitt et al. (2001)

12 April   Self-assessment
Notes: "Self-assessment", pp. 37-39
Articles: Cram (1995); Harris (1997)

[Mid-trimester break]

3 May   Peer assessment, conferencing and other alternative methods
Article: Liu and Hansen (2002); Cheng & Warren (2005)

10 May   Portfolio assessment
Notes: "Portfolio assessment", pp. 40-45
Articles: Hirvela & Pierson (2000); Weigle (2002)

17 May   Assessing productive skills
Notes: "Assessing speaking and writing ability", pp. 53-65
Article: Foot (1999); Saville & Hargreaves (1999)

24 May   Assessing receptive skills
Notes: "Assessing listening and reading ability", pp. 46-52
Article: Read (2002)

Additional notes and suggested readings will be provided weekly.

Expected workload

LALS 523 is a fifteen point one-trimester course. Course members should expect to spend about 15 hours per week for ten weeks on all the work for this course including lectures.

Readings
Essential texts:

A volume of notes and articles, with the title *LALS 523 Language Assessment Notes and Readings*, is available from the Student Notes Centre.

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer from 7 February to 11 March 2011, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks on Level 3 of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from nominated collection points at each campus. Customers will be contacted when they are available.
Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

Recommended Reading:

Recommended readings will be posted on Blackboard as needed.

Assessment requirements

Your performance in the course will be assessed by two assignments:

Assignment 1, due Tuesday 5 April	40%	(2000 words)
Assignment 2, due Tuesday 31 May	60%	(3000 words)

All course members should submit your assignments through the Blackboard system. This means that on-campus students will now need to submit an electronic copy to BB so that their papers are analysed with turnitin, and a hardcopy either in class or in the dropbox. Please submit each assignment (including cover sheet) as a single document in MS WORD format.

For the on-campus group, your assignments and feedback will be returned to you in class. Or you can collect them at the School Office. Feedback for the distance group will be done through Blackboard or through email.

N.B. Note that if no work is submitted for assessment before the last three weeks of teaching, there will be nothing on which to base an aegrotat consideration.

General Content Guidelines

- The assignment should relate to a particular language teaching/learning situation, but it doesn't have to be the same one for all the assignments.
- The assignment should show that you have done a significant amount of reading on the topic (course notes, set articles *and* other sources) and can apply what you have read to the teaching/learning situation you have chosen.
- Where the assignment topic requires you to prepare test or assessment material, the grading will be based partly on my evaluation of the quality of the material but more importantly on your discussion of how you went about designing, selecting and/or preparing the material for its intended purpose.

Relationship between assessment and course objectives:

The assignments in general provide an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of issues involved in language assessment and to show the practical application of ideas covered in class and in the set readings. Assignment 1 relates to course objectives 1 and 2. Assignment 2 relates to all four objectives.

Assignment 1 (due Tuesday 5 April)
2000 words

Outline what you understand as the basic principles of standards-based assessment and discuss whether it can be effectively implemented in a language teaching context you are familiar with.

> If so, what are some of the practical considerations which are needed to ensure that it will be effective?
> If not, what practical considerations prevent it from being effectively implemented?

Assignment 2 (due Tuesday 31 May)
3000 words

*Choose **one** of the following topics.*

Either
Discuss the rationale for using one of the following approaches to assessment in a language teaching context you are familiar with:
- self-assessment
- peer assessment
- portfolios

Explain in practical terms how you will apply this approach in a particular language course. Include some appropriate assessment material (e.g., a self-assessment questionnaire; guidelines for students on how to assess their peers' work, or on how to compile a portfolio; a rating scale to use in assessing their work)

[Note: Your proposed assessment procedures may include more than one of these approaches, but one of them should be the main focus.]

or

Choose **one** of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading or writing. Identify the teaching/learning objectives of a particular group of learners with regard to this skill and then discuss how you will assess their achievement of these objectives in a language course. Prepare some appropriate assessment material, which may take the form of an achievement test or some other kind(s) of assessment.

Penalties

There is no formal penalty for missing the deadline for submitting the assignments, but you must get permission in advance if you find that you have to hand work in late. Similarly, there is no penalty for *exceeding* the word limits given for the assignments; however, if the assignment is more than 20% shorter or 10% longer than the specified length, your grade may be lowered. In general, the word limit should not include any test or assessment material that you prepare.

Mandatory course requirements

To receive a pass grade for this course, you need to meet the following requirements:

- Submit two assignments for assessment
- Attend all the ten class meetings, or make at least one contribution each week to the Discussion Board forum on Blackboard.

Attendance

On-campus course members must attend all ten lectures. If an absence is unavoidable, then the course member should participate in the Blackboard Discussion Board for that week. Course members studying by distance must make a contribution to each one of the ten Discussion Boards.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source

- The work of other students or staff

- Information from the internet

- Software programs and other electronic material

- Designs and ideas

- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course will be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine http://www.turnitin.com. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.