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   1. Specification Development
   2. Test Writing
   3. Test Piloting and Revision
Preface: Purpose of this Workbook

In my experience as a language-testing specialist, I am confronted over and over again with teachers’ anxieties about creating good tests. One reason for this anxiety might be that few teacher training programs provide extensive education in language testing. Often, responsibility for creating language tests has been given to those with little training, otherwise external, professionally created language tests are adopted and used to assess students’ language abilities. Novice test writers can create functional tests, but the scope and sophistication of these tests is often limited. Externally created language tests tend to be very sophisticated but often do not closely match a language program’s curriculum. This video series is designed to provide support for both novice and experienced test writers in the development, use and analysis of language tests.

This workbook is offered as a resource for test writers. Chapter 1 is an overview of the video. The terms, definitions, sample items and tables presented in the video are shown in brief form in this chapter. Chapters 2 and 3 expand upon the terms presented in the video. Chapters 4 and 5 provide extensive examples of the different types of test items possible for language tests. Chapter 6 further explains the concept of “test specifications” and provides examples of each type of specification. Chapter 7 presents several test-writing tips and important information needed when using language tests in a language program.

I hope that this workbook will not be seen as a monologue but as a dialog. The reason the text is in a three ring binder format is to make it easy to update. If you see other item types that should be entered into this workbook, please contact CLEAR.

Those of us who have created this series hope that you find the video and workbook helpful in creating language tests.

H. Gary Cook
Chapter 1: Main Points in the Video

A. Test purposes--Why do we test?

First, what is a test?

A test is a method of obtaining a sample of behavior for the purpose of making some sort of decision.

Why do we test?

To make:

Proficiency decisions - General ability
Placement decisions - Placement in a program
Diagnostic decisions - Identify strengths and weaknesses
Achievement decisions - Assess learning

5 Questions teachers should consider before designing tests
1. What are the goals and objectives in your teaching?

2. What type of syllabus design are you using?
   a. notional-functional
   b. situational
   c. skill-based
   d. structural
   e. task-based
   f. topical

The following texts can assist you in your syllabus and curriculum development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3. Why are you testing?
   a. for proficiency purposes
   b. for placement purposes
   c. for diagnostic purposes
   d. for achievement purposes

4. How will this test fit into your curriculum, class or program?

5. How much time do you have to create this test? to administer this test? to score this test?

We suggest that you stop the video and review the following questions. After review, you're ready to start the video again.
B. How do we test?

*Skill Dimension*

- Discrete—focus on one skill
- Integrated—focus on several skills

*Scoring Dimension*

- Objective—little or no judgment required in scoring a test item
- Subjective—substantial judgment required in scoring a test item

Figure 1.1: Item Format Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Dimension</th>
<th>Skill Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
<td>Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple-choice Reading comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subjective</strong></td>
<td>Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Picture description task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Test Specifications
- Guidelines to create tests
- Maintain level of consistency

D. Type of Test Specifications
- Specification Table
  - Checklist of item types
  - Checklist of item content

Table 1.1: Sample Specification Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Content</th>
<th>Reading Comprehension Subtest—2 Passages</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehend</td>
<td>Identify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Details</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Items</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dictation—1 passage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Words per</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Detailed Specification

More comprehensive template for test creation

Detailed Specifications incorporate:

- Scope of the test
- Structure of the test
- Sample test items
- Other or supplemental information

Before you go on:

We hope that you found the video helpful. All of the concepts presented in this video are dealt with in much more detail in the remaining chapters. Additionally, other important test development information is provided in this workbook to assist you in your test creation. We suggest that you scan this workbook to familiarize yourself with the information, aids and samples provided.