

English Department

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**Course Description:** When we think of education, we think of testing! For better or for worse, testing is a major part of any student's experience with education. But assessment is much broader than just testing. It's all the ways that we get information about where a student is and how they are progressing. Quality assessment is a vital part of quality teaching.



Second language learners are assessed for program placement, for advancement between courses, for insights into their learning and progress, for measurement of proficiency achieved and whether it meets their real-world language needs, and for a myriad of other purposes. Assessment in a second language classroom is complicated by a wide range of factors including cultural norms, test formats, and linguistic skills that influence how students experience and perform on assessments and the inferences we make about their abilities.

The primary objective of this course is to give participants an understanding of principles of effective assessment and an awareness of various variables which affect learners' performance on tests. Students gain a better understanding of the complexities of assessment of English language learners and how these can be faced in a real classroom.

In this course, we will examine the ways that theories of teaching second language skills interface with second language assessment. We will use readings, discussions, exercises in developing and evaluating assessment instruments, and research to introduce approaches to evaluation and means of assessment of language skills, with special emphasis on English as a Second Language. We will examine various assessments and consider approaches to designing classroom assessment frameworks and materials.

Prerequisites: None

Text: Coombe, C., Davidson, P., O'Sullivan, B., & Stoyanoff, S. (2012). *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment*. Cambridge UP. ISBN: 978-1-107-67707-4