Read, J. *Assessing English proficiency for university study.* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. 2015. Pp. 252.

Assessing English proficiency for university study focuses on post-entry English language assessment (PELA) for students in higher education. The overall aim of PELA is "to enhance the students' prospects of achieving their academic potential" (p. x) by assessing whether students have sufficient academic language the skills to cope with the language demands of tertiary study. Despite its widely recognized significance in language assessment, PELA has been underexplored compared to pre-entry testing of English proficiency for university entrance (Jang, 2008). Read's book, structured by ten chapters, explores key concepts in the design and implementation of PELA and gives readers an understanding of what PELA is, and why and how it is important.

This book precedes Read's 2016 edited volume, *Post-admission language assessment of university students,* which brings together insights from language assessment specialists around the world working with PELAs in their own institutions. Read's 2015 book is particularly significant because of its strong rationales for addressing the issues pertaining to PELA as well as the serious research gap mentioned above. *Assessing English proficiency for university study* is situated in the context of higher education where the demand for PELA is increasing because of the influx of international students entering the English-medium university domain. Implementation of PELA also responds to the increasing need to assess the academic language skills of local students, including those who speak English as their first language or an additional language.

To summarize the contents briefly in the original chapter order, Chapter 1 highlights the rationale for PELA by reviewing English-medium higher education around the world, including regions where English is not spoken as a primary language. PELA practices in different countries and regions with unique situations are presented in Chapters 2 to 5, including specific cases of PELA in Australia (Chapter 2) and in New Zealand (Chapter 3). Discussions are developed in subsequent chapters in an effort to define English proficiency for university study by reviewing how abilities and traits relevant to successful academic performance are characterized (Chapters 6 and 7). Chapter 8 includes a discussion on the diagnostic functions of PELA. The last two chapters offer practical guidance for the development and evaluation of an assessment. It should be noted that the ten chapters are not a collection of empirical studies or theoretical arguments contributed by different authors. The contents of the chapters are developed by the author himself with two chapters co-authored by Catherine Elder (Chapters 2 and 4).

Across the chapters, readers will be made aware of several key issues that challenge those who are involved in designing and implementing PELA although these issues are not explicitly featured in an independent chapter, nor listed by the author. These issues include the following:

(a)   how we can satisfy the needs of language demands in different disciplines and diverse backgrounds of students at the same time (Chapters 3 and 6)
(b)   how we can enhance students' motivation to undertake a PELA (Chapters 3 and 5)
(c)   how the assessment can be delivered practically (Chapters 3, 5 and 9)
(d)   the necessity of integrating the efforts of faculty, language learning advisors, and administration staff as well as language assessment experts (Chapter 3 and 5)

The primary goal of PELA assessment should be to provide feedback and/or guidance to students and teachers for students' language enhancement and for successful academic outcomes in their academic discipline. This goal, in turn, raises question (a) above, of whether a single version of an assessment or different modules for different academic disciplines should be developed and implemented or not. Discipline-specific modules might be ideal but the feasibility would be constrained by logistics and/or limited resources. The second issue, labelled as (b), above, concerns the mission of PELA. Diagnostic assessments do not always put students in high stakes situations, unlike tests to determine students' admission for and graduation from university. The third issue (c) above, practicality, may not necessarily be unique to PELAs as testing or assessment is always constrained by the available resources (e.g., costs, logistics). The forth issue (d), above, is crucial in respect of the logistics necessary to implement the assessment as well as concerning the analysis of the domain to develop assessment instruments which represent traits of language demands in university disciplines.

Since there are diverse situations (e.g., budget, student backgrounds) in which assessment is developed and implemented, it is virtually impossible for a single book to offer an absolute and complete answer to a question of "what the design of an 'ideal' PELA should be" (p.196). Thus, it is not the purpose of this book to specify how a post-entry assessment should look and what the ideal design should be. However, actual operations of PELA and several types of assessments demonstrated in the chapters as well as the case at the author's institution in New Zealand, (Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment or DELNA described in Chapter 3) provide a rich source of options and alternatives to employ when designing and administering an assessment. The above-mentioned four issues are by no means simply the theoretical concerns, but challenges

empirically highlighted by the author's extensive engagement in his practice of PELA as in Chapter 3.

Although the target domain (higher education) and the focus of the book (PELA) are defined, target readers are not specified by the author. Defining the target audience for each chapter would allow readers to pay attention to particular aspects of PELA and read the chapters of interest. Generally, though, this book would be suitable for a range of readers including EAP teachers, test developers, policy advisors and others involved in PELAs. Across the chapters, much space is given to concrete examples of assessments at different institutions from the past to the present in constructing, delivering and evaluating a PELA.

Among the ten chapters, Chapter 10 (The validation of a post-entry assessment) was of particular interest to the current reviewer. In this chapter, Read describes an argument for test score interpretation and use following Knoch and Elder's (2013) argument-based framework. An application of an argument-based approach to validation allows us to logically demonstrate what test scores mean and how useful test scores are for educational decisions. Knoch and Elder's (2013) framework, applied by Read, puts an emphasis on the decisions made based on test scores and the consequences produced by those decisions. As Read demonstrates, and Knoch and Elder (2013) propose, undertaking validation with an emphasis on consequential aspects of validity could be meaningful for informing stakeholders about PELA. Currently, PELA is not as widely recognized by policy makers, teaching faculty and students in educational contexts as pre-entry proficiency tests determining students' entry. Thus it appears that those in higher education contexts are not always sufficiently informed of the overall aim of PELA (as described earlier). In this sense, using Knoch & Elder's (2013) argument-based framework, which highlights addressing educational policy as well as test score interpretation, would allow us to logically demonstrate how beneficial PELAs are for those in higher education and to provide an account of who needs to take a PELA. Thus, the validation argument described in Read's Chapter 10, in addition to providing an example of test validation, indicates a rationale for improving practice.

Every year, universities welcome new students. As an invigilator of a post-entry diagnostic assessment at my university, I see a large number of students working seriously on assessment tasks at the beginning of a semester. This is the moment when I, as a reviewer of this book and as a researcher on language assessment, become fully aware of what Read's book is for. Students' knowledge and expectations about language assessment may be diverse. However, I see students' faces full of expectation for

successful and fruitful academic work, for which I believe the insights of Read's book can be fully utilized by all of those involved in post-entry language assessment.

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