

L. Cheng & J. Fox *Assessment in the Language Classroom: Teachers Supporting Student Learning*. Palgrave. 2017. Pp. 246

Assessment in the Language Classroom: Teachers Supporting Student Learning is a recent addition to the Applied Linguistics for the Language Classroom series, edited by Andy Curtis and recommended for pre-service and in-service teachers of English as a second or foreign language. The authors, Liying Cheng and Janna Fox, are experienced teacher educators who have achieved international recognition for their research in the field of second language assessment. They explicitly draw upon their own language teaching experience to identify with teachers and demonstrate that they understand the classroom context and reality: "Like you, we are teachers" (p. xiii). It is this starting point which informs the content and organisation of the book, creating a meaningful and effective professional development opportunity for language teachers to engage with and help to co-construct as they reflect upon their own beliefs and assessment practices.

The book contains seven chapters designed to address fundamental questions that teachers may have regarding language assessment. The first chapter provides definitions of assessment and key related concepts, including assessment for and of learning, qualities of effective assessment, washback, and the importance of establishing a clear purpose for assessment. The focus of the second chapter is the content of assessment, with the foregrounding of the alignment of learning goals, assessment and classroom activities within the wider context of curriculum at both local and national levels. Chapter 3 begins with a discussion on the differences between large-scale testing and classroom assessment practices, which leads to the identification of assessment methods that are likely to be effective in the classroom context and segues into the development of a classroom assessment plan. Developing high quality classroom tests for summative purposes is the focus of the next chapter, in which readers are introduced to a systematic process of language test development. Construct definition, target language use domains, the creation of specifications and the process of item and task writing are clearly explained, with examples and advice on scoring decisions provided. Administering the test, analysing results for item difficulty and discrimination and interpreting the results complete the process. In Chapters 5 and 6, the importance of understanding students' needs and current language levels in order to support their progress and thus improve the quality of teaching and learning is emphasized. Clear examples of how this can be achieved through placement testing, needs analysis and diagnostic assessment tools are given

in Chapter 5, with the emphasis in Chapter 6 on providing effective feedback and understanding the relationship between assessment, motivation and learning. The final chapter highlights issues of grading, test preparation and student experiences of assessment in relation to the overarching theme of the book: how assessment can contribute positively to teaching and learning. Overall the book achieves an impressive coverage of relevant aspects of the second language assessment; however, one area that could have received more emphasis is the role and affordances of technology in classroom language assessment. While this is briefly touched upon in terms of e-portfolios and diagnostic assessment, further examples and links to on-line classroom assessment resources would be helpful for teachers.

Each chapter begins with questions that are designed to engage readers in reflecting on their own tacit understandings and beliefs about assessment and learning. Discussions draw upon language assessment theory and research in ways that are accessible and meaningful to classroom practitioners through examples and case studies. A range of activities in each chapter encourage reflection on current beliefs and practices and provide creative and practical examples of how assessment activities can be adapted for each unique classroom context. A list of suggested readings is provided at the end of each chapter and a useful, comprehensive glossary of key language assessment concepts is given in the Appendix.

In conclusion, this book is an excellent resource for language teachers and teacher educators. The foregrounding of the learner and explicit engagement with feedback and motivation in language learning and assessment set it apart from other introductory texts on language assessment. It could function as a stand-alone professional development resource for groups of language teachers who have formed a community of practice and would also be extremely effective for use in language teacher education courses.

Reviewed by Lyn May

Queensland University of Technology