

WORKSHEET B

Title Fundamental principles of assessment	
Objective(s) To apply principles of validity, reliability, and feasibility to evaluate situations of classroom language teaching and to consider guidelines for professional practice	
Keywords validity – reliability – feasibility	
Ref to the guide	Ref to the CEFR
4.1	9
Task A	
Step 1 († † †)	
<p>Consider the following examples of testing practices in the light of the three key principles of assessment: Validity, Reliability and Feasibility and discuss them with your colleagues. Make notes of your reflections.</p> <p>Focus in particular on ways in which they do or do not respect one or more of these principles and what consequences this will probably have.</p> <p>Here is a definition of the three principles as a reminder.</p> <p><i>Validity</i> concerns whether an assessment assesses what it claims to assess. This idea assumes there is a definition of specific content and conditions for the assessment, i.e. an underlying construct. It also assumes that inferences, decisions, and actions result from the assessment. Evidence is required to know whether the inferences about the construct that come from the assessment are valid. First, do the conditions of the assessment represent the construct (or other factors that are not relevant to the construct)? Second, are the consequences of using the assessment appropriate? Do they have a desirable washback on teaching and learning?</p> <p><i>Reliability</i> concerns the consistency of the assessment, across situations, opportunities and people. For example, do two assessments of the same construct generate similar results? Do different assessors agree when rating students' performances? Does a student taking a test one week get the same results on the same test on the following week?</p> <p><i>Feasibility</i> - also called <i>practicality</i> - deals with practical, often contextual, aspects of assessment, for example with regard to time, resources, and budget constraints.</p>	
Example 1	
<p>An examination board plans to administer an exam for young learners (at language proficiency A1). The test specifications include vocabulary about colors as an objective. The item writers wanted to include a task to test vocabulary using colored illustrations. However, they were informed that the test was going to be printed in black and white and that no illustrations were available.</p>	



Example 2

Writing was a common activity in a particular course. However, when it came to preparing a final exam, the teacher decided that a good writing task would take too much time. The teacher decided not to include a writing task in the test. The teacher reasoned that the items about grammar and vocabulary on the test would provide information about students' knowledge of language structures.

Example 3

A teacher has decided to introduce self-assessment and peer-assessment in his/her classroom as a complement and addition to more traditional testing. The students first find it difficult but learn quite quickly and appreciate it more and more. However, some parents protest, as do some of the other teachers at the school. Due to this, the head teacher asks the teacher to produce a rationale for the procedures used, supported by empirical evidence, to be presented at a parental meeting.

Example 4

Two teachers examined their students' oral performance using an interview. After the interview, they compare their ratings. Their ratings of pronunciation are the same, but each teacher gave slightly different ratings of the students' vocabulary, syntax, and grammar.

Example 5

The teacher wants to assess learners' spelling and listening comprehension. To do so, the teacher asks the learners to write a dictation. However, this type of a task has never been practiced in their classroom.

Example 6

The aim of the task was to assess listening comprehension. The students were asked to write a summary of a long and difficult text they had just listened to. Later the teacher decided to deduct points for spelling mistakes, missing ideas and problems in test cohesion and coherence.