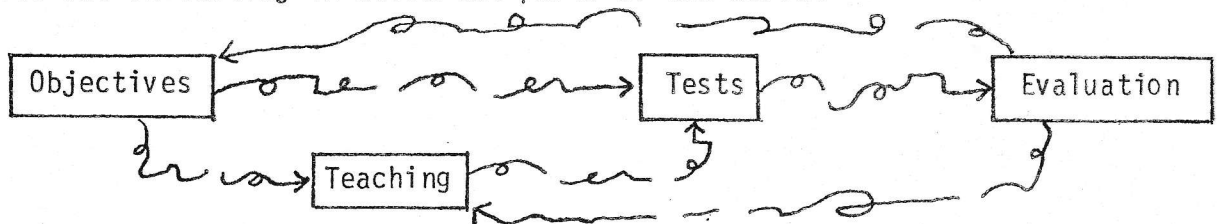


## LECTURE

### Designing a Typology for Assessing the Relative Merits of Various Test Types Sauli Takala, University of Jyväskylä and University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign

The author maintains that as we have gained more experience and added to our knowledge of tests and testing, we have come to realize that one of the greatest obstacles that slow down the development of test culture is that decisions are too much based on intuition and traditions that are not subjected to sufficiently critical scrutiny. The same problem of implicitness can also be seen in curriculum construction. One of the greatest challenges that should be taken up is to make the decisions that are related to testing and evaluations more conscious and explicit. In order to be able to do that models and typologies should be developed as the first attempt to systematize thinking.

The following figure characterizes much of the activity that is currently carried out in testing in different parts of the world.



Usually the links between objectives, teaching, tests and evaluation are illustrated by drawing straight lines from one box to the other. Broken lines and twists would be a better characterization of the situation. Straightening out the twists and removing the gaps is a challenge, where explicit criteria, rules and conventions would be of great help. By making decisions explicit, they are also made more susceptible to criticism and thus the likelihood of the improvement of testing practice is also increased.

As one contribution to making testing more explicit, the author has tried

to develop a systematic typology for describing test types and for assessing their relative merits. The typology has language elements and skills as one dimension and, as the categories of the other dimensions, the construction, administration, scoring, validity, washback effect and costs of testing. The typology will be used to assess the merits of some commonly used test types on a five-point scale. This assessment is based on the author's own experience of testing, and is only presented as an illustration of the typology.

Scheme for Assessing the Relative Merits of Different Test Types in Measuring Language Knowledge and Language Skills

Element/ skill	Construction		Admin- istra- tion	Scoring		Validity	Washback Effect	Costs (Constr./ admin./scoring)
	Mc	Fi		Tr	Gp			
Listening compre- hension	L2							
	L1							
	T/F							
Speaking								
Reading compre- hension	L2							
	L1							
	T/F							
	CL							
Writing								
Grammar								
Vocabulary								

List of abbreviations: Mc=Multiple choice, Fi=Fill in, Tr=Transformation, Gp=Guided production, Fp=Free production,

Tra=Translation/interpretation, LI=Mother tongue, L2=Second language, T/F=True/false, CL=Cloze test