

Meeting 05 • 19 January 2010 • Tuesday

Version:
1/19/10

Today

- numbers in () = minutes planned for activity/ topic
- √ = topic / activity that was adequately dealt with during the class
- + = topic needs more attention & will be resumed at next / subsequent meeting(s)
- = a topic / activity that was proposed but not carried out (but will be taken up later)
- ~~Struck through text like this~~ = a topic / activity that was proposed but not included / is not going to be taken up after all
- Italic text like this* = comments after the meeting

	Main topic(s): Introduction to Assessment; the FL and AL Cultures
(5)	(possibly a regular feature:) assessment in the news! Texas Oregon! and "Race to the Top"; Thursday (21 Jan.): PPS trying to improve high school programs, including languages
(5)	EW gets to tell about the Hawaii conference
(50)	The OPI (media clips) - structure, examiner stance, question types; OPI familiarization workshop manual (1994, 0036); audit one sample (g_bill_steveH_31); how to write a rating
(5)	Assignments - checking in and up: 1) reading, see the "schedule & assignments" page (under modification); 2) written assignment #1: reflection about a newspaper article. Two examples from previous years. 3) Assignment 2: Rate your own proficiency - let's put the deadline off till 21 January, and plan to discuss both assignments that day.
(5)	Demographic survey: participants' previous coursework and work experience; language inventory - can't do this in the form that I proposed, as an activity during my absence, but we'll spend a couple minutes using the idea to gain better insight into levels of proficiency: 1) what proficiency is required for the topic? 2) How would it have to be altered to provide a test for, say, Novice-High?
(40)	Audit #2 (g_bill_timW_30, maybe just first half, or else - somewhat better sound quality - g_pete_bambi_19) - Evaluate the sample and write 1/2 page to support your rating; 1/4 page comments about interviewers tactics and techniques; how to write the rating: 1) state the rating; 2) describe (10 words) the text type; 3) summarize the functions and contexts/contents encountered; 4) (and only now) offer evidence about accuracy.

Upcoming class meetings

- 21 January: Assignment 2 (evaluate your own speaking proficiency) is DUE TODAY
- (10) Demographic "survey": backgrounds and professional interests of instructor
- 26 & 28 January: expanding ACTFL standards into testing other modalities

Upcoming assignment(s)

This section offers a PREVIEW, not activated assignments. Assignments are made, with announcement of their deadlines, both in class and on the "schedule" page. The next topic (week 2, 12 & 14 January)

Announcements

The change of the course to German-only participation requires some more rethinking of the syllabus. So I'm dropping any specific ESL aspects, at least temporarily, and we'll resume the discussion in a week or so.

Misc.

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top of page

Oregon to peg teacher ratings to student scores

18 Jan '10 Al Oregon

Education | The state hopes to win federal money but plans the change in evaluation regardless

BY BETSY HAMMOND
THE OREGONIAN

Oregon for the first time plans to connect student test scores to the teachers responsible for those students and make the results available to teachers, principals and researchers to help them judge teachers' effectiveness. Schools will be expected to use those results to improve teaching practices and could use them to help decide which teachers they should promote, give bonuses or let go.

Those plans are laid out in Oregon's application to win a \$200 million share of the Obama administration's \$4 billion Race to the Top fund.

To compete for the money, states must pledge to take several controversial steps that U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan contends will lead to big gains in student achievement.

Applications are due Tuesday, and as many as 43 states are expected to apply. Oregon is one of only about 28 states that have the backing of their teachers unions.

Nationally, the requirement to evaluate teachers in part by their students' test scores has proved the most controversial element of the Race to the Top initiative.

Tying student test scores to individual teachers is the most sweeping change proposed in Oregon's application, which was designed by a large team of educators, business leaders and education advocates.

Please see **ACADEMICS**, Page A10

Academics: High schools pose problem to new system

Continued from Page One

"One of the most important components of the proposed Oregon Plan is the commitment and ability to link student achievement to individual teachers," the application states. "Results can be readily placed in teachers' portfolios."

That doesn't mean teachers will get raises or be fired based solely on their students' test scores. Any use of test scores in teacher evaluations would be decided at a school district level after negotiations between the administration and teachers union.

But a few districts and unions have agreed on new evaluation systems that put more emphasis on documenting gains in student learning.

If Oregon wins federal money, measuring teachers' effectiveness by the test score growth of their students would take effect more quickly.

"Improving practice"

If it doesn't secure federal money, Oregon still will develop the ability to connect student test score gains to the teachers who work with each student — and soon, says Doug Kosty, Oregon assistant superintendent for assessment and information services. The initial data link probably will happen by fall 2011, he said.

"This is all about improving practice," he said.

The emphasis will not be to determine whose students post the highest test scores, as that often reflects the family backgrounds of individual students. Instead, the emphasis will be to see how far students improve their scores during the time they are taught by particular teachers — then to duplicate the practices of those teachers who record the biggest gains.

This year, for the first time, Oregon graded schools partly by

how much they improved individual students scores from one year to the next.

There is at least one big hole in the new system to connect teachers and their students' test scores: high schools.

Oregon high school students are given state tests during only their sophomore year, and only in reading, writing, math and science. So most high school teachers won't be directly tied to any test scores. Similarly, elementary and middle school teachers of music, art, physical education, social studies and health have no student tests to show their effectiveness.

"There will still be a lot of landscape uncovered," Kosty said.

Union gives its OK

The other main components of Oregon's Race to the Top plan are to raise academic standards to match those in other states and some other countries; to identify the state's 60 or so lowest performing schools and require big changes; to make student achievement a bigger part of how principals and teachers are

evaluated and rewarded; and to provide more mentoring and higher quality on-the-job training to teachers.

In April, states will learn whether they have won or whether they need to reapply for a second round of grants.

Courtney Vanderstek, assistant executive director of the Oregon Education Association, said her union was comfortable signing off on Oregon's plan because teachers, principals and school support staff were included on the planning team and felt their views were heard.

Vanderstek and Redmond Superintendent Vickie Fleming, who headed the planning team, said the main reason to connect student test results to teachers is as a tool to help teachers do better, not to punish them.

"This is not going to be used to say, 'We want you moved out of this school or moved out of this district,'" Vanderstek said. "It is about helping teachers and administrators know how students are doing ... so we can help kids do better."

Kosty said parents probably

would not be permitted to see individual teacher results for confidentiality reasons, but they probably would see schoolwide data.

Oregon's system will track student gains not only on end-of-year state tests but also on reading and math tests that track students' progress during the year. That's important, Fleming says, because it allows for midcourse corrections to better ensure success by the end of the year.

"The best result that can happen from having this information is that the teacher who is getting great performance helps the teacher who is not getting great performance know what to do differently," she said.

"This whole fear factor about student achievement data being tied into evaluation is sort of a duh — that's what we do. We teach kids," Fleming said. "We have to embrace that we know more about what's going on with their progress."

Betsy Hammond: 503-294-7623 or
betsyhammond@
news.oregonian.com

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Q&A Ask Professional Advice About Your Health

Dental Implants

Q. Some offices advertise implant treatment without bone grafting. How can this procedure be by-passed if there is not adequate bone?

A Excellent point. Bone grafting is not an elective procedure. In some cases it is required for proper positioning and support of the implants. On average, 25% of implant cases need bone grafting. Bone is the foundation, which holds the implants. Lack of adequate bone volume causes weakness in the system. It is important to graft the deficient sites to ensure the longevity of the implants. Not grafting the deficient sites is like building a house on a bad/poor foundation. It will hold temporarily, then it will fall apart and become a disaster. If anyone tells you that bone grafting is never needed, they are misleading you. Do not fall for these advertising gimmicks. Quick treatments require short cuts and they fall apart after a while.

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A. Your problems may be due to a poorly designed

lower partial. There are many different ways to design a partial. It is of extreme importance for the health of your remaining teeth to wear an appliance, which fills the space between the remaining teeth. Without the proper support teeth become loose and drift out of position causing more problems. It is also important for the health of your tissue on the upper ridge to have a firm chewing surface. You should not chew just with your front teeth. Do everything you can to save your remaining lower teeth. (The anchor teeth are very valuable.)

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presenter ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Scorer WBT Date 23 Jan 08 Total Score 9 + 1,2 + 3 + Factor 4 Grade 4
Scoring Guide for Reflective Writing: Oregonian Article about Math Teaching & Testing in Washington

final check before detailed scoring: The prescribed parts of the activity must be present, or else it cannot be scored and is to be returned for revision. (Score "on-time" according to date of original reception.) The base presentation must be distinct from the other parts in the organization of the reflection, whether as a separate section, or set off by temporal indicators (past perfect, etc.). But the two parts of the revision may be more closely intertwined. If writer addresses Factors 3 & 4 creatively, as is allowed for in the specifications, the piece has to accomplish the major purpose of the activity; it can't be an unsubstantiated rant or inner monolog that other language professionals cannot relate to.

le of thumb for 4/satisfactory: The writer views the recollected experience differently, as a human being, and applies the article to the profession of language teaching.

ch higher level assumes that the content described in lower levels is also present. The level descriptions are typical profiles, not check-off lists to apply tightly, without advance for compensating features within the level. Levels 5/3/1 represent quality that is CLEARLY closer to 6/4/2, rather than halfway between the level below and the one above. The principle here is that the next level could be reached with moderate revision and little help.

re calculation: Factor 2 = 30%; Factor 3 = 30%; Factor 4 = 30%; Factor 5 = 10%. (If Factor 1 is eventually activated: each Factor = 20%)

Factor 1: On-time*	Factor 2: Base (pre-reading) presentation of the recollected test (objective & subjective count equally)	Factor 3: Revisitation - reflections about the test	Factor 4: Revisitation - reflections about language teaching & learning	Factor 5: Expository skills
received within 2% of the time before due date	The experience is "alive" - it includes several details (or one deep detail), and detail contributes to our insight.	Multiple insights applied to multiple stakeholder-types. Sees education as much more than individual classes with undifferentiated learners being taught with no consideration of larger features and need for change through time and circumstance.	Reflection shows integrative understanding in breadth and depth, applied specifically to the complexity of the profession: learning, teaching, society. If the understanding is not from insight gained through the reading, there must be clear evidence that the writer is confirming previous knowledge and wisdom.	Can be shared, as is, with advanced professionals. Level 5: needs a few fast edits of small errors or expressions.
received on the due date	Essentials of what, when, where, how, but no significant details. More than <u>10</u> subjective reflection. Distinguishes reactions <u>then</u> from reactions later.	Clearly applies the math-testing content to the recollected testing experience. Expresses one deeper insight gained from the article (or else explains why the insight was there before reading.) The insight probably has to do with fellow test-takers, rather than teachers, administrators, taxpayers.	There is a clear insight related to something specific about language teaching. The focus is likely limited to one aspect of the profession / one party in the process (just the learners, just the teacher, etc.).	Can be shared with peers. Readers will respect the piece. Style is not memorable or notably effective.
received up to a week after the due date	Essential facts are absent. Reflection is terse and vague.	Insights are barely insights, but instead largely superficial comparisons. Little evidence of consciousness of causality, underlying concepts, and role of circumstances.	There is evidence of attempt to make the connection between the world of the article and the world of language learning / teaching, but the outcome is either vague, narrow, trite, distorted, or simply unattended to the article (example: links the rigor of math and language study as "discipline")	Needs extensive revision of thought and repair of expository language.

*for this version of the activity, Factor 1 On-time is intended only for discussion, not for scoring and grading, and is thus grayed-out.

1
 6
 4
 2

The first classroom learning experience that resulted in significant testing of that knowledge placed me back in high school. At the time, I had been attending math and language arts classes at the high school level for three years and, already taken two practice SAT's (PSAT). In my final year of high school, I took my SAT and scored a 1090.

The testing circumstances were very formal and strictly presided over by certified teachers. I myself and my peers were all tested in reading, writing, and math. Additionally, we students were given a limited amount of time to complete each section of the test. The eventual scoring would place each student on a scale of 1-1600 which is intended to reflect on each person's general intelligence and wisdom in relation to his/her peers. The SAT has created a standardized way of assessing each of our high school learner's general intelligence and overall progress K-12. In this respect, the SAT has effectively accomplished its purpose.

Now in my final year of college, I believe that the SAT still accomplishes its goal of widespread standardized testing of high school learners. However, I do not believe that it is an accurate representation of learner intelligence. While math, reading, and writing are all fundamental skills, little attention is paid to other important aspects of education, such as history, logic, communication, mechanics, etc.

After reading the article, I realize that it brings up an interesting point about teaching methods and curricula with regard to state testing standards. Teachers should work together and organize their curricula so that they have more focus on mastery of specific topics and aspects of math, reading, and writing so that curricula do not overlap and proper attention is being paid to each topic -- especially if student progress is to be gauged by state-organized standardized tests.

(However, there was one aspect of the article which may require some critical attention. According to the article, "the goal [of the changes] is to realign what is being taught in the classroom with what is being tested on the [WASL]." I do not know if I fully agree with this stated goal. Undoubtedly it is the job of the schools to ensure that each student receives a quality education, however to adjust entire curricula for the sole purpose of having better statewide test scores is a potentially dangerous decision. Such is the case in the Japanese education system which has long focused its curricula on achievement of high standardized test scores. However, in the last 15 years, there has been much consideration that teaching in such a way doesn't promote high levels of individual or creative thought.

It seems like there is a difficult decision to make as to whether teachers should have power to test and grade autonomously. However, if those teachers aren't educating their students well, then shouldn't someone or some organization (such as state government) regulate and regularly test students to gauge whether they are being educated well or not. Conversely, is it a good practice for the government to regulate how and what teachers are supposed to and not supposed to teach? Is the government effectively tying the hands of teachers with state standards and standardized testing?

The answer to these posed questions are unclear and certainly will not be answered in the near future. The education of our youths and young-adults is certainly a important and problem filled issue. It seems that whenever some politician or teacher poses a new set of changes to our country's education system, no matter how insightful they seem at the time, new problems quickly arise in place of the old ones (such as No Child Left Behind). Discretion must be used when any new changes are to be proposed and seriously considered as many new problems may occur that could very well put our country's education system in a worse state than it was in previously. fl

"experiences don't place recollection might"

here's the big point

yes!

however often comma doesn't work here - see above, where it's used correctly

could be cut 50%

Just tell us you took the SAT. The rest is jamika

We all know this too.

sprawling sentence

mis used

"answers" are not "answered"

Standardized tests were introduced originally to protect students from prejudice, but of course other problems have emerged

presenter ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Scorer WBF Date 23 Jan 08 Total Score 519 Grade _____

Scoring Guide for Reflective Writing: Oregonian Article about Math Teaching & Testing in Washington
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The writer views the recollected experience differently, as a human being, and applies the article to the profession of language teaching.

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Factor 1: On-time*	Factor 2: Base (pre-reading) presentation of the recollected test (objective & subjective count equally) 1/8	Factor 3: Revisitation - reflections about the test 1,8	Factor 4: Revisitation - reflections about language teaching & learning 1,8	Factor 5: Expository skills 5
received within 1/2 of the time before due date	The experience is "alive" - it includes several details (or one deep detail), and detail contributes to our insight.	Multiple insights applied to multiple stakeholder-types. Sees education as much more than individual classes with undifferentiated learners being taught with no consideration of larger features and need for change through time and circumstance.	Reflection shows integrative understanding in breadth and depth, applied specifically to the complexity of the profession: learning, teaching, society. If the understanding is not from insight gained through the reading, there must be clear evidence that the writer is confirming previous knowledge and wisdom.	Can be shared, as is, with advanced professionals. Level 5: needs a few fast edits of small errors or expressions.
received on the due date	Essentials of what, when, where, how, but no significant details. More than 1 subjective reflection. Distinguishes reactions then from reactions later.	Clearly applies the math-testing content to the recollected testing experience. Expresses one deeper insight gained from the article (or else explains why the insight was there before reading.) The insight probably has to do with fellow test-takers, rather than teachers, administrators, taxpayers.	There is a clear insight related to something specific about language teaching. The focus is likely limited to one aspect of the profession / one party in the process (just the learners, just the teacher, etc.).	Can be shared with peers. Readers will respect the piece. Style is not memorable or notably effective.
received up to a week after the due date	Essential facts are absent. Reflection is terse and vague.	Insights are barely insights, but instead largely superficial comparisons. Little evidence of consciousness of causality, underlying concepts, and role of circumstances.	There is evidence of attempt to make the connection between the world of the article and the world of language learning / teaching, but the outcome is either vague, narrow, trite, distorted, or simply unattended to the article (example: links the rigor of math and language study as "discipline")	Needs extensive revision of thought and repair of expository language.

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~~Handwritten scribble~~

15 Jan

One of the best! Thank you!

I suppose the classroom learning and subsequent testing experience that is most relevant to this class, and readily comes to mind, was in a second year Japanese language course I took at Portland Community College before I transferred to Portland State about three years ago. No English was spoken in the class by the teacher, and students were discouraged from using any language other than Japanese during class time, but the teacher would take questions in English during the ten minute break in the middle of each class, or after the class was over. Circumlocution was encouraged, no matter how awkward the phrasing, rather than falling back on English; I believe the purpose of this was to promote real communication in Japanese, and to build the important skill of circumlocution, which requires a more organic use of the language. For most classes the teacher would demonstrate a new grammatical structure or concept, breaking it into simple terms, and give some examples, then the teacher would have us partner up, or break into small groups, and practice the new concept with scripted dialogues, or with some sort of role play activity in which students had an opportunity to use the new concept in a more natural way. We also had homework, which usually consisted of text book or hand-out reading, exercises from the text book, or other brief written exercises.

Students were expected to study new material on our own as well. Each week we were given a set of kanji—also called Chinese characters—that we were expected to learn; at the end of the week we would be given a quiz on the new kanji, to make sure we learned them, and a list of new ones to learn for the next week. Each term there was a mid-term and final oral exam. The exams consisted of a private one-on-one conversation with the teacher in her office. The teacher would ask us questions in a conversational way that elicited responses that required us to use all the major new concepts and grammatical structures we learned in class. The teacher made notes on our performance, and rated us on how well we could use the new materials, and on our over all capability to communicate in Japanese. There may have been other components to the classroom learning and the exams that I do not remember. I think there was a written part to the exams as well, but strangely I can't remember exactly. I do remember that the oral part of the exam was the part that all the students got stressed out about though.

Yes! So often neglected

comma doesn't work here - period or semi colon

or; We--

Ask me sometime how my kids learned Kanji & Kanji

Sounds like a modified OPI to me.

Yup, long ago I published an entire article about oral testing, including stress.

The classes seemed very demanding at the time, but I also enjoyed them a great deal. I feel that I really learned a lot from those classes, so they must have been pretty effective, but my wife is Japanese so I was a very motivated learner, and did a good deal of study outside class, some of it in Japan, that was also very valuable. At the time I really had no idea about how a language should be taught; the only other language classes I have ever taken were some German classes in high school, but I didn't really seem to learn much in them at all. When I studied Japanese at PCC I didn't know what to expect from a college level language class, so I just took for granted the way it was taught. Now that I have been studying Applied Linguistics here at PSU I feel that the PCC Japanese program was very good. The program used fairly state-of-the-art methods, and it seems to have been pretty effective at least as far as what I got out of it. State-of-the-art techniques don't necessarily make for a good program, but I feel in the case of the PCC Japanese program they worked really well. The oral exam seems like it was a pretty good way to determine how well we learned, and how much we studied. On the other hand, the conversational style of it seems like it may have been problematic in terms of consistency of evaluation.

I'm sorry!

After reading this article I found myself reflecting on standards in the public education system. It seems very important that standards be agreed upon across the entire system, that they are high enough to ensure that students learn what they need to know, and stringent enough that they learn it to an adequate level of competency. Of course at the college level the issue of standards across the system is a little different, especially when it comes to language education. Many students pick certain schools just for the languages taught, and methods of instruction used, however I found it frustrating that the Japanese programs at PCC and PSU are so very different as far as method and curriculum. Many students start at PCC and move onto PSU, and it really would have been beneficial to me if the Japanese language programs had meshed together. Though this was not the only factor that led to my decision to not further study Japanese at PSU, it was a significant one. I decided to take up my study of Japanese again once I get to Japan. I have heard many other students of Japanese, who made the trek from PCC to PSU, make similar complaints. I've heard the PSU program uses much older methodology based on the audio-lingual method, and many students who take Japanese

You said it!

Can't use comma + however this way

to understand!

and are in the Applied Linguistics program complain that the method is needlessly rigid, (even penalizing students for using language more advanced than is currently being used in the curriculum, or so I've heard) and frustratingly difficult. I have also heard that many students who come to the program from PCC have a lot of difficulty making the transition and often have to take second year classes over again. Now all that aside, I haven't experienced the program for myself, and do not wish to make any judgments as to which is the better program—perhaps the PSU program's rigidity forces a higher level of proficiency—I just wish that both PCC and PSU had the same standards and practices in their Japanese programs, or at least similar enough ones that students could transition from one to the other. I hope this isn't beside the point.

*Dream on!
We've made
more progress
at K-12 than
in post-sec.*

It is very interesting to see how standards for a school system are decided upon. It must be very difficult to decide upon testing and teaching standards with so many people weighing in. If I ever find myself teaching at a public high school, which one day I may, this very political process of deciding on what will be taught and how it is decided will become very important indeed. I think perhaps this view into a seemingly successful instance of setting the standards for a teaching program and test standards gives a lot of insight into just how difficult a process it can be. Democracy can certainly be a messy business at times.

Tougher in enough for languages. Imagine the battles in social studies + English + arts (when anybody cares about that, of course!)

I saw a little of how "unnecessary" this business was in East Germany, and of course the French are famous for their uniformity of schooling. The political complexity is why I fume when I see the bumper stickers. I doubt many of the drivers of those cars would be happy with the consequences of having education funding the way defectors - the people who provide the money also specify the curriculum - Of course, when one's own party is in power ---