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BAELS3B

UNIT 2

CONTENT

Unit 2 discusses the principles of language assessment as administering/making tests shouldn't be done lightly and recklessly. If a test is administered irresponsibly, it would be detrimental to the student's future performance. A test is effective when it is dependable, can be given within appropriate administrative constraints, and accurately measure what it wants to measure. With that, there are five principles of an effective language assessment: practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback. Practicality is determined by the teacher's (and the student's) time constraints, costs, and administrative details, and to some extent by what occurs before and after the test. Test and test administration reliability can be achieved by making sure that all students receive the same quality of input, whether written or auditory. Validity is the most complex and important principle. A test could both be practical and reliable but lacks validity. Authenticity is the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a target language task. It can be enacted in the real world. Lastly, the design of an effective test should point the way to beneficial washback.

EXPERIENCE

Since tests are a common occurrence in a learning facility, these principles are more or less facilitated within the tests I have encountered. I have stated on the essay quiz that reliability is something I deemed the most important out of the five principles because I've experienced unfair and biased grading. Although I understand that it's something inevitable, especially in essay quizzes or tests that need the teacher's subjective and objective opinion to grade it, it still made me lose self-esteem and confidence that I can still do better. This happens when the test failed to elicit positive washback. One thing that I also noticed is that in this current learning setting, it is hard to maintain reliability in tests. Test administration is one of the factors of reliability and being in an online setting, there will be unavoidable problems (i.e. the teacher or students have internet connection problem) that may occur during the administration of the test. I also want to add that face validity is sometimes the basis of the test-takers, including me, if the test is reliable, valid, and authentic. Even though experts view this as a superficial factor.

REFLECTION

Before this lesson, I only know that a test shouldn't be done lightly and that a test should be dependable. This lesson filled the gaps in my knowledge about tests and assessment. Validity is considered the most important principle out of the five should we rank them, but I always felt as a learner that reliability comes first before anything else. Moreover, my experience taught me that if I ever want to be a teacher, I should make sure to give proper feedback and make tests that can provide washback. The five principles are useless when students themselves feel that the tests are just hurdles in their learning journey. They should feel that the tests are something that measures their learning achievements and could also learn from the tests to do better next time. The goal is to retain the learning and to learn more. These principles exist for the students first and teachers second.

APPLICATION

These five principles, although not strict, are something I could use when I critique and review my own administered tests if I ever want to become a teacher. This lesson had emphasized that although the process of designing effective assessment instruments is far so complex to be reduced to five principles, they still serve as an excellent foundation to build my own tests.