

Testing Tips

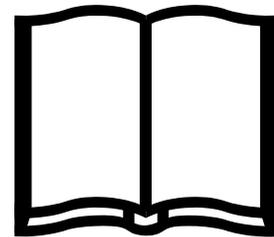
Beyond Testing Tips

Francesca Di Silvio, Center for Applied Linguistics

This month's Testing Tips answers a question that many readers of this column may have: How can I learn more about assessment and improve my assessment knowledge?

One way, of course, is to submit a question for a future **Ask a Tester** column by sending an email to opat@cal.org with the subject line Ask a Tester. Beyond this newsletter, there are a variety of resources to help increase your understanding about the fundamentals of assessment and ways to assess language in your specific context. The following list includes suggestions to fit different needs but is by no means comprehensive. Take a look in your area for other opportunities – local college and university ESOL, FL, or linguistics departments sometimes provide resources, host workshops, and offer courses about assessment as well!

1. Make use of free online resources about language assessment offered by Language Resource Centers and other research institutions:
 - Second language assessment materials at [CARLA](#) (Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition at the University of Minnesota)
 - Assessment resources for less commonly taught materials at [CLEAR](#) (Center of Language Education and Research at Michigan State University)
 - The Foreign Language Assessment Directory and companion resources at [CAL](#) (Center for Applied Linguistics)
 - Testing and assessment webinars from [LARC](#) (Language Acquisition Resource Center at San Diego State University)
2. Access references about language assessment theory and practice:
 - Brown, H.D. (2004). *Language assessment: principles and classroom practices*. White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman.
 - Hughes, A. (2003). *Testing for language teachers* (2nd ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press.
 - Articles about assessment in journals about language teaching and learning such as *Foreign Language Annals*
 - Subject-specific journals such as *Language Testing* and *Language Assessment Quarterly*
3. Participate in training on language assessment:
 - Train as a rater for the Modified Oral Proficiency Interview (MOPI), AP Examination, or other language assessment used in your instructional context. You can search for these opportunities online.
 - Sign up for professional development sessions offered through your district or home institution.
 - Find workshops or webinars, like those offered by [LARC](#), and work with your home institution to bring them to your area to help you and your colleagues.



- Start a discussion group with your colleagues about your questions and issues relating to assessment, and share the results of your discussions across your network.
4. Learn about language assessment at professional conferences.
- Attend sessions in the Assessment strand at the ACTFL Annual Convention.
 - Attend presentations on testing at the conference of your national language association or your local FL teaching conference such as [NECTFL](#) (Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) or [SCOLT](#) (Southern Conference on Language Teaching).



These methods offer just a start to building your assessment knowledge, a journey that will be informative and rewarding for your instruction!