
ESOL Tests and Testing

Review by Kalei Kapuni'ai

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ESOL TESTS AND TESTING. Stephen Stoyhoff and Carol A. Chapelle. 2005, Alexandria, Virginia: TESOL, pp. 208. ISBN 1931185166. Price: \$29.95 (Member: \$21.95)

This text can be used by teachers and administrators to learn more about appropriate ways to assess ESL/EFL students. General information about assessment is provided, including concepts such as the importance of assessment and how to close the gap between teachers and testers. The practical advice offered in this book is informed by recent developments in research, especially the educational measurement theory.

Also included is basic information relevant to and a review of 20 of the most frequently administered tests of English ability in the world. These reviews consist of three sections: test purpose, test methods, and justifying test use. This section would be particularly useful for ESL/EFL teachers who are helping students prepare for a specific standardized test.

In addition, the authors present information on how to use a test manual to learn more about a test before administering it. This section focuses on the structure and content of typical test manuals, their relevance for test administrators, information about scoring and interpretation of assessments, and a discussion of reliability and validity. Another important assessment topic addressed here is the issue of how to evaluate the usefulness of tests. Some information covered includes the limitations of validation theory and a guide on how to analyze a test a teacher is considering for a given population. This chapter is particularly interesting for ESL/EFL teachers during the test selection process.

Finally, information about why and generally how to develop tests of English ability is discussed. Included is information about how to evaluate and improve a self-made test.

The text addresses each of the major topics thoroughly, using language and organization that is reader-friendly and attractive. This book offers a great deal of useful information and guidelines for ESL/EFL teachers and test administrators about assessing English language ability.

About the Reviewer

Kalei Kapuni'ai holds a dual BA/BS degree in cultural studies and environmental science from Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. He teaches ESL part-time at Central Middle School in Honolulu, Hawaii, and is a graduate student in the MATESL program at Hawaii Pacific University.