



Moving Students Forward via Interactive Assessment

- The Impact of IA on Student Learning, Challenges Teachers Face Practising IA and the Way Ahead

**Miss Nicole Tavares
and
Professor Liz Hamp-Lyons**

Abstract:

This paper examines Hong Kong English teachers' exploration of the meaning and practice of 'interactive assessment' (IA) and its implications for teacher education. Grounded in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978) that knowledge is constructed through dialogue, in line with Valsiner's (2001) *future-in-the-making* model and developed based on the theories of educative assessment (Stiggins, 1998), assessment as feedback (Wiggins, 2004) and dynamic assessment (Lantolf and Poehner, 2004; Poehner, 2008; Poehner and Lantolf, 2005), IA is an initiative in the most recent school-based assessment reform in Hong Kong which advocates an expansion of the interactive, mediating and collaborative role of the teacher in the process of assessing students' oral language. IA is nonetheless counter to prevailing conceptions in most educational cultures of how assessment 'should' be done and thus presents ideological, linguistic and pedagogical challenges.

Adopting a Vygotskian sociocultural approach to the analysis of teacher-student while-assessment discourse and teachers' IA strategy use, this paper reports on the results of an action-research-based study of seven Hong Kong junior secondary schools seeking to help teachers improve their IA skills. The paper will discuss how local English teachers interpret IA and the major constraints and difficulties they face in its implementation. Drawing on pre- and post-assessment interview data, teacher reflections, and the observation and analysis of actual IA episodes in the classroom, the paper explains aspects of students' performance teachers (fail to) focus on, reasons for their 'strategic' choice and the factors limiting their ability to assess interactively. Pedagogical implications for teachers' lack of ability to practise IA will also be examined and recommendations for teacher professional development made.

Nicole Tavares

Nicole Tavares is a teacher educator in the Faculty of Education of The University of Hong Kong where she teaches on the BA&BEd, BEd and PGDE English Language Education programmes and runs professional enrichment courses for local teachers on SBA and other related areas. Before joining the University in 2001, she was English Panel Chairperson at a local mainstream secondary school for nearly a decade where she taught second language learners across all levels. Her main research interests are in dynamic/interactive assessment, teacher assessment readiness and teacher professional development.

Liz Hamp-Lyons

Liz Hamp-Lyons, is an Honorary Professor in Education at The University of Hong Kong, and is Professor of English Language Assessment at the University of Bedfordshire. With Professor Chris Davison, she developed the HKCEE school-based assessment speaking component for the HKEAA, and with Miss Nicole Tavares she has developed the principles and practice for Interactive Assessment as part of a large QEF project.

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All are welcome!

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