



Integrating assessment and learning in task design

through activity theory

**Steve Andrews &
Matthew Clarke**

Abstract:

Current assessment activities, instruments and procedures for oral English language assessment in the senior secondary school are dominated by the demands of the externally-set and marked oral exams; hence their range is narrow and their validity is questionable. School based assessment, with its focus on authentic tasks conducted in the classroom, offers scope for transcending these limitations. But to be effective, school-based assessment tasks and the procedures for their classroom implementation must be carefully developed in order to ensure the integration and alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. This presentation will examine the potential of activity theory as a framework for designing integrated school based assessment tasks, in which the task is conceived as a mediating artifact between the subject, i.e. the learner, and the object, i.e. the desired learning outcomes. Within this conceptualization the task is viewed as a collaborative, dialogic and potentially transformative structure that enables learners to develop increasing levels of competence within their zones of proximal development. The presentation will also employ the notion of scaffolding and assisted performance to consider ways of ensuring that the task balances challenges with support for learners. Illustrations will be drawn from research with teachers and students in junior and senior forms.

Matthew Clarke

Matthew Clarke led the task development group with Steve Andrews in a recent QEF project to promote assessment for learning with junior forms in Hong Kong schools.

His research interests include discourse analysis, teacher identity formation and development, as well as language and literacy education.

Steve Andrews

Steve Andrews was involved in two recent assessment for learning projects funded by the QEF and is currently conducting research into the impact of SBA as an assessment innovation in Hong Kong secondary schools. His other major research interests focus around L2 teachers' language awareness.

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LG 01 Hui Oi Chow Building,
The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road**

All are welcome!

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