



Fairness as an issue in school-based assessment



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Abstract: What is fairness? What makes a test fair? How do we know when a test is unfair? What is school-based assessment? Is it a test, or about testing? How do we cope with questions about fairness in school-based assessment? These are all questions that are asked by teachers and other education professionals whenever they are confronted with tests. Parents too want to know that decisions about their own child are being made in fair ways. The public want to know that decisions about which students enter which forms of education are the right ones, and to them that means fair ones. But in order to judge whether a traditional test or a more modern decision-making process such as school-based assessment is 'fair' we need to look at many sides of the question. This seminar will introduce and discuss different sides of the question and will explain how they operate in school-based assessment.

Prof Liz Hamp-Lyons is an Honorary Professor in the Division of Language and Literature, Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong, as well as at the Universities of Nottingham, UK and Melbourne, Australia. Her work on formal and alternative assessment has spanned three decades and has contributed to theory and practice in language assessment internationally. She was Principal Researcher of the HKEAA research and development project Professional Development for Teachers in Preparation for School-based Assessment in the 2007 HKCE English Language Examination, and is Consultant Investigator on a longitudinal study of the implementation of school-based assessment in the 2007 HKCE English Language Examination. With Dr Chris Davison she has been researching and developing materials for use in professional development short courses for English teachers implementing SBA in their classrooms. Professor Hamp-Lyons' most recent scholarly book is *Assessing the portfolio: Principles for practice, theory and research* (Hamp-Lyons & Condon 2000, pub. Hampton Press) and an advanced textbook *Study Writing* (Hamp-Lyons & Heasley, pub. CUP) will be out in mid 2006. She has published extensively in journals such as *Language Testing*, *World Englishes*, *System*, etc, and in many edited collections.

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Chair: Dr Chris Davison

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