Quality Standards of Online Language Tests – The Future of Testing

Martin Beck

beck@mondiale.de

Mondiale-Testing GmbH (Switzerland)

Abstract:

Anyone who has taken on the task of developing a test knows how difficult and time consuming test authoring is. Few teachers embark upon a course without the support of an authoritative book or similar material. Likewise, more and more teachers are turning to independent tests to aid them in their teaching.

When asked about language testing, most people will immediately think of high-stakes certificate examinations used for selection purposes (academic admissions, career recruitment, immigration). These tests, sometimes called strategic tests, are by far the most prominent examples of language test but tests designed around teaching and learning, tactical tests, are instrumental in bringing students up to the levels required for success in certificate exams. Syllabus-related tests are often used to align students with the appropriate teaching material or to test the achievement during the course. Equally important, are tests that monitor the overall language proficiency and show the big picture. Syllabus-independent tests are necessary to do this.

What institutes need is a cost-effective test which fulfils highest quality standards. Anyone who has taken on the task of developing a test knows how difficult and time consuming test authoring is. The same technology that spawned blended learning provides the solution for state-of-the-art online language testing.

There will be described the quality management which has to be part of the development process to provide a valid and well calibrated online language test product.

The presentation will give a first insight in the future project outline of an International Technical English Exam.