Developing and Promoting Language Assessment Literacy

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Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) is commonly defined as the knowledge and skills that language teachers should possess to utilize a variety of assessment/testing procedures for the purpose of evaluating individual student performance and/or knowledge and provide them with appropriate support. It is also considered to be one of the core attributes that language teachers ought to develop in the process of teacher training (Lam, 2015) because teachers' judgements and classroom assessments may have profound effects on students' future opportunities (Jang, 2014). Despite the fact that LAL has a possibility to make language teaching more effective for a growing range of test stakeholders (Taylor, 2013), a majority of teachers are not well trained to be knowledgeable and skillful in assessment (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). Additionally, very little empirical research to date has been conducted to systematically explore the effectiveness of LAL from the various viewpoints such as assessment context, teachers' beliefs, their knowledge, and their teaching/training experience. In order to monitor teachers' LAL development and establish effectiveness and efficiency of LAL, this on-going study, as a large experimental project, aims to provide support to pre-service and in-service EFL teachers in Japan with an assessment program and an assessment knowledge test for teachers. Based on the literature review which addresses issues and challenges of LAL in the ESL/EFL classroom community, the author proposes an assessment course syllabus to give teachers as a control group an experiential opportunity to understand effective classroom assessment procedures and a preliminary version of an assessment knowledge test which will be used to measure the development of their LAL before and after the course in her future research.