

TESL/ALT Brown Bag Colloquium Series



Friday, September 27th
12:00-1:00pm
212 Ross Hall



Validating an English Oral Communication Placement Test

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&
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Many universities carry out post-admission English language assessment of international students using locally-developed placement tests. This study uses an argument-based validity framework to examine a locally-developed oral communication test used to place students into an ESL oral communication course. Seven instructors of this course were asked to rate their students ($n = 85$) on the extent to which they needed and were benefiting from the class. The results showed that 80 students (94%) were judged as needing and/or benefiting from the class, whereas only 5 were judged as not needing or benefiting from the class at all. Closer inspection of these 5 students' placement test scores showed that they were all very close to the cut score needed to pass the test, suggesting that aside from a few errors right near the cut-score, the placement test is doing a good job of not placing students into the ESL oral communication course, who would not benefit from it.