

New Directions in Vocabulary Assessment

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- We have tests that provide some indication of:
 - vocabulary knowledge at different levels of frequency
 - knowledge of the Academic Word List (AWL)
 - L2 vocabulary size
 - How well words are known

- No established tests have been designed to measure students' vocabulary learning competence
- Test development has been relatively slow

Vocabulary Levels Test

- Vocabulary Levels Test (Nation, 1983, 1990; Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001)
- Measures knowledge of sets of 1000 word families at 4 levels: 2000, 3000, 5000, 10000
- and Coxhead's (2000) 570 item Academic Word List

Vocabulary Levels Test

- matching test
- 30 items per level
- Bilingual versions may have 1000 level

1. choice
2. crop _____ heat
3. flesh _____ meat
4. salary _____ money paid regularly for doing a job
5. secret
6. temperature

1. choice
2. crop _____ 溫度
3. flesh _____ 肉
4. salary _____ 薪水
5. secret
6. temperature

Positive features of VLT

- Indicates which words teachers should focus on in their courses
- Indicates vocabulary learning progress from year to year
- Indicates the level of difficulty that students may have with different texts

Positive features of VLT

- easy to administer and grade
- hard copy versions are freely available at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/paul-nation>

- bilingual versions have been created in Japanese, Korean, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Tongan, Samoan, and Tagalog

Limitations of VLT

- No 1000 word level
 - 1K level accounts for 84.3% and 75.6% of words in conversation and newspapers, respectively (Nation, 2001)
- Word lists used to create the levels are rather old
 - 2K level based on West (1953)
 - 3K, 5K, and 10K levels based on Thorndike and Lorge (1944) and Kucera and Francis (1967)

- Words at the 2000 level of West's(1953) GSL include: scold, coward, conquest, scorn, omit, rival, voyage, hollow, punctual, tremble, solemn, veil, coarse, cape, applause, oar, quarrel, scent, tame, tribe, procession, barber, vain, razor, ceremony, rake, hinder, obedient, cultivate, donkey, limb, wax, shilling, sow, haste, remedy, telegraph, thread, clay, axe, carriage, and cork

Table 1. Distribution of Vocabulary Levels Test items in the BNC word lists

BNC word list	Frequency level							
	2000		3000		5000		10000	
	tokens	%	tokens	%	tokens	%	tokens	%
1000	17	28.33	5	8.33	2	3.33		0
2000	28	46.67	15	25.00	5	8.33		0
3000	12	20.00	14	23.33	18	30.00		0
4000	2	3.33	15	25.00	10	16.67	1	1.67
5000	0	0	5	8.33	12	20.00	4	6.67
6000	1	1.67	4	6.67	8	13.33	9	15.00
7000			1	1.67		0	6	10.00
8000				0	2	3.33	6	10.00
9000			1	1.67	1	1.67	5	8.33
10000					1	1.67	6	10.00
11000					1	1.67	10	16.67
12000							3	5.00
13000							3	5.00
14000							6	10.00
Outside 14K							1	1.67

- A new Vocabulary Levels Test (NVLT) is being developed to address these limitations
- 5 levels: 1K, 2K, 3K, 4K, 5K
- Word frequency lists derived from BNC and COCA (Nation, 2012)
- 1K and 2K lists derived from a higher proportion of spoken discourse

Advantages of NVLT

- Made up of the frequency levels of greatest value to teachers
- Difference between levels is the same so may clarify vocabulary development
- Lists represent current English

Disadvantages of NVLT

- No 10,000 word level
 - Little need for this level
 - VST is available to provide a measure of vocabulary size
- No AWL level

1000 level

- | | | |
|---------|-------|-------------|
| 1 idea | _____ | white drink |
| 2 milk | _____ | things |
| 3 oil | _____ | moving air |
| 4 party | | |
| 5 stuff | | |
| 6 wind | | |

2000 level

- | | | |
|-------------|-------|--------|
| 1 capital | _____ | choice |
| 2 career | _____ | test |
| 3 committee | _____ | job |
| 4 exam | | |
| 5 fence | | |
| 6 option | | |

3000 level

- 1 accommodation _____ end
- 2 author _____ leader of a city government
- 3 candidate _____ person who wrote a book
- 4 conclusion
- 5 division
- 6 mayor

4000 level

- 1 ambassador _____ place to go out
- 2 exit _____ shape with three corners
- 3 miracle _____ surprising occurrence
- 4 relevance
- 5 specimen
- 6 triangle

5000 level

1 antibiotic

_____ disaster

2 balcony

_____ kind of medicine

3 catastrophe

_____ thing used to protect against rain

4 referee

5 shark

6 umbrella

Academic Word Levels Test

- AWL test in VLT provides a useful measure of knowledge of the AWL as a whole
- Teaching the 570 word AWL in one course may be challenging
- Teaching several sublists of the AWL may be more likely to occur

- AWL sublists were created according to frequency in academic text
- Sublist 1 of greatest value
- Sublist 10 of least value
- more useful to measure knowledge of sublists than the AWL as a whole

Relative value of the AWL sublists

Sublist	Items	Coverage	Interval between encounters in academic text
1	60	3.6%	4.3 pages
2	60	1.8%	8.4 pages
3	60	1.2%	12.3 pages
4	60	0.9%	15.9 pages
5	60	0.8%	19.4 pages
6	60	0.6%	24.0 pages
7	60	0.5%	30.8 pages
8	60	0.3%	49.4 pages
9	60	0.2%	67.3 pages
10	30	0.1%	82.5 pages

Adapted from Coxhead (2000)

AWLT

- AWLT has 5 levels
 - Sublists 1 and 2
 - Sublists 3 and 4
 - Sublists 5 and 6
 - Sublists 7 and 8
 - Sublists 9 and 10

- Format based on VLT

Sublists 1 and 2

- | | | |
|------------|-------|-------------------------|
| 1 benefit | _____ | way something happens |
| 2 focus | _____ | answer or reply |
| 3 policy | _____ | official plan or method |
| 4 process | | |
| 5 reliance | | |
| 6 response | | |

Sublists 3 and 4

- | | | |
|------------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1 attitude | _____ | total amount |
| 2 code | _____ | feeling toward something |
| 3 ministry | _____ | set of rules or laws |
| 4 project | | |
| 5 sequence | | |
| 6 sum | | |

Sublists 5 and 6

- | | | |
|---------------|-------|-----------------------|
| 1 aggregate | _____ | study of the mind |
| 2 decade | _____ | act of getting larger |
| 3 enforcement | _____ | picture |
| 4 expansion | | |
| 5 image | | |
| 6 psychology | | |

Sublists 7 and 8

- | | | |
|----------------|-------|--|
| 1 advocate | _____ | a person who speaks or acts for someone else |
| 2 device | _____ | level |
| 3 grade | _____ | subject being talked or written about |
| 4 manipulation | | |
| 5 phenomenon | | |
| 6 topic | | |

Sublists 9 and 10

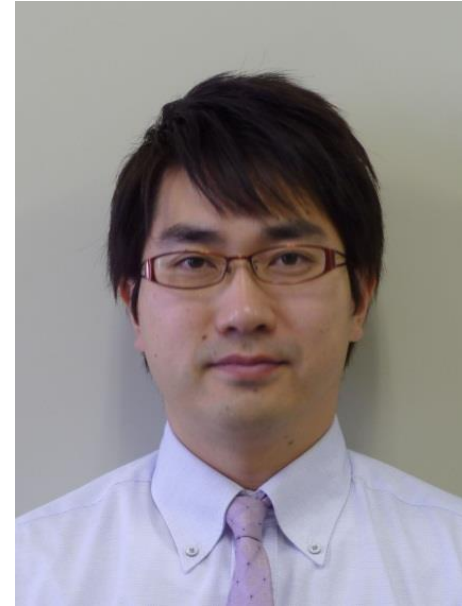
- | | | |
|---------------|-------|---|
| 1 controversy | _____ | public disagreement |
| 2 duration | _____ | group of people working for a common goal |
| 3 ideology | _____ | system of rules |
| 4 inclination | | |
| 5 protocol | | |
| 6 team | | |

Tests of Vocabulary Learning Competence

- measures of aptitude for learning words
- greatest value in assessment of most frequently used methods of learning
 - guessing from context
 - word parts
 - using dictionaries
 - learning with word cards

The Guessing from Context Test

Yosuke Sasao
Toyohashi University of Technology
Japan



Downloadable from:

<http://ysasaojp.info/testen.html>

Guessing from context

- Most frequently used strategy for dealing with unknown words (de Bot, Paribakht, & Wesche, 1997; Fraser, 1999)
- Teachable (Fukkink & de Glopper, 1998; Kuhn & Stahl, 1998; Walters, 2006)

Why create a guessing test?

- Diagnostic information on learners' weaknesses in guessing
- No standardised tests => inconclusive effects of teaching

What's involved in guessing from context?

- A) Identify the part of speech of an unknown word
- B) Look for the contextual clues
- c) Guess the meaning

(Clarke & Nation, 1980; Bruton & Samuda, 1981; Nation & Coady, 1988; Nation, 1990, 2001, Williams, 1985)

The guessing from context test (GCT)

- 20 passages: 3 questions per passage
- The first question looks at the part of speech of the unknown word
- The second question measures whether you can derive information from the context
- The last question measures whether you can derive the meaning of the unknown word

Selecting target words

- Randomly chosen from low-frequency words between the 11th and 14th 1000 word families in the BNC word lists (Nation, 2006)
- (noun):(verb):(adjective):(adverb)=9:6:3:2
- Replaced by nonsense words with the same inflectional and derivational suffixes and roughly the same length as the target words
- e.g., ostensibly => secomantly

Creating reading passages

- Selected from the BNC
- Includes one contextual clue
- Simplified (most frequent 1,000 word families)
- 50-60 running words

Contextual clues

direct description	restatement
indirect description	cause/effect
contrast/comparison	words in series
synonym	reference
appositive	association
modification	example

(Ames, 1966; Artley, 1943; Deighton, 1959; Dulin, 1970; Johnson & Pearson, 1984; McCullough, 1943, 1945, 1958; Seibert, 1945; Spache & Berg, 1955; Walters, 2006)

Q1: Part of speech

What is the part of speech of the word 'candintock'?

Like a wine **candintock** who only has to smell the wine to know how good it is, a cat can learn all it wants to know without actually eating the food.

(1) noun (2) verb (3) adjective (4) adverb

Q2: Contextual clue

What word or phrase helps you to work out the meaning of the word 'candintock'? Choose one item that applies best.

Cats have a good nose for food. Many cats smell food and then walk away without even trying it. Like a wine **candintock** who only has to smell the wine to know how good it is, a cat can learn all it wants to know without actually eating the food.

- (1) walk away without even trying it
- (2) who only has to smell the wine to know how good it is
- (3) a cat can learn all it wants to know without actually eating the food

Q3: Meaning

What is the closest meaning of the word 'candintock'? Choose one item that applies best.

Cats have a good nose for food. Many cats smell food and then walk away without even trying it. Like a wine **candintock** who only has to smell the wine to know how good it is, a cat can learn all it wants to know without actually eating the food.

- (1) consumer
- (2) specialist
- (3) seller

The original word
= connoisseur

One more example

Q1: Part of speech

What is the part of speech of the word 'nogable'?

It is likely that the published works themselves are **nogable**: they might now look different.

(1) noun (2) verb (3) adjective (4) adverb

Q2: Contextual clue

What word or phrase helps you to work out the meaning of the word 'nogable'? Choose one item that applies best.

It is likely that the published works themselves are **nogable**: they might now look different. If the writers received a prize, their works might be highly respected and have an increased value. If you read a book ten years after you read it for the first time, you might feel differently about the book.

- (1) published works
- (2) look different
- (3) highly respected and have an increased value

Q3: Meaning

What is the closest meaning of the word 'nogable'?
Choose one item that applies best.

It is likely that the published works themselves are **nogable**: they might now look different. If the writers received a prize, their works might be highly respected and have an increased value. If you read a book ten years after you read it for the first time, you might feel differently about the book.

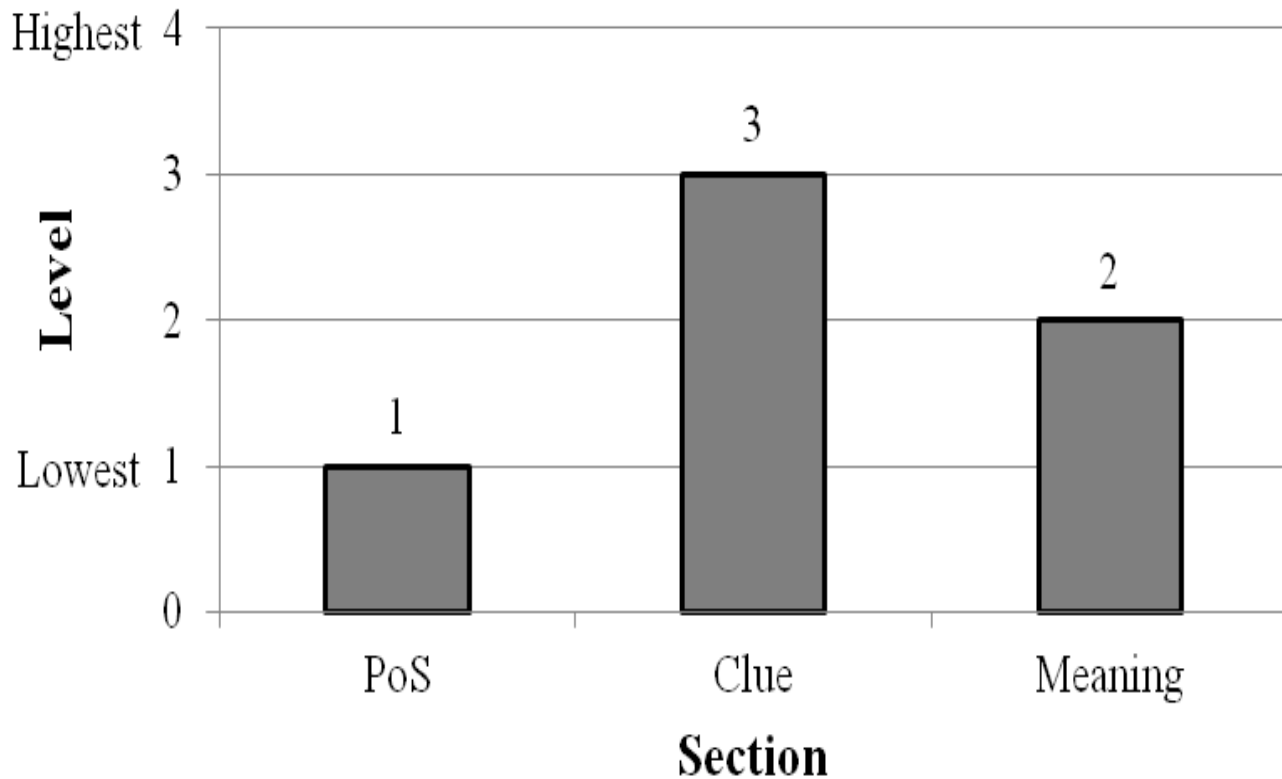
- (1) changeable
- (2) readable
- (3) valuable

The original word
= mutable

Validation

- Validation followed two pilot studies
- 428 Japanese learners of English
- October and November 2010
- Rasch analysis => 11 misfit items (49 acceptable items)

Feedback (Learner A)



Lv 4 = above 1 logits

Lv 3 = 1~0 logits

Lv 2 = 0~-1 logits

Lv 1 = below -1 logits

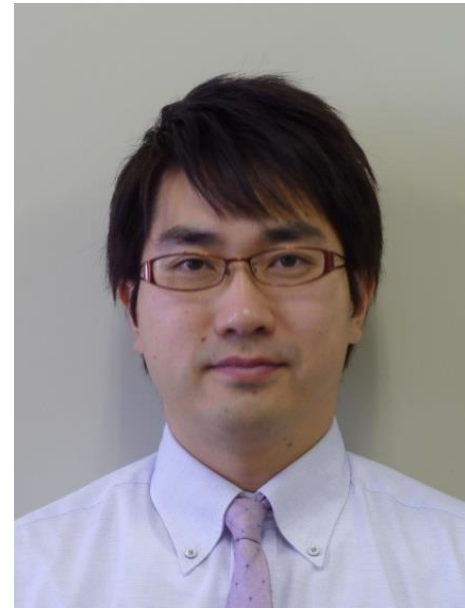
Feedback

- You might be able to improve the skill of guessing from context by using information about the part of speech more effectively
- For example,....

The Word Part Levels Test

Downloadable from:

<http://ysasaojp.info/testen.html>



Important features

- Three different levels (Easy, Middle, & Hard)

=> Teachers may quickly examine whether their students need to work on easy or difficult word parts

- Three different sections (Form, Meaning, & Use)

=> Teachers may find out which aspects of word part knowledge need to be learned

The Word Part Levels Test (WPLT)

- Word part = affix
- *un-* (unhappy, unlucky)
- Affixes that appear more than once in the first 10,000 word families of the BNC word lists (Nation, 2006)
- 118 affixes (42 prefixes and 76 suffixes) were identified

Word parts levels

- Three forms with different difficulty levels

(difficulty = Rasch item difficulty)

Form	Word part level	No. of word parts
A	easy	40
B	middle	39
C	hard	39

Word parts (example)

Easy	Middle	Hard
mis-	-wise	-let
micro-	-some	arch-
re-	-hood	-atory
mid-	ab-	-i
multi-	-ible	-ette

Sections

3 sections: **Form**, **Meaning**, and **Use**
Nation (2001:275-278)

- (1) Learners need to be able to **recognise word parts**
- (2) Learners need to be able to recognise what the affixes **mean**
- (3) Learners need to be able to recognise what the affixes **do**

Form section format

(1)po- (2) bu- (3) wa- (4) en-

- Test takers must select the affix
- Same number of letters
- Incorrect answers are a string of letters that occur in English words but are not affixes which change the meaning or the part of speech of a word

Form section

1.	(1) sal-	(2) cau-	(3) lin-	(4) dis-
2.	(1) yogh-	(2) shee-	(3) brea-	(4) fore-
3.	(1) micro-	(2) cerem-	(3) sheph-	(4) pecul-
4.	(1) -rse	(2) -ack	(3) -ful	(4) -uin
5.	(1) -onse	(2) -inge	(3) -ound	(4) -ness
6.	(1) -ly	(2) -ma	(3) -ra	(4) -na

Note. Prefixes and suffixes are typically separated into two subsections

Meaning section

7 mono- (monotone; monoculture)

(1) person/thing

(2) not

(3) one

(4) into another state/place

8 dis- (disappear; disorder)

(1) not

(2) person

(3) new

(4) main

9 -ess (actress; princess)

(1) female

(2) small

(3) not

(4) many

10 -able (acceptable; predictable)

(1) person

(2) not

(3) can be

(4) one

Use section

- Some affixes have the function of changing the part of speech of a word. For example, some word parts change a noun to a verb.
- For each item, a word part is presented with two example words. (The word part may also appear in other words.)

Use section examples

1. -ment (development; management)

- (1) Noun
- (2) Verb
- (3) Adjective
- (4) Adverb

2. -ness (awareness; illness)

- (1) Noun
- (2) Verb
- (3) Adjective
- (4) Adverb

3. -ly (clearly; finally)

- (1) Noun
- (2) Verb
- (3) Adjective
- (4) Adverb

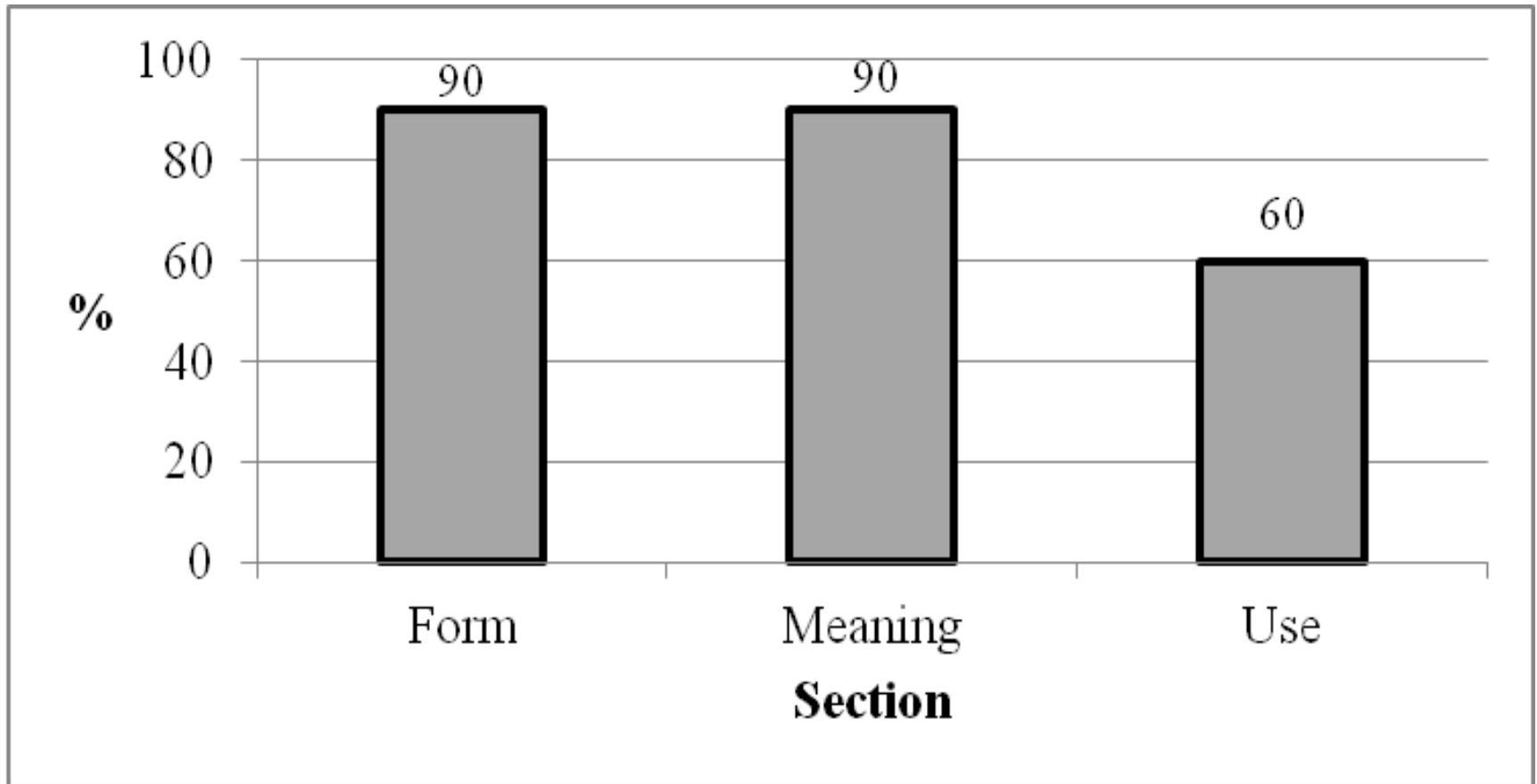
4. -y (lucky; healthy)

- (1) Noun
- (2) Verb
- (3) Adjective
- (4) Adverb

Validation

- Study 1
 - To identify and rewrite bad items
 - 440 Japanese learners of English
- Study 2
 - 1,348 participants with 30+ different L1s from 100+ different countries
 - A wide range of proficiency levels
 - Web-based format

Score example



=>Focus on use

Conclusion

- Vocabulary tests provide value to teachers, learners, and researchers
- We need to continue to update and develop new tests
- NVLT, AWLT, GCT, and WPLT are a small part of this process

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Thank you!

Assessment and evaluation are crucial cogs in the wheel of the education system and as such need to be reliable and fit for purpose. The significance of assessment of and for learning; the critical difference in their concept, purpose and approach; the importance of teacher competency in assessment methods and test development, and the significance of robust monitoring and evaluation systems in large scale projects were key themes of the Symposium. They reinforce the understanding that all of these areas need to be tackled if we are to work towards improving the teaching and learning of English. If you are interested in how to effectively evaluate or assess English language learning, this collection of papers – the proceedings from the British Council East Asia Regional Symposium on Assessment and Evaluation – is essential reading. These Proceedings capture the insights from contributors with a wide range of backgrounds and experience. The papers describe different contexts and tackle the issues from a variety of perspectives and as a result provide an immensely important contribution to discussions surrounding assessment and evaluation. This publication is free to download. Downloads Current Practices and New Directions. JOHN READ. University of Auckland. ABSTRACT. This paper surveys some current developments in second language vocabulary assessment, with particular attention to the ways in which computer corpora can provide better quality information about the frequency of words and how they are used in specific contexts.