



Planning for Assessment in Language Programs: A Practical Tool

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Mahalo, Obrigada, Thank You

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Ministry of Education



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Institute of International Education,
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Key Points

- Language Programs don't plan for assessment.
- Language Programs should plan for assessment.
- Assessments should attempt to nourish the body of linguistic knowledge.
- How do you do this?
- If it's too late, what can you do?



Lack of Planning

- Emphasis on implementation
 - Successful implementation = successful program?
- CEFL and ACFTL proficiencies, but no provisions for assessment
- UNESCO
- Malone, Susan. 2010. *Planning Mother Tongue Based Education Programs in Minority Language Communities*. SIL. Dallas.



Lack of Planning: Dangers

- Cessation of funding:
 - Evaluations are increasingly required by nonprofit funders as verification that the nonprofits are indeed helping their constituents.
- You might not be doing what you think you're doing:
 - Evaluations can identify program strengths and weaknesses to improve the program.
- Waning community support:
 - Produce data or verify results that can be used for public relations and promoting services in the community.
- Hurts legitimacy.



Lack of Planning: East Timor

- 2012 – MTB-MLE (UNESCO)
 - Mother-Tongue Based Multilingual Education
 - 3 languages, 12 pilot schools
 - no formal assessment in ToR
- 2013 – first call for assessor
- 2014 – second call for assessor
- 2015 – problems with consistency, legitimacy, and politics



Linguistic Theory

- Assessments are often not linguistically or theoretically sound.
 - Move Forward (NGO)
- They could be a tool to add to the existing body of language literature.
- Track age and level appropriate development.
 - Must be appropriate to the goals of the program (literacy, acquisition, etc.)



The Toolkit

- Multi-level program assessment
- Multi-level community assessment
- Multi-level linguistic assessment



The Toolkit

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Multi-level program assessment

- 1. Context:
 - define the situation before the program begins,
 - identify the goals and assess the needs of the community,
 - attempt to diagnose the problems underlying the needs, and
 - identify the external factors that will affect the program



Multi-level program assessment

- 1. Context
- 2. Input
 - discover potential resources,
 - learn about other programs/activities in the community that might collaborate
 - identify and describe potential stakeholders in the program



Multi-level program assessment

- 1. Context
- 2. Input
- 3. Process:
 - identify strengths and weaknesses of the program plan and implementation,
 - provide information to stakeholders and
 - keep a record of the implementation process and its impact on the community



Multi-level program assessment

- 1. Context
- 2. Input
- 3. Process
- 4. Impact:
 - relate the outcomes of the program to the original situation,
 - the goals and needs identifies by the community,
 - the objectives described in the program plan,
 - and the resources that were available to the program



Multi-level program assessment

- 1. Context
- 2. Input
- 3. Process
- 4. Impact
- Where do you get this data?
 - Interviews, surveys, meeting notes, proposals, budgets, anything from which you can glean intent



The Toolkit

- Multi-level program assessment
- **Multi-level community assessment**
- Multi-level linguistic assessment



Multi-level community assessment

- Community member attitudes
 - Above all, they deserve to know how the program is going.
- Outsider attitudes
 - Decision-makers sometimes come from outside and it is important to keep track of their perceptions.
- Teachers' performance
 - Teachers need to feel supported and looked-after.



The Toolkit

- Multi-level program assessment
- Multi-level community assessment
- Multi-level linguistic assessment



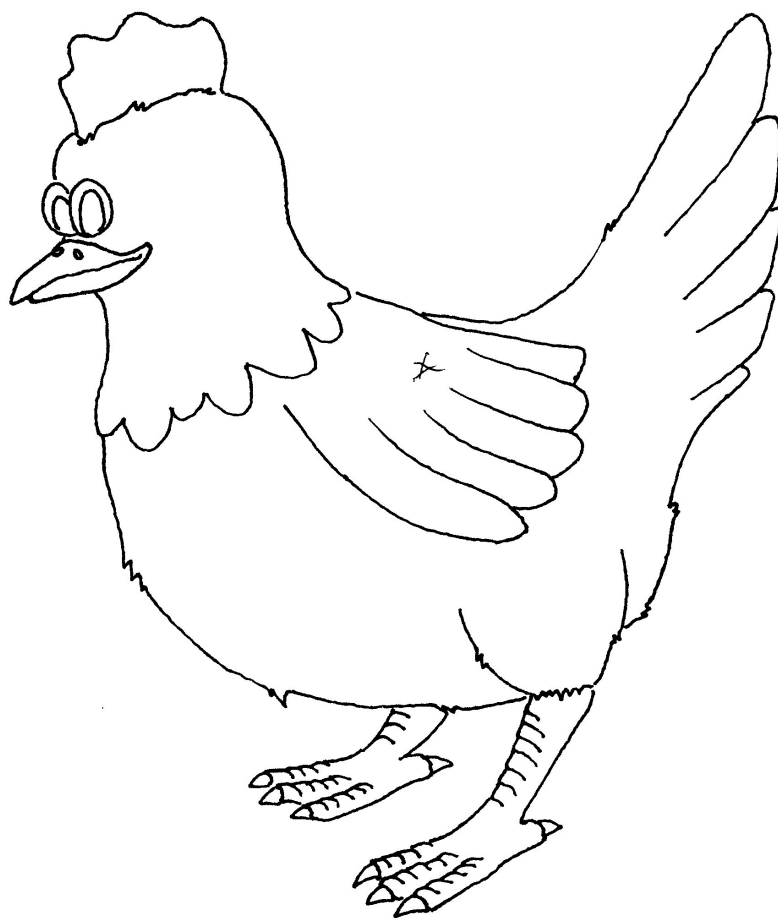
Learners' knowledge

- Traditional Benchmarks: listening, speaking, reading, writing
- Linguistic/Acquisition Benchmarks
 - Phonological development
 - Morphological development
 - Grammatical stuff: Relationships, hypotheses, passives
 - Discourse competence and constructing dialogues



Learners' knowledge

- Linguistic/Acquisition benchmarks
 - Phonological development: Pronunciation and lexical recall

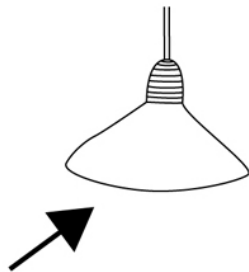
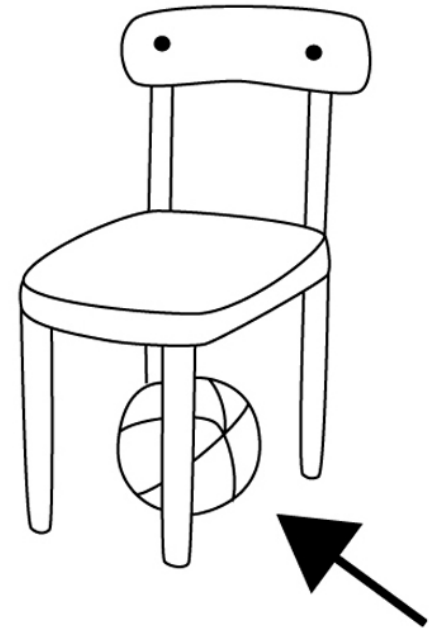




Learners' knowledge

- Linguistic/Acquisition benchmarks
 - Phonological development
 - Morphological development: Ownership, location, plurals/classifiers

- *Can you tell me where the ball is?*



- *Can you tell me where the lamp is?*

- *Can you tell me how many people are on the bus?*





Learners' knowledge

- Linguistic/Acquisition benchmarks
 - Phonological development
 - Morphological development
 - Grammatical stuff: Relationships, hypotheses, passives

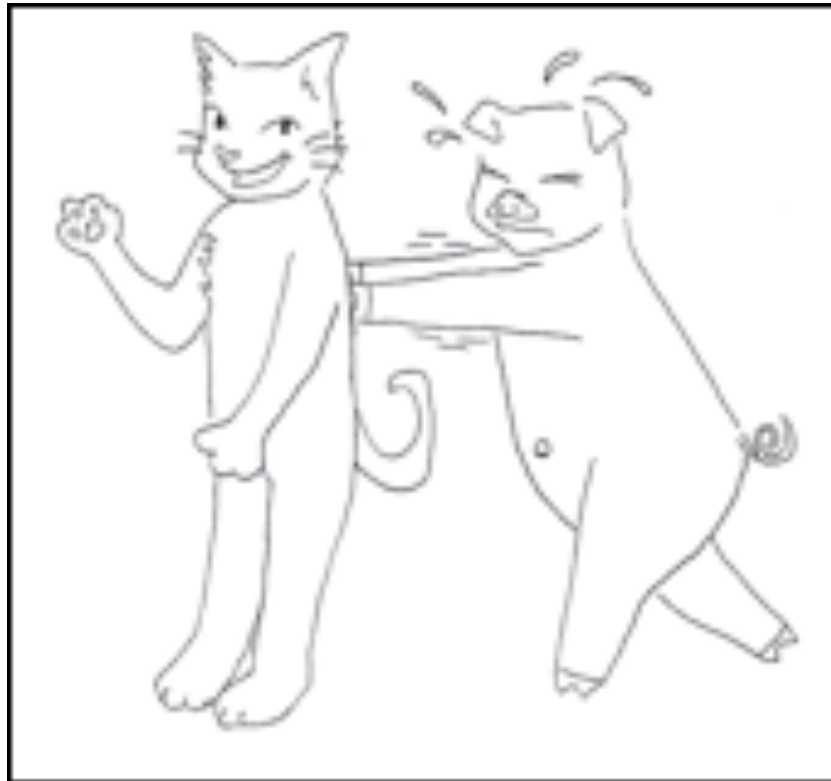
- *Can you tell me what's happening in this picture?*



- *Cinto got a new ball today. What do you think he will do tomorrow?*



- *Can you tell me what's happening to the cat in this picture?*

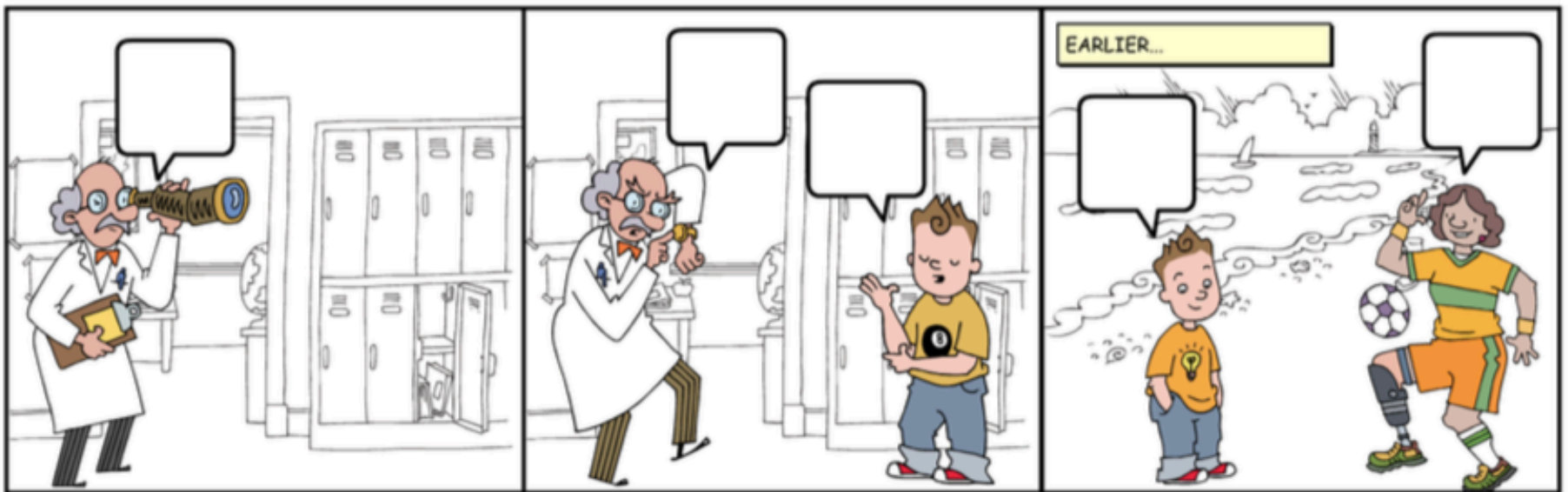
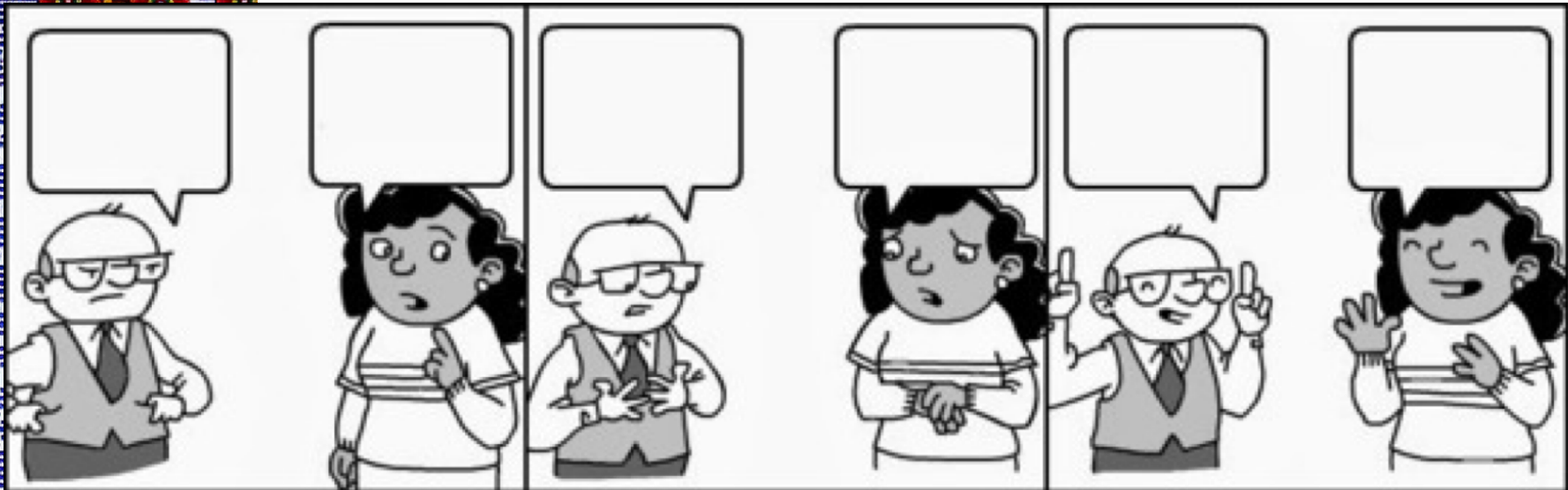




Learners' knowledge

- Linguistic/Acquisition benchmarks
 - Phonological/pronunciation
 - Morphological/ownership, location,
 - Grammatical stuff/relationships, hypotheses, passives
 - Discourse competence and constructing dialogues

- *Can you tell me what these people are saying to each other?*





Other Toolkit Components

- What do you need to do assessment?
 - Getting started and setting goals
- What do you do with the data?
 - Organizational tips for spreadsheets, basic analysis tools, basic statistics
- How do you make recommendations?
 - Really carefully!



The Importance of Context!

- Each part of the assessment ought to be considered for use, but varied to fit context.
 - Scoring - to grade or not to grade?
 - Level-appropriate tasks
 - Culturally-appropriate tasks



Conclusion

- Program assessments can be fun! Really!
- They can also be useful to the broader linguistic community.
- (Free, non-copyrighted) Assessment materials are scarce, but I'm working on that.
- Eventually everything will be hosted on my website. (Interview materials are ready now)
 - melodyannross.me



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Obrigada ba tempu!