BRITISH COUNCIL

Positive Washback?
The impact of Vietnamese learners' IELTS goals on assessment in British Council Vietnam's Adult and Upper Secondary English programmes.

Andy Milner
Head of Upper Secondary and Adult Courses,
British Council Vietnam

Aims of the session

This presentation will illustrate efforts within British Council Vietnam to incorporate IELTS criteria into the assessment of learning for both Upper Secondary and Adult learners, and the implications this has had on syllabuses, courses, teacher assessment literacy and learner sense of progress.

Format of the Session

- Introduction and Situation
- British Council Courses overview
  - Upper Secondary
  - Adult courses
- Teacher Assessment Literacy
- Summary and Conclusions
- Questions and (hopefully) answers!

What's *your* English level?

- Upper-Intermediate / Advanced / Pretty fluent?
- Native speaker / Mother tongue / Second language?
- B2 CEF?
- IELTS 8.5?

IELTS in Vietnam

- Vietnam is a top-ten country for IELTS
- c.100,000 exams taken each year
  - Graduation from High School
  - Entry to universities here and abroad
  - Requirement to graduate from many university courses in Vietnam
  - Job seeking and Career advancement
  - Access to training - public **and** private organisations

A familiar situation?

We have the results of your placement test. Well done…, you are a B1.2 and can study on our Intermediate B course.

Er…thanks. That's nice…but what band is that in IELTS, teacher?

British Council Vietnam

- 80+ years of experience creating Educational Opportunities
- 25+ years in Vietnam

- Early Years, Primary & Lower Secondary

- Upper Secondary

- Adults

The **core material** of each module is an eight-page magazine; main sections:

OUR WORLD → Get information, discuss opinions and learn vocabulary about the topic

Secondary Plus

BRITISH COUNCIL | Secondary Plus

My Practice   My Portfolio

LearnEng

BRITISH COUNCIL   Secondary Plus

Learning Sequence 1: Magazine Cover / Our World

MY STORY
STUDY SKILLS

Secondary Plus
UPPER INTERMEDIATE 1
THE SECRET

Secondary Plus
UPPER INTERMEDIATE 1
OUR DIGITAL

MY STORY

STUDY SKILLS

1. SHARE IDEAS

3. READ A LETTER TO A NEWSPAPER

READING

2. PREPARE TO READ

LETTERS to the editor

WHAT GETS YOUR GOAT?

STUDY SKILLS

1. SHARE IDEAS

3. READ THE ARTICLE

READING

2. PREPARE TO READ

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

by Amy Campbell

Upper Secondary Syllabus

Academic Skills

Exam Skills

Upper Secondary Assessment

BRITISH COUNCIL

Secondary Plus

MY LEARNING: You are what you eat

Project:	Create a petition about a food related issue in your school or community.			
Success criteria				
Writing skills	X ✓	**Speaking skills**	X ✓
I wrote a short title for my petition.		I used persuasive language to encourage my classmates to sign my petition.	
I used persuasive language, including imperatives, strong adjectives and adverbs.		I summarised my idea at the beginning of the presentation.	
I used facts to support my views.		I supported my views with facts.	
I separated each point with paragraphs or bullet points.		I used modal verbs to help express my views.	
		I used sentence stress to emphasise my opinions.	
Core skills			X ✓
I developed my research skills.			
I collaborated well with my group to plan our presentation.			
I developed my understanding of the importance of playing an active part in society and being a responsible citizen.			

Upper Secondary Assessment

BRITISH COUNCIL

Secondary Plus

MY LEARNING: You are what you eat

Project:	Create a petition about a food related issue in your school or community.

Success criteria				
Writing skills	**✗ ✓**	**Speaking skills**	**✗ ✓**	
I wrote a short title for my petition.		I used persuasive language to encourage my classmates to sign my petition.		
I used persuasive language, including imperatives, strong adjectives and adverbs.		I summarised my idea at the beginning of the presentation.		
I used facts to support my views.		I supported my views with facts.		
I separated each point with paragraphs or bullet points.		I used modal verbs to help express my views.		
		I used sentence stress to emphasise my opinions.		
Core skills			**✗ ✓**	
I developed my research skills.				
I collaborated well with my group to plan our presentation.				
I developed my understanding of the importance of playing an active part in society and being a responsible citizen.				

TEACHER EVALUATION GRID: My project

Class: _____   Module: _____

1 = completed the task(s), but on a basic level and didn't achieve all the objectives.
2 = completed the task(s) and achieved all the objectives.
3 = completed the task(s) fully and achieved the objectives, exceeding in some.
4 = completed all parts of the task(s) fully and exceeded all the objectives.

	Agreed learning objectives➔ Students' names ⬇ Notes↘	FOCUSSED SKILLS						OVERALL LEVEL
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								
7.								
8.								

But it's not enough in Vietnam!

Well done in your assessments! You are doing really well and have B+ in most of them this term.

Er...thanks. That's nice...but what does that mean in IELTS, teacher?

50/50

	A	B	C	D	E
1		**Book**	**Unit Coverage**		
2	**PA-T1**	Sec+			
3					
4		New Insight into IELTS	Selected skills and lessons as below		
5				TEACHER ASSESSED	
6				PEER / SELF-ASSESSED	
7		**Suggested content coverage and pacing** (please be sure to cover all assessment tasks)			
8	**Week**	**Lesson 1**	**Lesson 2**	**Assessments**	**Homework suggestions**
9	1	**Writing 1:** Task 1 p107-110 Comparing and grouping information	**Writing 1:** Task 1 cont.		
10	2	**Writing 2:** Task 2 p127-130 Ideas into arguments	**Writing 3:** Linking your ideas p131-134 Linking / complex sentences		Prep for writing
11	3	**IELTS Writing Task 1 and 2 assessment**	Sec+	01. IELTS Writing Test 1	My Practice
12	4	Sec+	Sec+		Prep for project
13	5	Sec+	Sec+	02. SEC+ Assessed Project	My learning
14	6	**Listening 1:** Identifying main ideas p21-23 Short answer / multiple choice	**Listening 2:** Beyond surface meaning p25-27 Matcing / classification		Practice listening
15	7	**Reading 1:** Scanning and skimming p43-46 Short answers	**Reading 2:** Identifying main and supporting ideas p48-53 Note completion		Practice reading
16	8	**IELTS Reading Test** **IELTS Listening Test**	Sec+	03. IELTS Reading Practice Test 04. IELTS Listening Test	My Practice
17	9	Sec+	Sec+		Prep for project

Elementary | Pre-Int | Intermediate (draft 1) | Upper Int | **Pre-Advanced** | Assessment Overview_All levels

Name: _____   Teacher: _____

Prepare key discussion points and follow-up questions for the IELTS Speaking Part 3 type questions below.

Task 1

Are people in your country happier now than they were in the past? Why / why not?

What are some of the challenges that young people in your country face?   Where can they get support?

Is the pursuit of career success and wealth a good life goal, or should more time be spent on helping young people develop skills necessary to deal with failure?

TEACHER NOTES

Assessment rubric

Provide a score for **all 4 criteria**. Give an average <u>overall score</u> based on these. You can use the rubric on page 2 of this document to help you select grades A-E.

A = Performance exceeds expectations for this level

B = Strong performance against expectations

C = Performance meets expectations for this level

D = Support required to meet expectations

E = Performance does not meet expectations

Rubrics are for **internal use only** and are designed to support teachers in identifying key strengths and weaknesses in learner productive skills, and to support increased standardization when allocating

UI	SPEAKING			
	Task and fluency	**Vocabulary**	**Grammar**	**Pronunciation**
A	Main ideas relevant and supported. Speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence. May be some language-related hesitation at times , or some repetition and/or self-correction. Uses a range of discourse markers with ease and accuracy.	Range of vocabulary allows some flexibility and precision. Uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation. May be occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation. Extensive accurate and appropriate use of relevant vocabulary from unit of study and beyond.	Uses a variety of complex structures. Error-free sentences are common. Extensive accurate and appropriate use of relevant grammar and structures from the unit of study and beyond.	Can be understood without effort. Fairly good ability to replicate natural stress and intonation patterns. May mispronounce individual words occasionally but this does not prevent clear communication of message.
B	Main ideas relevant and generally supported, although supporting information may be limited / less relevant. Can speak at length but occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation might affect coherence. Uses a range of discourse markers but not always appropriately.	Range of vocabulary adequate to complete task. Tries to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy. Some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication. Some accurate and appropriate use of relevant vocabulary from unit of study and beyond.	Mix of simple and complex sentence forms. Some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication. Some accurate and appropriate use of relevant grammar and structures from unit of study and beyond.	Can be understood without much effort. Some ability to replicate natural stress and intonation patterns but this might not be sustained. May mispronounce individual words frequently but this does not prevent clear communication of message.
	Range of vocabulary more or less			

Adult Courses

- myFoundation (A1)
- myClass (Work, Study, Live)
  - Elementary (A1-A2)
  - Pre-Intermediate (A2-B1)
  - Intermediate (B1)
  - Upper-Intermediate (B2)
- IELTS Preparation (B2+)

New! IELTS **Premium**

- Diagnostic Consultation & Study Plan
- 90 hours F2F learning
  - Up to 72 hours of IELTS lessons
- 150 hours of online learning
- IELTS Writing service
- Mid-course and End-of-course Tutorials

New! IELTS **Premium**

- Diagnostic Consultation & Study Plan
- Feedback on <mark>IELTS **Speaking**</mark> in tutorials with IELTS Experts
- Feedback on <mark>IELTS **Writing**</mark> via homework submission
- Self-Assessment in class and online for **Reading** and **Listening**

BRITISH COUNCIL

IELTS COACH DIAGNOSTIC TEST: INTERVIEWER

Hello. May I ask your name, please?

Part 1 (2 minutes max): *Choose one or two questions from the following.*

- What do you do?
- What do you like about your job? Why?
  or
- What do you like about your studies? Why?

Let's talk a bit about IELTS...

- When are you planning to take the test?
- Why do you need IELTS ? What scores do you need?
- Have you taken it before?
- Was it easy or difficult? Why?
  Or
- Do you think it is going to be easy?

Part 2 (4 minutes max: 1 min instructions, 1 min preparation, 2 minutes

Now, I'd like you to speak for one to two minutes about the topic of English.

Describe your experience of learning English and how it is important to you:

You should say:

When you started learning English

BRITISH COUNCIL

IELTS COACH CONSULTATION FORM

Writing Task: Highlight here the closest descriptors:

IELTS — WRITING TASK 2: Band Descriptors (public version)

Speaking: Highlight here the closest descriptors:

IELTS — SPEAKING: Band Descriptors (public version)

YOUR ASSESSMENT

To be copied and pasted into the essay and completed by the marker.

OVERALL	COMMENTS and SU...
Task Achievement / Response vement:	
Choose an item. ▼	
Coherence and Cohesion	
Choose an item.	
Lexical Resource	
Choose an item.	
Grammatical Range and Accuracy	
Choose an item.	
Choose an item.	

I012IWGL	Writing Practice Test

Recap

- IELTS preparation and practice now 50% of Upper Secondary courses (Pre-Int and above).
  Some assessed tasks mimic IELTS tasks and use IELTS influenced criteria.

- Adults can opt for a blended IELTS programme of flexible learning and with expert advice.
  All skills are assessed with reference to IELTS criteria (S&W) or marking systems (L&R).

- So, what does this mean for our teachers?
  - From vague notions of Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced
  - through to the CEF levels
  - through to IELTS Academic ratings

"Taylor (2009: 21) states that: 'There can
be no doubt that testing and assessment are growing in importance
and influence around the world today.' She identified two reasons
for this growth. The first is globalisation, which leads to a desire to
align assessment frameworks with internationally accepted
standards. The second is the increasing
reliance on test scores in education, the workplace and, perhaps
most controversially, in migration and citizenship practice."

Sheenan & Munro, 2017
ELT Research Papers 17.08:
© British Council 2017 Design /G239
10 Spring Gardens
London SW1A 2BN, UK

BUT,..

"Testing and assessment is an under-taught area in many EFL teacher training programmes and, as a result, many teachers have received little or no training in the subject (Taylor, 2009). However, testing and assessment have become an increasingly important part of classroom practice. The impact of globalisation is felt keenly in the world of language teaching, and English has never been more popular than it is now."

-ibid

Assessment Literacy

- Steps taken:
  - Encouraging our teachers to take official IELTS Speaking examiner training
  - Unofficial IELTS Writing assessment training
  - British Council's own IELTS training – 6.5 hours of self-access and reflective learning
  - The frequent use of IELTS Public Descriptors
  - Regular INSETT geared towards IELTS and IELTS teaching
  - Training up a core of IELTS experts in, for example, marking IELTS Writing tasks.

Conclusions

We increasingly find it important to…

- …**acknowledge the need of learners** to understand their level of English with reference to IELTS – even if it is not designed to infer performance in criteria directly relevant to them
- …take the opportunity to provide **meaningful feedback** on progress and performance with certain groups of learners for whom this criteria is meaningful, and add to it other feedback for their language development too
- …provide **clear tools for teachers** to work with and support their standardisation in applying those criteria
- …take this opportunity to **help teachers develop** their assessment literacy in an important area (IELTS and EAP) so that they are supported in both their teaching and in their career.

A future situation?

We have the results of your placement tests. Well done everyone…, you are a B1.2 and can study on our Primary Tigers course.

That's nice…but what band is that in "IELTS Junior", teacher?

Conclusions?

- IELTS washback can be positive for course design and for the associated assessment of learning
  - **if** that is what the learners both need and want.
- IELTS washback can support the development of both teaching and learning
  - **if** attention to broader language and skill development is not lost
  - **if** we teach to the construct, as well as the test

Q & A

- Thank you for listening!
- Any questions?

STATEMENT OF APPROACH TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING – SECONDARY PLUS

This is our statement of approach to English Language Teaching for secondary students aged 11–17. The statement defines the elements of secondary practice that make up effective teaching and effective learning.

IN BRITISH COUNCIL CLASSROOMS, LEARNERS THRIVE IN THEIR LANGUAGE LEARNING BECAUSE TEACHERS …	IN SECONDARY CLASSROOMS, TEACHERS …
set and negotiate realistic goals with and for their learners.	give appropriate support and guidance to achieve learning goals. Learning goals are shared with students and parents; they include language skills and core skills for learning to equip students for the future. Each module works towards a final task-based project so students know where their work is leading and see a clear purpose for it.
inform learners of the aims and purpose of learning activities.	make learning meaningful and relevant by informing students of the learning aims and purpose of tasks and activities so they understand what they are going to do and what they are going to learn.
create a positive and inclusive learning environment where learners learn with and from each other and feel confident using English in the classroom.	help students become confident users of English, and develop good pronunciation and a wider vocabulary. Each student is treated as an individual and listened to and respected. Students are also encouraged to listen to each other and to support and respect each other.
make lessons engaging, personally relevant and appropriately challenging.	select and adapt materials and activities according to students' interests and needs. Topics and tasks allow students to relate their learning to their own experience and opinions. Tasks are adjusted to cater for different levels of language ability; lesson topics are interesting and engaging to get students thinking and speaking. Project-based tasks reflect real-life situations so language arises naturally to create genuine need.
help learners develop intercultural awareness and understanding.	introduce topics and activities which help students develop their awareness of themselves and their lives, of others, of other cultures and of the world around them.
help learners develop a positive and persevering attitude towards their English language learning.	provide students with a positive experience of learning so they enjoy challenge and high achievement. Help students take responsibility for their own learning by showing them how to be accountable for what and how they learn.
use a variety of resources and technologies to meet their learners' needs.	use a wide range of multimodal resources, such as IWB, images, a variety of written and listening text types, digital and video content, student-generated content
help learners identify the strategies that suit them best to become successful and autonomous language learners.	structure lessons so that students become independent learners and build their confidence. The tasks support critical thinking, creativity and learning how to learn skills. Throughout each module students are encouraged to review their learning, assess their own performance and decide what they need to do to improve. They are encouraged to research tasks at home to prepare for subsequent lessons.
use assessment to promote and measure learning.	use assessment for learning and assessment of learning to respond to students' learning needs. Students self- and peer-assess their learning against agreed criteria to identify what they have done well and what they need to work on next.
give timely and constructive feedback on learning and progress.	use constructive praise and encouragement to help students make improvements. Assessment focuses on what the students can do and on what they have achieved. Teachers report to parents on a regular basis and encourage parental involvement in their child's learning.
encourage learners to reflect systematically and regularly upon their learning and progress.	help students review their learning throughout the lesson and to reflect on what they have learnt, how well they did and what they found easy or difficult; students are helped to identify what they can do to make further progress. The *Secondary Plus* magazine format creates anticipation, interest and ownership as students build up and personalise their own collection to provide a record of their learning.

Secondary Assessment

help learners identify the strategies that suit them best to become successful and autonomous language learners.	structure lessons so that students become independent learners and build their confidence. The tasks support critical thinking, creativity and learning how to learn skills. Throughout each module students are encouraged to review their learning, assess their own performance and decide what they need to do to improve. They are encouraged to research tasks at home to prepare for subsequent lessons.
use assessment to promote and measure learning.	use assessment for learning and assessment of learning to respond to students' learning needs. Students self- and peer-assess their learning against agreed criteria to identify what they have done well and what they need to work on next.
give timely and constructive feedback on learning and progress.	use constructive praise and encouragement to help students make improvements. Assessment focuses on what the students can do and on what they have achieved. Teachers report to parents on a regular basis and encourage parental involvement in their child's learning.
encourage learners to reflect systematically and regularly upon their learning and progress.	help students review their learning throughout the lesson and to reflect on what they have learnt, how well they did and what they found easy or difficult; students are helped to identify what they can do to make further progress. The *Secondary Plus* magazine format creates anticipation, interest and ownership as students build up and personalise their own collection to provide a record of their learning.