
Learning & testing alignment - towards positive washback

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ICAEA Workshop

The ICAO LPRs - 10 years on: Progress or Pain?
Dubrovnik April 2017

Caution!

- Washback or Backwash?



An integrated approach

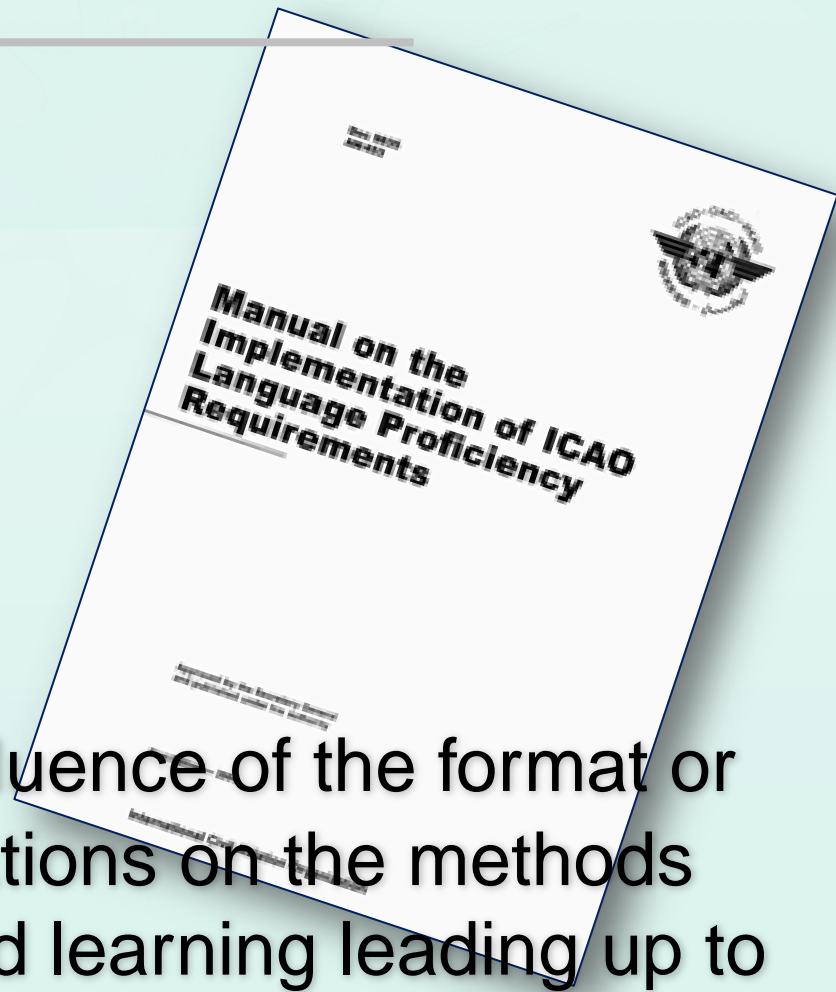
- Washback
- Test dominance
- Authentic real world communication
- Integrating learning & testing
- The workshop



Washback

- ICAO9835

- ✿ Washback **effect**. The influence of the format or content of tests or examinations on the methods and content of teaching and learning leading up to the assessment.



What is washback

- influences teachers and learners to do things **they would not otherwise do** (Messick, 1996)
- washback **only** linked to the intro and use of the test (Messick, 1996)
- connects the design and use of an assessment with what teachers and learners do in the classroom when preparing for **that** assessment (Green, 2014)

Does washback exist?

- **reaction** to external standardised testing (Bailey, 1996; Alderson, 1993)
- **contrary** to the principles of communicative approach, (Bailey, 1996)
- connected to **outmoded** teaching methods (Bailey, 1996)
- no **empirical** evidence (Bailey, 1996)
- **little** research in the field (Alderson, 1993)

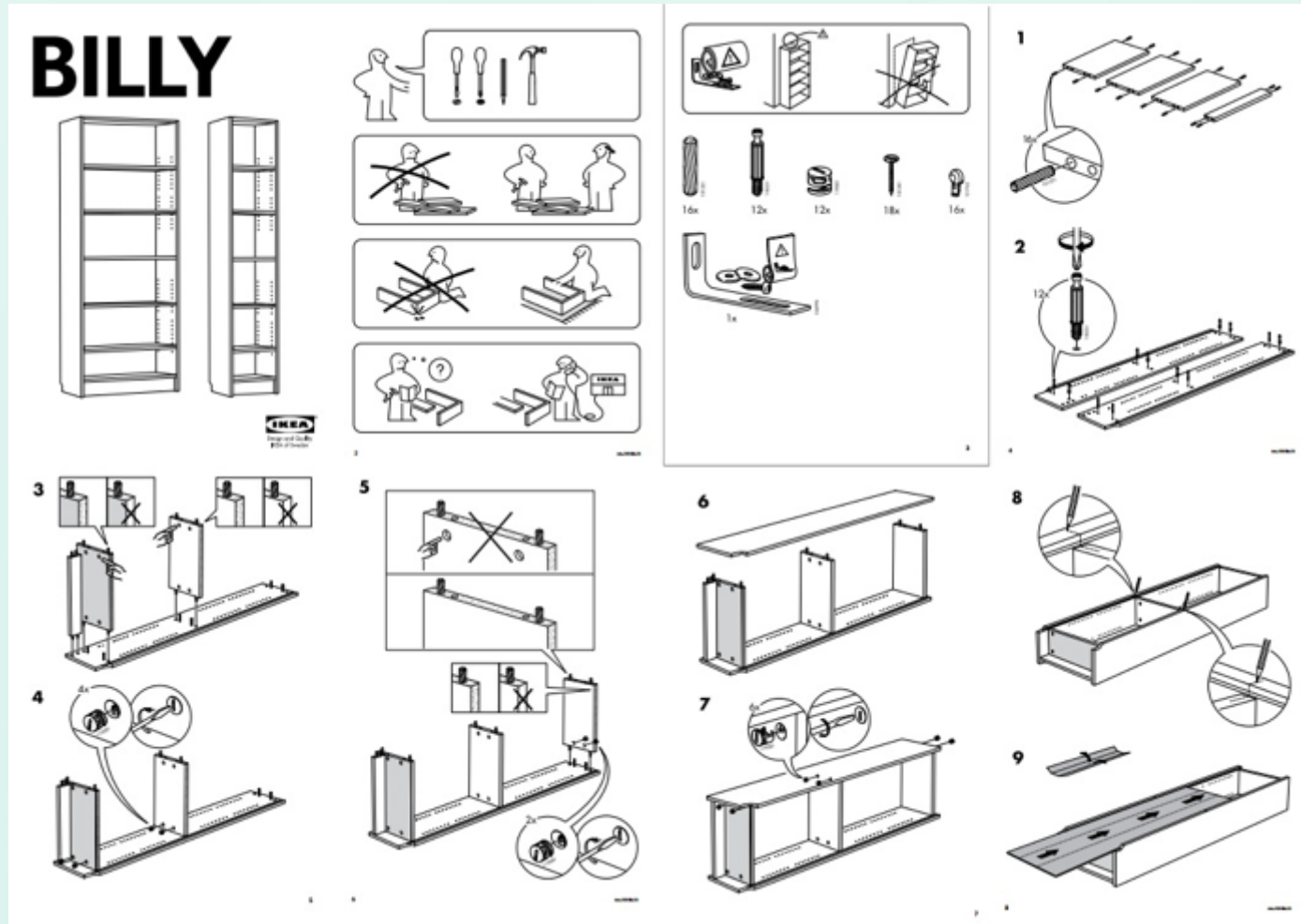


The communicative approach



- related to the **behaviour** of the participants, (Bailey, 1996)
- **authentic** language situations and tasks (Shohamy, Bailey, 1996)
- **congruency** between test tasks and real life (Doye, 1991)
- the test induces in the educational system curricular and instructional changes that **foster development** of cognitive skills that the test is designed to measure (Bailey, 1996)
- **alignment** of valid test performance and valid learning content. (Fulcher, 2009)

Fine if things go as planned...



Fine if things go as planned...



However ...

- My students only want to pass the test
- I would be failing my students if I didn't teach to the test
- All I want is my ***** Level 4 , 5 or 6* *delete where applicable*

However ...



If we test without learning?...

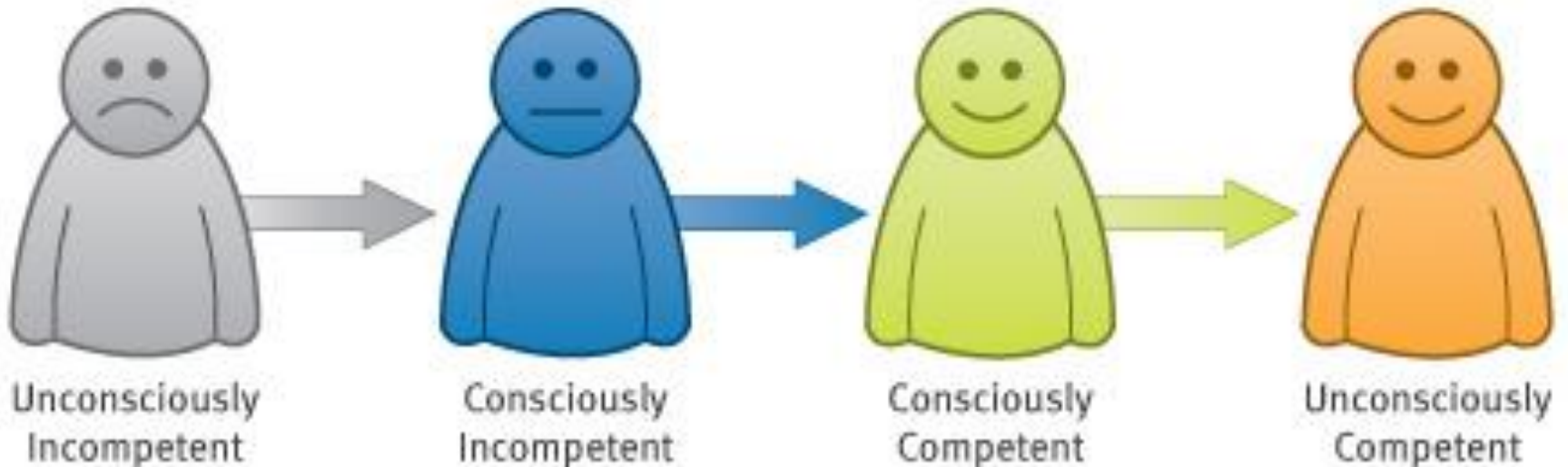


How valid are the results?



"The doctor will see you now —
I can't promise that he'll talk
to you, but he'll see you."

How valid are the results?



How valid are the results?



Our objectives...

- **Authentic** test = real-life situation. (Doye, 1991)
- Parallel to the **real world** (Messick, 1996)
- Test = same tasks/features of **TLU** (Douglas, 2000, Paramasivam 2013)
- Learners ... fundamental **professional** language. (Feak, 2013)
- **Improved learning** of the construct (Bailey, 1996)
- **Authentic** test mirrors **curriculum** content & firmly linked to learning **goals** (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996)

Theory > practice – combined roles

- Test development
- Test administration
- Rater/Assessor
- Rater/Assessor Trainer
- ELPAC ELE
- Teacher Trainer
 - - pilots PPL (A) & (H)
 - - ATPL (BJ)
 - ATCO (TWR/APP/ACC)
 - Apron



Example

Airbus A319 Aborts take-off 21.12.2013 Bristol UK

ATC	EZY64LW surface wind 28015knots, runway 27 cleared for take-off
P	Runway 27 cleared for take-off EZY64LW
P	Tower EZY64LW stopping
ATC	EZY64LW roger are you able to taxi or do you need to stay there for a moment or two?
P	We'd like to taxi to the end and vacate. EZY64LW
ATC	EZY64LW roger taxi and vacate at the end of the runway and taxi holding point G4
P	Roger taxi to the end and vacate and taxi holding point G4 EZY64LW
ATC	EZY64LW just for planning purposes are you planning on returning to stand or taxiing round for departure?
P	You'll have to stand by on that we're going to need to do some drills when we clear the runway and then it'll become clear whether we need to go back to stand.
ATC	EZY64LW roger and do you require any assistance or do you need me to make any phone calls to people on the ground?
P	At the moment no we're fine as we are.
ATC	Ok no problem.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=55BLAtAvcRE

General plain language (EGP)

non-domain specific lexical & grammatical forms, paraphrasing of ESP, negotiation, clarification

Semi-coded plain language (ESP)

Technical lexis, delexical verb collocations, acronyms, initialisms, redundancy

Language in
Aeronautical
Communications
(Bullock 2015)

Restricted (RTF)

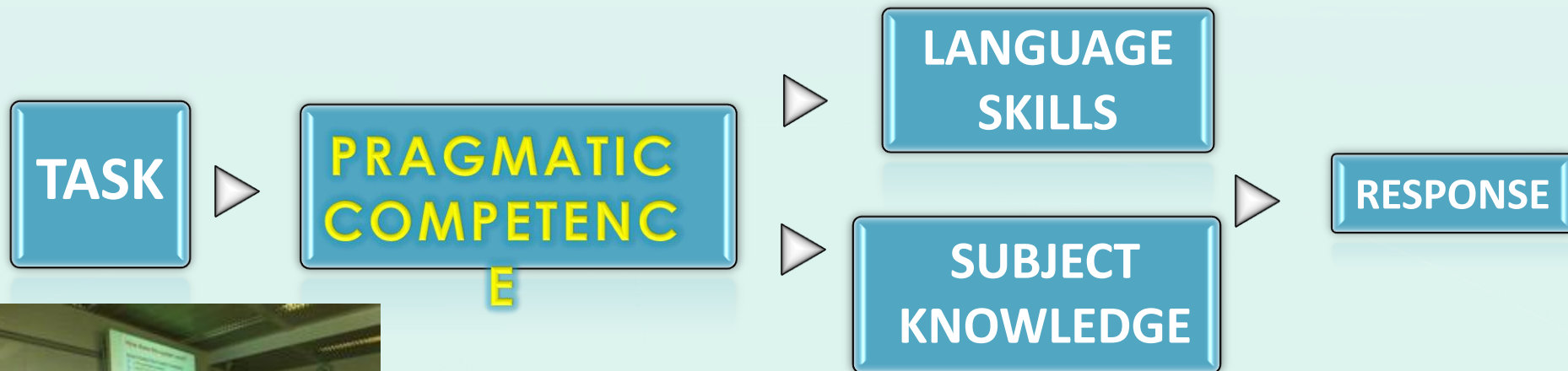
Radiotelephony

**Effective
communication**
*Blended learning
skills*



Assessment in the learning process

- Combining all the elements of communication (Bullock, 2015)
- Background Knowledge – underpins communication
- **Pragmatic competence** = mediator (Bachman & Palmer, 1996)
 - internal traits of TT v external character of situation context



learning literacy



**REAL
WORLD
OBJECTIVE**

NEEDS
ANALYSIS

CURRICULUM,
MATERIALS
METHODOLOGY

FORMATIVE
ASSESSMENT
LEARNING
SUMMATIVE
ASSESSMENT

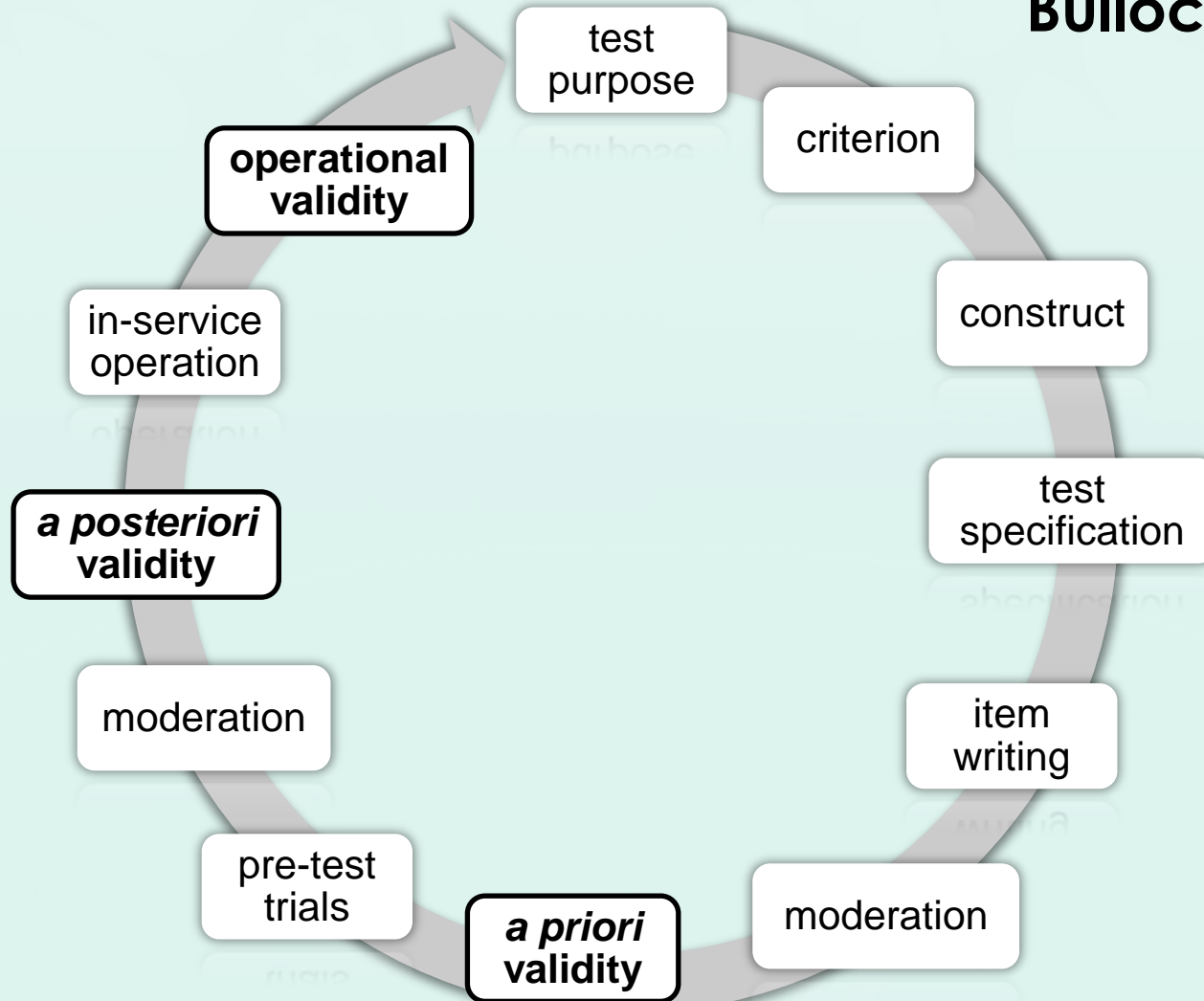
FORMAL
TESTING



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Test Development

Fulcher 2010 /
Bullock 2015



Benefits - learning

- Skills for **real life communication** needs
- **Analysing** authentic communication
- **Aligning** learning /testing
- **Focus** on domains, skills, functions

Benefits - testing

- **Real life** task based items
- TTs a better **understanding**
- Rater/Assessors – **focussed** training
- **Documentation** linking testing to learning

Workshop



- **Test Tasks**
 - Evaluate them for +/- effect / influence on learning
- **TLU authentic communication**
 - Learning task
 - Test task

Recalibration

- Based on authentic **TLU** communication
- **Learning** oriented
- **Learner** oriented / Constructive Alignment
- Course contents > **beyond** the test: Real life
- **Valid** test tasks
- Testing & learning **alignment**
- Address all **stakeholders**



Thank you for listening!



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Linked-in

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