Using Comparisons within Language Examination Results to Validate Language Teaching Assumptions

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Abstract. Assessing language learning outcomes is an essential grading requirement that can be used to monitor students’ progress as well as to evaluate teaching effectiveness and curriculum quality (Gallavara et al., 2008, pp.40-41; OCDE, 2007, 2010). To satisfy the requirements of course assessment, language instructors use an array of language testing tools to methodically assign summative grades to assess their students’ language proficiency. This research reports on a Year 1 Semester 1 French language course programme for 2009-2010 enrolling 33 students. The course used a set of six sub-tests which were administered as Test 1 in week 6. It also used a second parallel set of six sub-tests which were given at the end of the course as Test 2. Students’ grades were determined by summing their performances on all 12 sub-tests. This represented considerable teacher effort and resulted in only one grade for each student. To add value to the assessment effort expended by language instructors this paper shows how to also use the students’ results for course evaluations. The paper describes four language course assumptions, the pedagogic theory and advantages of each assumption, how these assumptions were implemented and how the students’ results were re-used to evaluate how successful or unsuccessful were the assumptions. The pedagogic theory is significance in that it helps to resolve a major conflict in the language learning literature and introduces the Neuro-linguistic Learning Model (NLM).

Key words: language proficiency; language testing; quality assurance; course evaluation; Neuro-linguistic Learning Model.