



Sharon Duncan – LAS Author

The first LAS test was developed in response to the Lauw revenues, which intern came about because of the 1974 Lauw verses Nichols Supreme Court decision. In fact the very first LAS was developed as a favor to a friend, Quinton Del Gado who was principal in a San Francisco School district and the school had no test to determine English proficiency of children who spoke over 17 different languages. At that time we reviewed some 45 different language tests, and found that none of them both met the criterion of the American Psychological Association that also had developed specifically the meet the needs of immigrant students. The result of that review was the development on the theoretical rational for the LAS and the piloting standardization and publication of the first test in 1976.

All of the tests and the revisions of the tests undergo a very stringent series of developmental phases. In the first phase of the test we review the theoretical rational, determine if it is culturally, socially and technologically appropriate.

The development of the loss test items involved a series of very stringent phases of development. In the first phase a theoretical rational is developed. Whether this is a revision of the test or whether this is a new test and we look it in terms of cultural, linguistic and educational appropriateness for the target group. In addition we review the literature of language acquisition. We look at the requirements of the individual state DOE. We would go to expert opinions and we even do on-site observations of the linguistic demands of the classroom.

The first LAS test was created in response to the now remedies. Which intern had been created in response to the 1974 Law verses Nichols decision. In fact, the first LAS was created as a favor to a friend, Quintin Del Galdo, who was a principal at the San Francisco school who had children that spoke over 17 different languages and the school had no test to determine their language proficiency. We reviewed some 40 or 50 language tests and we determined that no one test could meet both the criteria of the American Psychological Association that also had been specifically developed to meet the needs of immigrant students.

The result of the review was the development on the LAS theoretical rational and standardization of the test and the publication in 1976.

All of the LAS tests and the revision to the tests undergo a series of very stringent phases of development. In the first phase the theoretical rational is developed or revised according to the cultural, linguistic, social and political demands of the time. In this phase we also do a review of the literature on language acquisition. We visit the requirements of the individual departments of education for the various states. We look at classroom methodology. We get expert opinions and we do on site observations of the linguistic demands of the classroom.

In the second phase the specifications for the individual test items and passages are developed, but subsequent to that a team of professional writers, most of them experienced teachers developed the actual items and write the passages that would be piloted in standardizing the tests.

In the pilot phase these items are tried out, so to speak, the data is gathered on the test, and then all the data information is analyzed and we make all the necessary revisions to the test. Following that we

go to standardization which is nationally, then in the case of the Spanish materials internationally. After the standardization data is in and all the tests are scored and a whole list of gradings are done on it, the data is analyzed and a long series of reliability and validity tests are conducted and the result of that is the selection of the items and the preparation of the materials to publication. The publication of these materials includes the ancillary materials, which would include, of course, the examiner's manuals. In the case of the oral materials it would be audiocassettes, there might be stimulus items picture books.

The final step, of course, is the preparation of the materials for publication, which in addition to the actual test itself includes the examiner's manual, audiocassettes, two picture booklets and items of that sort.

All of the LAS tests embody a conversion approach to language assessment, which includes a number of different kinds of items. We have multiple choice items, we have single answer pass/fail items and then we have some scales that actually look at the performance of the student. One such performance subscale is in story retelling procedure. Over the decades a number of language researchers have discovered that both children and adults when they are asked to retell a short oral passage will revise the passage according to the level of vocabulary and syntax that they have at the time.

The rubric that we have developed over several decades provides the basis for all of the holistic scoring of the storytelling examples.

The rubric that we have developed for the holistic scoring are based on several decades of research from the scoring and analyzing of many thousands of language samples from the multiplicity of ethnic groups.

The process for developing the story cross involves finding an appropriate theme and content. Appropriate level of language and the linguistic and statistical equivalents of the alternate stories.

All of the LAS test represent a conversion approach to language assessment. What this means is that different kinds of items are included in different kinds of subscales. So we have multiple choice items. We have single response, pass fail items and we have subscale that actually tests the performance of the child. One such performance subscale is in story retelling.

All of the LAS tests represent a conversion approach to language assessment. What this means is that there are different kinds of items in the tests such as multiple choice items, single response pass/fail items, and performance subscales, such as story retelling. A number of language researchers have discovered that both children and adults when they are asked to retell a short passage will revise it according to the particular level of vocabulary and syntax that they have at the time. The rubric that we have developed for scoring in story retelling is based on several decades of research and the analysis of many thousands of language samples from a multiplicity of ethnic groups.

When we create the story problems for the story telling subscale we look at a number of questions. These include the appropriateness of them and the content of the story. We look at the appropriate level of language in a target group and we look at the statistical and the linguistic equivalents between the stories within one test or between the different forms of that test.

Some of our stories are original stories and some are adaptations of folklore or legends from all over the world. An analysis of the linguistic equivalents involves looking at the number of words in a passage. The mean length of utterances. An analysis of the linguistic equivalents of the stories involves looking at the average length of the passage. The mean length of utterances. The various indices of vocabulary and sentences complexity. Arriving at the necessary equivalents between the stories often involves a lot of tweaking and revisions to the original draft of the story.

Arriving at the necessary linguistic equivalents often involves a good deal tweaking and revisions to the original draft of the story. The equivalence of the story is also arrived at statistically through a number of analysis which would include paired comparisons of a student's performance on two different stories. In cases if it turns out that one story is more difficult or easier than the other story that one would be dropped and that is one of the tests.

We have almost a hundred stories. The themes of the stories have a very wide range all the way from fantasy in the pre LAS stories to Hispanic legends from various countries in the Spanish tests, to stories of rock bands in the high school level tests. In the adult test we go to our versions of TV broadcast, covering a whole range from a baby that is born on board an airline to a cruise ship that runs into an iceberg.

The age level of the LAS test runs all the way from three and a half and four year olds in pre-LAS through elementary and secondary school all the way up to the adult language tests. Therefore the themes and the topics that we have in these stories are very wide ranging as well. We have fantasy and all sorts of realistic stories in the pre-LAS. We have Hispanic legends from various countries in the Spanish tests. We have stories of rock bands for high schools and we have our own versions of television narrations in the adult test, which range from a baby born on board an airliner to a cruise ship that runs into an iceberg.

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Simon says look up. Simon says look down.

Simon says touch your ears. Simon says point to the door.

Simon says open your hand. Simon says pick up the paper.

Simon says turn the paper over. Simon says pick up the pencil.

Simon says put one hand on top of the other. Simon says knock on the table.

Simon says put one hand on top of the other. Simon says knock on the table.

Simon says take the middle of the paper.