Reviews of *Language Testing and Assessment*

These are extracts from longer reviews. Please consult the original review for full details.

Review #1: Annie Brown writing in Language Testing 2011 28(1), 145 – 148.

"There are now any number of introductory and overview texts on language testing and assessment, from those with a general focus on test development – Hughes (2004), for instance, or Davidson and Lynch (2002) – to those with a more specialized skills focus – such as Alderson (2000), Weigle (2002), and Purpura (2004), all in the Cambridge Language Assessment Series – and those providing a more comprehensive overview of the theory and practice of language testing, such as Bachman (1990), Bachman and Palmer (1996), and McNamara (2000). While these provide useful resources for students of language testing, they do not provide what Davies (2008, p. 328) refers to as a 'deliberate pedagogy', that is, planning and organizing the subject matter in such a way as to facilitate learning. This is the main innovation and strength of Fulcher and Davidson's book.

This book should, and will, be seen as a major resource for teachers of language testing and their students. Being specifically designed as a teaching resource, the book contains plenty of discussion and practical application exercises to extend the development of key concepts. Yet, at the same time, it is more than just a technical introduction to language testing concepts and techniques. The book challenges readers to think critically about major themes and key issues currently engaging the field, and thus has the potential to also develop the analytical, creative, and critical skills of its readers – skills, which, as the authors point out, are fundamental to test design and development. Between them, the authors have many years' experience of working with postgraduate students and teaching about language testing and it shows: the book raises the bar on introductory texts in language testing….

While the book deals with key issues in language testing and assessment, the authors point out that they choose not to simply reflect the state of the art in language testing and assessment, but to set the discussion 'within a new approach that we believe brings together testing practice, theory, ethics, and philosophy. At the heart of our new approach is the concept of effect-driven testing. This is a view of test validity that is highly pragmatic. Our emphasis is on the outcome of testing activities' (2007, p. xix).

….I believe it is an admirable core textbook around which to build a course. Through a combination of the authors' own argumentation (which reveals their mutual philosophical bent), key readings and a mixture of reflective activities, critical reading and research ideas, what are in many cases quite complex or daunting topics are dealt with in such a way as to make them both accessible and interesting. The themes are well thought out, and cover a mix of the very practical and the more abstract or theoretical, and the activities and tasks are challenging, requiring the reader to engage

in analysis and critical thinking. In fact, I would also recommend the book to language testers who are not involved in teaching about testing or assessment; it might provide them with a fresh way to think about what we do."

Review #2: Alan Davies writing in *Language Testing* 2008 25(3), 329 - 330.

"Bernard Spolsky calls Lado's 1961 volume 'a pioneering book' (Spolsky, 1995, p. 353).... No later publication comes near the breadth of its scope, until perhaps Fulcher and Davidson (2007)."

Review #3: Coombe writing in *Language Teaching* 2009 42(1), 135 - 142.

"The great strength of the Fulcher and Davidson volume is that it not only presents existing research and reflects on the state of the art in language testing and assessment but also presents a new approach that brings together testing practice, theory, ethics and philosophy."

Review #4: Ji Young Kim writing in *System* 2009 37(3), 547 - 549.

"...this resource book has three major strengths. First, with an overarching theme of effect-driven testing, the book provides a good review of key concepts and issues in language testing. It deals with a wide range of issues from very practical item writing techniques to philosophical or ethical issues. In addition, rather than highlighting the distinctiveness of concepts and issues, the book emphasizes their equal value and the interconnection among them from a pragmatic perspective. Despite the gravity and wide significance of the subject matter, discussions in the book are not daunting. Reflective thinking activities and research ideas implicated in the first two sections and explicated in the third allow readers easy access to the topics, even to rather heavy topics such as validity and ethics, and help readers create their own insights and research agenda. Finally, the organizational structure that links the three sections thematically ensures that readers have enough opportunity to explore each topic depending on their needs and previous knowledge."

Review #5: Javanshir Shibliyev and Ilkay Gilanioglu writing in *English Language Teaching Journal* 63(2), 181 - 183.

"The book has a unique structural pattern. Moreover, Fulcher and Davidson address issues regarding testing and assessment through a new effect driven approach. it is essentially driven by the impact it might have on people and institutions involved. As the focus is on the outcome and on the view that 'test design and development is about *doing*, *creating* and *researching* (p.xx), it adopts a pragmatic view of testing....an invaluable resource."

Review #6
Also read a complete review by Tim Newfields in Shiken: http://jalt.org/test/new_8.htm