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## IATEFL Innsbruck Conference, 2011

Berufsbildende  
Schulen

CEBS

NILE

ENGLISCH  
AOC-check

### AOC and beyond – Awareness – Orientation – Coaching

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## Overview

- Reasons for introducing a diagnostic test
- Purpose, target group, mode of delivery
- Test development
- Content, tasks and test types
- Feedback
- The formative benefit
- AOC and beyond - how to improve learner competence

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## Why a diagnostic test?

**Students ...**

- have just stepped from lower to upper secondary education
- come from different types of schools
- have different conceptions of learning (routines and culture)
- find themselves in a completely new learning environment

**Teachers ...**

- need to identify and harmonize objectives
- need to cope with mixed ability and mixed motivation groups
- need evidence in order to design individualized instruction

⇒ need to find out about learner competence quickly in order to support learners adequately

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## AOC and Dynamic Assessment

- Assessment and instruction should not be seen as opposed to each other
- They should be fully integrated
- Cognitive development happens through social interaction
- Intervention helps learners to develop

(Vigotsky, 1978 - ZPD, Poehner, 2008 – DA)

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## At the beginning ...

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## Purpose of the AOC-Check

1. Provide information on
  - individual learners' strengths and weaknesses
  - competence profile of class/group
  - level of proficiency of individual learners
2. Initiate a dialogue around learning
3. Positive washback on teaching at lower secondary level

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## Mode of delivery

- Constraints
  - Computer-based part to be completed within one lesson (= 50 minutes) for receptive skills
  - maximum of 5 to 6 test types
- Web-based for receptive skills & paper-and-pencil for writing
- Objectively scoreable

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## At the beginning ...



Awareness  
Orientation  
Orientation  
Coaching

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## AOC-Check – Test development 1

**CEBS** (Language competence centre affiliated to the Austrian Federal Ministry) commissioned to design a diagnostic tool to be used at the beginning of upper secondary vocational education

**Partner:** NILE (Norwich Institute for Language Education)

**Training** for a team of item writers (Dave Allan)

**Basis for test:** feedback from piloting of Oxford Online Placement Test 2009 (OOPT)

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## AOC-Check – Test development 2

**Test for receptive skills trialled in June 2010**

- **Concurrent validity** testing
- Students ran AOC + one other test that is safely calibrated against CEFR (OOPT, QPT, OPT)
- Some had also done the OOPT the year before
- Items we have retained had the item characteristics required (evidence of work with population of 5000)

**Piloting:** Autumn 2010 with about 20.000 students

**Practice Test** went online: June 2011

**First Live Test:** Autumn 2011

**Piloting of Writing Test:** Autumn 2011

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## Some features of the AOC-Check

- based on the E8 Standards (educational standards for Year Eight; Level A2/B1) [www.uni-klu.ac.at/lte/inhalt/520.htm](http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/lte/inhalt/520.htm); [www.bifie.at/bildungsstandards](http://www.bifie.at/bildungsstandards)
- elements of vocational training
- one component of a comprehensive support package for teachers and their learners at vocational schools

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## Test content

1. Listening discrimination
2. Listen and read
3. Listening involving partial dictation
4. Contextualized grammar and vocabulary
5. Reading signs, notices and visuals
6. Reading longer texts

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## 1. Listening discrimination

Minimal pair discrimination

- phonemic discrimination, intonation, stress and pause discrimination
- time-driven by the soundfile

*Listen and tick the correct word:*

Do you think they should be doing more **peer/pair** work?

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Questionmark Perception - Mozilla Firefox

https://ondemand.questionmark.com/delivery/open.php?customerid=cebs&SESID=50148785768834620&NAME=tester&PASSWORD=cebstester

Angemeldet als: tester

### 1) LISTENING DISCRIMINATION

Hören – Ähnlich klingende Wörter unterscheiden

Höre dir die folgenden Wortpaare genau an. Entscheide, welches Wort du gehört hast. Du hörst jede Aussage nur ein Mal. Die Aufgabe beginnt mit einem Beispiel.

Audio geladen 100%

1. I didn't think ☐ resigned ☒ re-signed
2. He's been getting a lot of back ☐ pay ☐ pain of late.
3. Do you think they should be doing more ☐ peer ☐ pair work?
4. The railways have said they'll have a ☐ goods ☐ good service operating tomorrow.
5. Is the ☐ car ☐ card in your name or your wife's?
6. Good shot - no ☐ risk ☐ wrist there really!

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## 2. Listen and read

Listening input and multiple choice response

- vocabulary, grammar and listening skills
- also looks at reading and aspects of speaking
- offers a lot of flexible but focused spread and coverage
- time-driven by the sound file

*Listen and choose the correct answer:*

Have you got any questions?

A I'm sorry.  
B No, I haven't.  
C No, I can't.  
D No, I don't.

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### 2) LISTEN AND READ (Listening input – Multiple Choice Response)

Hören – Die richtige Antwort auswählen

Höre dir die folgenden Fragen bzw. Aussagen genau an und wähle die richtige Antwort (A, B, C oder D) aus! Du hörst jede Frage nur ein Mal. Die Aufgabe beginnt mit einem Beispiel.

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26.
  - ☐ No, it's not very long.
  - ☒ Yes, we need one.
  - ☐ No, it's complete.
  - ☐ Yes, we both have it.
27.
  - ☐ That would be very helpful.
  - ☐ It's probably a week.
  - ☐ You can borrow it, too.
  - ☐ It's quite quick, isn't it?

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## 3. Partial dictation

Completing a text while listening

- listening skills, reading skills and prediction
- also tests writing in terms of lexis (spelling)

*Listen and read, then fill in the missing words:*

Last summer we spent a week at the seaside. We stayed at a small hotel which was (0) ..... to the beach. Every morning ....

Key: (0) right next

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## 4. Contextualized grammar and vocabulary

Choosing the correct word to fill the gaps

- focus: grammar and vocabulary
- two different contexts
- also tests reading and aspects of writing
- multiple choice format

*Read the text and choose the correct answer:*

This year our school will be holding open days (0) **at/on/in** the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of January. This will give you a chance to find out in more detail (1) **about/also/for** all the courses and let you discover ....

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## 5. Reading signs, notices and visuals

### Understanding signs, notices, messages and visuals

- reading skills (prediction, translating words, drawing from prior knowledge, using visual input to support comprehension)
- multiple choice format  
*What does the sign say?*



A This is a one-way street.  
B This street has no way out.  
C This is a dangerous street.

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## 6. Reading longer texts

- text of about 300 words
- reading skills (predicting text structure and content, inferring meaning from context, hypothesizing, monitoring text characteristics, ...)
- true/false format

*Tick the following sentences "True" or "False"*

A Checking online messages keeps young people out of bed until late at night. T/F  
B Not sleeping enough is quite okay. T/F  
C Most teenagers get more than 8 hours of sleep a night. T/F

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### 6) READING – TRUE/FALSE

Lesen – Aussagen zum Text als richtig oder falsch erkennen  
Lies dir den Text genau durch und wähle die richtige Antwort (True oder False) aus. Die Aufgabe beginnt mit einem Beispiel (0).

(0) Checking online messages keeps young people out of bed till late at night.  
☒ True ☐ False

1. Not sleeping enough is quite okay.  
☐ True ☐ False

2. Most teenagers get more than 8 hours of sleep a night.  
☐ True ☐ False

Senden

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## AOC Feedback

- provided for teachers and learners
- category specific and combined
- for individual learners and for the group
- gives level of competence from A0 to B1
- basis for lesson planning and individualized work

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## AOC Feedback 1

Candidate's Page  
AOC - Awareness - Orientation - Coaching

ENGLISH  
AOC-Check

Liebe Kandidatin,  
lieber Kandidat,  
Du hast einen wichtigen Teil des AOC Programms erfüllt.  
Dieses Programm soll dir helfen zu sehen, wo deine Stärken in Englisch liegen und woran du arbeiten musst, damit du an unserer Schule Erfolg hast.

Kandidatin: [Name]  
Test: AOC Check September 2010  
Testdatum: 10.09.2010

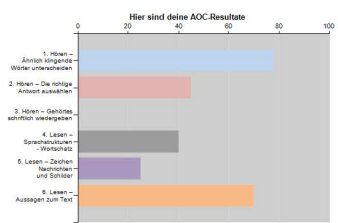
Du konntest zeigen ...

- wie gut du Unterschiede zwischen ähnlich klingenden englischen Wörtern erkennst
- wie gut du in verschiedenen Situationen Englisch reagieren kannst
- wie gut du Gehörtes schriftlich wiedergeben kannst
- wie groß dein Wortschatz ist und wie gut du grammatische Strukturen anwenden kannst
- wie gut du Hinweise, Aufschriften, Anzeigen verstehen kannst
- wie gut du einen längeren Text zu einem Thema, das dir nicht neu ist, verstehen kannst

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## AOC Feedback 2

Hier sind deine AOC-Resultate



Kategorie	Ergebnis
1. Hören – Ähnlich klingende Wörter unterscheiden	80
2. Hören – Die richtige Antwort auswählen	40
3. Hören – Gehörtes schriftlich wiedergeben	40
4. Lesen – Sprachstrukturen – Wortschatz	40
5. Lesen – Zeichen heraussuchen und Sortieren	20
6. Lesen – Aussagen zum Text	70

Muss unbedingt nachholen. → Bin wirklich gut.

**AOC Feedback 3**

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B2 B1	Ich kann Hauptpunkte in Gesprächen, TV, Radio verstehen, wenn es um vertraute Dinge geht. Ich kann Texte zu häufig vorkommenden Themen des alltäglichen Lebens und private Nachrichten verstehen. Ich komme im Allgemeinen zurecht, wenn ich mich zu Themen, die mich selbst betreffen, äußern soll. Kann schon recht gut an Gesprächen teilnehmen.
A2	Ich kann die wichtigen Dinge in Alltagssituationen, die mir gut bekannt sind, verstehen. Ich kann kurze, einfache Texte zu Themen, denen ich im Alltag begegne, verstehen. Ich kann gut eingelernte Sätze sagen in Situationen, die mir sehr vertraut sind. Kann dann auch schon einige Fragen stellen und beantworten.
A1	Ich kann einzelne Wörter und sehr einfache Sätze verstehen, wenn mir die Dinge sehr vertraut sind, ich kann einfache, sehr vertraute Namen, Wörter und Hinweise lesen und verstehen. Ich kann einige, recht kurze Wendungen und einfache Wörter verwenden. Muss diese vorher gut geübt haben.
A0	

**The Writing Test**

- Paper & Pencil Test done within one lesson
- Four writing tasks
- Three shorter texts + one longer text
- Marked by teachers
- Assessment scales provided for teachers
- Results are planned to be integrated into the online test

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**Writing test content**

Part	Task	Words at least	Time
PART 1	Filling in a form	60 words	6 - 7 minutes
PART 2	Writing a note	60 words	6 - 7 minutes
PART 3	Writing a Facebook comment	50 words	6 - 7 minutes
PART 4	Writing an email or a blog	150 words	~20 minutes
<b>Total</b>			<b>~ 40 minutes</b>

**PART 2: WRITING A NOTE**

Here!!

You are staying with a British host family.  
You find out you are going to be late for dinner in the evening.  
They are not in when you come home at lunchtime, so you leave them a note.

Apologise and tell them  
why you will be late  
when you will be back  
why you did not tell them earlier

*You will need at least 60 words and should take no more than 6 or 7 minutes to complete this task.*

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**The formative benefit 1**

- **Construct** based on comprehensive conception of subject matter
- **Focus** on all skills, specific **aspects** of writing and speaking also included in the online part
- Identification of strengths/weaknesses of **individual** learners + identification of **common** problem areas

⇒ **Adjust** ongoing teaching to learners' needs  
⇒ **Support** learners in learning process  
⇒ **Raise** awareness of learners – active role

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**The formative benefit 2**

Test performance needs to be checked against **other evidence**

Using **assessment** to help learning:

- Self assessment
- Peer assessment
- Teacher assessment

project work  
homework  
class  
writing + speaking tasks  
observation

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## AOC and beyond

- Focusing learners on their **strengths** to overcome their weaknesses
- Providing motivational **support**
- Using the results as a starting point for **individualized learning** with the help of the **European Language Portfolio 15+**
- Helping students to **reflect** on their own performance and to **monitor** their progress

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## First steps – improving **listening** skills

- Strategy training (ELP 15+, **tips and suggestions for study techniques**, p.13)
- Awareness raising exercises (for sound discrimination, stress and intonation)
- Self-assessment (work with listening tasks from textbooks and the **checklists of the ELP 15+**)

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## First steps – improving **reading** skills

- Strategy training (ELP 15+, p. 13)
- Making the strategy suit the purpose of reading (e.g. general understanding or understanding details)
- Self assessment (work with reading tasks from textbooks and the **checklists of the ELP 15+** )

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## First steps – improving **vocabulary** strategies

- Skills that learners use to discover the meaning of unknown words
- Skills for integrating and consolidating new words

(ELP 15+, p. 17)

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## How to discover the meaning of unknown words

- Contextual guessing
- Skilled use of dictionaries (also online)
- Asking people who know
- Note taking
- Paying attention to word formation
- Drawing from the knowledge of other languages (intercomprehension)

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## How to integrate and consolidate new words

- Activating newly learnt words
- Using memory strategies
- Visualization
- Repetition strategies
- Paying attention to word formation

⇒ Generally using meta-cognitive strategies for vocabulary learning

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## First steps – improving **grammar** strategies

- Improving learners' repertoire of strategies
- Mistake management
- Learner diaries and reflection sheets

(ELP 15+, pp 18-23)

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## How to improve the learners' repertoire of grammar strategies

- Noticing and remembering structures
- Making own hypotheses
- Using newly learnt rules in context
- Using example sentences for specific structures

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## Future developments

- ⇒ Improving the existing tests for **receptive skills** and **writing**
- ⇒ Production of **Speaking Tasks** + Assessment Scales to complete the diagnostic package
- ⇒ **Training and support** for teachers

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## Standardisation and individualisation of learning means.....

- ...that students have to take responsibility for their own learning.
- ...that teachers have to adopt a new role. They have to move away from traditional attitudes ...

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## What is the new role?

from **master of process**

to **facilitator of learning and coach**

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Thank you for your attention.

Any questions?

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## Useful books

- M.E. Poehner. Dynamic assessment, Springer Science 2008.
- L.S.Vygotsky. Mind in Society, Harvard University Press 1978.
- G. Abuja e.a.: Das Europäische Sprachenportfolio 15+ für junge Erwachsene, Veritas 2007.

