



HUMAN CAPITAL
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EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN
SOCIAL FUND



Warsaw, 20/21 October 2011



Young foreign language learners' assessment: when teachers and research meet.

**Lucilla Lopriore
Roma Tre University
Rome, Italy**

Today's presentation

- Overview on current issues
- Research studies in Italy
- What learners and teachers need
- What research can do
- Results for accountability or springboards for learning & professional development?
- A way and ways: looking forward

Overview on current issues

- Early language learning in the European school systems
- Multilingual and multicultural classes where the country first language is the second/third language to many children.
- Policy issues: Curriculum renewal, Teacher education, system accountability etc.
- International research on learners' achievement (OCSE-PISA), international comparison.
- Different types of assessment (formative, summative, for learning) in different contexts, in different subjects and in different countries.

The Italian context

- Uneven conditions
- Long standing tradition in early language learning (since 1970s)
- Pre- and in-service education
- Lack of an 'evaluation' culture
- Impact of international certifications
- Impact of the PISA research and introduction of a national evaluation system (INVALSI)
- 13 years of school = over 1200 hrs of English from A1 to ? B1!!!!

What do FL learners and teachers need?

- Teacher language confidence.
- Continuity through school levels.
- Common aims (eg language competence) across subjects.
- Shared language, language indicators and descriptors.
- Appropriate forms of assessment and of self-assessment (self-concept).
- Continuous professional development.
- Starting from the learner and the classroom (what does research tell us about learning and teaching?)

Research studies in Italy

from 1999 to 2010

Foreign Languages

- 1976 - ILLSE Project (reduced sample)
- 1999-2000 - National Research project
- 2001-2003 - National Action-Research Project
- 2006-2010 - ELLiE (regional sample)

Italian, Science, Maths (national sample)

- OCSE - PISA 15yrs old
- INVALSI <http://www.invalsi.it> (Primary+middle school)

Schools and teachers' requests:

- Tools for carrying out reliable assessment embedded in everyday classroom life
- Tools to sustain continuity within and across subjects

Research studies in Italy

- 1999-2000 National Research on Italian young learners of English and French
- National sample (3 yrs of FLL, age 10/11):
ENGLISH (9959 schools) 2500 sts,
FRENCH (2818 schools) 600 sts.

Test construct

Aim: to ascertain

- the language competence of young learners after 3yrs of FL (approx. 270 hours) and
- young learners' attitude to the FL & culture.
- learners' L1 metalinguistic abilities

Procedure:

- Analysis of coursebooks, activities, interviews with teachers, teachers' team
- Development of contextualised tasks (mixed team)

Tools:

- Parents', teachers', students' q.aires

Language Tests:

- Lexical competence
- Reading comprehension
- Aural comprehension
- Metalinguistic competence in L1 (TAM1,2,3 R Titone/MA Pinto)
- Test validation (pilot on approx. 100 children)

Scuola:

Codice scuola				
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Codice alunno				
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Prova di Inglese

Istruzioni

Qui di seguito ci sono alcune prove di inglese. Prima di ogni prova troverai le istruzioni in italiano su ciò che devi fare. Le prove saranno usate per una ricerca e non ti sarà dato un voto per questo lavoro.

Cerca di fare del tuo meglio e di lavorare da solo.

Se hai dubbi su come rispondere chiedi alle persone che vi hanno portato questo materiale.

Hai 45 minuti di tempo per completare la prova.

Grazie per la collaborazione

Lexical competence

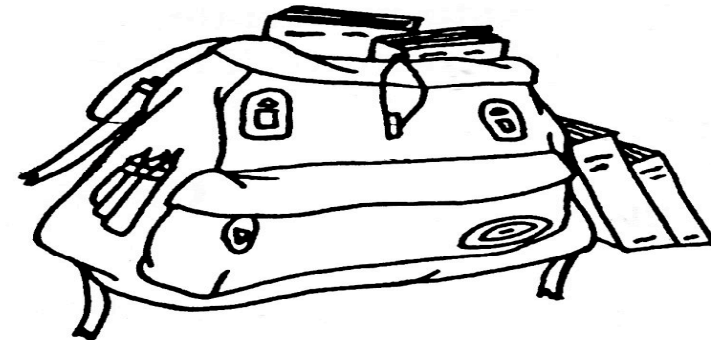
A.

Scopri gli intrusi

Mark ha preparato una lista di cose da mettere nella cartella per andare a scuola, ma ci ha messo qualcosa di troppo.... . Leggi attentamente l'elenco di oggetti scritti qui sotto e scopri i due oggetti che non possono entrare nella cartella di Mark, segnandoli con una crocetta.

"In My School-Bag"

- a) Pencil-case
- b) Blackboard
- c) Books
- d) Ruler
- e) Rubber
- f) Scissors
- g) Pens
- h) Chair
- i) Glue



Lexical competence

B.

"A Recipe"

Sue ha invitato due amiche a cena e ha preparato una lista di cose da comprare. Leggila attentamente e scopri le due parole che non possono stare con le altre, segnandole con una crocetta.

List:

- a) Tomatoes
- b) Bread
- c) Lunch
- d) Eggs
- e) Sugar
- f) Milk
- g) Cheese
- h) Glasses
- i) Onions
- j) Sausages



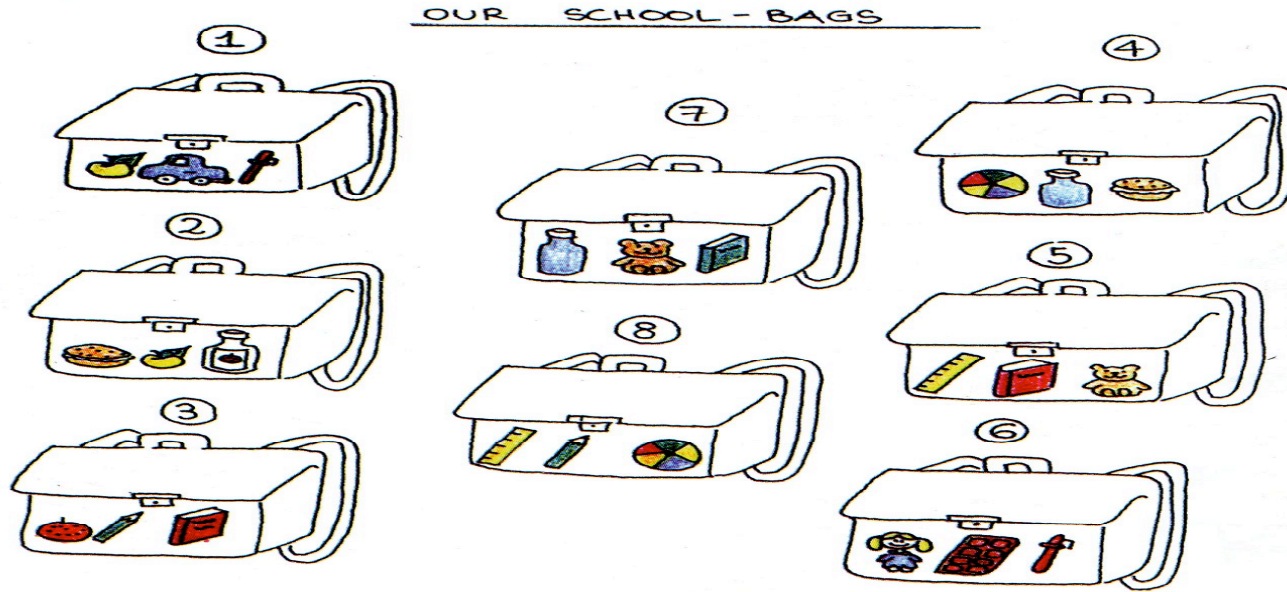
AURAL COMPREHENSION

D.

Our schoolbags

Scrivi nei quadratini accanto a ciascuna persona il numero della cartella che viene descritta.

Per aiutarti, un numero è stato già scritto, quello della cartella di Andrew.



JULIE



ANDREW ③



MARY



RICHARD



SUE



JOHN

d.

Completa l'elenco

Susan deve arredare la sua nuova casa e ha preparato una lista di oggetti da comprare. Completa la lista aggiungendo due parole da scegliere tra quelle scritte in fondo alla pagina.

"My New House"

a. Wardrobe

b. Armchair

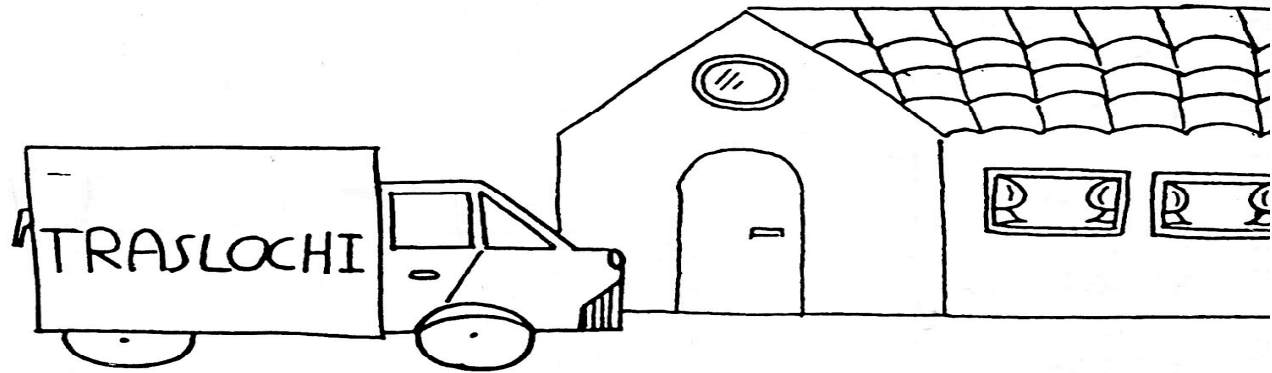
c. Desk

d. Bed

e. Cupboard

f. _____

g. _____



Bridge

Bat

Mirror

Lamp

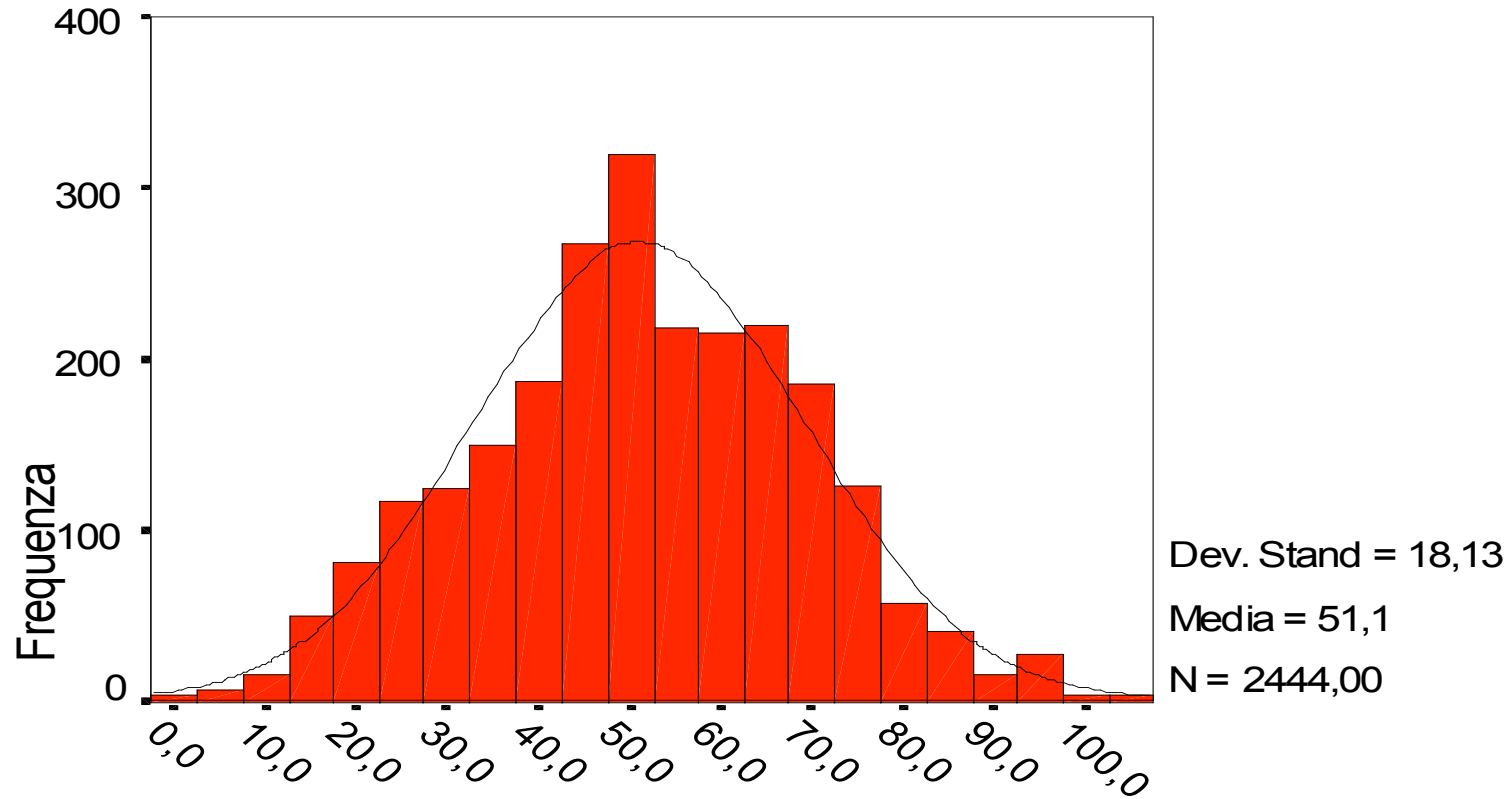
Roof

1999-2000
National research results

Reading results (2000)

comprensione

lingua inglese

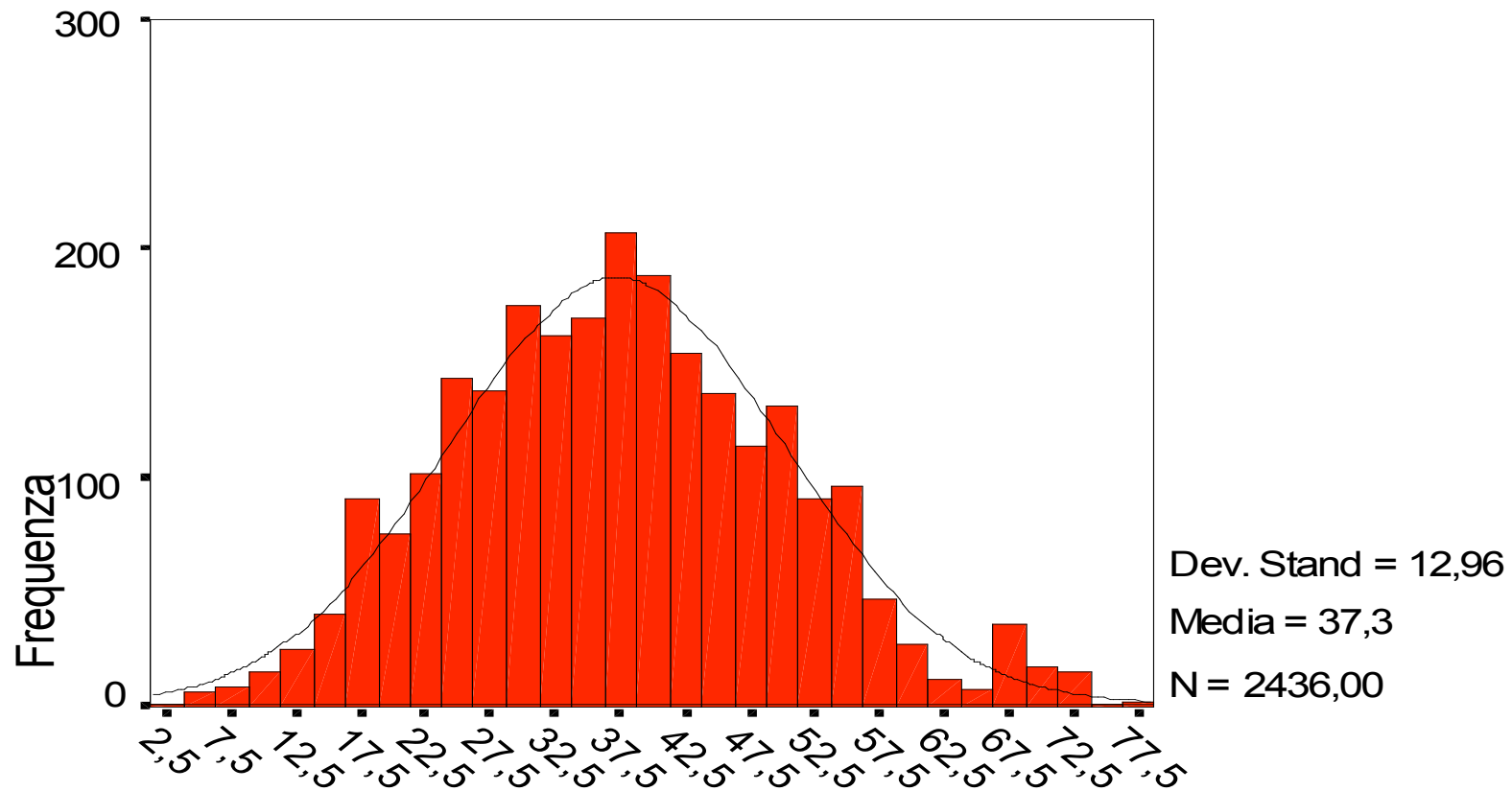


comprensione

Listening results (2000)

ascolto

lingua inglese

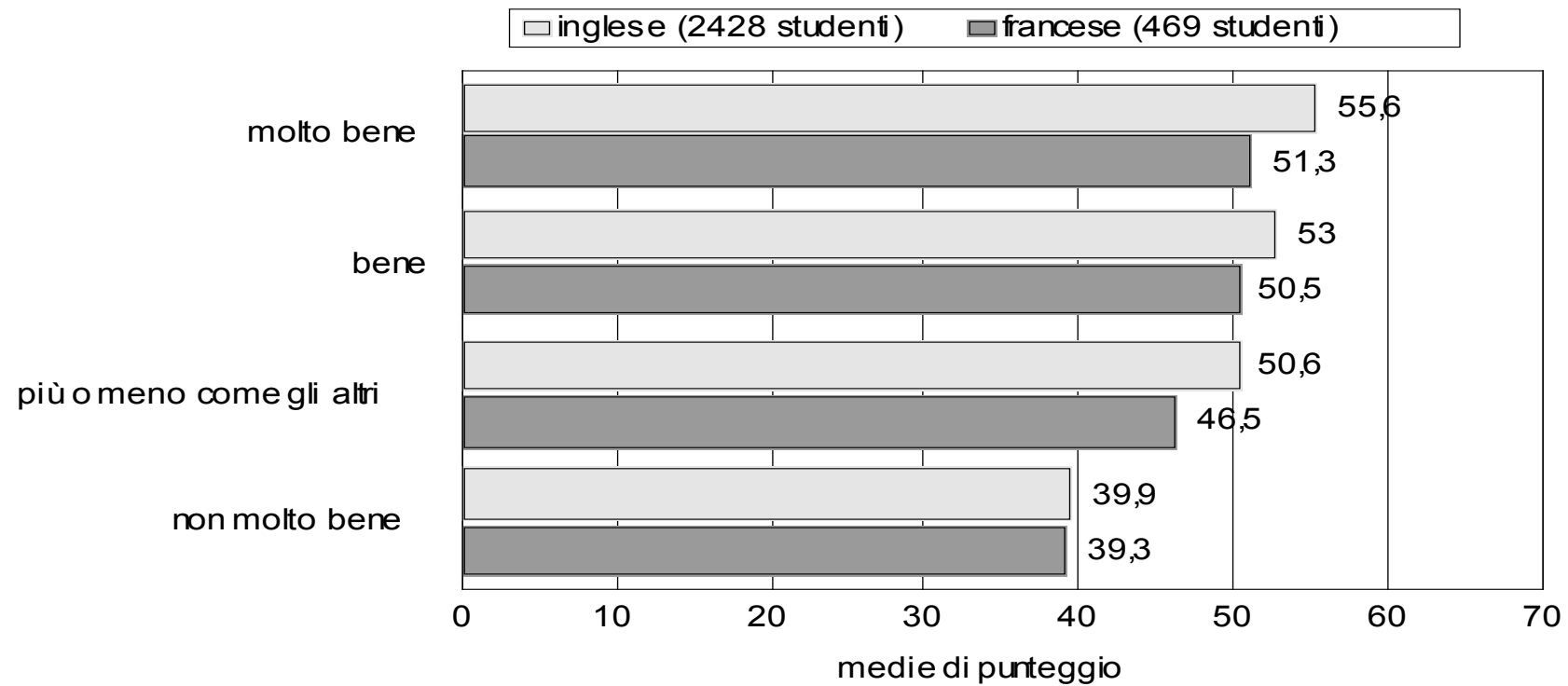


ascolto

Self-perception and results

English and French

Autopercezione delle competenze e risultati alle prove
Prove di comprensione per le due lingue



Frequency of use of technologies (Recorder, TV, Computer) & reading comprehension and listening results

	Comprensione		Ascolto
	n. stud.	media	media
Registratore			
Sempre/spesso	2117	52,2	37,9
Raramente/mai	276	44,8	33,6
Televisore			
Sempre/spesso	643	52,2	39,3
Raramente/mai	1621	51,3	36,9
Computer			
Sempre/spesso	261	48,7	37,4
Raramente/mai	2094	51,9	37,6

Uso delle tecnologie e punteggi alle prove

What have we learnt from the research?

- Genre differences
- L1 and local dialects (significant correlation between some dialects and FL results)
- Positive attitudes to foreign languages
- Self-perception (significant correlation)
- Teachers' competence (s.c.)
- L1 metalinguistic competence: positive correlation
- Use of technologies
- Favourite activities
- Lack of forms of FL classroom assessment

After 10 years **2010 ELLiE Research in Italy**

Findings similar to the previous research except for:

- The increased amount of:
 - exposure to the FL
 - use of technologies
- Attitudes to the FL (change in the third grade)
- Aural comprehension + immediate feedback
- Different activities (more varied)

When teachers and research meet

What do teachers need?

What is the researcher role?

Ways research can sustain teachers and
teacher trainers

What can we share with the teachers and the trainers?

Teachers in the interviews reveal that they are particularly interested in:

- learning how to develop new assessment tools;
- using forms of learners' self-assessment
- monitoring progression in time by identifying indicators of progression;
- finding out more about language awareness such as L1-L2-L3 relationship.

Ethical considerations and fairness in classroom-based research

- Classroom-based research:
surgical intrusion, collaborative effort or ethical compromise?
- The privilege of the researcher
- Young learners: a special case
- Teachers, parents, principals and staff
- Insights into classroom-based assessment:
Learners' self-assessment &
Teachers' evaluation

Eats, shoots and leaves?

Unique nature of longitudinal studies:

- Special relationship with learners
- Specific relationship with teachers
- Gaining insights into each others' field:
what info does CBLA provide the researcher?

Unforeseen dimensions:

- Teachers' requests & their informative role
- Learners' self-evaluation
- Learners' engagement and their cognitive development

Implications

- For the researcher,
dissemination of results: feedback to stakeholders,
but also to learners & teachers point of view
- What is the payoff for the school and the teacher? an
opportunity to grow?

Eg:

- Children are capable of self-reporting.
- Children's self-reports match their results.
- Classroom based assessment

“A special approach to the assessment of young language learners is needed because of the special characteristics of growth, literacy and vulnerability that children bring to language learning and assessment. [.....]

Assessment has the power to change children’s lives; the effect of assessment maybe positive or negative. [.....]

Young learners are particularly vulnerable in their formative years to assessment that sends messages of worth and status and that thus perpetuates power relationships in society”.

(Penny McKay, 2006: 24-25)

What about you?
What would you identify as the
most urgent issues in your FL
context?

As a FL teacher
As an FL trainer

**Let's look at some of the
2000 reading comprehension tests.**

**What are they measuring?
How?**

**Strengths and weaknesses
What would you change?**

Let's talk about listening
for Young Learners
The ELLiE tests

Aural Comprehension

In a younger learner programme,
listening
provides the basic input
for literacy development:
it is through oral language
that the foundation for learning a new language
is established.

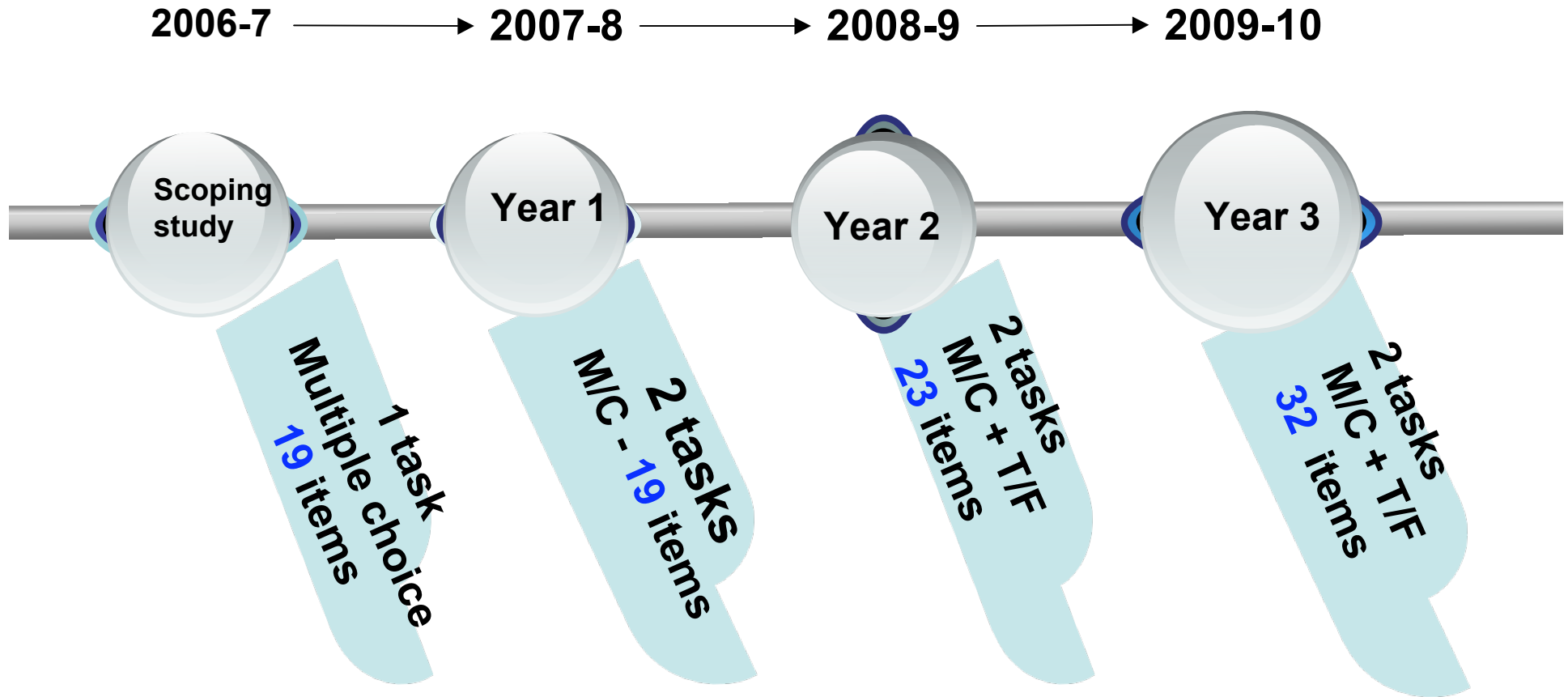
(Gabrielatos,1998; Flowerdew & Miller, 1992; Hasan, 2000; Rost, 2002;
Vandergrift 2002, 2007; Goh, 2006, 2009; Field, 2008; Vandergrift &
Tafaghodari, 2010; Brown, 2011)

Listening tasks

construct

- Measure children's ability to
 - Identify specific vocabulary items
 - Comprehend short chunks and phrases with visual support.
- Longitudinal dimension
 - Item number & complexity increase
 - Anchor items
- Post-listening q.aire (3rd-4th yr)

LONGITUDINAL PERSPECTIVES



Post-listening questionnaire

- **How did you find the first/second part?**
 - 5 points Likert scale
- **What has helped you understand?**

Pictures, voices, words, concentration on task, other, etc.
- **What has caused you most difficulty?**

Pictures, voices, unknown words, background noises, impossibility to concentrate, speed of the recording, other, etc.

My comprehension was.....

- **Sustained by:**

- Words I knew
- Voices in the recording
- My concentration
- Pictures

- **Hindered by:**

- Speed of delivery
- Words I did not know
- Task length
- Failure to concentrate
- Unfamiliar voices

POST-listening and listening results

Post listening 1	Mean point 2010
<i>Very easy</i>	550,28
<i>Easy</i>	495,79
<i>Neither easy nor difficult</i>	415,19
<i>Difficult</i>	331,46
<i>Very difficult</i>	377,96

Post listening 2	Mean point 2010
<i>Very easy</i>	579,28
<i>Easy</i>	538,36
<i>Neither easy nor difficult</i>	473,79
<i>Difficult</i>	400,70
<i>Very difficult</i>	398,55

- *I think it was good, but a bit too easy!*
- *Not difficult, make it harder.*
- *I felt more self-confident in the first part.*
- *I felt well, but there were a few words I didn't understand.*
- *I couldn't understand some words because our teacher never said them like that.*
- *Some pupils were noisy and I could not concentrate.*

Aural comprehension

- Is linked to the use of multiple classroom aural tasks;
- Should be connected to L1 listening (very seldom developed);
- Develops in the years;
- Can be sustained with a variety of oral input;
- Can be monitored through post-listening activities.

Thank you for listening!

llopriore@uniroma3.it