THE NORMATIVE BASES OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS: A CRITICAL RE-EXAMINATION

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Abstract

Needs assessment is now considered an essential first step in designing valid instructional syllabuses for learners of additional languages, particularly for those learning a language for specific purposes. This paper explores the subjective and normative qualities of language needs assessment, and outlines some of the problems needs assessments in applied linguistics encounter through neglect of these qualities. The processes of needs assessment in education are contrasted with those in applied linguistics, especially with reference to defining terms, setting standards based on authoritative values, and interpreting data. Needs assessment in applied linguistics is viewed as a form of applied research with both descriptive and prescriptive functions. The paper concludes with a proposal to match needs assessment research methodologies with the functional tasks to be undertaken.

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Introduction

In this paper I examine several fundamental problems of language needs assessment which have received scant attention in the literature of applied linguistics. I am not so much concerned with the quality of arguments raised in support of needs assessment — I think the case has been made well enough, particularly with reference to syllabus design in the field of language for specific purposes — but rather the general lack of attention to the function and effect of *definition, valuation* and *interpretation* in language needs assessments.

Why these processes of applied research should be important to people who want to assess language needs is the central issue of my discussion. In general, the literature of second language needs assessment offers us technically interesting ways to examine and use data about prospective learners, contexts for use of language and the texts which prospective learners are likely to encounter. Unfortunately, we are often left without explicit guidance on how to ensure the validity of the needs assessment undertaking: How do we know that we are assessing what should be assessed; by what authority are some versions of need to be accepted and others rejected? These are among the "practical" questions to be explored during any needs assessment. They are practical in the sense that failure to project them into the needs assessment procedure leaves us with no way to make convincing claims about the validity of syllabus specifications, which is supposed to be the object of the exercise.

Perhaps the best place to begin the discussion is with two disclaimers: The first disclaimer relates to applied linguistics, the field of research and practice which I want to examine critically in light of its use of language needs assessment to assist the planning of language syllabuses. I am not going to argue that applied linguistics is somehow guilty of various

crimes against a particular form of applied research. Like any other problem-solving discipline in the social sciences, including education, applied linguistics is renewed continually through communication of critical perspectives from its membership. Because I consider myself a practitioner in the field, and have a particular interest in making second language education more responsive to learners' needs, I am going to talk mainly about the uses and misuses of language needs assessment in applied linguistics and language teaching, recognizing that other fields – notably education – have also had to examine critically the ways in which needs assessment are conceived and carried out (see, for example, Griffith, 1978). I also want to explore how concepts and practices from other fields can be applied to the kinds of problems we hope to solve through use of language needs assessment.

Second, I have no preferred form of needs assessment to offer you and I do not know anyone who is likely to offer a breakthrough that will allow us to specify validly everything a prospective learner needs to know. With Munby (1978) it appeared that someone had at last made a serious and comprehensive effort to link models of language and social life to such pre-course planning decisions as who gets what varieties of the target language. As it turned out, the effort produced a cumbersome procedure which begged for simplification. Beyond simplification, however, the Munby-style language needs processor is very much a creature of the kind of technical valuing which insists that educational needs – language needs in our case – are "out there, waiting to be discovered" (Monette, 1977, p. 124); it is only a question of applying the right knowledge base and the right technology to the discovery process.

I want to be clear at this early point in my argument that nothing is likely to be discovered until we have defined its shape well enough to recognize it when we do see it; a concept of need must be supported by a concept of value that is

communicable to ordinary people . outside of the needs-assessing community; there is no data which self-evidently tells us what people need to know — somewhere along the line someone is going to be responsible for interpreting data, and the quality of this interpretation will characterize the description of need.

In brief, then, language needs assessment is very much in its infancy, as Schutz and Derwing (1981) have observed, and the infancy is likely to be extended unless we come to terms with the essential subjectivity and normative character of the undertaking.

Educational Approaches to Defining, Valuing and Interpreting in Needs Assessment

If we view second, additional or specific purpose language instruction as some of the applied functions of a parent discipline, we immediately run into a problem of classification: Are we talking about linguistics or education or, perhaps, both ? My own preference is to classify broadly enough to avoid excluding bodies of research and practice which help us solve such functional problems as how to write a valid instructional syllabus. Some of the more thought-provoking articles published in applied linguistics have, in fact, attempted to look over the hill into the mainstream of educational (and other disciplinary) research (see, for example, Long, 1981 in classroom-based research methodology, Sampson, 1977 in instructional methodology, and Zamel, 1976 in composition research). Thus, I think it is time to consider how concepts of need and needs assessment have been discussed in such educational sub-disciplines as adult education and to bring the discussion home to needs assessment in applied linguistics.

The Problem of Definition

What is a need? What is an educational need? Are there any circumstances in which a communicative need is a type of educational need?

Need is conventionally defined in the literature of educational research as a gap or discrepancy between what is and what ought to be (English & Kaufman, 1975; Kaufman, 1972; Marrs & Helge, 1978; Sarthoy, 1977; Witkin, 1977). For the moment I will ignore such obvious problems as "ought to" or the notable lack of subjects and objects in the definition (*who* needs, and *who says* they need). But I do want to point out that even a formulation of need as gross as the conventional one is characteristically lacking when people sit down to think about assessing language needs. What I mean is that instead of approaching a working definition of need which identifies some of the more important variables, we generally seem to avoid definitions altogether and rely on analysis of speech situations and texts, or on achieving consensus for statements about possible prospective use of the language to be learned, in order to support selection of items for a syllabus. I want to exemplify some of the forms these approaches to needs assessment take and argue that they produce, at best, only part of the information required for adequate presentation of a language need.

The analysis of written and spoken tests as a kind of groundwork for possible application in classroom or other language learning settings can be found in such conceptually sophisticated work as Selinker, Todd-Trimble and Trimble (1978) on rhetorical function shifts in EST (English for Science-and-Technology) discourse, in Kaplan's seminal cross-cultural analysis of rhetorical style (Kaplan, 1972), and in the more recent work on possible applications of discourse analysis to teaching second languages (see, for example, Larsen-Freeman, 1980). Although these studies are respectable in

their own right as contributions to knowledge in second language research, with very little difficulty it is possible to imagine second language learners "needing" to focus on authentic, specialist texts (in electrical engineering or physics, for example) which are supposed to illustrate how a particular discourse function in the specialist text operates. Perhaps the best-known example of this approach among English-for-specific-purposes instructional texts (and one of the most thoughtfully designed) is the *English in Focus* series (Oxford University Press) edited by J.P.B. Allen and H.G. Widdowson.

There is nothing wrong in principle with attempting to apply theory which is in the process of formulation to planning language programs or improving the quality of instructional materials. From the viewpoint of a definition of a need which entails description of "gaps", however, the analysis of written and spoken discourse per se describes no one's language needs and therefore offers no content for a needs-based instructional program. We have no more than a focused account of how language is used in a particular context – a kind of status report which tells us much more about what is than what ought to be. Even when we move directly into those forms of research which have been expressly designed to assess language needs, we are still faced with the problem of turning descriptions of use into prescriptions for learning a language. The now classical methods of language needs analysis – the language use survey (e.g., Mackay, 1976) and target situation analysis (e.g., Chambers, 1980; Jupp & Hodlin, 1978) – in themselves offer no guidance for the syllabus designer who has not been given explicit standard by which to interpret the data.

Beyond the misperception of descriptive accounts as exemplars of learning needs, however, is the fairly widespread use of *consensual statements* to indicate language needs. Oddly enough, both the absence and the presence of agreement among such constituencies as program administrators, teachers

and students on desired uses of a language have been taken as evidence of language needs and thus as points of possible remediation. Mackay (1978), for example, describes parallel structured interviews administered to professors and students of English at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, but does not explain how the results of the interviews are to be interpreted as language needs. We are asked to focus on the discrepancies between the language needs perceived by the two groups – not on the discrepancies between current and desired states. Apparently, following this logic, a need comes into being as soon as a preference is expressed: an actionable need emerges when preferences *conflict*.

A rather different kind of logic is applied in Holmes' study of needs among Spanish-speaking, adult English-as-a-second language students in Los Angeles (Holmes, 1977). Here, needs "felt" by students and "ascribed" by adult, school principals are given priority status because they have obtained a high degree of consensus during analysis of survey data (pp. 175, 177); the collection of statements upon which the two groups can agree is relatively small (in comparison with the simple rating within groups) and includes such disparate items as "Lack of medical care at reasonable prices" and "Lack of a language lab for individual practice" (p. 170). This approach to needs assessment obviously values consensus both within and between groups, but it doesn't seem to offer much more than a catalogue of wishes; it lacks any rationale for treating wishes as needs.

Jupp and Hodlin (1978) and Dooley and Nierobisch (1981) focus on immigrants' needs for English in the workplace. Both studies are concerned with methods of collecting data, analysing it for areas of consensus among people in the work setting who have a stake in prospective language training and relating it to design of the program. Jupp and Hodlin, in particular, outline a useful strategy for collecting information about functions of English in the workplace. This includes

participant observation, materials analysis, interviews with learners and with others involved with learners or course aims (p. 37). Although we know what the sources of information are, we are never sure how, for example, "Difficulties with names and forms of address" (p. 27) came to be a language need. What operational definition guided the selection process? Clearly, somebody believes that learning names and forms of address is educationally worthwhile, but does an educational need necessarily come into being as soon as beliefs, even consensually held ones, are documented?

This brings me to the concept of *educational need* and its relationship to functional syllabuses. If we are in the business of organizing our own or other people's learning we are in the business of education. I realize that we derive much intellectual sustenance — models, hypotheses and ways of thinking about language — from the various branches of theoretical linguistics. But when we talk about "meeting" language needs or communicative needs, we are most likely discussing *educational* solutions, as opposed to offering, say, counselling or information services. This means, in effect, that concepts like *educational* are going to be impossible to avoid whenever we do language needs assessment if we happen to be concerned about the applied side of applied linguistics.

Malcolm Knowles, a major conceptual source in adult education during the past three decades, defines educational need as

> something a person ought to learn for his own good, for the good of an organization or for the good of society. It is the gap between his present level of competencies and a higher level required for effective performance as defined by himself, his organization or his society. (Knowles, 1970, p. 85)

What is most striking about Knowles' definition is its unabashed identification of what is to be learned with what is worthwhile learning. This notion of the worthwhile is at the heart

of educational philosophy, although it has been conspicuously lacking in applied linguistics. We seem to prefer entirely technical solutions to the problem of determining communicative aims for learners. We avoid crediting ordinary biases with the power they do in fact possess to direct attention to certain language learning aims rather than others.

For example, a few years ago structuralist rationales and the kinds of syllabuses they produced seemed almost beyond reproach. It was clear to almost everybody that language structures were worthwhile learning. Now we are pretty well convinced that language functions are much more desirable to teach than language structures. Since we seem to be convinced that they are more desirable, we have inevitably tended to describe communicative needs as, for example, the need for 'x' function, or 'y' linguistic realization of 'x' function, and let the once-favored structures fend for themselves. In other words, our biases have changed (and are likely to change again) and have influenced the way we think about which language learning goals are worth pursuing. Now that we believe, in general, that learners need functions, nobody is going to be surprised to find that functions are what learners are going to get. As Monette (1979) notes, "It is ironic that while needs are used to define objectives, needs *per se* imply pre-formed objectives, that is, objectives are required to define needs" (p. 548).

A number of educational critics have argued that this tendency of educational needs assessment to serve as a fulfillment of the prophecy makes "needs-meeting" programs a logical anomaly, or, at best, offers those with responsibility for educational programs a handy way of selling them as new wine in old bottles to their various constituencies (see, for example, Komisar, 1961; Hirst & Peters, 1970). Their point is that it is strange to talk about finding a need when, after all, the "need" turns out to be no more than individual or group preferences for others to behave in certain ways. As I indicated

earlier, however, the case for doing language needs assessment has developed much better than the means of doing it or the understanding of its limitations. If we accept the limitation that any needs assessment is going to be, fundamentally, a normative exercise that helps planners to specify what it is that is worthwhile learning, then I think we will have put ourselves on the right track. If we agree with Munby's (1978) contention that "the most crucial problem. . .facing foreign language syllabus designers. . .in the field of language for specific purposes, is how to specify validly the target communicative competence" (p. iv), then it becomes very helpful if *valid* is taken to entail the kind of competence that a legitimate source of authority believes is worth having.[1] And this brings me to my next point.

Authority and Values in Language Needs Assessment

Authority. So far I have been discussing communicative needs as forms of educational need (A doesn't know X but ought to learn it, following some form of organized instruction'). But for present purposes I want to recast educational needs as "normative needs", needs which "exist" only in relation to a desirable standard or norm held by experts or some other source of legitimate authority (Bradshaw, 1974; Monette, 1977) — e.g., 'We (a source of recognized authority or expertise in a given social system) know that A doesn't know X but ought to learn it, following some form of organized instruction'. Now, as soon as we accept the premise that there is no *a priori* reason why one needs statement should be preferred to any other, we are left with the option of evaluating the credentials of those who make them. In order to do this we require a concept of authority and some notion of who count as proper sources of authority.

This may seem a fairly trivial problem, especially since professionals in applied linguistics are supposed to share, more

or less, an understanding of the conceptual boundaries of the field. It is not at all clear to me, however, that we do share the same concept of authority or even that shared concepts retain their unifying force for very long. We used to believe, for example, that contrastive analysis would tell us what to teach (this is, ultimately, the authority of the structural linguist, or, more generally, the holder of specialist knowledge); we have also been told that the only proper basis for deciding the content of instruction is by consultation with the learner (the authority of the learner — a position elevated to extreme prominence in adult education programming). There is also the authority that comes with power — a kind of political/administrative authority which influences perception of language needs at the national or policy-making level. We know, for instance, that high school students in Japan apparently need English in order to take and pass tests, and that anyone seriously considering tampering with the useful power of the examination system to discriminate among students and to allocate them to various universities is going to be very frustrated.

The point I want to stress here is that authority takes on many forms and helps to define the characteristics of needs (see, for example, Harris, 1976; Peters, 1973). When we accede to the authority knowledge (epistemic authority) we are really saying that we have faith in theory and other knowledge systems to guide practice. Nothing wrong here, except that in language teaching, we have also, and for excellent reasons, vested authority in advocates of what are essentially moral positions or moral-political positions — we help people to learn languages in order to help them grow as human beings or to raise their consciousness — and in the pragmatists who tell us that the only thing that counts is survival of the local social system — a corporation, a community, and so on. Eventually the exercise of authority results in such prescriptions as: "He needs these language micro-functions and not those".

We can choose to credit the source of the prescription with legitimate authority if we have no other source of authority to guide us, or if we have learned to value it more than other possible sources, but again, there is no *a priori* reason to accept it.

Values. In the absence of coercion, we can expect (and, in fact, do find) considerable disagreement in our field over the authority to offer legitimate prescriptions, although we are just as susceptible to learned and other bandwagons as participants in any other field of study and practice. My point here, however, is that authoritative prescriptions are not so simply invented out of thin air; they stem from sets of values and attitudes towards things in the world. A failure to be explicit about the values we apply to needs assessment is at best misleading and at worst dishonest. Moreover, the definition of educational needs which I discussed earlier *requires* clear statements of essential, desirable standards for knowing and behaving — communicative use of language in our case — against which current knowledge or behavior can be compared. Although the implications of this for communicative language test development have only recently been explored (see Farhady, 1982), the implications for needs assessment are clear and have been discussed critically in the literature of educational research for years: Whether or not we agree with the influential biases which lead to the comparing and prescribing functions in needs assessment, we are entitled to have them specified.

Let me be a little more precise, at the risk of becoming unnecessarily technical. By "specified" I mean that, at some point, authoritative individual or group concepts of what is worthwhile must be translated into standards. These standards must be capable of influencing planning decisions and must be communicated to people who are responsible for making the decisions. Sooner or later the standards are going to influence some sort of constituency if we assume that they

entail educational purposes. The constituencies may not, in fact, be interested in what leads to their being treated in particular ways, but *if they are*, they will have a means of examining critically the program which affects or interests them.

I want to emphasize that from an analytic point of view, it is no problem at all having different ways of valuing produce different conceptions of need for individuals or groups. I also recognize that different kinds of valuing — technical, aesthetic, political — produce different orientations to methodology and reality (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) among proponents of such forms of applied research as needs assessment. Occasionally, an orientation of this sort is embodied as a formal rationale which explains claims to authority and, in general, the author's stance towards reality and methodology. But concepts, orientations and rationales do not work for us in identifying needs unless they 1) help us locate the functioning sources of authority in a given social system and 2) outline a procedure for eliciting standards of language use from those who are entitled to offer them.

A helpful approach to needs assessment, then, is the clear representation of authoritative values in the form of standards at some point in the needs assessment process. If communicative language needs assessment is the issue, we will need somebody to place a value on certain uses of the language and then to tell us in a convenient way what these uses are. I happen to believe that teachers (or others who might legitimately claim to be experts in planning and carrying out instruction) are not necessarily the best source of functional standards for language use. In a business or industrial second language learning context, for example, it is much more likely that essential uses of a second language in and for the company — those which reflect the current values of the corporate system — will be better understood by, say, the managerial staff than by the teaching staff. Far from assuming equality

among various possible sources during the standards-setting process, I would assume quite the opposite and suspend, at least temporarily, the egalitarian principle which seems to fascinate planners of adult language programs. When I say that standards ought to be specified for inclusion in a needs assessment, then, I mean that we require suggestions for language content from those who can lay a legitimate claim to knowing what content is important to the survival and maintenance of the system under study and what is not. I want to examine the implications of this position in a bit more detail in the next section.

Towards Interpretive Methodologies
for Language Needs Assessment

So far the study of values in applied linguistics has been limited largely to the influence of affective, attitude and social variables on second language learning (e.g., Jonz, 1976; Lambert & Gardner, 1972). The instruments used in this kind of research are, typically, adaptations of such indirect value measurements as the Rokeach Value Survey (Rokeach, 1967, 1973). While such quantitative studies of values have been peripheral to the focus on influential variables in second language learning, they have been widely reported and cited, and represent a fairly standard variety of research in applied linguistics. On the other hand, direct, qualitative approaches to the setting of standards in language needs assessment have not been pursued even though the translation of values into standards for language use would seem to be well suited to hermeneutic (or, interpretive) forms of research — those which emphasize subjectivity and multiple, coexisting versions of reality (see Ochsner, 1979).

The fact is, we have no model for doing research into language needs which places axiology — the study of values — at the center of the activity. We have only the occasional hint

of a methodology for doing this axiology-centered research in a way which suits the essential subjectivity of the concept of need and which could be used in conjunction with more traditional forms of needs assessment, including statistical sampling and analysis. In the area of standards-setting in language needs assessment, for instance, we can return to Holmes' study (Holmes, 1977) which used Delphi method-ology[2] to obtain the consensus of "experts" on specific desired functional competencies in ESL. The study is virtually unique as an attempt to explore the qualitative dimension of standards-setting in second language needs assessment. Un-fortunately, Holmes did not work within a definition of educational need, nor was the relationship of values to needs assessment a central part of the study. So, while the use of Delphi methodology seems a valid and reasonably economic-al way of studying values in language needs assessment, it cannot be considered a comprehensive needs assessment tool. More important than searching for a single way of doing all of the basic tasks in needs assessment is the recognition that the tasks are qualitatively distinct and require distinctive approaches.

What I want to propose, then, is that we apply Ochsner's advice regarding second language acquisition research to needs assessment as a form of applied research: "What we should have for SLA [Second Language Acquisition] research is the means to alternate between two kinds of equal research; one for objective, physical data and one for subjective unobserv-able facts" (Ochsner, 1979, p. 60). There is no reason why we have to go on viewing language needs assessment as a single form of research. In fact, given the way I have idealized it (using the metaphor of a gap or discrepancy), at least two kinds of research and associated methodologies have to be undertaken.

First, most needs assessments require that "objective data" — descriptions of how language is being used or is going to

be used by various categories of current or prospective learn-
ers — be collected and placed at the disposal of syllabus
planners. This kind of information can be used in fairly
sophisticated ways, including hypothesis-testing, although
the use I have in mind is primarily descriptive (as opposed to
inferential): depiction of current conditions for target
language use within a defined population or on behalf of
individuals. This form of research seems especially applicable
to "simple" facts and "simple" structures (Ebel, 1967; Och-
sner, 1979) and could entail, for example, description of
the ways in which a target language is currently used. I don't
want to imply that this kind of research — more precisely, a
phase of the needs assessment process — is somehow more
trivial than the interpretive phase of needs assessment. To
the contrary, without a clear idea of current statuses, we
have no formal way to document needs or follow the reason-
ing which eventually results in educational prescriptions.
What I very much want to avoid, however, is crediting objec-
tive studies with more power than they really have; by them-
selves they have *no* power to tell us what ought to be and
certainly none to tell us what is needed.

Second, in order to learn what people think is educationally
worthwhile, we need interpretive (often termed qualitative)
studies — those which attempt to reconstruct for outsiders
(readers, listeners) the meanings and understandings attached
to events by those who experience them. Ochsner (1979)
contrasts the character of the two research traditions, ". . .
we can do experiments or write histories" (p. 63), and exem-
plifies the "writing of histories" in such forms as case studies,
ethnographies and diaries. I would add to the list Delphi
studies and simulations as additional sources of qualitative
data, even though these techniques entail some manipulation
of the "natural" social environment. I am not especially
concerned about this experimental quality of Delphi studies
and simulations since the ultimate goal of the analyses would

be understanding of the local value system. Such typical goals of experimental research as causal explanation, prediction, generalization and control are not factors in the conduct of interpretive studies designed to help us understand and report the substance of local values.

Forms of Interpretation in Needs Assessment

This point brings me back to my contention that applied linguists generally ought not to be asked to decide which standards for language use are important in a particular setting. This is, in part, a question of content specialization which non-specialists such as teachers are not likely to possess, or, more fundamentally, a question of valuation which cannot ordinarily be resolved adequately by people who do not possess the values or the right to purvey them. But applied linguists in the guise of applied researchers — or indeed other researchers with an understanding of qualitative research methodologies — may have the competence to conduct interpretive enquiries into the subjective world of the value holders even though they do not happen to share the values. Applied linguists have both the competence and, it seems to me, the responsibility to interpret, eventually, the information produced by comparing desired and current uses of the target language in order to produce an instructional syllabus which has a claim to being needs-based.

The term "interpretive", as I have used it so far, suggests both an identifying characteristic of needs assessment research and a responsibility of the people doing needs assessment. I want to spend a little more time examining this second sense of the term, since the interpretive functions of needs assessment are crucial and often unrecognized. Indeed, the more precision and complexity we add to the technology of language needs assessment the more likely we are to fool ourselves into believing that the responsibility to interpret has

been reduced accordingly. Regardless of complexity, however, interpretive functions are inescapable at several key points in the needs assessment process: in deciding to collect information in particular ways, to analyse certain forms of available information in preference to other forms, to recognize as important or otherwise noteworthy certain pieces of information and not others, to make conclusions and offer prescriptions on behalf of learners or prospective learners, and so on.

It may seem ironic, then, that a tool for helping planners to be more precise about language needs is so steeped in the apparent imprecision of qualitative research and subjective judgement. But without the supplement of qualitative biases, needs assessment is simply not assessment.

Conclusion

I want to conclude by returning to my disclaimer and adding a cautionary note about the growing complexity of formal language needs assessment. Although I have not offered you a way to do needs assessment, I think I have outlined several critical operations in the assessment process which will help us arrive at "valid specifications of the target communicative competence". Among these operations are defining the concept of communicative language need in educational terms, that is, in terms which oppose what is worthwhile learning with what has already been learned. Language needs assessment must also entail the translation of authoritative educational values into standards of functional or communicative competence. In order to accomplish this translation, procedures for interpretive research should be applied to the needs assessment. Finally, the interpretive functions and responsibilities of people who undertake a formal language needs assessment ought to be clarified and recognized as desirable rather than as the undesirable effects of imprecision.

I don't want to leave the impression that needs assessment ought to be transformed into a kind of "interpretive technology", or that it become even more of a complex activity than it already is. Because needs assessment is fundamentally a form of applied research geared toward improving the quality of programming decisions (Pennington, 1981), it makes very little sense to undertake long and complicated studies which planners cannot use. So it is with some caution that I urge others to philosophize about the normative bases of needs assessment in applied linguistics. Instead, perhaps I should have talked more about doing *valid* needs assessment — validity being the conventional, tests-and-measurement term to indicate that somebody has thought about the meaning of their measurement work. Once we have thought about our work in this way, we have the further obligation to offer suggestions for obtaining useful and reliable results when we do communicative needs assessment.

This is just the problem I want to explore next.

Notes

[1] This is very much the way the theoretical sources of validity are discussed in the literature of testing and measurement. Face, content and construct validity are ultimately attributable to informed introspection, intuition, or experience. See Kerlinger, 1973; Popham, 1975.

[2] Weatherman and Swenson (1974) describe Delphi as "a group of related procedures for eliciting and refining the opinions of a group of people" (p. 97). Holmes (1977) notes that "the basic idea of the Delphi Technique is to obtain information from a panel which never meets as a group" (p. 65).

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