

Researcher

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Title of Project

Exploring the Language and Communication Demands of
Early Childhood and School Teachers in Australia:
Implications for Language Assessment for Teacher Registration

Research Supervisor

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**TIRF Research Topic Investigated**

Language Assessment

Bio

Xiaoxiao Kong is a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Languages and Linguistics at the University of Melbourne. Her research interests include language assessments for professional purposes and test validation. Her Ph.D. project investigates the language demands of early childhood and school teachers in Australia, and the appropriacy of currently approved English proficiency tests for teacher registration purposes.

Project Summary

The current study aims to (1) explore and compare the linguistic and communicative demands of early childhood, primary school, and secondary school teachers in Australia, and (2) examine the appropriateness and adequacy of the IELTS Academic, the only English language proficiency test approved by all Australian jurisdictions, for teacher registration purposes. Despite nationwide implementation of this English language proficiency requirement, the validity and appropriateness of the IELTS Academic for teacher registration purposes have yet to be investigated. Additionally, existing studies provide limited knowledge of the language demands of teachers, especially at different education levels.

Guided by an argument-based validation framework as well as needs analysis for language assessments for professional purposes (LAPP; Knoch & Macqueen, 2020; Long, 2005), this study adopts a multi-stage sequential design, incorporating a variety of research methods including document analysis, focus groups, surveys, and interviews. Multiple sources of data will be triangulated to inform the language-related tasks valued in teaching, language use of teachers, language-related challenges, as well as teachers' views on the relevance of the IELTS Academic test tasks to their workplace language demands. Findings from the needs analysis will serve as sources for backing for the domain definition and extrapolation inferences in validating the IELTS Academic for teacher registration purposes in the Australian context. In addition to assisting in the evaluation of the current LAPP needs analysis model, findings from this study will provide implications for policy formulation as well as the design and implementation of language assessments for teacher registration and employment purposes.