Editorial

This is the sixth in our Special Issues Series. The Guest Editor is Antony Kunnan, who provides the following editorial.

The Editors

I would argue that it is a necessary characteristic of any field to have its methods and techniques interrogated with newer ways so that there are new angles of vision to examine both new issues and persistent problems. The field of language assessment is prime for such a new angle through the application of a new methodology. This special issue introduces a relatively new methodology to the field of language assessment, namely, structural equation modelling (SEM).

SEM theory and practice are addressed in the three articles in this issue: an introduction to SEM for language assessment research by Antony John Kunnan and two SEM applications by James Purpura and Jungok Bae and Lyle Bachman. These articles were written as a result of three colloquia and one workshop presented in recent years: at the TESOL Convention in Chicago (1996), the AAAL Conference in Chicago (1996), the LTRC meeting in Orlando (1997) and the LTRC meeting in Monterey (1998). All these meetings were well attended and I certainly learned from all the questions and comments. I want to acknowledge and thank all those who participated in those conferences for their support and contributions. The articles in this issue also benefited from an anonymous reviewer and from Lyle Bachman, both of whom scrutinized every turn of phrase, every table and figure, and the intent and quality of all the articles.

One final thought: since the truth that we seek, in the field of language assessment, as in all social science, will most probably be plural and multifaceted, even seemingly contradictory and incompatible, in the short run, a newer methodology such as SEM can only clarify, not fog up, our vision. So, I offer SEM for better vision to all language assessment researchers.

 0265-5322(98)LT152ED © 1998 Arnold

Copyright of Language Testing is the property of Arnold Publishers and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.