

# **Washback and CLT**

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## **Abstract**

Realizing the social consequences involved in language testing, many researchers have attempted to investigate ‘washback’, or the influence of testing on teaching and learning. While it is widely acknowledged that the nature of washback is dependent on context (Burrows, 2004; Shih, 2010; Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996), the very definition of washback is problematic due to its reliance on what constitutes ‘good’ teaching and learning practices which can differ from one educational context to another. To determine whether a test has had a positive washback effect on teaching and learning, one must identify the characteristics that constitute positive washback, which is likely to espouse a preferred teaching paradigm. This article argues that the majority of washback studies to date suggest that positive and negative washback are defined by the presence or absence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The findings from an empirical investigation into the washback of the Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-Based Test (TOEFL iBT) in a Vietnamese context raises the need to rethink how washback is defined.

**Key terms:** Washback, English as a Foreign Language, Communicative Language Teaching, Internet-Based Test.

## **Introduction**

Washback, or ‘backwash,’ is used in applied linguistics to refer to the influence of testing on teaching and learning. Washback has been described by researchers as a complex phenomenon consisting of numerous mediating factors. While most researchers agree that washback exists, they also acknowledge that there are varying degrees and different types of washback (Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Spratt, 2005; Watanabe, 2004). Washback is characterized as either positive or negative and is recognized as playing an important role in the relationship between testing, teaching and learning.

Contrasting negative and positive washback, Taylor (2005) argues that negative effects occur ‘when a test’s content or format is based on a narrow definition of language ability’ while positive effects occur when the testing procedures encourage ‘good’ teaching practices (p. 154). While Taylor’s definition of positive and negative

washback appears reasonable, what constitutes 'good' teaching practices is often contextually defined. The reality is that teaching approaches evolve and change and therefore caution must be taken in defining phenomenon such as washback in connection with a preferred teaching paradigm (e.g. communicative language teaching).

Similar to Taylor (2005), Bailey (1996, p. 259) suggests that tests, which are not aligned with or 'run contrary' to the principles and practices of communicative language teaching, generate negative washback. She goes on to argue that 'it is unlikely that a test based on outmoded theoretical constructs will lead to positive washback. Since, in many parts of the world, a narrow view of linguistic competence has been replaced by a broader perspective on communicative competence' (p. 276).

The views of Taylor (2005) and Bailey (1996) suggest that the way in which a test is designed, particularly if it aligns itself with either communicative language teaching or traditional teaching practices can determine whether the test's washback is positive or negative. This can then be realized through 'good' teaching practices. A look into several prominent washback studies will attempt to uncover how the language testing community has come to define washback by the presence or absence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

### **Washback Studies in Review**

High stakes tests have often been used in language education to change teaching and learning practices as intended by policymakers and test designers (Qi Luxia, 2005). A number of empirical studies have discovered that while test designers have intended for the test to introduce a shift to communicative language teaching practices, they have fallen short of their aim (Andrews, 1994; Cheng 2004; 2005; Chen, 2006; Wall and Alderson, 1993).

Wall and Alderson (1993) used classroom observation and teacher and student interviews to investigate the washback of a new national English test in Sri Lanka. This test was linked to a textbook series that introduced new ideas in terms of content and methodology (Wall & Alderson, 1993, p. 44). The series was underpinned by a communicative teaching approach and aimed to influence both how and what the teachers taught.

Like Wall and Alderson (1993), Cheng (2004; 2005) and Chen (2006) have linked positive washback with tests that promote communicative teaching practices in the classroom, while negative washback has been linked with classrooms that primarily teach test-taking strategies. In their research on government initiatives in Taiwan and Hong Kong to introduce an English language test that would facilitate change in teaching practices, both Chen (2006) and Cheng (2004; 2005) respectively discovered a gap between teachers' perceptions of what was expected of them with their actual actions within the classroom. Though teachers claimed that a change in teaching methodology must occur due to the changes in the examination and curriculum, few actually implemented these methods. Chen (2006) reports that even though the Basic Skills Test (BCT), used within Taiwan junior high schools as a high school entrance exam for English, aimed to encourage Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and students' communicative competence, teaching remained test-oriented with a focus on de-contextualized language points rather than communication. The teacher who was observed chose methods aimed at teaching toward the test rather than implementing the curriculum's goal of communicative competence.

Likewise, Cheng (2004; 2005) discovered that the introduction of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) did not show a significant amount of change to the teachers' current teaching methods. While the exam aimed to facilitate more integrative and task-based approaches to teaching, teaching remained test-oriented, highly controlled, and content-based, thus exhibiting negative washback.

In another study, Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt & Ferman (1996) investigated the influence of the Arabic as a Second Language (ASL) and the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) examinations in Israel and found that the EFL exam provided strong evidence for positive washback while the ASL exam did not. The ASL exam did not induce any new or special teaching activities while the EFL exam, which only tested speaking, provided a more focused attention on that particular skill which had been previously lacking in skills being taught. Again, positive washback is linked to introducing a skill such as speaking that encourages communicative language teaching practices in the classroom.

There are also a number of research studies that have investigated the washback of international language proficiency tests, such as the International English Language Testing System (Green, 2007; Hayes & Read, 2004; Hawkey, 2006; Saville &

Hawkey, 2004) and the TOEFL (Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Hamp-Lyons, 1998; Johnson, Jordan & Poehner, 2005; Wall and Horak, 2006; 2008; 2011).

Alderson & Hamp-Lyons (1996) observed classes and interviewed students and teachers from both TOEFL test preparation courses and general English language classes in order to investigate the washback of the TOEFL Paper-Based Test (PBT). They argued that the PBT consisted of more ‘discrete items focusing on language below discourse level,’ (p. 295). They identified a number of negative washback effects that were evident in the test preparation course and used the general English course as a point of comparison to demonstrate more positive teaching methods and learning activities. The general English courses espoused a communicative language approach, while the test preparation course following PBT specific textbooks. Therefore, they supported this notion of negative and positive washback being defined by the absence or presence of CLT.

Wall and Horak’s (2006; 2008; 2011) 5-year longitudinal study explored the influence of the iBT on teaching and learning in Central and Eastern Europe. The first Phase was dedicated to discovering what type of washback the developers of the iBT intended and describing what TOEFL preparation courses in Central and Eastern Europe looked like. Phase 1 acted as a baseline study for the broader longitudinal study. After they completed Phase 1, they commented that:

...there was a general hope that the new TOEFL would lead to a more communicative approach to teaching and that preparation classes would pay more attention to academic tasks and language, there would be more speaking, there would be integrated skills work, and some aspects would change in the teaching of other skills (Wall & Horak, 2006, p. 17 as cited in Wall & Horak, 2008, p. 3).

Their findings from the longitudinal study align with the findings from other washback studies, such as more evidence to suggest an influence on content than on methodology and the power of coursebooks in defining what is taught. Wall and Horak (2011) also discovered the difficulty in defining the types of washback that were expected by the test designers and thus what defines positive and negative washback. They felt that there were statements made in the TOEFL framework documents suggesting that the test aimed to take a communicative language approach (Wall & Horak 2011, p. 124). However, the test designers and experts did not comment specifically on the teaching methods that should be employed in future

TOEFL preparation course (Wall and Horak, 2011, p. 124) or the types of impact/washback desired (Wall and Horak, 2011, p. 135).

Educational Testing Service (ETS), the governing body of TOEFL, claimed that one of the reasons for the introduction of a new TOEFL test was ‘to keep up with the best practices in language teaching by using a communicative and integrated skills approach’ (Education Testing Service, 2006, p. 8). The language ‘best practices’ combined with ‘communicative and integrated skills approach’ suggests that the test designers felt (or hoped) that these approaches would be embraced by the classroom, in contrast to methods aligned with discrete-point testing that the Paper-Based test (PBT) had once been criticized for. According to Jameison, Jones, Kirsch, Mosenthal, and Taylor (2000), who created a framework of the new TOEFL, language teachers felt that TOEFL’s use of discrete-point testing had a negative effect on teaching and learning. ‘ESL/EFL teachers are concerned that discrete-point test items, and the exclusive use of traditional, multiple-choice items to assess receptive skills, have a negative impact on instruction (Jameison et al., 2000, p. 3).’

The problem exists, however, that while all tests presumably aim to produce positive washback, it is unclear what positive washback looks like in the classroom. It is suggested from the studies presented in this article that positive washback is somehow defined by the presence of a communicative language approach in the classroom. A study on the washback of the TOEFL iBT on English language programs in Vietnam challenges this concept of positive washback and aims to redefine our current understanding. However, it is first important to contextualize this study by exploring how Communicative Language Teaching is construed in a Vietnamese context.

### **Appropriacy of CLT in Vietnam**

Upholding its history in Confucian precepts from its early Chinese rule, the Vietnamese education system continues to place a strong emphasis on perfection, content and form, rigorous study and a defined relationship between teacher and students. However, with the push for a more communicative approach to language learning and the recent innovations of the TOEFL which espouse such an approach, Vietnamese teachers are left to reconcile culturally entrenched traditional teaching methods and Western teaching practices that are based on foreign ideas of ‘good teaching.’ Many researchers have argued that teachers need not choose between the

two, but rather find a balance, or cultural continuity, between traditional and Western teaching styles that employs a pedagogy that is appropriate for their local context (Ellis, 1996; Holliday, 1994; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996, Lewis & McCook, 2002; Pham, 2007). As communicative competence is a core constructs of the TOEFL, it is important to understand how communicative language teaching (CLT) is contextualized in Vietnam.

CLT emerged from a paradigm shift in the 1970's when linguists and language educators began to view language as a system for the expression of meaning rather than a system of syntactic rules. In the 1980's, Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence became the theoretical backbone of CLT and acceptance became widespread. Nunan (1998, p. 9) describes it as the most pervasive change to teaching practice over the past twenty years. However, according to Holliday (1994), there is a strong and weak version of the communicative approach. The weak communicative approach focuses on language use with an emphasis on student talk time and pair and group work. This approach is underpinned by the belief that communication facilitates learning (Holliday, 1994, p. 170). On the other hand, the strong version focuses on how language works in discourse or how students engage with the text (Holliday, 1994, p. 171). With the emphasis on student-to-student interaction in many Western language classrooms and commercial English language materials, most language educators associate CLT with the weak communicative approach. However, the strong communicative approach is gaining more awareness as many educators are attempting to focus on students' interaction with texts, whether written or spoken.

CLT, whether strong or weak, has been highly esteemed by many native-speaking linguists and language educators, however, how is an approach such as CLT construed in a context like Vietnam where traditional styles of teaching are part of their cultural heritage? To answer this question necessitates a further look into Vietnamese teachers' beliefs and practices, the contextual and cultural constraints they face and the future of CLT in relationship to the TOEFL.

### **Teacher beliefs and actual practice**

In recent years, several empirical studies have been conducted in Vietnam to examine Vietnamese teacher's beliefs about CLT (e.g. Ellis, 1996; Lewis & McCook, 2002;

Pham, 2007, Phan, 2004). In Lewis and McCook's (2002) study, Vietnamese secondary teachers who were attending a workshop on CLT were asked to reflect on teaching practices in Vietnam in the form of journal entries. Though their research may have uncovered some interesting perspectives on how the 14 participating teachers perceived teaching and learning, there was little evidence to suggest that these beliefs were aligned with actual practice.

Similarly, Phan (2004) attempted to contest stereotypes of Vietnamese teachers who use '...deficient and imposing, didactic and backward, following an 'empty vessel' teaching method,' (p. 50), but fails to provide evidence that the teachers' beliefs match teaching practices. Her study involved two female teachers from regions in Vietnam that are believed to be more traditional. They had recently completed an MA degree in Australia and were familiar with CLT practices. Phan suggests that Vietnamese classrooms are not as traditional as had once been perceived and uses the following reflection by one of the teachers to provide evidence for the use of communicative methods in the classroom (2004, p. 54):

[When teaching grammar,] I create many activities to get students involved. And these 'communicative-oriented' activities are designed in relation to a specific grammar structure. After these activities, students will have to sum up what has been studied, and based on these they will ask more questions to further their understanding. Other students can help answer, or I can help them if necessary. In general, the way I teach is flexible.

First, the way that teachers perceive their teaching practices and what they actually do in the classroom often are two completely different things. In light of the context, what seems to be 'communicative-oriented' may be relative to the traditional context in which they are taught instead of actually reflecting principles of CLT. Second, there are many questions to be asked. What do the activities consist of and how do they meet the communicative aims in the class? How will the students sum up their ideas? Will they verbalize their ideas to the teacher, other students or in writing? Is the classroom atmosphere conducive for students feeling comfortable enough to ask questions, work with other students or ask for help? Finally, it might be easy to make claims such as 'the way I teach is flexible' but one is still left wondering how it is actually realized in the classroom.

More convincing is the research by Pham Hoa Hiep (2007) on teachers' beliefs on the use of CLT, in which data is collected from both conversations and classroom observations. Like Phan (2004), Pham also selected teachers who had completed graduate degrees from Australian universities. The three teachers were all female and taught at a university in Vietnam. Pham claims that the teachers in his study embrace CLT but when it comes to applying its principles in practice, they encountered many problems. The teachers do not perceive themselves as being successful, especially with pair and group work. While the teachers express their support for CLT practices, their attempt to appropriate them to a Vietnamese classroom has offered many contextual and cultural constraints.

### **Contextual and Cultural Constraints**

While many Vietnamese teachers, such as those mentioned in the research by Phan (2004) and Pham (2007), return from teaching programs in native-speaking countries which advocate CLT, they struggle to find a way to implement such practices under many contextual and cultural constraints.

Many constraints stem from how classrooms are organized in Vietnam. With class sizes ranging between forty and sixty monolingual students (Pham, 2007), pair and group work can be difficult to manage and monitor. Since both the teacher and students speak the same mother tongue and there is no immediate need to use English within their local context (in contrast with a mixed ESL classroom), the motivation to communicate in English is low. It seems more fitting to treat the language as a form to be learned and mastered than as an authentic means of communication. In addition to large classroom sizes, teachers are restrained by curriculum and examinations requirements:

They may have 60 students, many of whom are more concerned about the immediate goal—to pass exams, to get a degree, rather than the long term goal—to develop communicative competence. It is thus uncommon for teachers to take a binary approach to teaching: it is to be teaching grammar or teaching communication; one thing has to be done at the expense of the other (Pham, 2005, p. 337).

Making time for more communicative practice is not always optimal when teachers are under pressure to accommodate immediate student needs and administrative and organizational requirements.



Though constraints within the classroom and the broader education system exist, cultural values also challenge the use of communicative practices. As mentioned before, a precept of Confucianism that has permeated the culture of many educational settings in Asia is that of the teacher's authoritative role in teacher-student relationships. Pham (2007) found that while one of his participating teachers claimed she gave her students more choices and encouragement, upon observation, the teacher still unconsciously retained a position of power and authority in the classroom.

### 2.2.3 CLT and Development

While CLT methods may not always seem contextually and culturally appropriate in Vietnam, they do offer an opportunity for teacher development by building awareness of methods that promote authentic language use that can then be manipulated to better suit the teaching context.

However, while there are certainly problems in the transfer of CLT methods from the Western contexts to others, it is questionable whether these problems negate the potential usefulness of the CLT theory. Undoubtedly, CLT originates in the West, but to decide a priori that this teaching approach is inappropriate to a certain context is to ignore developments in language teaching, and this might lead to the de-skilling of teachers (Pham, 2007, p. 196).

Still, many claim that transferring Western communicative teaching methods to other parts of the world can be problematic because they are often not appropriate to the local context (Ellis, 1996; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; Holliday, 1994; Lewis & McCook, 2002; Pham, 2007). However, what if the context they are preparing them for is one that these methods are widely used? If Vietnamese teachers do not incorporate CLT methods, how can they adequately prepare their students for such a test or the ultimate goal of studying abroad? Thus the tension exists between Vietnamese teachers remaining true to their educational beliefs and keeping up with the 'best practices' in language teaching.

The awareness and interest in this tension lead to the following study.

### **Background of Study**

The findings from a washback study involving the influence of the TOEFL iBT on English language programs in Vietnam will be briefly discussed in order to confirm previous assertions about washback effects while also broadening our current understanding. The study aimed to explore how the introduction of the TOEFL iBT

influenced the content and teaching methodology in TOEFL iBT preparation courses and general English courses in Vietnam. A large majority of the washback studies on international language tests have focused on the impact of the target test on test preparation courses but have not explored its influence beyond these courses (Green, 2007; Hayes & Read, 2004; Wall and Horak, 2006; 2008; 2011). In this study, four teachers, two native and two non-native English speakers, were observed teaching a TOEFL iBT preparation course and a general English course. These teachers taught in both the private and public sectors of Vietnamese education; institutions including a national university, an American language centre, a Vietnamese language centre and a home-based course (private tuition). In order to explore the washback effects of the TOEFL iBT on the content (teaching materials and curriculum) and teaching methodology (methods and activities) in both test preparation and general English classes, data was collected through classroom observations and teacher interviews and the collection of teaching materials employed in the classroom.

Both types of classes (test preparation and general English) were observed using the *Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme* (COLT; Spada & Frohlich, 1995), providing detailed information about classroom activities and teacher and student interactions (e.g. teacher to class versus student to student). Each classroom observations was followed by a teacher interview in which the teacher was asked to recount what happened in his or her lesson and was asked questions relating to the information recorded on the COLT through the use of a semi-structured interview. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded. Finally, worksheets and textbooks used in the classrooms were collected and analyzed using a framework by Littlejohn's (1998), which was designed to analyze English language materials by investigating the process, classroom participation and content.

## **Results and Discussion**

The study aimed to investigate the extent to which the introduction of the TOEFL iBT in Vietnam influenced *what* was taught and *how* it was taught. While this article will not delve into a detailed discussion of the results, it will briefly discuss the evidence for the TOEFL iBT's influence over both content (what was taught) and teaching methodology (how it was taught), in addition to shedding light on the complexities of attempting to make a test more communicative and the messiness of defining washback.

### **Textbooks define what and how the test is taught**

In alignment with other washback studies it was revealed that due to the teachers' heavy reliance on test specific textbooks there was a marked difference in what was taught (Andrews, 1994; Andrews, Fullilove & Wong, 2002; Cheng, 2004; 2005; Read & Hayes, 2003; Wall and Horak, 2011). Additionally, the study also found that teachers were incorporating TOEFL iBT specific materials into their general English classes in order to teach academic skills that the teachers deemed universally important. One of the general English courses observed had made a special request to the teacher to incorporate TOEFL iBT activities in the classroom every week as they felt this would 'improve their English.' Another teacher noted that after he was introduced to TOEFL iBT integrated skill tasks, he realized the importance of note-taking in an academic setting and began to encourage note-taking in his general English classes.

In regards to the test's influence on teaching methods, a degree of washback was evident when comparing the methods used in the test preparation courses with general English courses. By tracking the percentage of class time that was allocated to interaction patterns (e.g. teacher to student/class, student to student/class, group, individual), it was discovered that the TOEFL iBT courses were highly teacher-centred and teacher activities represented over half of class time. While the TOEFL iBT aimed to encourage communication in the classroom, student to student, student to class, and group interactions were non-existent in the non-native English speaking teachers' TOEFL iBT classes. While one teacher relied heavily on teacher activities and teacher instructions irrespective of the course he taught, the other teacher dedicated more time to student-to-student interaction in her general English class than in her TOEFL iBT course. In her TOEFL iBT class, she spent 66% of class time giving instructions and answers and 34% on individual exercises. In contrast, she spent 27% of class time in her general English class on teacher instructions and feedback and 73% on student to class presentations. The high percentage of student interaction (student presentations) in the general English course may have been due to the timing of the observations and the nature of general English courses being more organic and flexible. When asked as to whether the teacher had to change her teaching style to teach the TOEFL iBT, she argued that she simply followed the prescribed TOEFL iBT textbook, relying heavily on teacher explanations and individual exercises. She said, 'For example, in listening, students listen and the teacher

comments in the classroom like in Vietnamese context. You see nothing can be different.’ In other words, she did not intentionally incorporate certain methods or activities because of their pedagogical merit but followed the content and methods that were stipulated by the textbook. Therefore, the TOEFL iBT *textbooks* had a powerful influence on what and how the content from the TOEFL iBT was taught.

### **Speaking component does not guarantee a communicative classroom**

Like many other English language proficiency tests, the TOEFL aimed to assess English in real-life situations, or more specifically to TOEFL, academic contexts. Incorporating a speaking component into the TOEFL iBT not only ensured that all macro skills (e.g. speaking, writing, listening, reading) were assessed but placed a newfound importance on the skill of speaking. However, due to practicality issues, such as the cost and training of interlocutors overseas, and the desire to ensure reliability in their administration of a speaking subtest, TOEFL decided on a semi-direct format as opposed to a direct (live) format.

Luoma (2004, p. 44) argues that the construct that is assessed by direct speaking tests is interaction, while semi-direct testing is more concerned with production. Tape or computer-based testing is unidirectional and examinees do not need to accommodate to the recording as they would an interlocutor. One of the participating teachers in this study argued that while the TOEFL iBT reflected the skills required for the target setting (an academic setting), he was not convinced that the TOEFL iBT reflected a communicative approach, especially in relation to the speaking subtest:

The communicative approach...I think they’re missing the mark on because for foreign language speakers, the communication is not natural communication. The rubrics that they use don’t really require you to use a natural form of communication. They require you to have a very structured form of communication. I tell the students all the time, ‘I’m not teaching you how to talk here. I want you to be able to formulate an answer in 10 seconds and spit it out in 35 and it has to have all of these components in it.’

Therefore, you can add a speaking component but it does not guarantee that it will encourage real-life, natural communication. Underpinned by extensive research, the iBT has gone to great lengths to be more authentic and valid, however, it has not attempted to simulate the social dimension of interaction that is inherent in oral communication and assumed in a communicative classroom.

## **Nature of Washback**

This article has argued that there is a current assumption that washback is defined by the presence or absence of a communicative approach or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Holliday (1994) argues that there are two types of CLT, the strong version, which focuses on how language works in discourse and how students engage with texts, and the weak version, which focuses on student-to-student interaction. If CLT is used to describe the nature of washback in this study, then positive washback is observed in the presence of strong CLT (e.g. interaction with texts) and negative washback is observed in the absence of weak CLT (social interaction) in TOEFL iBT preparation courses. This study found that the TOEFL iBT encourages strong CLT in TOEFL iBT preparation course as students engage with reading and listening texts and integrated test tasks. However, the interaction with academic texts and discourse is somewhat undercut by the lack of interaction in the computer-mediated format. While the TOEFL iBT may have promoted strong CLT in the TOEFL iBT preparation courses observed, these courses lacked student-to-student interaction (weak CLT) and thus had a negative washback effect.

However, does this fairly represent the nature of washback? Deciding whether a test has had a positive or negative washback effect becomes extremely complicated because a test can show evidence of both and there are other variables to consider. For example, even if a test is underpinned by a communicative and integrated approach this does not mean that this approach is transferred to the classroom. As illustrated in this study, textbooks and other teaching materials play a large role in what is taught. Therefore, even if the test is designed to reflect a communicative approach, there is no guarantee that the commercial textbooks employed in test preparation courses will promote communicative teaching practices, particularly if they are designed for self-study and not for the classroom. To complicate the issue even more is to acknowledge the role of the individual classroom. This study also revealed that the teaching context, including the teacher, is another important variable in test washback. Vietnam, a country whose education system is upheld by Confucian ideals, has had difficulty embracing communicative language teaching. Therefore, even if a test and the corresponding textbooks reflect a communicative approach, there is no guarantee that the classroom will be communicative if it does not suit the teaching context.

## **Conclusion**

In sum, washback is very complex as there are a number of variables involved in the washback of a test. It seems misleading to say that the TOEFL iBT has strictly either a positive or negative washback effect as it can have characteristics of both. In addition, the way in which positive and negative washback is characterised needs to be reconsidered in light of the methodology that is appropriate for a particular teaching context. There does not appear to be anything negative about students in Vietnam learning the academic skills needed for the TOEFL iBT in a teacher-centred classroom, especially if they prefer this method over a communicative approach. This study brings to light the need to reconsider how washback is defined and the importance of acknowledging the methodologies and teaching practices that are appropriate for different teaching contexts. While it may appear that the TOEFL iBT has had a negative washback on test preparation courses due to the focus on teacher-centred activities and the lack of group and pair activities (or lack of weak CLT), it does not imply that the students in these courses have not effectively learned the skills needed to be successful on the TOEFL iBT. Therefore, washback may be better defined in context than by the presence or absence of CLT.

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