**Informed Consent Form discussed in Video 19**

I am providing a copy of the *Introduction to the Informed Consent Form* as well as the *Informed Consent Form* Chris and Phil read parts of aloud in Video 19, in case you want to discuss them with colleagues, student, or administrators.

Of course, you and your students could transcribe the spoken versions of the *ICF*. But hearing unfamiliar voices and messages you have never heard before might be bewildering as well as time consuming. After becoming familiar with the language used, transcribing is likely to be more gratifying and can still diagnose language needs

As I have pointed out many times in the videos and readings, hearing or reading material one time is, to a large extent, a waste of time. The retention rate of students who are native speakers of English listening to lectures one time is around 10%.

If you write down what you remember after you listen to videos 1 through 25 one time, I think you will be able to confirm this claim.

It is unlikely you have retained very much. I supplement my often excessive talk with videos but I introduce more than one point in each video and many of the points are distinctive and the opposite of many widely held beliefs and practices.

Multiple viewings of the videos with pauses to write comments and multiple readings of one or two sections of each reading interspersed with your trying the activities suggested are necessary to understand and change what you do.

It is the same for your students. No one learns to play a piece on any instrument nor to master a tennis stroke, soccer play or swimming stroke with one try. Language is more complex so once is never enough.

I stress once again that the purpose of listening, reading, speaking and writing English for non-native speakers of English is not just to understand and say or write a few words.

Rather the point is for them to process the word order, various forms of words—*go, goes*--, words with no experiential meaning such as *of, not, maybe*, the stress, rhythm and intonation of spoken language, the experiential words such as *process, various*, *meaning, intonation,* and the message that they see or hear or try to share aloud or in writing.

**Introduction to an Informed Consent Form**

I might be less adversarial towards the publishers of standardized tests and the preparation books for these tests if the commercial groups would require test takers and the heads of institutions who require the tests, and often know nothing about language learning or ways to check learners’ progress, to sign an *Informed Consent Form.*

People have to sign these before many medical procedures. Some of the consequences of standardized tests can be as negative as the results of medical tests and some prescribed drugs.

**A Proposal for an *Informed Consent Form***

**I am proposing an *Informed Consent Form* for commercial testing and test preparation publishers and English schools that prepare students to take standardized tests. I am proposing it in the spirit of Jonathan Swift in *A* *Modest Proposal*, 1729. He suggested that to improve the economic situation in Ireland, the Irish fatten up undernourished children and feed them to Ireland's rich land-owners.**

**Here are a few points I would suggest commercial companies consider in developing an *Informed Consent Form*.**

**As the videos and readings focus on language learning and teaching, it is written for language learning test takers. It could just as well be for any and all standardized test takers and subjects, as all of the issues are the basically the same, though they reach an extreme in language testing and learning.**

**1.** I am taking this exam because an institution I wish to enter or am working for is obsessed about scores on so called standardized tests, thanks to your very cunning, pervasive and costly marketing. I am being forced to your profits from the exorbitant fees you charge the millions of people who sit for your commercial products. I want to share my objections to being forced to take this exam at such great expense.

**2.** Because my actual abilities required to answer these test questions can vary by 50 points below or above my score, my achieved score, my future is determined by test companies which have never been able to produce tests with precisely accurate results. And I understand that if my score is lower the second or third time I take this exam, it does not necessarily mean my language abilities have decreased.

You provide information on variations in scores on your websites but in language that few understand.

I object to your lack of transparency and to the dubious claims you make about the value of your tests and I take your exam objecting to your lack or transparency, or in normal English, honesty.

**3.** Because my teachers are forced to focus on test preparation, they have to teach in ways that stifle my language development and their development as teachers.

Every day, my teachers have been giving us numerous multiple-choice questions which contain one supposedly correct choice and three incorrect ones. So, every week, I listen to and read maybe 300 incorrect sentences along with 100 correct ones.

I have to listen to the teacher’s explanations or read those in test preparation books, most of which I cannot understand about why these choices are incorrect or correct. Hundreds during the course.

One exposure to a correct sentence model or verb or whatever, form with an explanation of why the form is correct and others are not correct is more than useless. The exposure to three time more errors than to correct language is detrimental to my learning.

I sign this *Informed Consent Form* knowing that preparing for your exam prevents me from learning English that I can use.

In no other classes do I have to endure the ordeal of being exposed to three times more errors than correct information.

**4.** Because fiction, songs, and poetry are rarely, if ever, used in standardized tests, I am forced to read and listen to boring and banal passages and impersonal dialogues, rather than songs, poems, short stories, and other forms of literature.

I object that you are limiting my world view and emotional experiences and stunting my language and personal development by not encouraging me to develop my language abilities in the ways people have learned languages for centuries, by reading and listening to stories, songs, poems, and personal narratives each person selects individually.

**5.** In all reading and listening, passages I have seen, both in my first language and in English, I see titles. Your removal of titles from passages is another instance of how your exams are removed from the way we speak, read, listen to, and write language in our daily lives.

**6.** I learn more about what I know and need to learn from activities such reading silently, saying what I want to say to others and into my cell phone recording application, writing what I hear said and comparing it with the original, and writing questions about what I read and listen to than from test scores. I think that diagnosis should be the goal of determining what I need to learn, rather than be used to evaluate me.

Seeing that I got a score of 40 on grammar, and 61 on vocabulary tells me nothing. By seeing that when my teacher said “Please write down everything I say”, I wrote “Pleae wrte down overy I’m say,” I and my teacher know what I need to learn.

Learning what I know and do not know from these types of activities costs me nothing but provides me with information that both my teacher and all of the students can use.

The separation of testing from learning and teaching that your commercial tests force us all to experience I do not approve as my signing of this Informed Consent Form indicates.

**7.** As everyone knows, but commercial test and textbook companies do not point out, success in school and life is not due to any one factor. Yet, the text and test industries have worked strenuously to convince institutions and learners that, if they get a high score on a standardized test, they will succeed.

In discussions with fellow students and my teachers, family, and friends and in my observations of people who are successful, I have noticed traits such as these that are crucial to a fulfilling life, both in classrooms and outside of classrooms: **•**

**•Curiosity 1**

**•Empathy 2**

**•Self-discipline 3**

**•Ability to relate**

**to peers 4**

**•Ability to relate**

**to older people 5**

**•Ability to relate**

**to younger people 6**

**•Musical ability 8**

**•Mental health 9**

**•Artistic skill 10**

**•Physical health 11**

**•Capability for**

**dealing with**

**ambiguity 12**

**•Physical dexterity 13**

**•Proficiency in first**

**language 14**

**•Integrity 15**

**•Mathematical skills 16**

**•Perseverance 17**

**•Aptitude for solving**

**problems 18**

**•Determination 19**

**•Tactile sense 20**

**•Proficiency in English 21**

**•Flexibility 22**

**•Patience 23**

**•Kindness 24**

**•Respect for people different from one’s self 25**

The focus on **Proficiency in English 21,** to the exclusion of the other 24, measured by English tests that treat me as a passive recipient and encourage rote learning, is unlikely to enable institutions and companies to enroll and hire people with the skills needed to work on solving the great problems of our day.

Almost all learners of English as a foreign or second language are stronger in some of the other 24 traits listed, there are many more, of course. I have seen many of my peers who had low test scores and sometimes grades improve their English abilities and flourish as students or employees because they were given chances to tap their other skills and use in their studies or jobs.

**8.** Because gestures and facial expressions, animation, and originality are not evaluated in IELTS I have no confidence in the score I receive and resent the fact that such crucial features of interaction are given no value.

**9.** I am distressed that only one person evaluates me in my IELTS interview. Inter coder reliability as far as I know is not used in evaluating not only the spoken test in IELTS but in almost all teacher made tests.

My friends and I video our conversations with each other, with visitors to our class. We look at them in pairs and with our teacher. We practice some of the patterns we got wrong and record the conversation on the same topic again and again. We compare our recordings and see changes. A much more informative option than IELTS and costs us nothing.

I sign this ICF knowing that I will learn hardly anything about my language ability and distressed that testing is separated from teaching and learning.

**10.** When I read my textbook at home and answer the so called comprehension taking as much time as I need—re –reading some sentences a couple of times and re-reading the questions as well I get more correct answers than when me teacher limits the time in preparation for standardized tests which limit the time for each section of the test.

I sign this ICF knowing that the time limits distort what I understand and do not understand.

Signature of person taking test

Signature of parent or guardian for a minors taking the test

Date