



CHAPTER 2

ISSUES IN ASSESSMENT FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

We take initiative, we explore our own questions and accept responsibility for our actions.

—Nishimachi International School, Tokyo, Japan

This Learner Expectation, “We Take Ownership”, is posted in the entrance to a K-9 international school. It projects the belief, “We cultivate meaningful connections between people, cultures and ideas (for) Nishimachi learners (to become) empowered to know, care and take action to bring value to others and make a positive impact in their world.” The Learning Expectation is fulfilled by the school in having an “academic environment that is both rigorous and nurturing, promoting independence and resourcefulness while touting tolerance, understanding, and respect for self and others. Teachers care about the overall well-being of each child, and they strive to create an environment in which students can foster strong relationships with one another and with their teachers. As students learn how to be part of a group, developing necessary interpersonal

skills in the context of the classroom, they also learn about themselves as learners.” (See <https://www.nishimachi.ac.jp/learning>)

The goal of our adventure into assessment is to illuminate pathways to empower multilingual learners and teachers, in essence, to take ownership. However, oftentimes the road to obtaining this desired outcome has some forks in it. In this chapter, we explore these divergences, expressed as recurring, often controversial, issues for educators to stimulate conversation, discuss their options, and reach consensus on thinking about assessment for multilingual learners.



PREMISES OF THE CHAPTER

- Theories of language, language learning, and multilingual language learning can facilitate or hinder student and teacher empowerment and how we conceptualize assessment.
- Educators need to be flexible in navigating conflicting policies and practices and adjust to different contexts for assessment for their multilingual learners.
- Teachers and other educators should be sensitive and react to the linguistic and cultural overtones that create potential biases for multilingual learners and their families across an array of issues.
- Working together through assessment-related challenges for multilingual learners enables us to become stronger, more resilient, and more agentive.

ISSUES IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND ASSESSMENT FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

Developing genuine, trusting, and enduring relationships among educators, families, and students is an incredibly challenging undertaking. Equally ambitious is creating opportunities for teachers and multilingual learners to raise their voices and be heard in a way that leads to their empowerment. Often these efforts are in stark contrast to traditional teacher authority, constricting instructional practices, and hierarchical school policies that are intended to maintain control (Biddle et al., 2022).

We specifically designed this book to offer you choices to cross the bridge to empowerment, and for you to have a say on a range of issues associated with assessing multilingual learners. Admittedly, there is always some inherent bias in any set of issues. However, whenever possible, we offer a rationale for each side. In the first chapter we tackled the dilemma of the terminology used for students, teachers, and programs and its effect on assessment. In the pages ahead, we confront other challenges that persist in language education, namely:

1. Theories of language, language learning, and multilingual language learning
2. Access to assessment in one or more languages

3. Perspectives on language development and language proficiency assessment
4. Definitions and use of academic language
5. Assessment for formative or summative purposes
6. Contexts for assessing multilingual learners
7. Assessment policies and practices
8. Evidence for learning.

When it comes to assessment for multilingual learners, there is often friction between the status quo with its generally restrictive English-only policy for accountability purposes and the inauguration of policies and practices that encourage multilingual learners' access and use of their multiple languages for improving teaching and learning. This chapter is intended to be a stimulus for opening spaces for ongoing discussion and resolution of these assessment-related topics.



LET'S CONNECT

Here are some ideas to contemplate as an educational community throughout the chapter. *Before reading* the chapter: How might you rank the importance of the eight issues in your setting? Discuss the list with colleagues and perhaps brainstorm some questions for the dilemmas you deem most relevant. *During reading*: Prioritize which topics to tackle and investigate them in more depth. Eliminate those which you do not consider pertinent. *After reading*: Generate some ideas, if you choose, to alter or amend local assessment policies and practices for multilingual learners and share your communication plan with others.

THEORIES OF LANGUAGE, LANGUAGE LEARNING, AND MULTILINGUAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

Ultimately, effective assessment for multilingual learners, as for all students, must be informed by theory (Gardner, 2010). In lieu of an in-depth treatment, we offer a thumbnail sketch of major shifts in theoretical thinking over the last century. Figure 2.1 is a summary of the contributions of select linguists to the field of language theory and their influence on assessment.

It is important to understand the overall nature of language, language learning, and multilingual language learning to form the basis for how we view and enact instruction and assessment for multilingual learners.

FIGURE 2.1 SELECT LINGUISTIC THEORIES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND THEIR APPLICATION TO LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

THEORY OF LANGUAGE	ASSOCIATED LINGUISTS	IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT
Structuralism: Language learning is a habit-formation process in which language is a bound static system of rules consisting of connections among sounds, words, sentences.	de Saussure; Bloomfield	Testing consists of discrete-point items (e.g., multiple choice, matching) with one correct answer that prioritizes scores over learning.
Nativism: Language is an innate social tool with universal grammar (entailing the whole system and structure of language).	Chomsky	The end point of language proficiency assessment is performance equated with that of a flawless “native speaker.”
Communicative Competence: Appropriate language use is tied to time, place, and audience in authentic environments (the social context).	Hymes; Canale and Swain; Savignon	Assessment is based on appropriateness (the social factors within a context) and effectiveness (meeting the purpose of the communication).
Functional-Notional Approach: Language is used for specific purposes (i.e., everyday real-life situations).	Finocchiaro and Brumfit	Assessment is built around language use in communicative situations.
Systemic-Functional Linguistics: Language is a resource in which meaning making and social contexts are inseparable (a social semiotic system with choices).	Halliday; Martin	Assessment is tied to specific purposes that are linked to making meaning during classroom learning.

Alongside linguistic theories there are psychological theories pertaining to language learning. As seen in Figure 2.2, these two theoretical camps often complement each other or even become intertwined, as do their implications for assessment. References at the close of the chapter include some works by the linguistics and psychologists mentioned in these figures and the time frame when these scholars gained prominence.

FIGURE 2.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS WITH ASSESSMENT FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

THEORY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING	ASSOCIATED PSYCHOLOGIST/ PSYCHOLINGUIST	IMPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS
Behaviorism: Language learning is based on operant conditioning where the environment influences language acquisition (for every stimulus there is a direct response).	Skinner	Students are constrained by having only one correct answer to test items.

THEORY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING	ASSOCIATED PSYCHOLOGIST/ PSYCHOLINGUIST	IMPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS
Developmental or Constructivism: Language development is a cognitive process that follows a person's stages of psychological development.	Piaget	Multilingual learners' cognitive development (as related to age) supports the appropriateness of assessment in one or more languages.
Social Interactionism/ Socioculturalism: Language development is flexible, contingent on social and cultural interaction within a person's zone of proximal development, influenced by the environment and available resources.	Vygotsky	Interaction of teachers and students or students with each other leads to unifying instruction and assessment into a single activity.
Heteroglossia: Language is dialogic and communication is fluid, revolving around dynamic use of all available linguistic resources in specific contexts, including the coexistence of multiple languages.	Bakhtin; Grosjean	Multilingual learners should have access to all their linguistic resources—languages, cultures, ways of being—to take action during assessment as bi/multilingual individuals, not two monolinguals.

Last are the contributions of multilingual learning theories that highlight language as social and cultural practices. Here we counter the premise that in US educational settings monolingualism is the norm where multilingual learners are to be “accommodated” through “scaffolded” strategies until they achieve at a rate and level commensurate with their monolingual English-speaking peers. According to these theories, learning in multiple languages is not only desirable, but it must also be normalized, evolving into a form of action (Pennycook, 2010). Figure 2.3 presents some theories from educational scholars that directly honor multilingual learners’ multiple languages, cultures, and ways of being along with their extension to assessment practices.

FIGURE 2.3 MULTILINGUAL LANGUAGE LEARNING THEORIES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT

THEORY CONNECTED WITH MULTILINGUAL/ MULTICULTURAL LEARNING	ASSOCIATED EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARS	IMPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS
Funds of Knowledge: Expertise is developed in community spaces and shared in other contexts, such as school.	González, Moll, & Amanti	Multilingual learners' community resources should be a source for and integrated into curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessment.

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THEORY CONNECTED WITH MULTILINGUAL/MULTICULTURAL LEARNING	ASSOCIATED EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARS	IMPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS
Multiliteracies: Multimodal forms of expression—linguistic, gestural, spatial, auditory, digital—alongside those of technological advances stimulate learning and meaningfully interpret communication of that learning.	The New London Group	Assessment should encompass a range of communication modes that reflect linguistic and cultural diversities along with access and use of technologies (in multiple languages).
Translanguaging: The dynamic interaction between shared languages is based on the fluid language practices of bi/multilinguals.	García; Wei	Assessment should minimally acknowledge and, optimally, incorporate bi/multilingual learners' full linguistic repertoires in their interaction with multiple languages.
Linguistic and Cultural Sustainability: Perpetuating and fostering linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism means infusing and maintaining lived experiences of learners in school.	Paris; Paris & Alim	Assessment design from its inception centers on the linguistic and cultural ways and experiences of multilingual learners.

If we summarize these theoretical orientations and their applications to assessment for multilingual learners, we see the emergence of two positive trends. The first is debunking the comparison between multilingual learners and native (English) speakers as a universal point of reference and standard in language assessment. The second is admitting to the destabilization of monolingualism in language use and the acceptance of the concept of heteroglossia (the coexistence of multiple languages and dialects) in assessing multilingual learners (Leung, 2022a). With prior assumptions and conceptualizations of language, language learning, and multilingual language learning slowly being eroded, we need to envision what the future of assessment for multilingual learners might bring.



LET'S CONNECT

There is no shortage of theories that have contributed to the conceptualization of language, language learning, and multilingual language learning. After completing Resource 2.1, perhaps each educator of a grade-level/department team could select one theorist to explore in more depth and apply the theory to assessment for multilingual learners. Teachers could then jigsaw their findings and, as a whole group, think about the theoretical direction to take in their classroom assessment practices.

ACCESS TO ASSESSMENT IN ONE OR MORE LANGUAGES

Across the United States, assessment in English dominates classrooms, schools, and districts with multilingual learners. Although instructional practices for multilingual learners originate from educational, learning, and language theories that endorse multilingualism, assessment rarely recognizes the multilingual language practices of the learners (Shohamy, 2011). In multilingual societies such as ours, having language tests in a single language, as required by federal law, transmits distinct messages regarding that language's power and prestige.

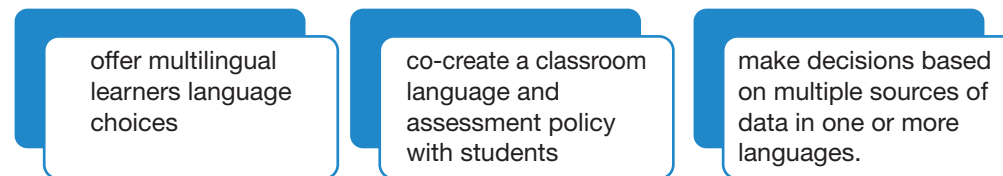
Valdés and Figueroa (1994) first drew our attention to the fallacy of assessing multilingual learners only in one language when, in fact, these students are bi/multilingual. Similarly, Otheguy et al. (2015) contend that “if schools want to test students’ linguistic ability—their ability to do these things with language—it doesn’t make sense to ask them to perform using only some of their linguistic repertoire” (p. 300). Thus, assessing multilingual learners only in English has become an issue of social justice and educational equity that leaves these students and their teachers without choices and diminishes their ability to become empowered.

Multilingual learners’ accessibility to their additional languages in school generally leads to one of two distinct outcomes. First, the students’ additional language serves as a precursor to their English language development, thus functioning as a scaffold to learning. Second, having access to multiple languages offers multilingual learners options to deepen and expand their language development and learning.

Student access to multiple languages, whether it is transitional in nature or ongoing bilingual development, is a dilemma. That is, multilingual learners may have access to their multiple languages during instruction; however, when it comes time for classroom assessment, it often disappears. Teachers across language programs should ask the following questions to determine the viability of using multiple languages for classroom assessment; these are converted into a checklist in Resource 2.2.

- What is the purpose for assessment—to examine language development, achievement in a content area, or both?
- Are multilingual learners orally proficient in their other language?
- If so, are they comfortable interacting in their other language with peers of that shared language?
- Are multilingual learners literate in a language other than English?
- Are multilingual learners motivated to, and do they enjoy, examining materials and resources in their other language?
- Do multilingual learners rely on multimodal resources to boost their understanding and serve as evidence for learning?
- Can multilingual learners seek out family and community members to assist in securing resources in multiple languages for long-term projects?
- In terms of language choice, are teachers bound to an instructional model for multilingual learners that is dynamic and fluid or one that is inflexible?

To optimize multilingual learners' access to multiple languages for assessment, teachers should:



When teachers can leverage their own choices during the assessment process and pass them on to their students for feedback, both teachers and multilingual learners become empowered.



LET'S CONNECT

How might you enhance opportunities for your multilingual learners to use their multiple language resources for instruction and assessment? If you are not conversant in the languages of your students, who might you befriend at school or in the community? Which neighborhood organizations, including community colleges, might you form partnerships with? Which free apps are available to you and your students to download? Which podcasts, webinars, or YouTube snippets might you explore?

PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

Language development is a process that occurs over time; language proficiency is an expression of language development at one point in time. The traditional structuralist view is one where second language acquisition is conceptualized as linear where students' language development progresses level by level along a continuum. Since 2002, ESEA has required states' English language proficiency (ELP) standards to have demarcations of levels that are aligned to their English language proficiency assessment. Figure 2.4 is a summary of these English language proficiency levels as delineated by states from the lowest level (1) to the highest level (6); each of these six configurations has its own proficiency level descriptors.

FIGURE 2.4 LEVELS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY REPORTED IN STATE/CONSORTIUM ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (ELP) TESTS AS OF 2023

STATE/ CONSORTIUM AND THEIR ELP ASSESSMENT	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Arizona- AZELLA	Pre-emergent	Emergent	Basic	Low intermediate	High intermediate	
California- ELPAC	Emerging		Expanding		Bridging	
ELPA 21 Assessment System	Beginning	Early Intermediate	Early Advanced	Advanced		
New York- NYSESLAT	Entering	Emerging	Transitioning	Expanding	Commanding	
Texas-TELPAS	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Advanced High		
WIDA Consortium- ACCESS	Beginning	Emerging	Developing	Expanding	Bridging	Reaching



LET'S CONNECT

How does your state define its English language proficiency levels? Does your state, district, or school use these language proficiency levels for (re)classification, instruction, and local assessment? How is the information on levels of English language proficiency from your annual state ELP assessment used?

In contrast to language development as a sequential progression, sociocultural theory sees language learning as a contextually dependent interactive social process in which multilingual learners learn to control increasing ranges of registers and genres within and across content areas (J. Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Here language development is not a lockstep process but varies as a function of

a person's familiarity and previous experiences with the topic, audience, and context for communication. Having flexibility and choice in language use across contexts is essential for supporting students' academic language development. Given their multiple reference points, linguistic resources, and cultural frameworks, multilingual learners have the potential to interact more effectively across groups (Uccelli & Galloway, 2016).

According to sociocultural theory, it is erroneous to compare multilingual learners to “native” speakers as the goal of language development. This critique of “nativism” is based on the premise that it is not a necessary condition for becoming a successful and effective communicator nor is it the end point of the language development process (Mahboob, 2019; The Douglas Fir Group, 2016). In addition, there is built-in cultural bias and elitist thinking that being born into and growing up in a monolingual speech community qualifies a person as a “native” speaker (Hachkert, 2012). Rather than attending to accuracy and correctness, sociocultural theory focuses on appropriateness and effectiveness of language use; in this way, multilingual learners are not perceived as failed “native” English speakers (Kibler & Valdés, 2016; WIDA, 2020).



LET'S CONNECT

A tension often exists between operationalizing and reporting language proficiency in state language proficiency assessment and assessing multilingual learners' language development in classrooms. Given these potentially contradictory language orientations, how can you reconcile these two positions when feeling the pressure to teach to the “test”? Discuss the issue of language proficiency v. language development with your grade-level/department team and generate some assessment strategies to obtain a more comprehensive sense of what your multilingual learners can do with language.

DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Ever since Cummins (1981) first posed a perceived dichotomy between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BISC or everyday language) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP or oral and written modes related to literacy and school success), there has been ongoing debate as to what constitutes and how legitimate is academic language. In the early 2000s two frameworks for “academic language” responded to the increased language demands required of multilingual learners to participate in mainstream classrooms and take content-area state assessments in English (Bailey & Butler, 2003; Scarcella, 2003). Overall, however, there was an absence of consensus in defining academic language in school contexts, as it vacillated in placing multilingual learners between being marginalized and supported (Valdés, 2004b).

Today, there still is a stark contrast among scholars in their conceptualizations of academic language and how it plays out in assessment (see Chapter 5 for further discussion). Some researchers see the construct as a pathway to educational equity, focusing on understanding and building on students' existing language resources. This orientation views academic language as crucial for supporting independent learning in school and beyond (Uccelli & Galloway, 2016). In this conceptualization, academic language is a vehicle, not a deterrent, to lead multilingual learners to think deeply and act, for example, as scientists, historians, and mathematicians, to achieve academically (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014). As a collection of language resources useful in supporting communication and content-area learning, academic language focuses on meaning and the understanding and expression of ideas (Uccelli et al., 2022).

Other researchers equate academic language with raciolinguistic ideology that equates low-income Latine and other minoritized students with being linguistically deficient and in need of remediation. According to this view, academic language, by being socially constructed and normalized by the white mainstream, creates rigid walls or linguistic borders that have destructive effects on students, resulting in social and educational exclusion (García & Solorza, 2020). In other words, academic language privileges and perpetuates white linguistic and cultural norms. In lieu of the term “academic language,” those who profess racialized ideologies prefer “language architecture” as alternative framing. Language architecture sends students a powerful message that their language practices at home are integral to the development of their academic identities (Flores, 2020; Rosa & Flores, 2017).

ASSESSMENT FOR FORMATIVE AND/OR SUMMATIVE PURPOSES

The terms *formative* and *summative* have been borrowed from the field of evaluation research. So labeled by Michael Scriven in 1967, formative evaluation is a method for judging the worth of an educational program while it is still forming or is in progress. Its intent is to foster further development and improvement of program activities. On the other hand, a summative evaluation is a method for judging the extent to which a program's goals have been met at the summation of its activities. Formative and summative are not distinct types of evaluation, rather they are intended to serve different roles.

Moving to the assessment arena, it was Scriven's belief that all assessments have the capacity of being summative in their function, but only some have the additional capability of serving formative functions. In essence, the formative–summative distinction is artificial as it is context dependent, contingent on the purpose of the assessment and the use of data. Fisher (2016) exemplifies this position, “I've come to think that we should stop saying ‘formative assessment’ because almost every assessment that I've used could be either formative or summative, depending on how I use it.”

Think about it. A high-stakes (summative) test which gives item-level analysis with its score report is, in some sense, diagnostic in nature as the results can be applied to differentiating instruction—a “formative” application of the data. Conversely, information from classroom student language samples collected within a lesson have a “formative” purpose, but simultaneously can be considered “summative”

as the samples represent a student’s cumulative language development. As shown in Figure 2.6, varying interpretations of “formative” assessment, as evidenced by an array of researchers, still prevail without consensus as to its features or uses.

FIGURE 2.6 DIFFERENT CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF “FORMATIVE” ASSESSMENT

DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES OF “FORMATIVE” ASSESSMENT	SUPPORT FOR EACH PERSPECTIVE
It’s a test or a series of mini-tests.	Commercial products of testing companies and publishers of instructional materials (e.g., bit.ly/432Vi8u)
It’s a set of practices that enables teachers and students to examine learning.	Makkonen and Jaquet (2020); Stiggins (2005)
It’s a reflective process.	Haubner et al. (2017); Heritage (2010); Moss and Brookhart (2009); Popham (2008)
It’s a system.	Fisher and Frey (2020)



LET’S CONNECT

Educators and scholars have varied definitions of formative assessment purposes and their distinction from those of summative assessment. These differences are generally attributed to time during the instructional cycle (e.g., during a lesson or at the close of a unit) or intended use of information (i.e., for informing teaching and learning or for accountability). How do you and your team view this distinction in assessment purposes, or is there one?

CONTEXTS FOR ASSESSING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

We have already established that the purposes of assessment are its drivers (see Figure 1.6 and Resource 1.7). These purposes generally align with specific contexts—those of the state or district and those of the school and classroom. Large-scale *state* testing in language arts/reading, mathematics in Grades 3 to 8 occurs on an annual basis generally during the same window or time frame, and science testing is given three times in a student’s school career. State tests are administered under standard conditions so that results yield valid inferences; having sound psychometric properties are important for accountability purposes. *District* assessment often occurs on an interim basis and replicates that of

the state with its primary purposes being local accountability and prediction of student performance on state annual tests. District assessment may also include common prompts or measures, designed by local educators, and administered at designated times throughout the year. *School* and *classroom* assessment revolves around local curriculum and instruction that draws from the learning environment and its students, a context simply not available in large-scale district or state situations (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007).

Statewide assessment results give us data that are broadly shared with the public and can thus be an important lever for equity (Lazarín, 2022). Yet, while important, tests in English supply most annual assessment data. Although there has been a call to be inclusive of multilingual learners' languages and cultures within large-scale language assessment contexts, there has been little to no movement in that direction (Chalhoub-Deville, 2019). Likewise, at the classroom level, monolingual data in English still abound as many bilingual programs do not teach or assess in languages other than English (Hinton, 2015). In addition to educators, families must be apprised (and, at times, convinced) of the value and benefits of assessment in multiple languages (Gottlieb, 2021b).

Classroom assessment should reflect the local curriculum and the student population; for multilingual learners, it should also be linguistic and culturally sustainable.

State testing data should complement that available from districts, schools, and classrooms; at the same time, as shown in Figure 2.7, there are distinct differences between the two. The starkest contrast between state/district and local school/classroom assessment is the information available to make decisions. Resource 2.3 reproduces these differences and adds a set of questions.

FIGURE 2.7 DIFFERENCES IN FEATURES BETWEEN STATE/DISTRICT TESTING AND SCHOOL/CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

STATE/DISTRICT TESTING OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS	SCHOOL/CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS
Always planned with standard uniform procedures for administration, scoring, and reporting, thus constrained with set parameters	Spontaneous to planned, including personalized student to schoolwide common assessment, thus authentic to the situation, context, and audience
Accommodated for English Learners per state guidelines	Designed with multilingual learners in mind so accommodations are not necessary unless students have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
Homogenized to minimize content and bias sensitivity, therefore, generally neutral	Inclusive of multilingual learners' languages, cultures, perspectives, and experiences
Reflective of assessment <i>of</i> learning (assessment for summative purposes)	Reflective of assessment <i>as, for, and of</i> learning (for both formative and summative purposes)
Delayed feedback to students and families	Timely feedback to students by other students or teachers
Equated with high-stakes accountability	Associated with informing and improving teaching and learning

We have established that classroom assessment operates on a different scale than that of large-scale state/district assessment. It is customized and sensitive to individual student learning minute by minute, day by day, week by week. Resource 2.4 converts teacher and student moves around classroom assessment practices described below into a checklist.

During classroom assessment, teachers:

- Clearly define its purpose and share it with their students
- Co-construct content and learning targets with their students and decide ways to document the extent to which they are met
- Ensure that students' learning targets reference both academic content and language development standards
- Co-plan activities, tasks, and projects representative of learning targets with their students
- Invite students to contribute their perspectives, as appropriate
- Co-create criteria of success for the learning targets with students along with accompanying tasks and projects.

During classroom assessment, multilingual learners:

- Have opportunities to access their multiple languages and tap an array of resources
- Give feedback to peers and act on feedback given to them
- Engage in self-reflection and peer assessment
- Choose from multimodal options for researching and producing projects
- Feel empowered from having made choices throughout the process.

ASSESSMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Assessment policies are generally hierarchical, originating from federal legislation or litigation and moving downward to states, districts, schools, and classrooms. Ever since the late 1990s states and districts have been under the microscope for implementing large-scale assessment required under ESEA, thus creating ongoing tension between compliance with federal mandates and local resistance to state testing. Conflict for educators of multilingual learners has stemmed from the lack of acknowledgment of students' multiple languages and multiple formats of assessment in determining what "counts" for school and district accountability.

How might school and district leaders reconcile the friction between federal policies and local practices without undermining teacher and student empowerment? Figure 2.8 illustrates the disparity between assessment's top-down policies and its bottom-up practices.

Large-Scale Assessment Policy

Both states and districts design and enact assessment-related policies for multilingual learners that are carried out in schools and classrooms. Figure 2.9 outlines examples of policy makers' and implementers' roles and relationships. Resource 2.5 asks you to examine these policies and summarize those of your state and district.

FIGURE 2.8 THE CONTRAST IN MOVEMENT BETWEEN ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE

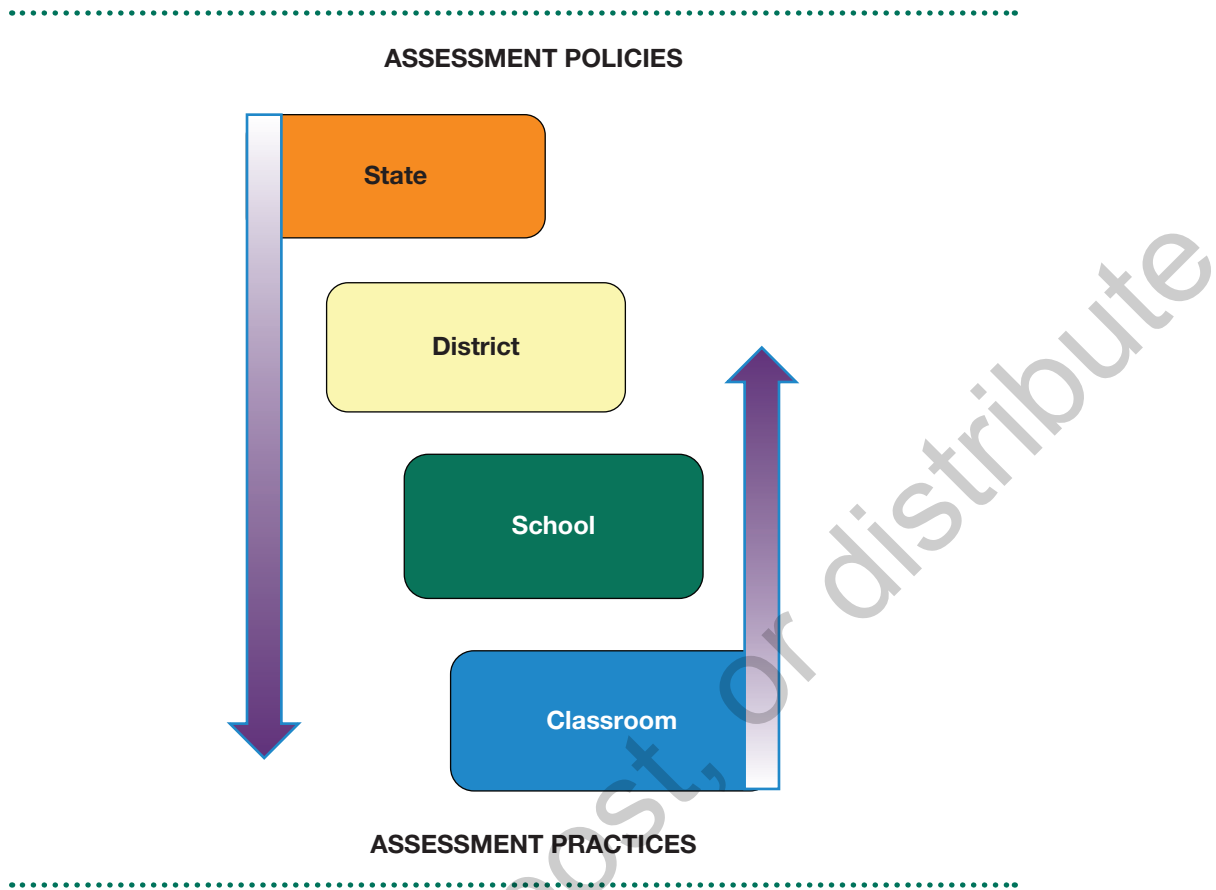


FIGURE 2.9 SORTING STATE FROM DISTRICT POLICY FOR ASSESSING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

STATE ASSESSMENT-RELATED POLICY	DISTRICT ASSESSMENT-RELATED POLICY
Design or adopt standards	Implement standards in curriculum, instruction, and assessment
Determine the testing window for annual content testing	Administer annual testing: select, determine testing windows, and administer interim content and language proficiency testing
Determine accommodations for multilingual learners and multilingual learners with named disabilities for annual content testing	Apply and document accommodations for multilingual learners and multilingual learners with named disabilities for annual content testing
Determine testing window for annual language proficiency assessment and alternate language proficiency testing	Administer annual language proficiency assessment during the designated testing window
Determine accommodations for multilingual learners with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for annual language proficiency testing and alternate language proficiency testing	Document accommodations for multilingual learners with IEPs for annual language proficiency testing and alternate language proficiency testing and ensure their availability



LET'S CONNECT

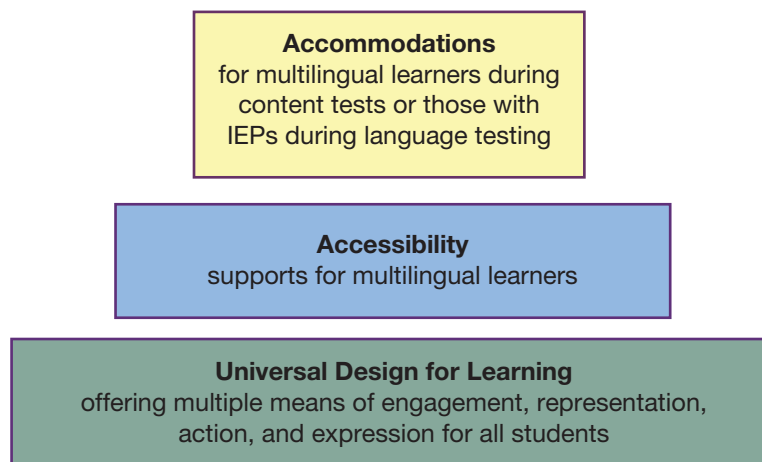
Trace the connection or disconnect between assessment policies for multilingual learners at your state and district. To what extent do you consider them equitable? Are there considerations for differing student characteristics, such as their multiple languages and cultures?

Accommodations and Accessibility Policies in Large-Scale Content Assessment

To encourage the participation of multilingual learners and students with named disabilities in large-scale testing, accommodations or modifications may be necessary to the test's administration or students' participation in the test. Individual states set acceptable accommodations for large-scale content assessment, such as extended time or the use of bilingual glossaries for multilingual learners. For multilingual learners with disabilities, their IEP or 504 plan serves as the legal document and guide to acceptable accommodations for English language proficiency and content testing. According to a student's IEP, multilingual learners with severe cognitive abilities might be eligible to take alternate content and language proficiency testing.

Accessibility, on the other hand, refers to different types of support available to multilingual learners, such as visual and graphic representation of items, to maximize the students' processing and production of meaningful responses. A test's accessibility features should reflect the guidelines of Universal Design for Learning (UDL, see <https://udlguidelines.cast.org>) which seek to promote student equity. Figure 2.10 shows the relationship among principles of Universal Design for Learning, accessibility supports, and accommodations during testing.

FIGURE 2.10 BUILDING BLOCKS FOR ASSISTING STUDENTS DURING ASSESSMENT

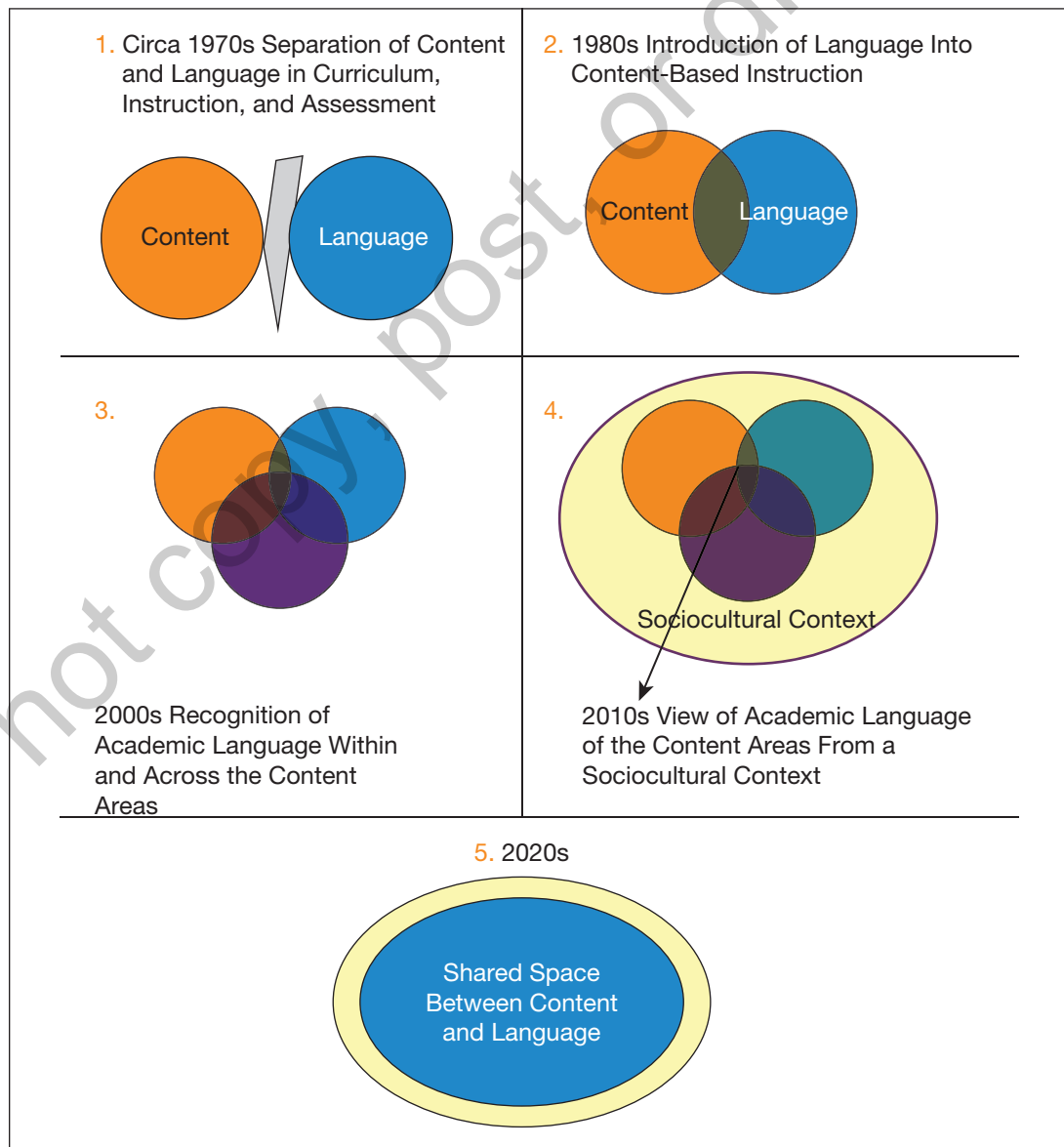


The Role of Standards in Assessment

From their inception at the close of the twentieth century, standards have been influential in shaping educational policy and practice. Today, a range of academic content standards covers different curricular and assessment foci, namely: (a) select content areas and domains of language development; (b) a range of age groups; and (c) different languages. The intent of standards is to bring specificity and clarity to learning expectations and serve as the criteria for measuring student progress (as opposed to a norm-referenced ranking).

Academic content standards of each discipline or subject area are the starting point and anchor for teaching and learning while language proficiency/development standards connect to content standards to specify associated language expectations. Over the years, these two sets of standards have come to merge during instruction and assessment (Gottlieb, 2016). Figure 2.11 illustrates

FIGURE 2.11 THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CONTENT STANDARDS FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS FROM THE 1970S TO THE PRESENT



the evolving relationship between content and language standards as enacted in curriculum, instruction, and assessment for multilingual learners over the decades. As teachers seamlessly collaborate in fusing content and language, we have created stronger bridges to student empowerment.

By elevating the status and rigor of what students are expected to achieve in school, new state academic content standards are intended to be a cornerstone of systemic equity for classrooms, schools, districts, and states. In that capacity, standards are pivotal in designing a coordinated assessment system that builds on robust curriculum and instruction.

Some critics oppose the idea that standards are an equalizer by saying that standards impose a “one size fits all” mentality under the purview of a centrally controlled authority (the state). According to this view, standards lead to standardization, which erodes local control of schools. Standardization also extends to large-scale testing that, in turn, has faced much opposition from the public and educators who see it as being too time-consuming and too far removed from local curriculum and instruction. Nonetheless, the concept of student standards has remained intact and has, in fact, even expanded over the decades to more areas of study.

Technology Standards’ Reach Into Instruction and Assessment

Technology continues to play an increasingly important role in our professional and personal lives. Interestingly, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards for students and teachers have been adopted by all US states and many countries around the world; they have been translated into eight languages. The vision of ISTE is that all educators (should be) “empowered to harness technology to accelerate innovation in teaching and learning and inspire learners to reach their greatest potential.”

As horrendous as the COVID virus and its variants have been on our global and individual psyches, one of its more positive outcomes has been the acceleration of technology use by educators, students, and families.

The ISTE Standards are a “framework designed to empower student voice and ensure that learning is a student-driven process” (see <https://www.iste.org/standards/iste-standards-for-students>). In essence, this framework is the basis for rethinking education around technological innovation in school and beyond. We share the following ISTE student standard of the Empowered Learner as it reflects the book’s theme, and we give an example of how it relates to assessment in Figure 2.12.

FIGURE 2.12 THE EMPOWERED LEARNER EXEMPLIFIED IN ASSESSMENT

ISTE Standards: Student
1.1 Empowered Learner
Students leverage technology to take an active role in choosing, achieving, and demonstrating competency in their learning goals, informed by the learning sciences

ISTE STANDARD	POTENTIAL USE IN ASSESSMENT
1.1.a Students articulate and set personal learning goals, develop strategies leveraging technology to achieve them and reflect on the learning process itself to improve learning outcomes.	Student self-assessment and reflection of learning, based on individual learning goals, can be recorded and archived using multiple technological modalities (e.g., audio, video).
1.1.b Students build networks and customize their learning environments in ways that support the learning process.	Students have choices in seeking resources for assessment to optimize how they show what they have learned.
1.1.c Students use technology to seek feedback that informs and improves their practice and to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.	Students engage in peer assessment along with giving and acting on feedback using technology tools.
1.1.d Students understand the fundamental concepts of technology operations, demonstrate the ability to choose, use and troubleshoot current technologies and are able to transfer their knowledge to explore emerging technologies.	Students seamlessly integrate different technologies (i.e., multimodal resources) into classroom instruction and assessment as is evident in their products or projects.



LET'S CONNECT

Think back to your technological acumen before the COVID era and compare it to the present day in terms of your and students' personal use of technology (e.g., communication, management). How have you incorporated technology into classroom assessment? Review the ISTE Standards with colleagues and brainstorm their use as part of instruction and assessment.

Social and Emotional Learning in Instruction and Assessment

Just as the ISTE standard in Figure 2.12 blends technology into the development of an Empowered Learner, so too does the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) which seeks to advance educational equity, in part, by empowering young people and helping in building their healthy identities (Niemi, 2020). The role of social and emotional learning (SEL) adds to our discussion on assessment for multilingual learners. Its five competencies—1. Self-awareness, 2. Self-management, 3. Social awareness, 4. Relationship skills, and 5. Responsible decision-making—are very much part of the make-up of caring classrooms and school communities. In fact, these competencies have been converted into standards in several states (e.g., see <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/SEL-Standards.pdf>).

While the updated definition of SEL aims to “affirm the identities, strengths, and experiences of all children, including those who have been marginalized in our education systems,” it can only be effective for multilingual learners when placed

within historical and political contexts. There have been accusations that SEL lacks cultural relevance for multilingual learners and consequently is cast in a deficit or negative light. For example, teachers have described a lack of social and emotional stability in minoritized households as an obstacle to overcome rather than accepting family life as it exists for these students (Mahfouz & Anthony-Stevens, 2020).

We must interpret data generated around SEL for multilingual learners within a multicultural context; otherwise, filtering information through a white middle-class frame, which is often the case, can portray students as “damaged.” There are several authentic ways of assessing multilingual learners that are compatible with SEL. These qualitative accounts include:

1. Student self-assessment, such as having multilingual learners keep an ongoing journal in languages of their choice of their experiences and feelings
2. Performance-based simulated scenarios prompted by students, such as ones based on conflict-resolution
3. Teacher observation and interaction with students.

CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Local assessment policies that are set by districts or counties and schools ultimately operate in classrooms. In large part, they revolve around the interpretation of federal or state policies and guidance. Nevertheless, principals and teachers can serve as change agents within their own buildings. Within a district there might be schools with a variety of programs serving multilingual learners, each with its own vision. In turn, each program might have unique partnerships with the community and distinct policies for instruction and assessment.

Classroom assessment that is indistinguishable from instruction might be contingent, meaning it is spontaneous or in the moment, or it might be integrated into the classroom routine. For example, at the close of a lesson, students submit exit slips, such as the ones below; in this instance information is being gathered for the students’ autobiography project. Student and teacher input in the teaching-learning cycle is integral to assessment *as* and *for* learning (Gottlieb, 2016; Heritage et al., 2012).

Example Student Exit Slips

Two questions I asked my family:

*How many primos do I have?
Where do they live?*

An interesting fact about my family:

My abuelita from Oxaca speaks two languages, Spanish and Zapotec!

Two important dates in my family’s history

*Mis papas came to Chicago in 2015.
I was born in 2016.*

EVIDENCE FOR LEARNING

At first glance this last issue is one that doesn't seem controversial; however, there are potential consequences (either negative or positive) for multilingual learners. We divide this issue into five areas and ask questions to guide educators. Resource 2.6 offers space to contemplate your collective responses to these questions.

- Standards as Guidance
 - Does your school or district include their academic content standards in conjunction with language development standards for multilingual learners?
 - How many standards per discipline or subject area are addressed each quarter?
 - Are standards paired with learning targets for lessons and units of learning?
 - For your Latine students in bilingual or dual language programs, do Spanish language development or Spanish language arts standards also serve as goalposts?
 - For WIDA states, territories, and agencies, per the ELD Standards Framework, 2020 edition, is Standard 1, language for social and instructional purposes, always addressed with the other ELD standards statements—the language for language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies—to bolster student engagement and personal relevance?
- Stakeholder or User Roles in Curriculum
 - Has district leadership selected a predetermined curriculum that includes standards and criteria of success?
 - Do leadership and teacher teams depend on textbooks as the de facto curriculum with end of chapter tests?
 - Do leadership and teacher teams design curriculum along with projects, performance tasks, and rubrics?
 - Do students have input in crafting curriculum and if so, how?
- Learning Expectations and Goals
 - Is there a uniform set of grade-level expectations for all students?
 - Are students expected to meet expectations in the same way or are there different paths students may take to accomplish their goals?
 - To what extent are multimodalities (e.g., visual, graphic, oral, written) incorporated into learning goals, expectations, and evidence?
 - Are students' individual characteristics considered in determining their goals for learning?
- Documenting evidence for learning
 - Are we speaking to multilingual learners' conceptual, language, and/or social emotional development?
 - Are we addressing learning in the moment and/or learning over time?

- Are we “counting” learning that has been scaffolded and/or learning that has occurred independently?
- Are we measuring learning by results from annual state tests and/or by ongoing assessment?
- Are we insisting on the same evidence for learning for all students in a grade, including multilingual learners and multilingual learners with learning disabilities?
- Grading Practices
 - Is there a grading system or policy for your school or district and, if so, what are its parameters?
 - Is the grading system uniform and standards-referenced or more traditional, reliant on individual teachers’ criteria?
 - Are attendance and homework included in grading?
 - Is effort and motivation part of the grading equation?
 - Do students have a voice in determining their grades?

Building Student and Teacher Self-Efficacy

Leveraging multilingual learners’ assets in working toward their learning goals helps students stay motivated to produce robust evidence for learning. This strengths-based strategy comes under the umbrella of promoting teacher and student self-efficacy. Research confirms the strong influence of teacher efficacy as a powerful accelerator of student learning (Hattie, 2018). We assert that student and teacher self-efficacy is a sign of empowerment.

Self-efficacy relates to a person’s individual perception of their capabilities through self-examination and evaluation. In essence, it is the belief in ourselves, our abilities, and our competencies. Self-efficacy allows us to confront and overcome challenges (Faddis et al., 2022). That, in essence, has been the theme of this chapter, to confront dilemmas for multilingual learners head on and come to contemplate a collective, assessment-related position or stance.

As a summary, you might wish to refer to the first LET’S CONNECT in this chapter and contemplate how to tackle current assessment practices and policies for your multilingual learners so that students can take ownership of their learning. Then turn to Resource 2.7 to revisit each issue and offer your personal reaction and/or that of your team. Ultimately, in bolstering self-efficacy throughout the instructional and assessment process, students and teachers will be ready to cross the bridge to empowerment.



FINAL CONNECTION

Each assessment issue presented here is dependent on and sensitive to community, district, school, and classroom contexts. No matter what the challenge, in seeking resolutions, educators need to collaborate with students, families, and each other.

1. What is the most controversial dilemma regarding multilingual learners in your setting and what might you do to help resolve it?
2. Which issues have been debated in your grade-level/department team or school? How might you facilitate consensus building and perhaps a change in policy?
3. How do you relate to local and state assessment issues for multilingual learners?
4. How might you present a convincing argument and propose a resolution to an issue to colleagues, your school, or the community? How might you include multilingual learners and families?
5. To what extent do you feel you have a voice in presenting your stance on these issues and, consequently, do you feel empowered by having that opportunity?

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SELECT REFERENCES FOR LINGUISTS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, AND MULTILINGUAL THEORISTS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO LANGUAGE, LANGUAGE LEARNING, AND MULTILINGUAL LEARNING

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RESOURCE 2.1

THE PROS AND CONS OF COMPETING LANGUAGE THEORIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON ASSESSMENT

Given the myriad theorists that have influenced current day teaching and learning in multilingual spaces, choose one from each field who most aligns with your philosophy. Referring to Figures 2.1 to 2.3, with a colleague, note what you perceive as the pros and cons of that theory for instructional practice and its potential implications for assessment for multilingual learners.

PROS	CONS	IMPLICATIONS FOR HOW WE ASSESS MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS
Theory of Language		
Theory of Language Learning		
Theory of Multilingual Language Learning		

RESOURCE 2.2

A CHECKLIST FOR MAXIMIZING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS' ACCESS TO MULTIPLE LANGUAGES DURING INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

This checklist is intended for teachers, but can easily be replicated for students if changed to first person. Securing answers to these questions will help plan assessment that is geared to the linguistic assets of multilingual learners.

DO YOU KNOW WHETHER YOUR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS	YES	NO
1. Understand why they are being assessed and in what ways they might utilize their multiple languages?		
2. Are orally proficient in multiple languages?		
3. Are comfortable interacting with peers of their shared languages?		
4. Can read in languages other than English?		
5. Can write in languages other than English?		
6. Enjoy examining materials and resources, such as technology, in their multiple languages?		
7. Rely on multimodal resources to boost their understanding?		
8. Seek family and community members to assist in securing resources in multiple languages?		
9. Contribute to a language policy in their classes?		

RESOURCE 2.3

COMPARING STATE/DISTRICT WITH CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

The boxes with questions offer space for you to respond to each pair of statements.

STATE/DISTRICT CONTENT TESTING OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS	CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS
Standardized with uniform procedures for administration, scoring, and reporting	Spontaneous to planned, from personalized student to schoolwide common assessment
What are the tests in your state and when are they administered?	What are some ways you and your colleagues assess multilingual learners?
Accommodated for multilingual learners	Designed with multilingual learners in mind so accommodations are not necessary unless students have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
What accommodations are afforded multilingual learners for assessment?	What are some specific considerations for multilingual learners when creating classroom assessment?
Homogenized to minimize content and bias sensitivity, therefore, generally neutral in linguistic and cultural relevance	Inclusive of multilingual learners' languages, cultures, perspectives, and experiences, therefore, more linguistic and culturally sustainable
Is a content and bias sensitivity review built into the design of large-scale measures?	How are multilingual learners' languages, cultures, perspectives, and experiences considered in preparation for and during assessment?
Equated with high-stakes accountability	Associated with improving teaching and learning
What are some details of accountability for multilingual learners in your state?	What steps have been taken to improve teaching and learning for multilingual learners based on assessment data?

RESOURCE 2.4

CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT PRACTICES FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

To what extent do you see your classroom assessment practices reflected below? This checklist is for individual teachers, learning communities, grade-level teams, or an entire school. You might choose to convert the checklist into a rating scale to make a more definitive determination of current assessment practices. Based on the results, decide how to more fully engage multilingual learners in classroom assessment.

FEATURES OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT PRACTICES FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS	YES	NOT YET
1. There is a clearly defined purpose for assessment that is shared with multilingual learners.		
2. Teachers and students co-construct (integrated) content and language learning targets and decide how they are to be assessed.		
3. Teachers and students co-create criteria of success based on learning targets.		
4. Teachers and students co-plan meaningful instructional and assessment tasks (and projects).		
5. Assessment tasks represent students' learning targets which are anchored in content and language standards.		
6. Assessment tasks invite multiple perspectives for students to relate to.		
7. Assessment tasks are multimodal and call for multimodal responses.		
8. Multilingual learners can access their multiple languages during assessment.		
9. Multilingual learners and teachers give and respond to timely concrete feedback.		
10. Multilingual learners engage in self-reflection and peer assessment.		
11. Multilingual learners have choices throughout the assessment process.		
12. Multilingual learners act on assessment results on behalf of themselves, their classroom, school, or community.		

RESOURCE 2.5

COMPARING STATE AND DISTRICT ASSESSMENT-RELATED POLICIES FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

Based on potential state and district assessment-related policies, decide which are most applicable and their impact on your setting and your students.

STATE ASSESSMENT-RELATED POLICY	DISTRICT ASSESSMENT-RELATED POLICY
Design or adopt standards with aligned assessment	Implement standards in curriculum, instruction, and assessment
Determine testing windows for annual content testing	Administer annual testing and determine the testing windows for interim content testing, if applicable
Determine accommodations for English learners and other multilingual learners for annual content testing	Apply and document accommodations for English learners and other multilingual learners for annual content testing
Determine the testing window for annual English language proficiency assessment	Administer the annual English language proficiency assessment
Determine accommodations for English learners with IEPs for annual English language proficiency testing	Ensure documentation of accommodations for English learners with IEPs for annual English language proficiency testing

SUMMARY OF MY STATE'S ASSESSMENT-RELATED POLICIES FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS	SUMMARY OF MY DISTRICT'S ASSESSMENT-RELATED POLICIES FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

RESOURCE 2.6

WHAT COUNTS AS EVIDENCE FOR LEARNING FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

Looking back at the set of questions (refer to issue #8), jot down what evidence for learning for multilingual learners means to you individually, your grade-level or department team, or even school. Later, you may wish to convert your responses into a schoolwide policy.

1. How many standards and which ones meet the evidence criterion?

2. Who (or what) determines curriculum and evidence for learning?

3. Should goals for learning and subsequent evidence be the same for all students, including multilingual learners and multilingual learners with learning disabilities?

4. How do learning expectations become the basis for evidence?

5. Is grading considered a source of evidence for learning and, if so, how is it factored in?

RESOURCE 2.7

REAFFIRMING MY TEAM'S AND MY STANCE ON ISSUES FACING EDUCATORS OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

Given the list of issues, or others you deem fit, spend some time to solidify and jot down your position or stance. Next, within your team, adapt your stance with that of others until you come to consensus on each issue and note it in the last column. You may ask to represent your team on your position at a faculty meeting or professional learning activity to create a school policy.

THE ISSUE	MY STANCE	MY TEAM'S STANCE
1. Theories of language, language learning, and multilingual language learning		
2. Access to assessment in one or more languages		
3. Perspectives on language development and language proficiency assessment		
4. Definitions of academic language		
5. Assessment for formative or summative purposes		
6. Contexts for assessing multilingual learners		
7. Assessment policy and practice		
8. Evidence for learning		

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