

ASSESSMENT

THE DESIGN OF CONTENT AND LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

This section covers how assessments should be designed to accurately measure the achievement and progress of English learners.

Comprehensive assessment for English learners (ELs) begins with identifying the characteristics of the student population and matching them to the systematic planning, collection, analysis, and interpretation of data for both language proficiency and academic achievement. These data subsequently offer feedback that impacts instruction and contributes to decisions affecting ELs. Assessment for ELs is standards-referenced and based on the Illinois Learning Standards, including college and career readiness standards and Spanish language arts standards (when applicable), in conjunction with Illinois English Language Development Standards. The languages of assessment reflect the specific instructional designs that are being implemented.

Assessment occurs at the classroom, program, district, and state levels; in turn, each level speaks to specific purposes and audiences. The goal of all assessment is to provide reliable and valid indicators of student performance. To be equitable, assessment for ELs must also be linguistically and culturally responsive. The following bulleted lists address the overall considerations in the selection of EL measures and considerations in the design of measures of academic achievement and language proficiency.

In selecting assessments of academic achievement or language proficiency at the program or district levels, administrators and school leaders are to consider the:

- demographics of the EL population, including their distribution across grade levels, along with their linguistic and cultural backgrounds
- educational experiences of the students inside and outside the United States
- linguistic and cultural experiences of the students
- students' conceptual development
- language(s) of instruction
- need for accommodations for ELs with disabilities

- inclusion of sizeable numbers of ELs in the development of the measure (e.g., piloting, field-testing, standard-setting as reported in the technical manual)
- presence of multiple perspectives in student tasks
- reporting of data by subgroup
- interpretation of data within a linguistic and cultural context

In designing content assessment at the classroom and program levels, teachers and school leaders are to consider the:

- literacy of ELs (in English and/or the home language)
- linguistic, cultural, educational, and instructional experiences of the students
- language(s) of instruction for the particular content areas
- supports used to maximize students' access to content during instruction
- accommodations used for state testing for ELs and ELs with disabilities
- ways to provide standards-referenced student feedback on ELs' academic achievement.

In designing language proficiency assessment at the classroom and program levels, teachers and school leaders are to consider the:

- language proficiencies of the EL population within and across language domains
- complexity of academic language use
- linguistic, cultural, educational, and instructional experiences of the students
- supports used for instruction to extend into assessment
- accessibility for all ELs and accommodations for ELs with disabilities
- ways to provide ELs standards-referenced feedback on their language development.

The purpose for assessment must match the design of the assessment and the use of the data. If there is a mismatch between the purpose and the measure, then the assessment is not valid and there is no confidence in the usability of the data. Additionally, the purpose of assessment tends to be associated with a specific level of implementation; for example, monitoring daily progress of individual students occurs at a classroom level while monitoring overall student progress on a quarterly basis, let's say, may occur at a grade level, department level, or program level. Table 3 outlines the primary purposes for assessment at each level of implementation along with suggested measures.

<i>Purpose for Assessment in K-12 Settings</i>	<i>Measures at the Classroom Level</i>	<i>Measures at the Grade/Department and Program Levels</i>	<i>Measures at the State Level</i>
1. Screening students to determine eligibility for language support services			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Language Survey • WIDA Screener
2. Monitoring progress of students' language development and academic achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructionally embedded assessment • Student self- and peer assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common district or school assessment of academic achievement (with accommodations) • Common language assessment with supports 	
3. Fulfilling federal accountability requirements			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC (with EL accommodations) • Additional non-academic variable • ACCESS for ELLs 2.0
4. Reclassifying students within or transition from language support services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher recommendations based on classroom assessment data (e.g., student portfolios) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACCESS for ELLs 2.0
5. Evaluating instructional support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher surveys & focus groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common district or school assessment of academic achievement (with accommodations) • Common language assessment with supports • School leader interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC (with accommodations for all ELs) • ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 (with accommodations for ELs with disabilities) • Alternate ACCESS for ELLs (for ELs with significant cognitive disabilities)

Table 3. Purposes for Assessing ELs and Suggested Measures at the Classroom, Grade/Department/Program, and State Levels

(Gottlieb, 2016).

The features of Illinois' instructional designs for ELs by their very nature dictate the languages of assessment. It is important to maintain a one-to-one correspondence between the language(s) of instruction and the language(s) of assessment at the classroom, program, and district levels. For instance, if literacy instruction is exclusively in the students' home language for ELs in a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) setting, then it is premature to assess the students' literacy in English. Likewise, the language allocation in dual language designs mirrors the amount of assessment in the home language in relation to that in English; for example, in 90/10 programs, 90 percent of assessment is to be in ELs' home language and 10 percent in English; in 50/50 programs, the languages of assessment (as instruction) are shared. Table 4 provides a guide for the languages of assessment by instructional design.

<i>Instructional Design</i>	<i>Differentiated English Language Proficiency Assessment at the Classroom and Program Levels</i>	<i>Accommodated Assessment of Academic Achievement in English at the Classroom and Program Levels</i>	<i>Assessment of Academic Achievement in the Home Language at the Classroom and Program Levels</i>
Dual Language— Two Way	X	All content areas taught in English with home language support	Core courses in home language
Dual Language— One Way	X		Core courses in home language
Transitional Bilingual Program: Self-Contained	X	All content areas taught in English with home language support	Core courses in home language
Transitional Bilingual Program: Collaboration	X	All content areas taught in English with home language support	Core courses in home language
Transitional Program in English: Self-Contained	X	X (with home language support as provided during instruction)	
Transitional Program in English: Collaboration	X	X (with home language support as provided during instruction)	

Table 4. Illinois' Instructional Designs for ELs and Their Corresponding Languages of Assessment