

# Multilingual Learners: Assessments

## Competency

The educator will design assessments to support multilingual learners and their growth in the understanding and application of language and/or content skills.

## Key Method

The educator will determine what concepts and/or skills are necessary to measure and create formative and summative assessments that are differentiated for various English language proficiency levels. The educator will reflect on data gathered from these informal assessments to monitor student growth toward proficiency. Additionally, the educator will decide when their students have mastered concepts or skills or when it is appropriate to provide them with additional instruction, practice, and support.

## Method Components

### Assessments and Multilingual Learners

Educators should use a variety of assessment tools, including language proficiency tests, informal observations, and student self-assessments to gain a holistic understanding of each learner’s linguistic abilities, cognitive skills, and academic progress.

### Meeting the Assessment Needs of Multilingual Learners

To develop assessments, educators must consider the unique characteristics and needs of their learners. Listed below are key considerations for creating assessments and steps needed



to ensure you are meeting the needs of your learners. Each of these is explained in more detail in the resource section.

## Considerations

- Culturally responsive assessments
- Multiple language proficiency
- Dynamic assessments
- Formative assessments
- Performance-based tasks
- Student self-assessment
- Portfolio assessments
- Collaborative assessments
- Individualized approach
- Sociocultural context
- Assessment literacy
- Long-term perspective

## Designing Assessments for Multilingual Learners

When designing assessments, consider your students' linguistic abilities, cultural backgrounds, and individual needs. The process should include these steps :

- Define learning objectives
- Select appropriate format
- Provide clear instructions
- Consider cultural sensitivity
- Accommodate language diversity
- Embed authentic context
- Include performance-based tasks
- Offer flexibility and choice
- Use clear rubrics
- Account for multilingualism
- Incorporate feedback and reflection
- Use diverse assessment tools

## State and District Language Assessments

As a teacher of multilingual learners , it is important to know your students' language levels. You can learn a lot about their level of English language proficiency by analyzing state, district, and classroom assessment data. It is important to use the results of your analysis to create goals for your multilingual learner students. Each assessment provides specific information that you can use in your planning.

**Home Language Survey (HLS):** The identification process begins during enrollment when you ask students' parents or guardians about their home language. The findings will help you to identify students who may need further assessment for English language proficiency.



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**English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT):** State mandated assessments that evaluate students' ability in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They determine the level of language support your students will need.

**Oral Language Proficiency Assessment:** This assessment focuses specifically on the student's oral language skills, including listening and speaking.

**Standardized Academic Tests:** Standardized tests in subjects like math and science can provide insights into a student's academic abilities. Discrepancies between content knowledge and language proficiency may indicate the need for language support.

**Observational Assessments:** Educators observe students in the classroom to gauge communication skills, interaction with peers, and comprehension.

**Writing Samples:** Written work allows educators to assess a student's writing proficiency, including vocabulary usage, sentence structure, and ability to express ideas coherently.

**Parent and Teacher Input:** Gathering input from parents or guardians, as well as classroom teachers, provides valuable insights into the student's language abilities, social interactions, and academic progress.

**Cultural and Background Assessments:** Understanding a student's cultural and educational background can inform instructional strategies and support services. These assessments may involve discussions with the student's family or reviewing prior academic records.

**Dynamic Assessments:** These assessments focus on the student's potential to learn and adapt. They involve interaction between the assessor and the student to determine the learner's ability to benefit from instruction and support.

**Language Screenings:** Quick assessments may be used to identify students who require further evaluation. These screenings help educators prioritize which students need more comprehensive language assessments.

## The Four Language Domains

Language encompasses four domains: Productive-writing and speaking, and receptive-listening and reading. Planning and assessing in these four areas create a comprehensive approach that considers the unique characteristics of each. Plan assessments in each area to understand your students' individual needs.

**Listening:** Use audio recordings and live interactions. Provide various tasks to gauge various levels of listening proficiency.



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**Speaking:** Incorporate presentations, role-plays, or discussions to evaluate fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary usage. Use rubrics that assess both content and language skills.

**Reading:** Select materials that align with language levels. Design questions that assess literal understanding as well as critical thinking.

**Writing:** Assign a variety of real-world tasks and assess your students' grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, and the ability to convey ideas. Use rubrics that include language features.

## Assessment Strategies for Multilingual Learners

It is essential to provide multilingual learners with accommodations, scaffolds, and other supports that ensure equitable assessment experiences. Accommodations and scaffolding reduce language barriers and allow multilingual learners to display their abilities.

### Accommodations

Accommodations are supports that are in place, usually for an extended time, and are used throughout the course to allow students access to the content. Design assessment experiences should include accommodations that are appropriate for your students:

- Translated instructions
- Extended time
- Bilingual dictionaries
- Visual aids
- Flexible response formats
- Language support or buddy

### Scaffolds

Scaffolds are temporary supports used to provide students access into the assignments or assessments. Scaffolds include:

- Pre-teach vocabulary
- Graphic organizers
- Sentence frames
- Modeling
- Peer collaboration
- Small group assessments
- Guided questions
- Self-assessments
- Feedback
- Checkpoints
- Mixed language use



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## Creating Rubrics

Effective rubrics use design to account for a student's level of language proficiency. Criteria should be clear and concise as well as promote language development. Your rubrics should include:

- Clear and simple language
- Visual representation
- Scaffolded criteria
- Language domain alignment
- Multilingual examples
- Cultural relevance
- Clarity of expectations
- Learner engagement
- Holistic and analytic elements
- Formative and summative criteria
- Differentiated assessment

Use the [sample writing rubric](#) in the resources below to understand how to create a rubric for your content and grade level.

## Setting Goals for Multilingual Learners

Setting goals for multilingual learners is a crucial aspect of promoting their language development, academic success, and overall growth. These goals should be tailored to each student's language proficiency, cultural background, and individual needs. Data gathered about your multilingual learners should be used to drive your instruction.

The following examples align with different language domains and proficiency levels, providing clear and measurable objectives for multilingual learners to work toward.

### **Goal for Speaking (Intermediate Level):**

SMART Goal: By the end of the semester, Maria will participate in group discussions on familiar topics, contributing at least two meaningful sentences in English during each discussion, with correct pronunciation and grammatical accuracy.

### **Goal for Reading (Advanced Level):**

SMART Goal: Within six weeks, Ahmed will read and comprehend grade-level science articles independently, summarizing key points and main ideas in written responses with at least 80% accuracy.

### **Goal for Writing (Intermediate Level):**



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SMART Goal: By the end of the quarter, Elena will write descriptive paragraphs in English, using appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, to effectively convey personal experiences and cultural traditions with minimal grammatical errors.

**Goal for Listening (Novice Level):**

SMART Goal: By the end of the marking period, Juan will demonstrate improved listening comprehension in English by accurately identifying and understanding essential details from short audio clips, achieving a success rate of at least 70% on listening comprehension assessments.

## Summative and Formative Assessments

Summative assessments provide a clear snapshot of students' overall mastery of skills or content at the end of a unit, course, or academic period. They also offer an opportunity to mark a student's performance against benchmarks. Formative assessments offer ongoing insights into a student's learning process. These assessments help identify gaps or progression toward goals.

Examples of Summative Assessments:

- Final exams
- Standardized tests
- End of unit tests
- Projects or presentations
- Performance assessments

Examples of Formative Assessments:

- Discussions in the classroom
- Exit tickets
- Quizzes and polls
- Think-pair-share
- Journals
- Teacher observations

Educators use both types of assessments to communicate progress to students and stakeholders and to make plans for academic and language growth for students.

## Supporting Rationale and Research

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<https://www.colorincolorado.org/blog/computer-based-common-core-testing-considerations-and-supports-ells>

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<http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/VAC/research/theory.html>

Wolf, Mikyung Kim, et al. (2010) "Improving the Validity of English Language Learner Assessment Systems." National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing, CRESST.  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1B7wJGg6csZTLqz8mUGWrJwMNYu3YE34k/view?usp=sharing>

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<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/nciip-english-learners-and-every-student-succeeds-act-ess>

## Resources

### Assessment and Multilingual Learners

[Equity for English-Language Learners](#)



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[“Teach to the Test” Robbing Newcomer Students of Precious Language-Learning Time](#)

[Speaking & Listening Skills for ELLs](#)

[Fair And Square Assessments for ELLs  
Can Do Descriptors](#)

[Newcomer Tool Kit \(PDF\)](#)

[Reading 101 for English Language Learners](#)

[Writing Instruction for ELLs](#)

## State and District Language Assessments

[50-State Comparison: English Learner Policies](#)

[WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition K-12](#)

## The Four Language Domains

[WIDA Writing Rubric Pre-K-Kindergarten](#)

[WIDA Speaking Rubric Kindergarten](#)

[WIDA Performance Definitions - Speaking and Writing Grades K-12](#)

[WIDA Performance Definitions - Listening and Reading Grades K-12](#)

## Assessment Strategies

[What is Formative Assessment?](#)

[Assessments for English Language Learners](#)

[Difference between accommodation and modification](#)

[Supporting Intermediate English Learners in Every Subject](#)

[Ending the Invisibility of Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Systems: A Framework for DLL Identification](#)

[Embedding the Can Do Cycle throughout the School Year](#)



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## Setting Goals for Multilingual Learners

[3 Ways Student Data Can Inform Your Teaching](#)

[Differentiated Instruction for English Language Learners](#)

[Using informal Assessment for English Language Learners](#)

[Consideration when Developing Assessments](#)

[How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students-- Webinar](#)

## Summative and Formative Assessments

[Creating and Using Rubrics—Eberly Center Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation](#)

[Formative vs. Summative Assessments: What's the Difference?](#)

## Creating Rubrics

[Sample Writing Rubric](#)

# Submission Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria

*To earn this micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and receive a proficient score for all components in Part 2.*

## Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

### **300-400 words**

Please answer the following questions:

- Describe your classroom demographics and content instructional goals. How is assessment an essential part of your practice? How do you currently consider multilingual learners as part of your assessments?
- Describe an assessment accommodation or scaffold that is currently in place for your multilingual learners.



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**Passing:** The educator completely answers questions using personal examples and supporting evidence. Accommodations or scaffolds are described and are supportive to multilingual learners.

## Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following artifacts for evaluation:

### **Artifact 1: Formative or Summative Assessment** **300-400 words**

Create an assessment that you will administer to your class. Identify whether this is a formative or summative assessment and how it will be administered. Your assessment should reflect grade level standards. Include the objective or standard that you are assessing as well as an exemplary response for your content and grade level. Explain the language domain you will be assessing within the assessment.

### **Artifact 2: Accommodations and Scaffold**

Describe two accommodations and/or scaffolds you provided for your students on the assessment in Artifact 1. Next to each accommodation or scaffold, explain your reason for using it.

### **Artifact 3: Rubric**

Create a grade-level appropriate rubric for your multilingual learners that is thoughtfully designed to account for the diverse language proficiency levels represented in your classroom. The rubric should assess content and language usage.

## Part 2. Rubric

	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>Artifact 1: Assessment</b>	The educator submits an assessment that does all the following: -Correctly and clearly explains whether this is a summative or formative assessment -Explains how the assessment will be	The educator submits an assessment that does 3-4 of the following: -Correctly and clearly explains whether this is a summative or formative assessment -Explains how the assessment will be	The educator submits an assessment but it may be missing more than four of the items or: -Does not correctly identify whether it is a formative or summative assessment -Is missing information on how



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	<p>administered in the classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Includes the content standard or lesson objective which correlates to the assessment</li> <li>-Includes an exemplary response</li> <li>-States the language domain which will be used by the student during the assessment</li> </ul>	<p>administered in the classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Includes the content standard or lesson objective which correlates to the assessment</li> <li>-Includes an exemplary response</li> <li>-States the language domain which will be used by the student during the assessment</li> </ul>	<p>the assessment will be administered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-A standard or objective or does not correspond to the assessment</li> <li>-Does not share response</li> <li>-Does not include information on language domain</li> </ul>
<p><b>Artifact 2: Accommodations or Scaffolds</b></p>	<p>The educator includes two or more accommodations or modifications to be used on the assessment.</p> <p>Each accommodation is clearly and thoughtfully designated.</p>	<p>The educator includes one or two accommodations</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Accommodations are not clearly referenced or designated.</p>	<p>Includes one or does not include any accommodations or they are incorrectly explained.</p>
<p><b>Artifact 3:</b></p>	<p>A rubric is included that does all required criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Assesses the artifact one</li> <li>-Assesses both content and language usage</li> <li>-Accounts for diverse language levels</li> </ul>	<p>A rubric is included that but it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Partially assesses Artifact 1</li> <li>-Assesses either content or language usage</li> <li>-Does not account for diverse language levels</li> </ul>	<p>A rubric is missing or includes fewer than two of the required criteria.</p>



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## Part 3. Reflection

### 300-400 words

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For guidance on writing a good reflection, review this resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Reflect on using assessments to support multilingual learners using the following guided questions:

- What did you learn about your multilingual learners in your assessment process? What do you hope to accomplish with your next steps?
- How has your thinking about the use of assessment with multilingual learners changed or been enhanced by this process?

**Passing:** The educator's response uses specific details from the micro-credential process and provides concrete evidence of reflective practice and clear next steps for multilingual learner instruction based on data gathered. Writing is organized and easy to understand.



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