

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Every school district must offer K-12 planned instruction in learning the English language that includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing (BEC, July 1, 2001). ESL is considered a curriculum in the same sense as mathematics or social studies (see Appendices C, D and F for a sample ESL curriculums). This ESL curriculum should be delineated by organizational levels (primary, intermediate, middle, and high school levels) to ensure students learning needs are being met.

Within each organizational level, students will progress through stages of the second language acquisition process. A recognition of the various stages of language proficiency are important because assessment and instruction should be linked to the level of English spoken/understood. While there are various nomenclature used to identify the stages of language progression, this kit will utilize four levels: pre-conversational, beginner, intermediate, and advanced. These stages can be broadly defined as: (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Equity Center www.nwrac.org)

Proficiency Level	Criterion
Pre-conversational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students do not produce the English language. • Students understand language that has been made comprehensible.
Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have a small active vocabulary. • Students are ready to speak in one- or two- word sentences.
Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is noticeable increase in listening comprehension. • Students will try to speak in short phrases. • Students will begin to use the social language necessary in a classroom. • Students exhibit early English academic skills.
Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students understand what is said in the classroom. • Students can express ideas comprehensibly in both oral and written communication. • Students will be able to read most grade level material. <p>This stage takes the longest, covers a broad continuum of language acquisition, and may take 7 to 10 years to achieve.</p>

The planned instruction must address the Pennsylvania Academic Standards in Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. Districts may also wish to use the TESOL Standards in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English that were developed and adapted by the Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESOL) national organization. In addition to an ESL curriculum, all content area curricula must include adaptations to assist ELLs in acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills in the various academic disciplines.

At the elementary level, ESL replaces language arts/English instruction and at the secondary level, ESL replaces the English classes that are required for graduation. Tutoring, remediation, and speech therapy are **not** appropriate ESL curricula.

During the initial assessment of ELLs, the level of proficiency will be determined and a student will be placed at the appropriate level of instruction. The level will determine the curricular adaptations needed as well as the length of time that students must work with the ESL teacher. This ranges from a suggested 2-3 hours for the pre-conversational stage to 1 hour per day for the advanced student. (BEC, July 1, 2001)

The assessment of ELLs begins with the identification and placement of students. Districts must have a comprehensive plan of assessment that monitors student progress and drives instruction. While the interaction between instruction and assessment is critical in all educational settings, it is particularly important to the ELL student. Inappropriate assessment may lead to misidentification, misplacement, inadequate monitoring and most significantly, the failure of students to acquire English language skills. There are at least six avenues of assessment that should be addressed in an ESL program relating to the program itself and student progress. These include:

1. Screening and identification: to identify students eligible for language and/or content area support programs
2. Placement: to determine the language proficiency and content area competencies of students in order to recommend an appropriate educational program
3. Reclassification or exit: to determine if a student has gained the language skills and content area competencies needed to benefit from instruction in grade-level classrooms
4. Monitoring student progress: to review student language and content area learning in classrooms
5. Program evaluation: to determine the effects of federal, state, or local instructional programs
6. Accountability: to guarantee that students attain expected educational goals or standards, including testing for high school graduation (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996)

There are numerous assessments that may assist districts in the screening, identification, and placement of ELL students. These have been referred to in Section One and, when properly implemented, can provide a wealth of information on students to guide instruction. When selecting an instrument, districts should ensure that all four modalities of the English language are included: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The assessment must also distinguish among the stages of language acquisition from pre-conversational to advanced for appropriate identification and placement and be usable for ELLs in K-12. Other factors to consider in selecting an appropriate assessment instrument include:

- Level of expertise needed to implement
- Amount of time required for testing
- Cost
- Appropriateness for different language groups

Once an ELL has been identified and placed within a program, progress must be continually monitored. This should be accomplished in a variety of ways depending on the level of the student and the content to be assessed. Multiple measures should be used to determine when a student is ready to proceed from one proficiency level to another, or whether they are able to exit the program. Levels of proficiency and exit criteria should be delineated and understood by all staff. It is important that students acquire cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), the language required for academic achievement, as well as basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) before exiting the program.

ESL and classroom teachers need to be conversant with the assessment strategies best suited to ELLs at the various stages of proficiency. Examples include: murals, sequence of pictures, role playing, graphs, student-made books, demonstrations, diagrams, labeling, portfolios, models, and oral presentations. Again, the background, age, and language level of the student should be factored into the development of assessment for ELLs.

Classroom teachers should also be aware of assessment accommodations and modification strategies. Some that might be used include:

- Allow more time for students to respond if they process information more slowly in their second language.
- Test students in a separate room if they are easily disturbed by noise.
- Have someone read the test to the ELL student in the student's primary language, and have the student respond orally (do not read the reading portion of the PSSA to students).
- Provide shorter testing periods to prevent exhaustion; allowing for flexible testing schedule may be beneficial.
- When appropriate, allow the student to use a dictionary, either in the primary or English language.

- Decrease the English-language demands of the assessment; remove all superfluous expressions and/or declarations from the test; and use simple, short, straightforward phrases.
- Provide the students with ideas on test-taking strategies and practice testing conditions.
- Adjust the weight of the test.
- Use fill-in-the-blank procedures rather than essays.
- For multiple-choice items, eliminate one or two of the possible answers; avoid “a, b, and c” or “none of the above.”
- Give a performance test; have the students make a tape or video.
- If students perform poorly, reteach and test again.
- Do not place extra words in a matching activity.
- Do place words at the top of a fill-in-the-blank test for student selection (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory).

When assessing ELLs, teachers should be aware of the environmental and cultural variables that will influence test results. Cultures have different attitudes toward time, competition, displaying one's knowledge and gender roles. Knowing the student's background may assist a teacher in analyzing the results of the test more accurately.

To move ELLs along the proficiency continuum, specific criteria should be used. These should be based upon educational research and practice and neither prematurely advance or hold a student in an inappropriate placement. A variety of methods may be used to monitor advancement. An attachment at the conclusion of this section contains a sample assessment to be used to move a student along a learning continuum. Results should not only be used for individual student assessment, but also for instructional and program improvement. Even when a student has exited the program, monitoring should be continued to ensure that language acquisition is being maintained.

Parents must be informed of the language acquisition progress of their students. During the parent orientation process, parents should be made aware of the assessment procedures that may vary greatly from those in their native lands. As much as possible, parents should receive this information in their native language.

Districts must also be accountable for student progress and achievement under the provisions of the Pennsylvania Basic Education Circular on Educating Students With Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and English Language as well as the federal No Child Left Behind Legislation.

Language Assessment Rubrics

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Student Name _____

Language spoken at Home _____

Dominant language _____

Grade at which student entered English speaking schools: _____	
Dates & Scores of English oral language proficiency tests	
Date _____	Score _____
Date _____	Score _____
Date _____	Score _____
Date _____	Score _____
Date _____	Score _____

Stages at which the student's observable language ability is described by all or most of the descriptors:	
Date _____	Grade _____ Pre-conversational Stage
Date _____	Grade _____ Beginning Conversational Stage
Date _____	Grade _____ Intermediate Conversational Stage
Date _____	Grade _____ Advanced Conversational Stage
Date _____	Grade _____ Approaching Academic Fluency Stage

Place a checkmark and the date near the skills as they describe the student. Use *NA* to indicate areas that are non-applicable or not grade appropriate for the student.

PRE-CONVERSATIONAL STAGE Dates: Beginning _____ Midpoint _____ Final _____

<u>LISTENING</u>	<u>SPEAKING</u>	<u>READING</u>	<u>WRITING</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student shows comprehension of simple questions and commands by answering in the native language, gesturing, nodding or using other non-verbal cues. <input type="checkbox"/> While being read to, the student can show comprehension of story through nonverbal means such as pointing to pictures. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to physically follow through on commands such as "Pick up the pencil." <input type="checkbox"/> Student can identify objects in the room. <input type="checkbox"/> Student shows comprehension of, not just nouns but, verbs and adjectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student is using native language to communicate. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is experiencing a "Silent Period" and is not yet producing speech utterances in English. <input type="checkbox"/> When asked, the student will tell you his name. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can answer yes and no to questions when asked. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can identify a handful of objects in the room by naming the objects. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can speak in one-word sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Student forms incomplete, but comprehensible sentences consisting of two or more words. For example: Girl cry. 	<p>Can the student read in his/ her native language? O Yes O No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student can identify environmental print such as Cheerios' box or McDonald's sign. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can identify his/ her name in print. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can identify close friends' names in print. <p><i>For Older Students:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students whose first language uses a similar alphabetic system as is used in English may be able to sound out English words without knowing the meaning of the words. <input type="checkbox"/> Students from countries that require English as a course of study (many Asian countries) may have reading and/ or writing skills that surpass listening and speaking skills. 	<p>Can the student write in his/ her native language? O Yes O No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student can write his/ her name. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can copy basic letters and words. <p><i>For Older Students:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students whose first language uses a similar alphabetic system as is used in English may be able to write out English words phonetically. <input type="checkbox"/> Students from countries that require English as a course of study (many Asian countries) may have reading and/ or writing skills that surpass listening and speaking skills.

Diagnosing stages of language development is not an exact science. Please use this as a guideline and add comments that might provide helpful information to future teachers of this student.

Place a checkmark and the date near the skills as they describe the student. Use *NA* to indicate areas that are non-applicable or not grade appropriate for the student.

BEGINNING CONVERSATIONAL STAGE Dates: Beginning _____ Midpoint _____ Final _____

LISTENING	SPEAKING	READING	WRITING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Since listening is an active process of translation at this point, the student's attention often drifts to non-related things. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can be kept on task by using simple total participation techniques such as quick-draws. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can listen to a chapter book being read and get the gist of the story. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can retell a story using simple vocabulary or pictures. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can follow along in classroom discussions and show comprehension by providing simple input. <input type="checkbox"/> Student's ability to comprehend what he/ she has heard surpasses his/ her ability to speak read or write. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student is beginning to use question words. Though questions may not be grammatically correct (Where is? Instead of- Where is he?). <input type="checkbox"/> Apparent "Explosion of Speech." Although, vocabulary is still limited and speech is marked by grammatical errors, this student, who at one time seemed unable to carry on a conversation, is now heard laughing with and conversing with friends. <input type="checkbox"/> Student volunteers to answer questions in class, or is able to answer when called on. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can explain his/her thinking through the support of facial expressions, gestures and simple sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Student reverts to first language when animated or frustrated. <p>Make note of anecdotal speaking examples here:</p>	<p>At this point, young students should be introduced to reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student knows sound/ symbol relationships. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can read approximately 50 sight words. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can read about 100 sight words. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can sound out many simple words. <input type="checkbox"/> Student participates in silent reading times. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can read simple picture books. <p>Name a few of these books here:</p> <p>Date _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <p>Date _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <p>Date _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <p>Date _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <p>Comments:</p>	<p>Attach a dated and non-edited writing sample for each semester that the student is in your class (include at least two per year). You can also add an edited copy if you feel it helps to give a clearer picture of the student's writing ability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Though the student's writings are marked by grammatical errors and misspelled words, the message is comprehensible. <input type="checkbox"/> Student writes in simple sentences as opposed to paragraphs. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to write about concrete events such as a summary or a narration of things that occurred. This includes a cohesive beginning, middle and end. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can explain his thinking in the content areas using simple sentences. <p>On the back of this sheet include and date a brief description of this student's progress and attitudes toward writing.</p> <p>For Older Students: Students from countries that require English as a course of study (many Asian countries) may have reading and/ or writing skills that surpass listening and speaking skills.</p>

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INTERMEDIATE CONVERSATIONAL STAGE Dates: Beginning _____ Midpoint _____ Final _____

<u>LISTENING</u>	<u>SPEAKING</u>	<u>READING</u>	<u>WRITING</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to comprehend and participate in a conversation with minimal misunderstandings. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to listen attentively to lectures, especially when given a listening accountability strategy such as an outline or a graphic organizer to fill out. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to take notes in class, but benefits greatly from the help of graphic organizers and highlighted key points. <input type="checkbox"/> Student understands more than what is evident in their explanations and writings. <input type="checkbox"/> Student, for the most part, understands jokes and humor (though he/ she may not use them in his/ her speech). <input type="checkbox"/> Student understands figurative speech, idioms and metaphors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For the most part the student's answers are short and are dependent on the listener hearing the question to understand the answer. <input type="checkbox"/> Grammatical errors are present but do not necessarily interfere with the message that the student is trying to convey. <input type="checkbox"/> Student answers questions in simple phrases; Yes, I think so. <input type="checkbox"/> The student settles for simple uncomplicated ways of explaining complex concepts. This fact is not as obvious as it was for the students at the beginning conversational stage, who reverted to their first language. Within the context of a conversation this fact is easier to overlook. <input type="checkbox"/> The student speaks in fragments (much more so than a native speaker) and has not yet developed a sophisticated level of vocabulary, although his/ her vocabulary is growing. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to give an oral report with the help of organizers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student can read sight words 1-100. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can read all 220 sight words. <input type="checkbox"/> Student reads different types of books. <input type="checkbox"/> Student reads aloud with minimal mistakes. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is beginning to read chapter books and some grade appropriate material. <input type="checkbox"/> Through the use of graphic organizers, student is able to be successful summarizing what has been read in academic texts. Though for the most part this remains a difficult task. <input type="checkbox"/> Student participates in silent reading times. <p>Name a few of the books that the student has read or is reading: Date _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Date _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Date _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Date _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>	<p>Attach a dated and non-edited writing sample for each semester that the student is in your class (include at least two per year). You can also add an edited copy if you feel it helps to give a clearer picture of the student's writing ability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to paraphrase ideas. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing is not yet as fluid as that of native English speakers. Mechanical errors often disrupt the flow of this student's writings. <input type="checkbox"/> Student writes about abstract as well as concrete concepts. <input type="checkbox"/> Student's message is clear, though past tense and other grammatical errors are common. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling errors are becoming less common <input type="checkbox"/> Student is beginning to add description to writing using adjectives and metaphors. <p>Briefly describe this student's progress and attitudes toward writing: Date _____</p>

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ADVANCED CONVERSATIONAL STAGE* Dates: Beginning _____ Midpoint _____ Final _____

LISTENING	SPEAKING	READING	WRITING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to verbally and/ or in writing demonstrate his/ her comprehension of class discussions, lessons and lectures using simple speech. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to take notes based on his/ her in-class learning. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to comprehend and participate in a conversation with few or no misunderstandings. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to listen attentively to longer lectures, and with some prompting, can form an outline or summary of many of the main points. <input type="checkbox"/> With prompting, the student is able to summarize what he/ she understands. <input type="checkbox"/> Student understands jokes and humor. <input type="checkbox"/> Student understands figurative speech, idioms and metaphors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student is beginning to use clichés and idioms in their conversation. <input type="checkbox"/> Student answers in longer sentences that can be understood within the context of the conversation. <input type="checkbox"/> With clarification and prompting, the student is able to verbally explain his thinking in a way that is understood. <input type="checkbox"/> The student volunteers to answer questions and gives his/ her opinion in class. <input type="checkbox"/> While the student may always have an accent, the student makes very few grammatical mistakes. <input type="checkbox"/> When the student makes any grammatical mistakes, they are not severe enough to interfere with understanding the message. <input type="checkbox"/> Student’s conversation is becoming less dependent on contextual supports such as teacher prompting. The student is able to answer open- ended questions with minimal prompting. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is experimenting with more sophisticated vocabulary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The student participates in, and is on task during silent reading times. <input type="checkbox"/> Student independently reads chapter books that are approaching age-appropriateness with minimal difficulty. <input type="checkbox"/> Student can participate in small group discussions centered around the analysis of a particular book. Though he/ she may need to have their thoughts written out beforehand. <input type="checkbox"/> Though the student may have preferences, he/ she is able to read from a variety of genres. <p>Name a few of the books that this student has read or is reading: Date _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Date _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Date _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>	<p><i>Attach a dated and non-edited writing sample for each semester that the student is in your class (include at least two per year). You can also add an edited copy if you feel it helps to give a clearer picture of the student’s writing ability.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> With help, the student is able to clearly organize thoughts into cohesive and well transitioned paragraphs. <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical errors are common in first drafts, but the student is able to identify these errors through editing. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to write a multi-paragraph persuasive paper explaining his/ her thinking or opinion. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is able to write descriptive paragraphs that enhance his/ her writings. <input type="checkbox"/> With some guidance, the student is able to complete essays and research reports using sophisticated publications such as textbooks, newspapers and encyclopedias. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing is no longer a feared and avoided topic. <p>Briefly describe this student’s progress and attitudes toward writing on the back.</p>

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*The Advanced Conversational Stage is NOT the final stage of language development. Students are continuing to develop in what Jim Cummins refers to as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). This is very important for teachers to be aware of since students at this point are often mainstreamed into regular English programs with little or no support that allows them to make sense of academic text. Beyond this point, students are still in need of close monitoring and scaffolding techniques that allow them to make sense of difficult concepts and texts.