

**DESIGN FOR A HANDBOOK OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT
FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to provide a design for the contents of a proposed Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient students. The design and proposed handbook can be used by educators and specialists in the field of English as a Second Language Education to assist them in evaluating and assessing skills presented by Limited English Proficient students.

The core of the study includes a literature review of current research that supports the use of alternative assessment techniques versus traditional and standardized testing practices to obtain reliable and functional skill level data of Limited English Proficient students. The information can assist educators, administrators and parents in making crucial placement and service needs for their children.

The product of this study is a design for a Handbook of Alternative Assessment. The design consists of an outline and summary of contents for the Handbook of Alternative Assessment.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Within U.S. schools, there is a growing population of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students who receive Bilingual and/or English as a Second Language (ESL) services. Educators of this specific population are challenged in providing appropriate placement and instruction for these students. The process of appropriately placing these LEP students usually begins with assessment.

According to Ovando and Collier (1985), assessment is used for many different purposes including placement, diagnosis, exit from a program and reevaluation of a program. The use of standardized and formal testing procedures have traditionally been utilized to assess the skills of LEP students. However, according to O'Malley and Valdez-Pierce (1996), traditional forms of assessment such as standardized tests are inappropriate for the English Language Learner (ELL) for a variety of reasons.

Standardized tests use multiple-choice items that may be unfamiliar to students with limited experience in US schools; multiple-choice items assume a level of English proficiency that ELL students may not have acquired; and these tests have not been effective in assessing the higher-order thinking skills students use in solving problems, analyzing texts, or evaluating ideas. (p.4)

"Much has been written since the 1970's about options to these practices that would provide practitioners with a more realistic and comprehensive assessment of an individual's English language proficiency and skill level " (Canales, 1994, p. 60). According to a survey of 150 ESL educators, "the majority of respondents ... advocated alternative assessment strategies" to collect realistic and beneficial information about LEP students' abilities (Solomon & Rhodes, 1996, p. 7).

This study investigated current research and practice that supports the use of alternative assessment tools to obtain skill level information of Limited English Proficient students.

Development of the Problem

Educators and specialists have used traditional and formal testing instruments to gather skill level information of Limited English Proficient students. Current research indicates that traditional and formal methods may not be the most effective and reliable tools to use with Limited English Proficient students. Ovando and Collier (1985) note that

teachers of LEP students complain bitterly that many formal tests mandated by the school system seem to be inappropriate because they include items with cultural bias or vocabulary which the students have not yet been exposed to, test skills with which the students have not yet had experience, do not measure what they say they measure, and are normed on middle-class children, do not reflect the cognitive styles of the children, or involve a culturally inappropriate testing situation. (p. 223)

Research and current practice support the use of alternative assessment strategies with Limited English Proficient students to gather pertinent skill level

information in the areas of expressive and receptive language, reading and math. Some of these alternative assessment tools include Portfolio Assessment, Text-Retelling, Cloze Test, Rubrics Strategies and Teacher Observation/Note Taking (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996). According to Chamot & O'Malley (1994) the information obtained from these alternative assessment tools lead educators to

identify students in need of special language, place students in appropriate programs, identify specific instructional needs, monitor student progress in attaining English language and content objectives, and exit students from special language programs. (p. 104)

Need for the Study

According to Ovando & Collier (1985), the following passage from the TESOL Statement on Statewide Programs of Competency Testing exemplifies the need for this researcher's design of an Alternative Assessment Handbook to be used by specialists and educators of Limited English Proficient students. The passage is as follows:

No single instrument can adequately measure students' competency in the basic skills. We urge, therefore, that a variety of opportunities be given to students to demonstrate what they know, and that decisions regarding competency never be made on the basis of a single test. (Ovander & Collier, 1985, p. 260)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to provide a design for the contents of a proposed Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient students. The design and proposed handbook can be used by educators and

specialists in the field of English as a Second Language to assist them in evaluating and assessing skills presented by Limited English Proficient students.

Research Question

What is the content of a design for a Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient Students?

Definition of Terms

Alternative Assessment: Approaches for finding out what students know or can do other than through the use of multiple-choice testing (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996)

Criterion-Referenced Tests: A criterion-referenced test ... simply measures each student's mastery of each objective of the curriculum (Ovando & Collier, 1985)

English Language Learner: A student who is in the process of acquiring English and whose native language is not English or who comes from a background where a language other than English is spoken (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996)

English as a Second Language: A form of bilingual education. A structured language program designed to teach English to non-English speakers (Ovando & Collier, 1985).

Norm-Referenced Test: A formal test that is normed on specific population of English speakers (Ovando & Collier, 1985). Results of norm-referenced tests are compared to an overall population nationwide.

Standardized Tests: A formal test usually used at the beginning and end of a school year to measure students' overall grade-level skills in specific subject areas (Ovando & Collier, 1985). Standardized tests include both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The researcher's purpose of this chapter is to share current research pertaining to traditional and alternative assessment practices used with Limited English Proficient students.

This chapter will include brief descriptions and examples of traditional assessment tools, such as: The Home Language Survey, Language Dominance/Proficiency Tests and Standardized Tests. Concerns regarding using traditional tests with Limited English Proficient students will also be discussed.

This chapter will include defining alternative assessment and present definitions and examples of alternative assessment tools, to include: Performance Assessment/Observations, Text-Retelling, Cloze Tests and Portfolios.

This chapter will conclude with a summary which includes what current research supports in regard to the use of alternative assessment to obtain overall skill level information of Limited English Proficient students.

The intent of the Literature Review is to explore traditional as well as alternative assessment tools used to assess LEP students, as well as to discuss the implications of these different assessment strategies in order to fulfill the purpose of this study.

Traditional Assessment

Assessment of language minority students in schools is conducted for a number of reasons. These reasons may include:

1. to identify students in need of special language services
2. to place students in appropriate programs
3. to identify specific instructional needs
4. to monitor student progress in attaining English language and content objectives
5. to exit students from special language programs. (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, p. 104)

Assessment is used for many different purposes in Bilingual and ESL settings, including placement, diagnosis, exit from a program and evaluation of a program (Ovando & Collier, 1985). There are a variety of traditional tools utilized, such as the Home Language Survey, placement tests and standardized tests. Variations in these instruments generate different kinds of information that can be collected regarding language-minority populations (Canales, 1994).

The Home Language Survey: The Home Language Survey (HLS) is used as an initial screening instrument completed by parents or guardians. While this survey may seem like a simple step in identification process, there are problems

related to this instrument (Canales, 1994). According to Canales (1994), “misinformed parents or guardians may feel a need to misrepresent the native language spoken in the home because parents feel that their children will be placed in programs that are not conducive learning English” (p59).

Language Dominance/Proficiency Tests: Following initial identification of LEP students in a school district, the next step in assessment is to determine appropriate programs for ELL students (Ovando & Collier, 1985). This determination of appropriate placement is often sought through the use of placement tests. Language Dominance/Proficiency Tests are one type of placement test used with LEP students.

There are school districts which use their identification survey alone to measure language dominance. There are other school districts who may use an actual test. According to Ovando & Collier (1985),

the appropriate method of assessment of language dominance is a test of proficiency in the first language compared with a test of proficiency in the second language. (p. 229)

One such test is the Bilingual Syntax Measure. The test ... “involves the direct measurement of language proficiency through eliciting natural communication” (Ovando & Collier, 1985, p. 231).

Ovando & Collier (1985) point out, “there are few valid and reliable instruments available for assessment of first-language proficiency other than English” (p. 231). It is not a productive option to translate tests available in English into other languages due to cultural and social differences.

Oral Language Proficiency Test: A second common practice in placement testing is the use of Oral Language Proficiency Tests (OLPT's) to assess the listening and speaking skills of ELL students (Canales, 1994). According to Canales (1994), OLPT's have focused on items of language proficiency, such as, use of verb tense, use of correct vocabulary term. "This process severely limits the amount of information regarding an individual's actual proficiency with a language ... "(Canales, 1994, p. 60).

Standardized Tests: Throughout school programs, on-going assessment is used to measure student's mastery of objectives of the curriculum (Ovando & Collier, 1985). This may include the use of standardized tests.

Standardized language tests are used widely in some educational setting for both first and second language assessment ... "because of their practicality, it becomes easier to use a test that is already available than to make up one's own" (Genesee, 1996, p. 232). "Indeed, one of the most common uses of standardized tests is to make screening and placement decisions and ... to determine whether individuals have achieved certain levels of language proficiency ... "(Genesee, 1996, p. 233).

Virtually all schools administer standardized tests once a year.

Standardized tests are often used in evaluating overall student progress for classroom, schools and the district (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). However ... "these tests are not useful for monitoring interim student progress in instructional programs ... and do not assess the language functions that are integral to

academic language or the use of learning strategies, integrative language or higher-order thinking skills" (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, p. 104).

Standardized tests used may be norm-referenced or criterion-referenced, but criterion-referenced tests are used more often for diagnosis and norm-referenced for overall performance and comparison of students.

Concerns of Using Traditional Tests with LEP Students

In the United States today, "standardized testing is running amok and ... newspapers rank schools and districts by test scores ... superintendents can be fired for low test scores ... teachers can receive merit pay for high test scores ... rather than to increase learning" (Shepard, 1989, p. 5).

According to Shepard (1989), publishers of standardized tests do not ensure that test objectives are well matched to widely used textbooks and the textbooks are in turn matched to the outlines of standardized tests.

Ovando & Collier (1985) note:

Teachers complain bitterly that many tests mandated by the school system seem to be inappropriate because they include items with cultural bias or vocabulary which the students have not yet been exposed, tests skills with which the students have not yet had experience, do not measure what they say they measure, are normed on middle-class children, do not reflect the cognitive styles of the children, or involve a culturally inappropriate testing situation, and so on. (p. 4)

According to O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce (1996), traditional forms of assessment such as standardized tests are inappropriate for ELL students for a variety of reasons

1. standardized tests use multiple-choice items that may be unfamiliar to

students with limited experience in US public schools,

2. multiple-choice items assume a level of English proficiency that ELL students may not have acquired,
3. these tests have not been effective in assessing the higher-order thinking skills students use in solving problems, analyzing texts, or evaluating ideas. (p. 4)

“Other problems that have been discussed in the literature with relation to traditional, standardized tests include norming on a population unlike the one being tested and cultural and language biases” (Huerta-Macias, 1995, p. 8).

Despite these numerous drawbacks, the public give standardized tests scores much attention and status. Shepard (1989) notes that when scores have serious consequences – and they often do – teachers will teach to the test and this ... “cheapens instruction and undermines the authenticity of scores of what children really know ... and they also omit important learning goals beyond the boundaries of the test domain” (p. 5).

Much has been written about the inadequacies of the two most widely used practices to identify and place linguistically different students, namely OLPT's and the SATs (Canales, 1994). The resulting problems can be especially detrimental to language minority students (Mohan, 1992). Mohan (1992) points out, “ELL students may find themselves recipients of lower grades than deserved, or even more devastating, they may find themselves misplaced academically” (p. 228).

Many researchers ... “warn against using a single, standardized instrument for decision making with ... bilingual students” (Stefanukis, 1998, p.

14). Stefanukis (1998) states that assessment of bilingual students should focus on the process of how a child learns, under what conditions, and with what materials, not on the single-session test results.

According to Canales (1994), much has been written since the 1970s about the options to these problems that would provide practitioners with a more realistic and comprehensive assessment of an individual's English language proficiency. Over the past decade we have seen a rapid expansion of interest in alternatives to traditional forms of assessment in education (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1994). Educators from all backgrounds ... "are seeking alternatives through multiple forms of assessment" (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1994, p. 1).

The educational literature from 1987-1996 suggests that assessment practice is evolving from a standardized produce format to a more complex, problem-solving process (Stefanakis, 1998). Stefanakis (1998) claims that ... "assessment practice for bilingual children should be multifaceted and involve multiple perspectives" (p. 7). Educators are looking for a more direct and continuous evidence of student learning rather than the normed information received from standardized testing. (Stefanakis, 1998). Moreover, they are recognizing that standardized testing "fails to describe the intricacy of individual student learning in today's classrooms" (Stefanakis, 1998, p. 7).

Alternative Assessment

According to O'Mally & Valdez-Pierce (1994), "alternative assessment consists of any method of finding out what a student knows or can do that is

intended to show growth and inform instruction, and is an alternative to traditional forms of testing ..." (p.1). Alternative assessment, most importantly, provides alternative to traditional testing in that it

- a) does not intrude on regular classroom activities
- b) reflects the curriculum that is actually being implemented in the classroom
- c) provides information on the strengths and weaknesses of each individual student
- d) provides multiple devices that can be used to gauge student progress; and
- e) is more multiculturally sensitive and free of norm, linguistic, and cultural biases found in traditional testing. (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1994, p. 1)

According to Huerta-Macias (1995), "alternative assessment procedures are non-intrusive to the classroom because they do not require a separate block of time to implement them, as do traditional tests" (p. 9). Because alternative assessment is based on the daily classroom activities, it also reflects the curriculum, unlike traditional, standardized tests that often test skills not related to classroom practices. Alternative assessment provides possibilities, rather than any one single method for assessment (Huerta-Macias, 1995).

According to a survey of 150 ESL educators, "the majority of the respondents ... advocated alternative assessment strategies" (Solomon & Rhodes, 1996, p. 7) to collect realistic and beneficial information about LEP students' language abilities, skills and knowledge. Chamot & O'Malley (1994) recognize six basic reasons as to why alternative assessment is valuable

1. **AUTHENTIC** – reflects the actual classroom tasks in content areas and reveals information about academic language
2. **VARIED** – looks at student performance from multiple perspectives
3. **PROCESS AND PRODUCT ORIENTED** – shows progress with respect to both work products and the processes and learning strategies used
4. **CONTINUOUS** – provides information about student performance throughout the entire school year
5. **INTERACTIVE WITH INSTRUCTION** – can be used to adapt instruction... and provide feedback
6. **COLLABORATIVE** – planned and conducted by teachers interactively. (231)

Alternative assessment has been described as an alternative to standardized testing and all of the problems found with such testing (Huerta-Macias, 1995, p. 8-9). Huerta-Macias (1995) continues to point out that ... "alternative assessment consists of all of those efforts that do not adhere to the traditional criteria of standardization, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, objectivity and machine scorability" (p. 9). Alternative assessment is different from traditional testing in that it actually asks students to show what they can do ... "and they are evaluated on what they integrate and produce rather than on what they are able to recall and reproduce" (Huerta-Macias, 1995, p. 9).

Teachers have been encouraged to adapt various classroom assessment tools and either to replace or supplement traditional methods of evaluation (Lynn, 1995). "The main goal of alternative assessment is to gather evidence

about how students are approaching, processing and completing real-life tasks in a particular domain" (Huerta-Macias, 1995, p. 9).

Performance Assessment/Observations: In performance assessment, students are asked to use knowledge and skills to produce a product (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). The product can be to a response to an open-ended question, a drawing, an oral presentation or written document (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). Performance assessment, according to Shepard (1995), "are designed to support instruction, are informal, teacher-mandated, adapted to local context, locally scored, sensitive to short-term change in students' knowledge, and meaningful to students" (p. 7). They provide immediate, detailed, and pertinent feedback; and they incorporate tasks that have instructional value (Shepard, 1995). "Classroom assesement is conducted in greater trust than are standardized tests ... and places no political pressure on teachers: it can address the full range of learning goals and ... the accumulation of data gathered about individual pupils in the course of a school year has much more accuracy than standardized tests ... "(Shepard, 1995, p. 7).

Observation data checklists or rating scales utilizing specific performance criteria can provide information regarding student's use of language situations relavent to context (Canales, 1994). Observation is highly regarded in research literature on the assessment of bilingual children (Stefanakis, 1998). Most bilingual researchers propose three observational formats for assessing the ... skills of binlingual children

1. dialogues with the child in L1 and L2

2. interviews with teachers, parents and peers describing their observations of the child's formal and informal communication skills
3. observations of the child's language use in activities (Stefanaki, 1998, p. 12).

According to Stefanakis (1998), a teacher may use literacy development checklists or other record keeping methods to report on observations of student progress.

"Informal observation is an integral part of everyday teaching as teachers continuously observe their students' language use during formal instruction or while the students are working individually ... "(Genesee, 1996, p. 77-78).

Teachers observe how students respond to and use instructional materials and how they interact with these methods (Genesee, 1996). According to Genesee (1996), "on the basis of their observations, teachers assess what students have and have not learned; they infer the learning strategies students may be using ... and they assess the effectiveness of particular teaching strategies ... "(p. 78).

Text-Retelling: Story/Text Retelling is an alternative form of oral language assessment ... "that involves students retelling stories or passages that they have listened to or read" (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996, p. 83). According to Shepard (1991), assessments that include oral reading, story retelling are considered authentic because they engage students in exactly the kinds of challenging tasks that we want them to be able to do. "For English Language Learners, retelling helps develop oral language proficiency as well as reading comprehension ... and helps the teacher assess reading comprehension as well as oral language (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996, p. 83). Solomon & Rhodes

(1996) note that a large group of respondents of a survey of ESL educators "suggest having students retell reading passages" as a strategy to assess language and reading skills (p. 7).

Cloze Tests: A cloze test is based on a reading passage from which selected words have been deleted and the task for the student is to identify the missing words (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). Administered and used properly, the results of cloze tests will give information regarding the student's level of skill with the text. Cloze tests provide information useful in planning for student's instructional need (Canales, 1994). The cloze test assesses reading comprehension ... "calls on integrative language skills and is easy for the teacher to construct" (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, p. 113).

Portfolios: Portfolio assessment ... "is a systematic collection of student work and other information about the student that is combined with a procedure for determining whether or not the student has maintained progress in accomplishing important instructional goals" (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, p. 127). A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that demonstrates to students and others their efforts, progress and achievements in given areas (Genesee, 1996). Portfolios have most frequently been associated with written language, but they can also be used effectively with oral language (Genesee, 1996). "Samples of writing, lists of books that have been read, book reports, tape recordings of speaking samples, favorite short stories, and so on can all be included in a portfolio" (Genesee, 1996, p. 101). According to Genesee (1996), "the primary value of portfolios is in the assessment of student achievement ...

because they provide continuous record of students' language development that can be shared with others" (p. 99). Sharing the contents of portfolios with parents and other teachers and educational professionals provides consistent communication with all who are working with the student (Genesee, 1996).

According to Calfee & Perfumo (1993), "a few states in the U.S. (e.g. Vermont and Connecticut) and quite a few school districts have discussed replacing tests programs (in part or whole) with portfolios" (p. 533). "Portfolios that serve as student, classroom, program, or school documentation, utilized in meeting compliance with designated district, state or federal regulations can be considered legal documents and are thus maintained as a permanent record of student achievement" (Gottlieb, 1995, p. 14). The constructive idea is that portfolios provide an opportunity for more authentic, accurate and valid achievement; educators will learn what students can do when given adequate time and resources (Calfee & Perfumo, 1993).

Support of Alternative Assessment

"The curricular and instructional needs of the Limited English Proficient population have gone unmet largely because of our lack of attention to appropriate language assessment practices" (Canales, 1994, p. 66). Canales (1994) continues to point out that "such blatant disregard for the effective schooling (and assessment) of the largest population of public school students can only result in a failed school system, a failed society, and, even worse, a failed child" (p. 66).

According to Ovando and Collier (1985), the following passage from the TESOL Statement of Statewide Programs of Competency Testing exemplifies the focus of this chapter:

No single instrument can adequately measure students' competency of the basic skills. We urge, therefore, that a variety of opportunities be given to students to demonstrate what they know and that decisions regarding competency never be made on the basis of a single test. (p. 260)

"Accurate, appropriate and varied assessment is the key to useful diagnosis and prescriptive teaching for academic success of language-minority students" (Ovando & Collier, 1985, p. 260). According to Ovando & Collier (1985), there will never be a perfect assessment tool for the language-minority population with diverse needs. But to respond to those needs, we must open ourselves to a spectrum of possibilities of different methods to assess the skills of Limited English Proficient students.

Overall, the research on formal, informal and classroom assessment in ... "bilingual education from 1987-1996 points to a change in the philosophy of assessment for bilingual children" (Stefanakis, 1989, p. 18). Stefanakis (1989) points out that educators of LEP students are moving towards the use of assessment that more accurately reflects the learning style and skills of students. They are doing so by using a combination of criterion-referenced tests, teacher-made tests, performance tasks, cloze tests in content areas and other alternative methods.

Summary

In summary, Chapter 2 defined and described traditional tests, such as standardized tests; discussed concerns in regard to using traditional tests when assessing the skills of LEP students; defined and described alternative assessment tools, including Performance Assessment/Observation, Text-Retelling, Cloze Tests and Portfolios, and provided research-based support of the use of alternative assessment to measure achievement and abilities of Limited English Proficient students.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to provide a design for the contents of a proposed Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient student. The design and proposed handbook can be used by educators and specialists in the field of English as a Second Language to assist them in evaluating and assessing skills presented by Limited English Proficient students.

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive research design. Merriam & Simpson (1995) note that the purpose of descriptive design

is to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of a given phenomenon, population, or area of interest. Description may include (1) collection of facts that describe existing phenomenon; (2) identification of problems or justification of current conditions and practices; (3) project or product evaluation; or (4) comparison of experience between groups with similar problems to assist in future planning and decision making. (p. 61)

This study involves a collection of facts that describe and support the use of alternative assessment tools to be used by instructors of Limited English Proficient students. It is the intent of this study to provide a design for a Handbook of Alternative Assessment.

Source of Data

The data for this study came from a review of literature pertaining to traditional assessment, such as standardized tests, Home Language Survey, Language Dominance Tests, and alternative assessment strategies, such as Performance Assessment/Observation, Text-Retelling, Cloze Tests and Portfolio Assessment.

Procedure

Once the data had been collected, it was organized in a review of current literature pertaining to traditional and alternative assessment. The core of the literature review included data to support the use of alternative assessment to assess the skills of LEP students.

The information was then integrated into a general outline or design for a Handbook of Alternative Assessment. The design is to provide a model for the development of a Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient students.

Product/Project Design

The contents of the design for a Handbook of Alternative Assessment includes an outline of the following: (1) Introduction explaining the purpose of the handbook; (2) Definition of alternative assessment; (3) Using alternative assessment with Limited English Proficient students; (4) Descriptions of specific alternative assessment tools to include: Performance/Observation, Text Retelling, Cloze Tests and Portfolios; (5) Examples of the alternative assessment forms to include: Performance/Observation, Text Retelling, Cloze Tests and Portfolios; and (6) Summary of the contents and purpose of the handbook.

Assumptions and Limitations

Because the researcher is a special education teacher who works with Limited English Proficient students who also present language disorders, the study is of personal interest. The researcher assumes that all information obtained from current literature is reliable and professional. The researcher acknowledges that alternative assessment is a relatively new process, which continues to evolve. The design, though appropriate for this study, may undergo changes in the future and may not be generalized.

CHAPTER 4

DESIGN FOR A HANDBOOK OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide a design for the contents of a proposed Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient students. The design and proposed handbook can be used by educators and specialists in the field of English as a Second Language to assist them in evaluating and assessing skills presented by Limited English Proficient students.

The development of the design for the proposed handbook is based on the integration of research supported data and current practice. Current researchers and authors who support the use of alternative assessment with Limited English Proficient students include A. Chamot & J. O'Malley (1994); A. Huerta-Macias (1995); J. Canales (1994); L. Valdez-Pierce (1996); E. Stefanakis (1998) as well as others. The contents of the design for the proposed Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient Students is based on the current literature and current practices related to alternative assessment of Limited English Proficient students.

The design includes the following sections: (1) Introduction – including the purpose of the design; (2) Definition of alternative assessment; (3) Using alternative assessment with Limited English Proficient Students; (4) Descriptions of specific alternative assessment tools to include: Performance/Observation, Text-Retelling, Cloze Tests and Portfolios; (5) Examples of alternative assessment forms to include: Performance/Observation, Tex-Retelling, Cloze Tests and Portfolios; and (6) Summary of the design contents and purpose.

Definition of Alternative Assessment

The proposed Handbook of Alternative Assessment would contain a section that provided a definition of alternative assessment. The following is an example of summarized definition of alternative assessment.

Alternative assessment consists of any method of finding out what a student knows or can do that is intended to show growth and inform instruction, and is an alternative to traditional forms of testing ... (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1994) such as standardized or criterion-referenced tests. Alternative assessment is based on daily classroom activities, it reflects the curriculum being used and often tests skills that are related to actual classroom practices. Alternative assessment is different from traditional testing in that it actually asks students what they can do ... "and they are evaluated on what they integrate and produce rather than on what they are able to recall and reproduce" (Huerta-Macias, 1995, p. 9). The main goal of alternative assessment is to find out how students are

learning, understanding, processing and completing real classroom tasks. Some alternative assessment tools include Performance/Observation, Text-Retelling, Cloze Tests and Portfolios.

Using Alternative Assessment with Limited English Proficient Students

The proposed Handbook of Alternative Assessment is designed specifically for Limited English Proficient Students. According to Stefanakis (1989), ... "research on formal, informal and classroom assessment in ... bilingual education from 1987-1996 points to a change in the philosophy of assessment for bilingual children" (p. 18). The current trend is moving away from formal assessment toward creating alternative assessment that more accurately describes what a student can do and how a student processes information in a class setting. Alternative Assessment tools can provide educators with a more realistic and comprehensive assessment of a LEP student's English language abilities and understanding.

Although there are various forms of alternative assessment tools, the proposed Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient Students will focus on the following: Performance/Observation, Text-Retelling, Cloze Tests and Portfolios.

Descriptions/Examples of Alternative Assessment Tools

The proposed Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient Students will contain a section which describes and provides an

example of the following alternative assessment tools:

Performance/Observation, Text-Retelling, Cloze Tests and Portfolios. This design will briefly describe each tool and provide one example of a published form related to each alternative assessment tool. Examples of these Alternative Assessment tools will be provided at the end of this chapter.

Performance/Observation: In performance/observation assessment, students demonstrate their knowledge and skills while producing a product. The product can be a response to open-ended questions, a drawing, oral presentation or written report. Performance/Observation data is documented on teacher-made or published checklists, rating scales, performance logs (noting pertinent information). The Performance/Observation forms will reflect the students' use of the English language, assess what students have or have not learned, as well as assess the student's learning strategies.

Text-Retelling: Story/Text Retelling is an alternative form of oral language assessment ... "that involves students retelling stories or passages that they have listened to or read" (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996, p. 83). Retelling helps Limited English Proficient students develop oral language proficiency, vocabulary and reading comprehension. Text-Retelling data can be collected on various teacher-made or published forms or recorded on tape – periodically to measure improvement.

Cloze Tests: A Cloze Test is a reading passage, taken from any curriculum area-reading, social studies or science, for example. The reading passage has selected words deleted and the task for the student is to identify the

missing words. When analyzed, a Cloze Test gives information regarding the student's level of proficiency reading the text, assesses reading comprehension and English language proficiency. A Cloze Test is easily constructed by the teacher.

Portfolios: Portfolio assessment ... "is a systematic collection of student work and other information about the student that is combined with a procedure for determining whether or not the student has maintained progress in accomplishing important instructional goals" (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, p. 127). The collection of work in the portfolio demonstrates the student's efforts, progress and achievements in given areas. Included in a portfolio can be: book reports, writing samples, tape recordings, drawings with labels – all records of a Limited English Proficient student's language development.

Summary of Contents and Purpose

In summary, the contents of this design for a Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient students is based on current practice and research and literature-based data that supports the use of alternative assessment tools for evaluating and assessing Limited English Proficient students. The core of the design includes definitions, descriptions and examples of alternative assessment tools, including: Performance/Observation, Text-Retelling, Cloze Tests and Portfolios.

The purpose of the design is to provide a model for a Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient Students. The design's

intent is for the proposed handbook to provide educators and specialists alternative assessment measures to evaluate and assess Limited English Proficient students.

Examples of alternative assessment tools can be found in Appendix A. Included in Appendix A are two examples of published alternative assessment tools for each of the following: Performance/Observation, Text-Retelling, Cloze Tests and Portfolios.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose of the Study and Summary of Contents

The purpose of this study was to provide a design for the contents of a proposed Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient students. The design and proposed handbook can be used by educators and specialists in the field of English as a Second Language to assist them in evaluating and assessing skills presented by Limited English Proficient students.

The core of the literature review pertains to formal testing and alternative assessment of Limited English Proficient students. The literature review includes research and literature data that supports the use of alternative assessment with Limited English Proficient students. The major topics in this part of the study includes: descriptions/definitions of formal testing instruments; concerns of using only standardized and formal testing instruments with Limited English Proficient students; descriptions/definitions of alternative assessment tools; and support of using alternative assessment tools with Limited English Proficient students.

The methodology used for the study involved a collection of facts that describe and support the use of alternative assessment tools to be used by

educators of Limited English Proficient students. The data collected was organized in a review of current research literature in order to support the design of a proposed Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient Students.

The design itself includes examples of alternative assessment tools that have been described and defined. Actual published examples of alternative assessment tools are provided in Appendix A. Two examples of each of the following alternative assessment tools are provided: Performance/Observation; Text-Retelling; Cloze Tests and Portfolios.

Conclusions

The conclusion to this study is that alternative assessment tools are needed and useful for assessing skills of Limited English Proficient students. These alternative assessment tools can be used in conjunction with or in place of formal or standardized tests instruments that are not always appropriate for use with Limited English Proficient students.

Recommendations

Because the research supports the use of alternative assessment tools for assessing skills of LEP students, implementation of the researcher's design for a proposed Handbook of Alternative Assessment for Limited English Proficient students is recommended. The design may be used by educators and

specialists in the field of English as a Second Language to assist them in evaluating and assessing skills presented by Limited English Proficient students.

Another recommendation is for on-going assessment of this design for corrections and edits in order to improve it.

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APPENDIX A

EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT FORMS

SAMPLE LITERACY DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Mark: ☒ = Effective ☐ = Sometimes Effective ☐ = Needs Work

Reading Processes

School Quarter:

1

2

3

4

I. READING SKILLS

Comprehends oral stories

☐☐☐☐

Understands vocabulary

☐☐☐☐

Fluently decodes

☐☐☐☐

Comprehends literally

☐☐☐☐

Comprehends inferentially

☐☐☐☐

II. INTEREST

Initiates own reading

☐☐☐☐

Shows pleasure in reading

☐☐☐☐

Selects books independently

☐☐☐☐

Chooses books of appropriate difficulty

☐☐☐☐

Samples a variety of materials

☐☐☐☐

III. APPLICATIONS

Participates in reading discussion groups

☐☐☐☐

Writes appropriate dialogue journal entries

☐☐☐☐

Uses reading in written communication

☐☐☐☐

IV. STRATEGIES

Monitors attention

☐☐☐☐

Notifies miscues that interfere with meaning

☐☐☐☐

Infers word meaning

☐☐☐☐

Summarizes main ideas or key events

☐☐☐☐

Links details to main ideas

☐☐☐☐

Remembers sequence of events

☐☐☐☐

Predicts conclusions

☐☐☐☐

Requests help if needed

☐☐☐☐

Performance/Observation

Student _____ Date _____

Rating Code

U = Usually evident

S = Sometimes evident

NY = Not yet evident

N/A = Not applicable

Performance Observed	Date	Date	Date	Date
1. Identifies environmental print				
2. Exhibits pretend reading				
3. Listens with interest to read-alouds				
4. Participates in discussions following class read-aloud				
5. Reads from left to right				
6. Identifies a letter and a word				
7. Attempts to sound out words				
8. Reads during free time				
9. Reads a variety of genres				

Adapted from a checklist created by elementary ESL teacher J. Eury (1994), Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia.

Text-Retelling

Name _____ Date _____

Title _____ Author _____

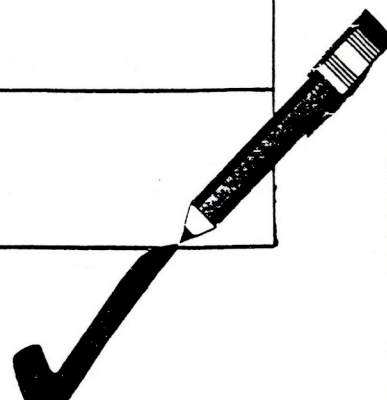
Quarter: 1st 2nd 3rd 4th

Text Difficulty: High predictability Moderate predictability Advanced

Response: Drawing/pictures Oral response Written response

Performance Tasks	Initiates	Responds to Prompt	Comments
Names main characters			
Describes setting			
Starts retelling at the beginning			
Identifies problem or issues			
Identifies major events			
Reports events in chronological order			
Describes resolution			

Adapted from a format developed by ESL teacher K. Harrison (1994), Fairfax County Public Schools, and based on National Education Association (1993).



Name: Lucia RamosDate: May 20Title of Story: The Baboon and the Tortoise

CHARACTERS

TIME AND PLACE

1. Baboon
2. Tortoise

Story doesn't say time.
Place is Africa - first Baboon's house in tree - then Tortoise's house near river.

PROBLEM: Baboon won't let Tortoise eat any food at his party.

EVENTS

Baboon invites Tortoise to party at his house in big tree.
Baboon says: you got to be polite - sit to eat.
Tortoise try to sit, but he fall down many times. So he can't eat.
another day, Tortoise invites Baboon to party at his house.
Tortoise burns grass around his house. When Baboon arrives, his hands dirty from burned grass.
Tortoise says: you got to be polite - wash your hands to eat.
Baboon wash hands in river, then come back - but hands dirty again (baboons have to walk on hands and feet).
Every time Baboon can't eat because hands dirty - so, no food for Baboon.

PROBLEM SOLUTION: Tortoise pay back Baboon - don't let him eat any food at his party.

MORAL: Be nice to your friends - or they won't be nice to you.

Cloze Test

Intermediate level text for middle and high school students

The Dream Keeper

Once, long ago, there was a girl who could talk to the birds. When she was little, she _____ happy. She walked in _____ forest and played by _____ stream and never thought _____ her purpose in life. _____ as she grew older, _____ asked: Why am I _____? Where am I going? _____ am I? But no _____ could answer these questions. _____ one day she walked _____ the forest. Maybe the _____ will know, she thought. _____ are my friends and _____ will talk to them. _____ at how they live. _____ is no hesitation in _____ flight. There is no _____ in their song. Surely _____ know their purpose. Maybe _____ know mine, too.

She _____ until she saw a _____ eagle. "Eagle," she asked, "_____ is your purpose?" "To _____ above the earth," the _____ replied. "From there I _____ see all things. Here _____ my feather. Fly with _____." Next she saw a _____. "Hawk," she asked, "What _____ your purpose?" "To be _____ messenger," the hawk replied. "_____ bring news of things _____ come. Here is my _____. Listen for my call."

_____ girl sat down next _____ a river. The sunlight _____ the water and it _____ beautiful, but she was _____. "I know the purpose _____ all the birds," she _____, "but what is my _____?" Then a dragonfly with _____ like paper flew by. _____ dragonfly saw the girl _____ sad and wanted to _____ her. "And you, dragonfly," _____ girl finally asked, "What _____ your purpose?" "To help _____ find their dreams," the _____ replied. "Help me, then," the girl said.

Cloze Test

Three religions and their holy books.

The Middle East has long been a meeting place for people and ideas as well as a crossroads for trade. Three of the world's great religions began in the Middle East. These religions are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. People who believe in these religions are called Jews, Christians, and Moslems. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam spread from the Middle East to all parts of the world. Today there are millions of Jews, Christians, and Moslems living all over the world.

Each of these religions has its own holy book. The Hebrew name for the Jewish holy book is *Tenach*. In English it is called the Bible. The word *bible* comes from a Greek word meaning books. Christians also call their holy book the Bible, but it is not exactly the same as the Jewish Bible. Moslems call their holy book the Koran.

The holy books of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are very old. The most recent one, the Koran, was written over 1,300 years ago.

Directions: First read all three paragraphs. Then write in the missing words. If you do not know a word, skip it and come back to it later. Spelling does not count.

The Middle East has long been a meeting place for people and ideas as well as a crossroads for trade. Three of the world's great religions began in the Middle East. These religions are Judaism, Christianity, and ^xJews. People who believe in these religions are called Jews, Christians, and Moslems. Judaism,

Christianity, and Islam spread from the Middle East to all

parts of the world. ^xon there are millions of Jews,

Christians, ^xJudaism Moslems living all over the world.

all of these religions has its own holy book. The Hebrew name for the ^xthis holy book is *Tenach*. In English it is called the Bible. The word *bible* came from a Greek

word meaning books. ^xHebrews also call their holy book the

Bible, but it is not exactly the ^xname as the Jewish Bible.

Moslems call ^xthis holy book the Koran.

The holy book of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are very old. The most recent one, the Koran, was written over 1,300 years ago.

9 correct answers
 $9 \div 16 = 0.56$
 $0.56 \times 100 = 56\%$ correct
(average score for class = 61%)

Portfolio Assessment

Your Name _____ Date _____

Your Partner's Name _____

1. Review your partner's work sample.

2. What do you think the sample shows your partner can do?

3. What do you think your partner did well?

4. What do you think your partner could make better?

Adapted from Clemmons et al. (1993).

WORKSHEET FOR PORTFOLIO INFORMATION

Student Name

Motoko

Date

2/9

Objectives (Content, Academic Language, Learning Strategies)	Assessment Measures	Performance
Describe characteristics of simple organisms	Writing sample	Content good. Needs help with use of articles
classify living things	Drawing	Effective and clear
Write lab report	Writing sample	Needs work stating hypothesis

Recommendations:

Instruction should focus on scientific method, writing, and speaking to group.

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