

## CHAPTER 2

# Getting Started with Assessment in Multiple Languages



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► Mural of diverse faces

*Apprendre une autre langue, c'est comme le commencement d'une autre vie.*

*Learning another language is like the beginning of another life.*

—Michel Bouthot

### The Dilemma

*But I only speak English! How can I be expected to communicate in other languages?*

*Irene Tan, the principal of Serenity School, has been busy promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism within her K–8 complex and across the community. Students representing 15 languages have crafted murals around the school, such as the one displayed earlier, to symbolize pride in themselves and their cultural heritage. Everyone at the school who is multilingual, including office, paraprofessional, lunchroom, and other support staff, volunteers to serve in an ambassador role to incoming students. Older students are paired with younger ones with the same partner language to*

mentor, advise, and read to their buddies. As principal, Irene has recruited a community cadre, from family members to local business leaders, to help with translation, health, and social services for students and families. Additionally, cultural liaisons supplement teacher teams in bridging the school to the community and the community to the school.

During the first days of the new school year, as an extension of the initial intake process, teachers systematically collect extensive information on their students' language use practices as a first step in getting to know their multilingual learners. Some teachers connect with families through technology, and some pair up to make home visits, while others gather information from students during opening activities. Throughout the school, there are built-in opportunities for multilingual learners to share their linguistic expertise through assessment in multiple languages. As a result, school leaders have a sense of multilingual learners' language proficiencies, and teachers are able to ascertain patterns of language use by their students to help inform their craft.

As part of baseline data at the beginning of the school year, all hands are on deck to collect oral and written language samples in English and, for multilingual learners, students' additional languages, whether they participate in a language education program or not. It is a schoolwide policy to videotape students' initial oral language samples and scan their written language samples common for each grade. The curriculum and assessment teams facilitate professional learning around interpreting student samples using grade-level cluster literacy rubrics. Coaches devote time to recalibrate scoring of the student samples with teacher pairs. As student bilingual samples are deemed reliable, they become the first entries in schoolwide portfolios that serve as evidence for local accountability.

As an instructional leader, Irene wants to safeguard fair and equitable assessment for all students, even though she is monolingual in English. She especially advocates for her multilingual learners whose full potential is realized through their multiple languages, and strives to maximize their opportunities for success. Irene encourages monolingual teachers to partner with bilingual colleagues for joint planning time, understanding that planning assessment in multiple languages with a full complement of measures is advantageous in describing what multilingual learners can do.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- In what ways does this scenario resonate with you?
- What baseline data do you collect in multiple languages to help with initial placement and grouping of students?
- How might monolingual teachers pair with bilingual teachers to optimize opportunities for planning assessment in multiple languages?
- What do you consider the primary purposes for assessment, and how might they be inclusive of multiple languages?

Educational leadership cannot be tacit or complacent when it comes to policies and practices revolving around multilingual learners and assessment in multiple languages. The entire educational community must come to endorse and promote multilingualism as a schoolwide and societal value. Hopefully, its commitment will have a ripple effect. The greater the acceptance of multilingualism as a right and resource, the greater the probability of embracing the assets of multilingual learners as demonstrated by assessment in multiple languages.

The opening two chapters of this book urge educational leaders to engage in systemic transformation of their current policies and practices to instill multilingualism and assessment in multiple languages as twin educational goals. To begin this journey, we attend to the conditions for change as educators delve into language planning and language policy. Questions address how to (1) use languages for specific needs and contexts, (2) ensure equitable treatment of different populations, and (3) create resource-rich learning environments where students see worth in themselves and in what they are learning (Reynolds, 2019).

In this chapter, we draw from the body of research on effective leadership in multilingual contexts and its impact on creating an aligned assessment system among schools, districts, and states. We introduce a multiphase assessment cycle for multiple languages that serves as the organizing framework for the remaining chapters. Then we match the purposes for assessment to specific assessment tools for multilingual learners across the school year. After that, we describe assessment *as, for, and of* learning through the lens of stakeholders serving multilingual learners. We conclude with a peek into how assessment can stimulate systemic change through social justice.

## HOW LANGUAGE POLICY INFORMS ASSESSMENT IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES

Language planning and language policy are necessary precursors to assessment planning and assessment policy, especially when multilingual learners are involved. Creating a multilingual language policy at district and school levels, as introduced in the previous chapter, is the first step to having confidence in creating an assessment plan. In formulating these policies, each school and its community should take an honest and hard look at their stance toward multilingualism and multiculturalism.

In 1984, Richard Ruíz outlined three orientations of language planning where each presupposes a unique mindset for exploring educational opportunities for multilingual learners. Each orientation has implications for assessment planning: (1) language-as-problem, (2) language-as-right, and (3) language-as-resource. In the first instance, language diversity (namely, the presence of any language other than English in a school) is conceived of as a social problem to be resolved. This problem or deficit view of language learning is often portrayed as a medical model in need of treatment. The second approach emphasizes the legal rights of multilingual learners, as in their civil right to receive education in languages other than English. The third orientation, language-as-resource, is viewed as an assets-based position and a possible solution for promoting the infusion of multilingualism (and multilingual education) into national language policy.

Applying Ruíz’s model, a school’s or district’s language policy should be a window into its mission, vision, and values. We know that school leaders are critical players in catalyzing school change, serving either as positive change agents or as barriers to the process (Bryk, 2010; Robinson, 2008). Principals, in particular, have great control in the leveraging of language education policies in schools with multilingual populations; however, many are not prepared to do so (Menken, 2014). Research shows that moving language policies along a continuum from monolingualism to multilingualism is possible when bilingualism is treated as a resource in instruction and leadership is **distributed** (Ascenzi-Moreno, Hesson, & Menken, 2016). These findings directly impact schoolwide assessment practices in multiple languages.



## Stop-Think-Act-React

### Relax and Reflect: How does your school and district envision or enact language planning?

Which of Ruíz’s three orientations to language planning does your school or district assume, and is it present in your language policy? As an extension, to what extent is your language policy reflected in your school’s or district’s assessment policy? How might you and other educators bolster the status of language planning for multilingual learners and their families so that it is inclusive of assessment in multiple languages?

## EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN PROGRAMS CULTIVATING MULTIPLE LANGUAGES

Just as a strong research base supports bilingual development of multilingual learners in school, there is also a growing body of research that suggests characteristics of effective educational leaders in dual language contexts. Many factors contribute to their success as leaders; Figure 2.1 identifies the traits that have emerged in the research, as cited in Menken (2017).

**FIGURE 2.1** Research on Educational Leaders in Dual Language Contexts

RESEARCHERS	FINDINGS ON EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN DUAL LANGUAGE CONTEXTS
K. Brooks, Adams, & Morita-Mullaney (2010)	Leaders working with multilingual learners must be cognizant of and willing to act on systemic inequalities facing these students.
DeMatthews & Izquierdo (2016)	Effective school leadership practices value all stakeholders, accept a variety of language perspectives, implement a collective approach to programming, and build capacity.
Heineke, Coleman, Ferrell, & Kersemeier (2012)	School leaders are part of negotiating language policy, enacting mandates, setting ideological foundations, and fostering meaningful collaboration with families and communities.
Howard et al. (2018)	School-level leadership entails advocacy for dual language programs along with professional development, strong oversight of programs, communication with district administrators, and equitable funding.

(Continued)

**FIGURE 2.1** (Continued)

RESEARCHERS	FINDINGS ON EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN DUAL LANGUAGE CONTEXTS
Hunt (2011)	Success of dual language immersion is contingent on (1) a schoolwide commitment to its mission, (2) collaborative and shared leadership, (3) mutual trust between teachers and administrators, and (4) flexibility in structures that are responsive to students.
Menken & Solorza (2013)	School leaders, particularly principals, play a critical role in either sustaining or eliminating bilingual education, including the formal preparation of their teachers to work with emergent bilingual students.
Scanlan & López (2012)	Dynamic building- and system-level administrators' goals include (1) cultivating language proficiency of multilingual learners, (2) ensuring student access to high-quality curriculum, and (3) promoting sociocultural integration in schooling.
Souto-Manning, Madrigal, Malik, & Martell (2016)	A principal's leadership skills feature a philosophy that insists on language equity, includes bilingualism and biliteracy, supports school-generated assessment, endorses multiculturalism, and has close relationships with families and communities.
Spillane (2006)	Through distributed leadership, organizational structures are created in which decision making is based on interactions among leaders and followers, and their situations within a school climate are built on collaboration.

## SUPPORTING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

Being an educational leader in times of international, national, or local crises poses a unique set of concerns. In particular, school leaders must be realistic, genuine, and empathic, finding the strength to reassure students and families when their life circumstances might be unstable or unbearable. In searching for talent to lead in a post-pandemic world, Baldoni (2020) suggests that the following character traits are essential during challenging times, whether dealing with a global pandemic or a pressing local injustice:

- Out-of-the-box thinking based on data from multiple disciplines
- Critical thinking in which reasoning is precise for posing solutions
- Confidence that triggers inspiration of others
- Team ethos where there is sensitivity to the impact of actions taken
- Trustworthiness and reliability in information sources

School leaders who work with multilingual learners and their families have to be exceptionally resilient, yet flexible, during difficult times as many multilingual learners tend to be quite vulnerable and their families unduly impacted. There are unique linguistic and cultural issues of multilingual communities that need to be addressed during stressful situations. The following is a partial list of

the qualities that educational leaders must display during times of increased anxiety and insecurity:

- Ingenuity to ensure that multilingual learners and their families are safe
- Resourcefulness in securing help for medical/health/social services, preferably in the families' primary language, along with shelter, food, and supplies
- Empathy for the plight of multilingual learners and their families
- Advocacy in support of multilingualism and multiculturalism in light of xenophobia
- Inventiveness in maximizing multilingual learners' access to reliable technology
- Creativity in designing online instruction with comprehensible content that is developmentally appropriate, interesting, and relatable to multilingual learners
- Respect for multilingual learners and their families' languages and cultures

Educators must be aware of the uncomfortable situations and apprehensions of multilingual learners, who in many ways may be traumatized. In trying times, it is more important than ever that multilingual learners' voices are heard. Therefore, leaders must think about how to make connections between students' social-emotional well-being and their educational program, including the impact of assessment.

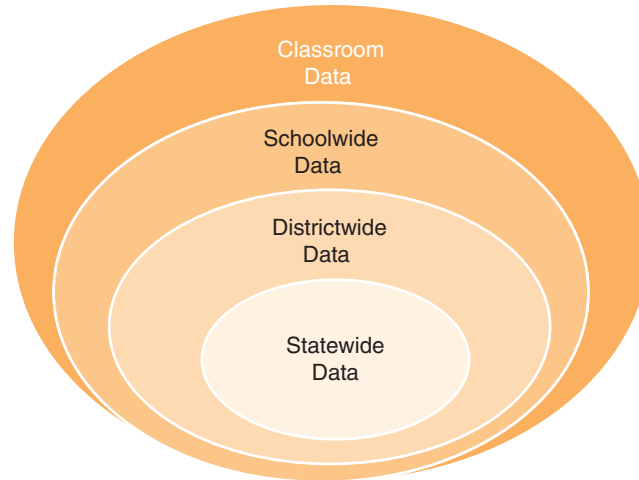
During the most recent pandemic, assessing multilingual learners should have been laser focused on the students' welfare, with consideration of the languages of communication at home. **Feedback** from teachers should have taken the context of learning into consideration before evaluating specific content learning. At the same time, districts and schools must have been aware of and complied with mandates by the U.S. Department of Education for screening and assessing multilingual learners' English **language proficiency** (such as the one issued in May 2020), as assessment for multilingual learners has always been and continues to be an issue of civil rights and equity.

## **THE ASSESSMENT CYCLE IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES**

Effective leaders are critical players in determining how assessment can enhance learning rather than distract from it. When multilingual learners are involved, this translates into having school leaders appreciate and act on students' strengths by allowing the use of multiple languages. Having district or school language and assessment policies that reflect this belief helps facilitate acceptance by leadership of multiple language use in instruction and assessment.

Understanding a school's or district's approach to language planning and language policy is requisite to establishing the pathway to assessment in multiple

**FIGURE 2.2** The Levels of Data in an Aligned Assessment System



languages. Right now, however, a paradox is brewing. Generally, assessment practices in K–12 settings in the United States simply do not capture multilingual learners' language growth and achievement, which, in turn, leads to a distortion of the perceived capabilities of these students (S. V. Sánchez et al., 2013). Yet assessment in multiple languages is the cornerstone of growing numbers of instructional programs that value student-centered perspectives along with bilingualism, biliteracy, and sociocultural competence.

Assessment in multiple languages is most impacted at the classroom level as it is closest to teaching and learning (thus, the largest of the concentric circles in Figure 2.2). Ideally, the policies, practices, and information generated at the classroom level contribute to and are representative of the school as a whole. The school, in turn, shares assessment data with the district, and ultimately, districtwide data contribute to those at the state level. When one level of data readily dovetails and is compatible with the next higher one, we can say that there is an aligned assessment system.

To create an aligned system, assessment in multiple languages should be endorsed across educational levels, from the classroom to the state, but also the reverse, from the state to individual classrooms. According to provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), states with sizeable multilingual populations of one language group are encouraged to provide achievement tests in that language. In turn, those states should incentivize districts to develop and use assessments in multiple languages, facilitating and supporting district dual language/bilingual education programs to demonstrate standards-based outcomes. Ultimately, schools should use assessment in multiple languages to more validly demonstrate multilingual learners' content learning (de Jong, 2019a).

An assessment cycle operates at each level of an educational system, ideally in a coordinated and coherent way. As shown in Figure 2.3, a five-phase cycle serves as the organizing feature for this book and its companion on classroom assessment in multiple languages (Gottlieb, 2021). When multiple languages are part of curriculum and instruction, then assessment must also be defined by multiple language use, always reflecting multilingual learners' understanding and expression in those languages.

The *planning* phase is critical as it sets the process in motion, first considering the characteristics of the students, in particular their languages and cultures, against

**FIGURE 2.3** A Multiphase Assessment Cycle for Inclusion of Multiple Languages



the context for assessment. The second phase, *collecting and organizing information*, identifies data in multiple languages to be gathered for making decisions. Next, the *interpreting information and providing feedback* phase examines the evidence generated from annual, interim, common, and classroom assessment in multiple languages. The fourth phase, *evaluating and reporting information*, explores dual language program effectiveness and **grading** policies for multilingual learners. The final phase, *taking action based on results*, encourages educators to work together to advance teaching and learning across a school, district, or community.

## **PURPOSES FOR ASSESSMENT INVOLVING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS**

Administrators are responsible for assessment activities aimed at meeting state compliance; other activities are designed for district accountability, and still others are intended to determine the effectiveness of school- or districtwide initiatives or programs. Knowing the purpose for assessment determines the kinds of data that are most appropriate for a specific context. Figure 2.4 gives examples of purposes for assessment for states, districts, and schools. Resource 2.1 invites educators to match the purposes for assessment with specific measures and languages to determine to what extent large-scale assessment is equitable for multilingual learners.

### **The Role of Standards**

State academic content and **language development/proficiency standards** are source documents for integrating language and content in curriculum, instruction, and assessment for multilingual learners. Spanish Language Arts and Spanish Language Development Standards coupled with English Language Arts and **English Language Development Standards**, when coordinated, provide the grounding for both school and district leaders in planning assessment for Latinx youth, who constitute approximately 75% of the multilingual learners in K–12 settings.



**FIGURE 2.4** Matching Purposes for Assessment With Levels of Implementation for Multilingual Learners

LEVEL OF ENACTMENT	PURPOSES FOR ASSESSMENT
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine effectiveness of programs involving multilingual learners based on local goals</li> <li>• Ascertain multilingual learners’ social-emotional, language, and conceptual growth in multiple languages</li> <li>• Make educational decisions based on linguistically and culturally relevant data from common and classroom assessment</li> </ul>
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate effectiveness of district programs for multilingual learners</li> <li>• Provide evidence for meeting local and statewide initiatives</li> <li>• Determine trend data from common and interim assessment in one or more languages</li> </ul>
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine impact of statewide programs for multilingual learners</li> <li>• Create procedures/policies to meet federal accountability and peer review requirements</li> <li>• Screen, identify, and classify multilingual learners according to uniform criteria for federal and state-supported services</li> <li>• Determine and apply uniform entry/exit criteria for language programs serving English learners</li> </ul>

Figure 2.5 outlines some of the purposes and uses of these content and language standards. Although both sets of standards deal with language, there are distinct differences between language arts, a content area or discipline, and language development, the process of language learning across disciplines. As a general rule, whichever standards are used programmatically should be aligned with the large-scale assessment for accountability purposes. In Spanish dual language settings, all four sets of standards mentioned before should be interwoven into curriculum and assessment to provide a strong defensible educational program for Spanish–English bi/multilingual learners.

### Initial Assessment for Multilingual Learners

Let’s turn to a multilingual learner’s first day of school. In Grades K–12, high-stakes assessment begins just as soon as a student walks in the school door (Gottlieb, 2017). As part of enrollment procedures, screening students for English language proficiency is a two-step process that determines which multilingual learners are English learners who qualify for language support services. The initial step generally consists of a short Home Language or Language Use Survey that includes items such as the following:

1. What is the primary language used in the home?
2. What is the language most often spoken by the student?
3. What is the language(s) that the student first acquired? (U.S. Department of Education, 2015)

**FIGURE 2.5** Standards in English and Spanish for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

STANDARDS	PURPOSES AND USES
English Language Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform curriculum, instruction, and assessment for multilingual learners</li> <li>• Provide pathways across levels of language proficiency and grade-level clusters for language learning in sociocultural contexts</li> <li>• Measure and interpret English language proficiency on an annual basis for federal accountability to report growth and contribute to reclassification criteria</li> <li>• Contextualize disciplinary content for learning in English</li> </ul>
Spanish Language Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessment in Spanish, and Spanish in conjunction with English, for Latinx students in dual language/immersion or developmental bilingual programs</li> <li>• Provide pathways across levels of language proficiency and grade-level clusters for language learning in sociocultural contexts</li> <li>• Determine and report Spanish language proficiency</li> <li>• Contextualize disciplinary content for learning in Spanish</li> </ul>
Spanish Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform curriculum, instruction, and assessment for Latinx students in dual language/immersion or developmental bilingual programs</li> <li>• Delineate Spanish language arts knowledge and skills for each grade level</li> <li>• Measure, report, and interpret student performance on reading/Spanish language arts on an annual basis for local or federal accountability</li> <li>• Set milestones for Spanish as a subject area</li> </ul>
English Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform curriculum, instruction, and assessment for all students</li> <li>• Delineate English language arts knowledge and skills for each grade level</li> <li>• Measure and report performance on reading/English language arts on an annual basis for Grades 3–8 and once in high school for federal accountability</li> <li>• Set milestones for English as a subject area</li> </ul>

Answers to these questions specify whether there are languages in addition to English in the students’ history and, if so, trigger an initial screening procedure.

In most school districts, the Home Language Survey (or Language Use Survey) and the English Language Proficiency Screener are the sole data sources for identifying and placing English learners (Kim, Molle, Kemp, & Cook, 2018). In response to the huge variability of criteria in these initial determinations, the U.S. Department of Education has come to require states participating in federally funded assessment consortia to have a common definition of English learners (Linguanti & Cook, 2013).

Although this tool is widely accepted and used, the trustworthiness of the Home Language Survey as a component of a statewide English-language proficiency

assessment system remains at question (Bailey & Kelly, 2012). Overall, there is a lack of validity evidence of the procedure in determining English learner status (Linguanti & Bailey, 2014). The *Home Language Survey Data Quality Self-Assessment* (Henry, Mello, Avery, Parker, & Statford, 2017) may help diminish misidentification of students and improve the effectiveness of the data. Therefore, in addition to the survey, districts or schools should collect student self-reported background information (e.g., language and literacy use).

As suggested in the scenario, as part of the enrollment process or shortly thereafter, it is beneficial to collect baseline data on multilingual learners' access to and use of multiple languages, whether they are to participate in language education programs or not. Research has shown that multilingual learners who are literate, irrespective of the language, are advantaged and poised to become literate in an additional language. If students could simply respond to common oral and written prompts in multiple languages, teachers at least would have a sense of their literacy, and this evidence could be the first entries in their portfolio (see Resource 2.2 for guidelines).



## Stop-Think-Act-React

### Relax and Reflect: How do definitions impact assessment for multilingual learners?

Review the Home Language Survey currently in place in your district or state to ascertain an initial determination of multilingual learner status. Then examine additional measures or criteria for identifying English learners and their placement in a language program.

Is there anything else you or your team might consider as part of multilingual learners' first assessment experience? How might assessment in multiple languages be helpful in making students welcome? How equitable is it to assess only in English knowing that multilingual learners are exposed to multiple languages and cultures at home?

Thinking about assessment means figuring out the data that will yield the optimal amount of useful information for decision making. Figure 2.6 illustrates how state, district, and school data can complement each other to offer a systemwide network of evidence for learning in multiple languages. It is replicated as Resource 2.3 with empty cells so that school leaders can supply specific measures across the school year—at the beginning, the middle, and the end—to gain a better sense of the distribution of data by type of assessment and language. In that way, everyone in a school or district can be apprised of the measures and languages for determining overall program, school, and district accountability.

### At a State Level

The good news: Over half the states and the District of Columbia offer standardized achievement tests in languages other than English as part of their ESSA state accountability plans. The lion's share of these measures seems to be

**FIGURE 2.6** Assessment Data for Multilingual Learners in Schools, Districts, and States Across the School Year

	STATE	DISTRICT	SCHOOL
Beginning-of-Year Data	Enrollment data, including demographic information; screening data for identification and placement	Initial diagnostic or baseline data in multiple languages; interim achievement data in one or more languages	Initial placement data based on language proficiency in multiple languages; baseline data in different content areas
Midyear Data	Annual English language proficiency data, K–12; achievement data, Grades 3–8 and once in high school	Interim achievement data; growth data in language proficiency in one or more languages from common assessment	Coordination of common data across classrooms in multiple languages; classroom assessment
End-of-Year Data	Performance data (results of language proficiency and achievement testing); exit and post-exit (monitoring) data plus data for other federal requirements	Interim achievement data; growth data from common assessment in multiple languages; language proficiency data	Data related to grouping of students; outcome achievement, language proficiency data in multiple languages based on common assessment along with social-emotional data

translations of state or consortium-led achievement tests for mathematics and science (Tabaku, Carbuccia-Abbott, & Saavedra, 2018). The bad news: Test translations have built-in biases and yield results with invalid inferences for multilingual learners. In other words, we cannot trust test scores from translated measures due to:

- Noncomparability of idioms or nuances that do not have translations
- Noncomparability of the language density of the tests—that is, translation yields different lengths of passages and literacy levels
- Noncomparability of cultural interpretations of the tests due to differing assumptions, perspectives, and traditions
- Noncomparability of student populations on which the measures have been normed

Put another way, “it [is] extremely difficult to create assessments in languages that are truly parallel, since each language has unique and distinct conceptual constructs with socially and culturally embedded meanings” (Abedi, 2011, p. 65). Another piece of cautionary advice on giving state tests in languages other than English (especially under high-stakes circumstances) is that research supports “native” language assessment only if the assessment matches the language of instruction (Abedi, 2011).

Assessment policies and practices that originate from federal legislation are generally based on monolingual constructs whereby multilingual learners are required to demonstrate their language proficiency in English without acknowledgement of their full linguistic potential (Escamilla et al., 2014; Menken, 2008; Shohamy, 2011). Additionally, there is a lack of cultural validity in large-scale assessment practices; that is, state tests generally do not address the sociocultural factors (beliefs, values, experiences) that impact the thinking of multilingual learners (W. Solano-Flores, 2011). As a result, measures often refer to experiences that are outside the socioeconomic realm of the students and lack reference to multicultural views; in essence, they are seen through a monolingual Anglocentric lens (Gottlieb & Honigsfeld, 2020).

### *At a District Level*

Oftentimes, state-level policy and procedures are adopted by districts wholesale, without much thought for multilingual learners. For example, districts select **interim assessments**—for the most part, online commercial tests that are administered twice or three times during the school year—to serve as predictive measures for annual reading or mathematics tests in English. Little attention is paid to their likely impact on dual language classrooms where two languages have equal status. Although these data may provide a trajectory of student performance on state achievement tests in English, they do not necessarily reveal the true extent of multilingual learners' knowledge in their additional language.

District and school leaders should consider creating a districtwide council of multilingual educators to evaluate the appropriateness and usefulness of commercial interim measures for their context. Even though some interim tests may be available in multiple languages, their norming population could be the same as the test in English, thus invalidating the inferences from the results. Leadership must be aware of the caveats of tests that have been directly translated. Those that have been transadapted, on the other hand, contain modified test items to fit the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students and are considered more acceptable for multilingual learners.

### *At a School Level*

With the rise of dual language programs across the nation, more and more schools are devoting resources to enrichment education for multilingual learners where content and language instruction co-occurs in two languages (Wilson, 2011). Any and all schools that house dual language programs should be held accountable for reaching their programmatic goals in multiple languages. School-level measures, such as common assessment, are (or should be) strongly tied to multilingual instructional practices.

Before embarking on the assessment cycle, schools should be knowledgeable of the linguistic, cultural, experiential, academic, and social-emotional makeup of their multilingual learners. Resource 2.4 at the close of the chapter lists a range of student variables with the hope that the information helps lead to fair and equitable assessment in one or more languages. Content and language teachers need to coordinate and co-plan assessment *as, for, and of* learning to offer a comprehensive data set that describes their multilingual learners.

## DATA ASSOCIATED WITH ASSESSMENT *AS, FOR, AND OF* LEARNING

Three approaches—assessment *as, for,* and *of* learning—provide a range of potential data sources that complement each other for decision making from classrooms to districts. Together, the approaches offer a strong model of inclusion for multilingual learners, their teachers, and other educational leaders in one or multiple languages (Gottlieb, 2016, 2020, 2021; Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2019; Gottlieb & Katz, 2020). Put another way, the three approaches represent an ecosystem where assessment is constantly informed by and leads to better student learning (Jones & Saville, 2016).

As shown in Figure 2.7, assessment *as, for,* and *of* learning centers on stakeholders (people and their relationships with others) rather than assessment for formative or summative purposes that focuses on outcomes (scores reported as numbers or letters). **Summative** and **formative assessment** is a false dichotomy as “any assessment can be formative and summative at the same time” (William, 2020). Assessment *as* and *for* learning are broader in scope, living in and across classrooms and engaging students and teachers in the process; likewise, assessment *of* learning generally extends from classrooms to schools and districts to include leadership teams, principals, and superintendents.

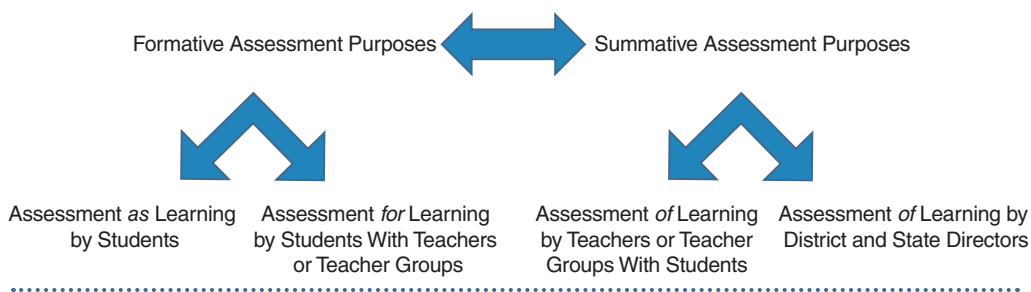
### Assessment as Learning

**Assessment as learning** is an approach that places students squarely in the center and substantiates the value of student engagement in learning (Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012; Dyer, 2015; Early, 2012). Assessment *as* learning offers opportunities for multilingual learners to become empowered through their multiple languages and cultures, thereby building agency and identity. School leaders must be sensitive to the unique qualities of multilingual learners that become visible through assessment *as* learning.

Data generated from assessment *as* learning are student driven. Student self-assessment offers school and district leaders an additional perspective on how students are faring. Assessment *as* learning enables multilingual learners to shine as they:

- Demonstrate **metacognitive, metalinguistic, and metacultural awareness**
- Use multiple languages as linguistic and conceptual resources
- Translanguage—that is, interact in two languages in natural settings with others of the partner language as they build their linguistic repertoire

**FIGURE 2.7** Assessment *as, for,* and *of* Learning: An Outgrowth of Assessment for Formative and Summative Purposes



**SOURCE:** Adapted from Gottlieb (2021).

Although assessment *as* learning is basically a classroom activity, there is no reason why it can't apply to a school or even district level. Here student self-reflection is incorporated into unit projects, performances, or products as well as common assessment. These data not only give students voice; they help guide instructional leadership teams to modify curriculum to be more inclusive of multilingual learners along with their linguistic and cultural perspectives.

### Assessment *for* Learning

Distributive leadership is a most effective practice when it's shared among a team of individuals around a mutually agreed-upon mission to spark and sustain a schoolwide culture of learning. As a result, leadership teams consisting of teachers and coaches can drive positive change throughout a school. These teams of coaches or teachers who collaborate and interact with students for a common purpose—to advance learning—can spark **assessment *for* learning**.

Example activities that leadership teams can help organize on behalf of their multilingual learners might include:

- Having coaches and teachers engage in cycles of observation, feedback, and reflection on students' language use in content classes in order to adapt and refine instruction and instructional assessment
- Modeling criteria for success for projects or common assessment that apply to one or more languages
- Examining student-level data in multiple languages, whether digitally or in physical portfolios, on an interim basis to ensure movement toward meeting program goals

It is essential for school leaders, in conjunction with leadership teams, to schedule dedicated time for teachers to co-plan the why, what, how, and when for assessment. In assessment *for* learning, multilingual learners negotiate with their

#### Relevant Research on *Formative Assessment*

Today's educators often deal with the multiple, contradictory purposes of formative assessment or assessment *for* learning, which has led to misunderstanding of the use of data, especially for multilingual learners. In recent years, formative assessment has been viewed as an event, a test, or a tool (Shepard, 2005) rather than a transformative, iterative process or cycle between teachers and students (Heritage, 2010). Black and Wiliam's seminal research in 1998, confirmed by Hattie and Temperley (2007), unequivocally confirms the value of formative feedback within the instructional cycle as pivotal for improving student achievement. It is feedback—descriptive information that is goal-oriented, transparent, actionable, user-friendly for students, and timely—not test scores, that helps students move toward reaching their goals (Wiggins, 2012).

teachers on a variety of issues, such as what counts as evidence, in which languages, and how to interpret and use the information. Assessment *for* learning embraces increased decision-making power of teachers in their interaction with others.

### Assessment of Learning

**Assessment of learning**, as depicted in Figure 2.7, serves two distinct purposes and audiences. The first purpose is for district or state accountability and stems from federal or state, and at times district, mandates. Here assessment *of* learning is externally imposed upon schools and is outside the control of teachers and, often, school leadership. It generally consists of standardized measures that are administered on annual and interim bases. In this case, assessment *of* learning is large-scale in nature, meaning that it occurs under standard conditions across a district or state.

At a district or school level, assessment *of* learning can also apply to internal accountability, such as in the use of common assessment data for making local decisions. Still considered large-scale as it crosses multiple classrooms, assessment *of* learning in this context represents democratized assessment in that it reflects what students have accomplished at the culmination of a period of instruction, such as a unit of learning. When determined by local leadership, in this case, assessment *of* learning is considered more authentic than test-driven (Sleeter & Carmona, 2017).

**Common assessment** is generally designed by a team of educators and occurs across classrooms in one or more grade levels, a school, or a district. As shown in Figure 2.8, this type of assessment *of* learning can vary from a mutually agreed-upon project, to a uniform writing or oral language prompt, to a unit test designed by teachers—all of which can and should have provisions for multiple languages. Common assessment, if based on a project, prompt, or end-of-unit test, has a uniform set of criteria or a descriptive rubric to interpret student work; if based on a prompt, it also has standard directions for administration.

Even if common measures are in English, there is no reason why multilingual learners cannot prepare for prompts or tests using another language, research their projects in multiple languages, or perhaps outline practice responses in

**FIGURE 2.8** Features of Assessment of Learning for Common Projects, Prompts, and Tests in One or Multiple Languages

FEATURES OF ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING FOR LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY	FOR PROJECTS	FOR PROMPTS	FOR TESTS
Standard directions for administration		X	X
Uniform criteria for success	X		
Interpretative rubric	X	X	
Inter-rater reliability in scoring	X	X	
Concrete timely feedback to students	X		
Linguistic and cultural relevance	X	X	



**FIGURE 2.9** Types of Large-Scale Assessment of Learning

TYPES OF LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENT	DESCRIPTION	LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION
Annual standardized tests	Measures required under federal legislation (i.e., reading/language arts, mathematics, and science achievement tests and English language proficiency tests); achievement tests in languages other than English; scored externally	States
Interim standardized tests	Off-the-shelf or online measures used for local accountability (e.g., reading/language arts, mathematics; English language proficiency tests) administered 2–3 times a year and scored externally	Districts
Common assessment with uniform prompts and procedures	Prompts (e.g., oral, written, multimodal) or performance tasks along with uniform procedures for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information across multiple classrooms; locally designed and scored/interpreted	Schools or districts
Common assessment for projects, products, and performances	Projects, performances, or products at the end of an instructional cycle along with uniform procedures for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information across multiple classrooms; locally designed and interpreted	Grade levels or departments within or across schools

their other language. If results contribute to school-level accountability, especially when multilingual learners are given the option of using more than one language, reliability of scoring and drawing inferences from the results are important. Figure 2.9 defines the differences in the types of large-scale assessment of learning that occurs at school, district, and state levels.

## UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

One of the hallmarks associated with assessment of learning is basic psychometrics—validity and reliability. Test **validity** refers to the degree to which evidence supports the interpretations of test scores associated with annual and interim measures. **Reliability** is the overall consistency of a measure—the extent to which a test produces similar results under consistent or standard conditions—or consistency among teachers/raters in interpreting what students produce.

### Validity for Large-Scale Testing

There are two primary purposes for educational large-scale testing: to inform educational policy and hold schools accountable for student learning (Sireci & Faulkner-Bond, 2015). The question at hand is to what extent can any monolingual test yield valid inferences for multilingual learners? If developers of language

tests (or content tests) work from a monolingual lens, we lose sight of the totality of what multilingual learners can do. Therefore, we must insist that language testing operations be based on multilingual constructs (Chalhoub-Deville, 2019). To be valid for multilingual learners and multilingual learners with disabilities, large-scale assessment at a school, district, or state level must:

- Be based on principles of Universal Design for Learning with multiple means of engagement, representation, action, and expression
- Include an adequate sample of multilingual learners and multilingual learners with disabilities in trials, field testing, and norming
- Represent the experiences and perspectives of the student population
- Avoid **construct irrelevance** (e.g., multilingual learners' English language proficiency should not mask showing their content knowledge on content tests)
- Have minimal linguistic and cultural bias



## Stop-Think-Act-React

### Relax and Reflect: How can construct irrelevance distort the validity of a test for multilingual learners?

The selection or development of large-scale assessment of learning generally has been decided by a district or state, outside the control of teachers and principals. The following is a list of potential construct-irrelevant factors when testing in English that skew the results for multilingual learners who are in the midst of developing that language. In testing content in English, multilingual learners may not be able to produce optimal results due to:

- Unfamiliarity with the context or situation of test items
- Idiomatic expressions
- Use of technical vocabulary outside of the content area being tested
- Complex and dense language
- Reliance on text without **scaffolding** (e.g., adding visual or graphic representation of the concept)
- Words that have multiple meanings (e.g., *table*, *arm*)
- Unfamiliar cultural references

Before selecting or administering an interim content test, the leadership team of a school or district should systematically review the items for these construct-irrelevant variables to ascertain the appropriateness of the measure for multilingual learners. Then the team should consider how assessment in multiple languages might counteract the ill effects of achievement measures only in English.

How can the validity of assessment be improved for multilingual learners? One way is to reduce the construct irrelevance of the items or tasks. Another way is to rely on more **performance assessment** as hands-on tasks are more authentic and can facilitate multiple language use. By allowing for variability in responses, students are not constrained by one correct answer, one way of expression, or one language. Ideally, these tasks have been designed based on theories that reflect multilingual or **heteroglossic language ideologies**, multilingual learners' funds of knowledge (N. González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), and multilingual resources. By adopting a multilingual stance on assessment, we accentuate multilingual learners' personal, cultural, and linguistic assets.

## Reliability

Reliability goes hand-in-hand with validity in assessment of learning. A multilingual assessment is considered reliable if it generates trustworthy and consistent results across various situations (Bisai & Singh, 2018). Reliability in assessment in multiple languages is also attributed to consistency in interpreting student-generated text in response to a prompt or a student project. To be reliable, samples from a prompt in each language generate the same degree of accuracy in scoring. For example, a common writing prompt in fourth- and fifth-grade dual language classrooms is based on a shared experience; multilingual learners then have an opportunity to respond in the language(s) of their choice. Reliability of results comes into play when the student samples are interpreted from comparable rubrics that are sensitive to each language and culture.

Together, assessment *as, for, and of* learning forms a comprehensive assessment system that is formulated by and seen through the eyes of different stakeholder groups. Resource 2.5 compares how different leadership teams at school and district levels might utilize these three approaches with an eye toward multilingual learners and assessment in multiple languages.

## EVOKING SYSTEMIC CHANGE THROUGH SOCIAL JUSTICE

Effective leadership for multilingual learners, especially in dual language education contexts, advocates for social justice. When social justice is a tenet of teaching and learning practices, educators come to truly see students for who they are, where they come from, and what they can do. In fact, “improved student learning efforts are attributed to school efforts and structures that explicitly aim to reduce marginalizing conditions” in schools (Menken, 2017, p. 16). When assessment is introduced as a social justice issue, English-only measures serve to exacerbate inequities and undermine dual language programs (Californians Together, 2021).

Community organizations can be key players in effecting systemic change and meaningful power-sharing in issues of social justice. Case in point, *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* has identified four levers to spark change that has relevance to school and district leadership: (1) commit to fostering open discussion, (2) apply an equity lens, (3) agree on the pathway to change, and (4) dedicate resources to the transformation process (RoadMap, 2018).

When social justice permeates curriculum and assessment *as, for, and of* learning, it becomes a powerful driver of how and what students learn. When school and district leadership enact curriculum and accompanying assessment through a social justice lens, school and district culture can become transformed for educators, students, and families.

## **FACING THE ISSUE: ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF YOUR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

School and district leaders do not necessarily have to be multilingual to support multilingualism and multiculturalism. However, they must have a deep understanding of and a steadfast commitment to multilingual education and its goals, as does the principal of Serenity School. Part of that conviction is the endorsement of assessment in multiple languages for multilingual learners.

Collaboration is paramount in enhancing the effectiveness of language education programs in schools and districts. Coordination of effort by leadership maximizes conditions for assessment in multiple languages. To cement the partnership among educational leaders, Cohan, Honigsfeld, and Dove (2020) suggest a collaboration framework based on four principles of teamwork: (1) common purpose, (2) shared mindset, (3) supportive environment, and (4) diverse team membership. These principles are foundational for moving the agenda of assessment in multiple languages forward. The following questions might be posed within that context.

### **For School Leaders**

- How might common assessment in multiple languages help equalize the playing field for multilingual learners and their teachers at a school level?
- How do current school policies positively or negatively affect assessment in multiple languages?
- How might assessment *as* learning in multiple languages extend to the home and community?

### **For District Leaders**

- How might you engage others in your district to help plan assessment for multilingual learners in multiple languages?
- How might you enlist multilingual adults in your community to help in initial screening and assessment in multiple languages?
- How might you create a network of administrators, school, and community leaders to answer difficult questions and issues revolving around instruction and assessment in multiple languages?

## RESOLVING THE DILEMMA: ENLIST FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS!

Just like Irene Tan, school and district leadership should think ahead about assessment in multiple languages. If you are in a setting with two or seventy-two languages, you can take steps to provide plentiful opportunities for multilingual learners to express themselves in their preferred languages to obtain a more comprehensive portrait of their conceptual, language, and social-emotional development. Here are some ideas for tapping multilingual resources in preparation for assessment activities.

- If you are a coach in a dual language or bilingual education setting, you have bilingual resources at your fingertips, starting with multilingual learners and their families. Their linguistic and cultural richness should be a source and inspiration for enhancing curriculum and assessment that are inclusive of linguistic and cultural perspectives.
- If you are a principal with multilingual learners of many different languages, or a program director, set up a schoolwide buddy system among multilingual learners. In addition, create a language resource bank of family and community members to assist in preparing for and proctoring during large-scale assessment.
- If you are a program coordinator or director, think of how you might involve the school's experts from the visual arts center, resource center, or technology center to form a multilingual literacy or coding club. Multilingual learners who participate in such activities could maintain a literacy log or a reflective journal in multiple languages to chronicle the impact of the club on their social-emotional development and achievement.
- If you are a district leader, consider how you might create a series of digital networks for different stakeholder groups around issues related to the assessment of multilingual learners in multiple languages. There might be one dedicated for principals and coordinators, one for school leaders, and one for the community. Have members of each network alternate monitoring the feed, posing questions, and offering ideas.

In this chapter, we have emphasized the value of school and district leaders as well as leadership teams' active participation and ongoing support for assessment in multiple languages. We have underscored the merit of having a balanced assessment system *as, for, and of* learning that touches on a variety of purposes, evidence, and stakeholders. Armed with resources from multilingual learners, we have illustrated how educational leaders might strategize how assessment in multiple languages might proceed to fortify connections among students, families, and the community.

# Resources for School and District Leaders

## RESOURCE 2.1

### Conducting an Assessment Audit for Multilingual Learners

Starting with individual schools, complete the chart by answering the questions “Why assess?” (the school’s purposes), “Which measures or types of assessment are used?” and “What are the languages of the assessment?” Analyze the responses to ascertain the equity of large-scale or common assessment practices for multilingual learners in schools, districts, and the state.

LEVEL OF ENACTMENT	PURPOSE FOR ASSESSMENT	MEASURES	LANGUAGES
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evidence for and growth in learning grade-by-grade</li> <li>• Evaluate the extent to which programmatic goals are being met</li> </ul>		
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of programs serving multilingual learners</li> <li>• Screen and place new multilingual learners</li> </ul>		
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply with peer review and federal requirements for assessment</li> <li>• Evaluate effectiveness of state initiatives for multilingual learners</li> </ul>		



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## RESOURCE 2.2

### Collecting Language Samples in Multiple Languages as Part of the Enrollment Process

Gathering oral and written language samples in multiple languages, if possible, should be part of overall data collection during the initial enrollment of K–12 students. Here are some suggestions for planning performance assessment that can readily be converted into a checklist.

In preparing for gathering performance data in multiple languages, have multilingual learners:

- Choose their preferred language, even if only available for instructions; then ease into the other language, if necessary
- Become familiar with the task
- Feel comfortable with the situation, to the extent feasible
- Select from multimodal resources such as action-packed, cross-disciplinary pictures, photos, or graphics
- Become acquainted with any equipment or technology
- Choose to use technology for keyboarding (for students in fourth grade and beyond) or paper and pencil for their written sample
- Listen to instructions in two languages or read instructions in two languages side by side to maximize comprehension
- Ask clarifying questions to each other in their preferred language

In addition, the following surveys may be helpful for districts and/or schools (see Gottlieb, 2016, 2021) as part of enrollment or during the beginning of the school year. Students respond as to whether they use English, their other language(s), or multiple languages in a variety of situations. The information from these surveys will help educators better understand the impact of multilingual learners' language practices on learning.

1. Language Use Survey
2. Oral Language Use Survey
3. Literacy Use Survey
4. Personal Interest Survey



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## RESOURCE 2.3

### Planning the Flow of Assessment Data for Multilingual Learners Throughout the School Year

Taking the information from Resource 2.1, think about how you might map assessment for your school, district, or state across the school year. Based on your measures, how might you better ensure fair representation of your multilingual learners in multiple languages?

	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	STATE
Beginning of Year			
Midyear			
End of Year			



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## RESOURCE 2.4

### Gathering Information on Multilingual Learners for Planning Assessment in Multiple Languages

Data on multilingual learners are invaluable for many reasons, but the most important is knowing as much as you can about multilingual learners and their families. The information is also critical for ensuring equity in the design and enactment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Use these considerations as checklists for helping to craft assessment.

1. Linguistic considerations; multilingual learners'
  - language(s) at home
  - estimate of oral language proficiency in their home language(s)
  - estimate of literacy in their home language(s)
  - preferences and contexts (when and with whom) of language use at home
  - estimate of English language proficiency
2. Cultural considerations; multilingual learners'
  - cultural backgrounds
  - cultural traditions and perspectives
  - number of years and places educated outside the United States
  - estimate of familiarity with mainstream ways
3. Academic considerations; multilingual learners'
  - prior language(s) of instruction by content area or time allocation
  - opportunities to learn grade-level content (with and without language support)
  - opportunities to access and use technology
  - access and use of the home language at school
4. Experiential considerations; multilingual learners'
  - continuity of education within a year (mobility or interrupted education)
  - participation in and types of language education programs
  - allocation of language(s) by educational program (if applicable)
  - exposure to literacy experiences outside of school and in which languages

5. Social-emotional considerations; multilingual learners'

- exposure to trauma from cultural or religious conflict or linguicism
- exposure to trauma from separation (i.e., from parents, close relatives, classmates)
- exposure to trauma from crises or pandemics
- exposure to racial/ethnic discrimination
- exposure to online or physical bullying
- transiency/homelessness

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## RESOURCE 2.5

### Thinking About Assessment *as, for, and of* Learning

How might assessment *as, for, and of* learning apply to different stakeholder groups? How might you and other educational leaders incorporate multiple languages into each of the approaches?

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING	ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING	ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING
School leaders, including coaches, coordinators, and principals			
Leadership teams, including professional learning communities at a school or district level			
District leaders, including directors and assistant superintendents			



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