Measuring Student Growth in World Languages

Districts that have adopted the model curriculum may choose to use the SLOs and accompanying Can-Do statements to inform the development of assessments to measure student growth as the SLOs and Can-Do statements contained in the model curriculum target the Cumulative Progress Indicators, the cultural content statements, and the linguistic content statement of the NJCCCS for World Languages.   For districts that have not adopted the model curriculum, they may choose to study the model curriculum and use the framework to determine appropriate contexts and themes, develop similar SLOs and Can-Do statements, and design assessments to determine whether students are achieving the targeted proficiency level.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do we determine whether students are meeting the targeted proficiency level?

First, it's important that you know the proficiency level of your students and you set an appropriate level for them to attain at the end of the year or at the end of a particular unit of study. While a student may hit a proficiency target in a specific context, it is important to provide opportunities for students to meet that proficiency target over a range of contexts. Secondly, students' proficiency should be evaluated using a tool that provides descriptors related to the proficiency level and the modes being assessed.

Are there rubrics that we can use to determine to what degree our students are reaching the targeted proficiency level?

You may wish to use the *Performance Descriptors for Language Learners* developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The Performance Descriptors provide benchmark targets appropriate for tracking learners' progress across elementary, middle school, and high school programs. These form the basis for the score descriptions for the ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) assessment. These score descriptions break down the proficiency levels into smaller gradations. The score descriptions are available on the bottom left-hand side of http://aappl.actfl.org/scores.

How does the NJDOE recommend that we use the rubrics?

It is important that both teachers and students have a clear understanding of each proficiency level and sublevel and what it means to function independently at each level of proficiency. There is additional guidance provided within the NJCCCS for World Languages as well as in the accompanying glossary and annotated resources. It is suggested that educators work collaboratively as they examine student work to provide consistent evaluation and feedback.

What type of professional development is needed for world languages teachers to build capacity for doing this work?

Districts may wish to focus professional development for world languages teachers around developing tasks to assess proficiency and rating samples based on proficiency benchmarks. To understand the proficiency levels, districts may choose to use student work samples and compare them to examples for each proficiency level found at http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/. These samples are available from Novice to Distinguished. Additionally, there are numerous interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational samples from New Jersey students anchored at specific benchmark levels at http://flenj.org/CAPS/student_work.shtml.

ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE OF STUDENT GROWTH IN A WORLD LANGUAGE: All evidence is

based on the modes of communication at a specific proficiency benchmark.

An **interpretive listening task** that assesses a student's ability to meet a CPI at a specific proficiency level within a context defined in the cultural content statements of the NJCCCS for World Languages. There should be a real-world reason for the students to listen to the selection. The selection should be culturally authentic: created by and for native speakers of the language.	An **interpretive reading task** that assesses a student's ability to meet a CPI at a specific proficiency level within a context defined in the cultural content statements of the NJCCCS for World Languages. There should be a real-world reason for the students to read the selection. The selection should be culturally authentic: created by and for native speakers of the language.	An **interpersonal speaking task** that assesses a student's ability to meet a CPI at a specific proficiency level within the context defined in the cultural content statements of the NJCCCS for World Languages. There should be a real-world reason for the students to participate in the conversation. There should be an information gap, providing a need to exchange information, ideas, or opinions. The students speak spontaneously, do not know what will be said next, have a real reason for listening, and both ask and respond to each other.
An **interpersonal writing task** that assesses a student's ability to meet a CPI at a specific proficiency level within the context defined in the cultural content statements of the NJCCCS for World Languages. There should be a real-world reason for the students exchanging information by writing, such as via text messaging. There should be an information gap. The students do not know what will be written next, have a real reason for reading, and respond to the message.	A **presentational speaking task** that assesses a student's ability to meet a CPI at a specific proficiency level within the context defined in the cultural content statements of the NJCCCS for World Languages. What students are asked to do should simulate an authentic task that has the potential to be presented to a real-world audience. The students have time to think about their content, organize it, and then present it.	A **presentational writing task** that assesses a student's ability to meet a CPI at a specific proficiency level within the context defined in the cultural content statements of the NJCCCS for World Languages. What students are asked to do should simulate an authentic task that has the potential to be presented to a real-world audience. The students have time to think about their content, organize it, and then present it.

Commercially available assessment:

Districts may choose to use a commercially available performance assessment based on proficiency. The ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) will allow districts to assess student growth within and across proficiency levels. Additional information for this assessment may be found at http://aappl.actfl.org/.

Caution:

Proficiency growth is related to time and intensity of program. If students do not have ample opportunities to acquire the language, the use of student growth objectives as an indicator of teacher effectiveness is questionable.

It will take more than one year to progress through any major level of proficiency (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior). Once students have reached the intermediate level, it is important to select an assessment that will

show student growth across contexts and themes within the larger proficiency level. Within the NJCCCS for World Languages 'The Cultural Content Statements' along with the topics that follow them should help inform how growth may occur within a proficiency level.

UNACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE OF STUDENT GROWTH IN A WORLD LANGUAGE*

A **vocabulary quiz/tes**t - Some examples of these types of quizzes/tests include: • Read a sentence and fill in the missing word from memory, by using a word bank, or selecting a response • Write a definition of a target language word using the target language • Match a target language word with a target language definition • A cloze type assessment • Translate a word from one language to another	A **grammar quiz/test** – Some examples of these types of quizzes or tests include: • Read a sentence and write the correct form of the verb • Put a sentence in a different tense • Conjugate a verb • Write the correct form of the adjective	A **listening comprehension quiz/test** – Some examples of these types of quizzes/tests include: • Listen as your teacher reads from a script and tell whether the statement is true or false. • Listen as your teacher reads from a script and choose the picture that she is describing
A **reading comprehension quiz/test** – Some examples of these types of quizzes/tests include: • Read a selection and answer comprehension questions based on the selection • Given story strips, put the story in a logical order (if dependent on reading and not just on logic) Any other assessment that measures discrete knowledge about language and culture.	Any **writing assessment** that does not have a real-world purpose, a potential for a real-world audience, and is not targeting a specific proficiency level	Any **speaking assessment** that does not have a real-world purpose, a potential for real-world audience, is memorized, and is not targeting a specific proficiency level

*Although **some** of the assessments above **may** have a place in the formative assessment system, they should never be used to measure student growth of language performance.