THIRD EDITION

Assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

Socorro G. Herrera | Robin M. Cabral | Kevin G. Murry

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Dr. Kevin G. Murry is Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at Kansas State University and is Director of Research and Development for the Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA). His scholarship has emphasized the professional development of K–16 teachers for the assets/needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. Dr. Murry's recent research and publications have emphasized teacher readiness for best practice with English learners, culturally responsive teaching and assessment practices, as well as the linguistic and cross-cultural dynamics of critically reflective and biography-driven teaching. In addition to his two textbooks in ESL/EFL, he has contributed book chapters for Erlbaum & Associates and Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)/Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI). His recent articles appear in the *Forum for International Research in Educatio*n, *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, *Journal of Bilingual Education Research & Instruction*, and *Journal of Teaching and Learning*.

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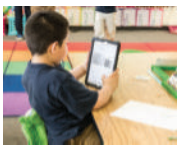

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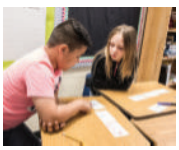

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NEW TO THIS EDITION

It is with great excitement that we complete the third edition of *Assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. Current policy and research in the field require us to pose questions about student learning and to document progress and achievement in systematic and creative ways. The new additions provide the reader with the most up-to-date research and strategies for effectively assessing culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. Our focus in this new edition is on ensuring that readers have the necessary support to make theory-into-practice applications. We continue to highlight the CLD student biography and how it relates to decision making for assessment practices. At the same time, we have emphasized to an even greater extent how the theory and research that provides the foundation for best practices is brought to life within individual classrooms and through the collaborative efforts of teachers serving the unique students in their learning communities. Additional resources are provided to illustrate how teachers might develop activities and tools for both promoting and assessing CLD students' linguistic and academic growth.

New features specific to this completely revised edition include the following:

- Chapter 7 is a new chapter dedicated to data-driven problem-solving processes. Assessment and instruction with CLD students require educators to rethink assumptions about how assessment is used to inform practice. Educators are guided to use knowledge of students' biographies to gather assessment data, interpret assessment results, and support informed decisions about programming and student supports. Readers will benefit from this additional guidance on how to explore teaching and learning dynamics when CLD students struggle to succeed in their current learning settings.
- Teaching Tips provide readers with considerations for practice as they begin to formulate site-specific applications of key concepts.
- Activity Lesson Plans for easy-to-implement activities support readers to put conceptual learning into practice with K–12 students. Guidance regarding appropriate grade levels, materials needed, student behavior to observe, ways to differentiate instruction, and notes on timing of the activity during the school year are provided for each.
- Using assessment to inform instruction is a new focus of chapters dedicated to a specific type of assessment (Chapters 2–6). These chapter sections support readers to understand the practical implications of assessments and their results for daily instruction.
- New and updated research and features ensure readers have access to the latest being written and talked about in the education of CLD students. The updated features support readers' comprehension and retention of key concepts discussed.
- An expanded glossary provides an easy reference for definitions of all key concepts highlighted throughout chapters.

Through this third edition of *Assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*, we hope that educators across the nation will gain added confidence in their capacities to develop and use assessments that provide meaningful data, encourage student engagement, and ignite their passion for teaching and learning.

PREFACE

The trend toward increasing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in the classroom is not a new phenomenon. In border and coastal states such as Texas, California, New York, and Florida, this is a long-standing trend. What has changed is the intensity and scope of this trend, which now influences classroom, school, and district decision making and educational policy throughout the nation. This is not the first, nor is it likely to be the last, textbook to address assessment practices for diverse populations.

PURPOSE

If textbooks that address assessment practices for diverse students already exist, why is this text needed? Assessment texts have traditionally been organized around assessment types, practices, and protocols. However, we, the authors of this text, wanted the *student* to be the driving force behind the narrative and organization; therefore, we began with a critical examination of fundamental questions about appropriate assessment practices for CLD students.

This text is written from the perspective of a *differential lens on assessment* practices for CLD students. This perspective emphasizes the following fundamental questions:

- Who should be the focus of assessment?
- Where should assessment efforts be concentrated?
- What should be the key purposes of assessment?
- When should assessments be conducted?
- How are the findings of assessment best used to improve practices for, and academic achievement among, CLD students?

The discussions in this text are designed to guide PreK–12 classroom teachers as they successfully differentiate assessment practices for diverse student populations. However, essential to these conversations is an understanding that meeting the needs of students from diverse backgrounds requires a collaborative team effort. Reading and math specialists, special education teachers, school psychologists, and other educational specialists contribute valuable expertise and assessment data to decision making about these learners. The following

exploration explains how answers to the aforementioned questions have guided the design and organization of this text.

Who

The question of who should be the focus of assessment (and the content of this text) can be answered by recognizing the increasing numbers of students who bring to today's classroom a complex range of cross-cultural, language, and learning assets and needs. In many parts of the country, CLD student populations are radically changing from those whose needs were addressed years ago. Therefore, this text focuses on the assessment of CLD students. The changing nature of this student population, and the field's response in relation to teacher preparation and assessment practices, are the emphasis of discussion in Chapter 1.

Where

This text also assumes a differentiating approach to the question of where assessment efforts for CLD students should be concentrated. Traditionally, this question is answered according to either the range of (primarily formal) assessments available to school educators or assessment policy perspectives. Instead, this text aligns the emphases of assessment efforts with critical dimensions of the CLD student biography (Herrera & Murry, 2016). More specifically, this text devotes three chapters to core assessments that directly relate to the four critical dimensions of the CLD student biography: the sociocultural dimension (Chapter 4), the linguistic dimension (Chapter 5), and the cognitive and academic dimensions (Chapter 6). This alignment of assessments with the CLD student biography ensures that teachers and their instructional practices are better informed by data (Chapters 2–8) about each dimension of the student's life.

What

What should be the key purposes of assessments for CLD students? The purposes of classroom assessments for CLD students should first encompass the need to provide the classroom teacher with the critical information necessary to adapt and refine classroom instruction and related practices for increasingly diverse populations of students. If teachers are to prove successful with CLD students, they must determine more than what the student does not know. Today's teachers need to know what *assets* the CLD student brings to the learning environment.

Among such assets the CLD student may bring rich socialization experiences in another country or culture (Chapters 3 and 4); unexpected cross-cultural insights (Chapter 4); prior schooling, academic experiences, and cognitive skills (Chapters 3 and 6); strong first language knowledge and emergent capacities in a second language (Chapters 3 and 5); and real-world experiences that foster a diversity of perspective (Chapters 2). Thus, the purposes of assessments for CLD students are as much about informing teachers as they are related to the evaluation of learners.

When

The timing of appropriate classroom assessment practices for CLD students is the product of a teacher's reflection on student needs and assets, decisions about where

to concentrate assessment efforts, and attention to the purposes of such assessments. Just as there are no recipes for successful instruction that work with all CLD student populations, there are few rules of timing for the implementation of assessments. Timing and sequence issues tend to vary according to types of assessments, including authentic versus standardized (Chapters 2–6), formative versus summative (Chapters 2 and 6), informal versus formal (Chapters 2–6), and norm-referenced versus criterion-referenced (Chapters 5 and 6).

Successful teachers reflect on their *informed* philosophies about appropriate assessment practices for CLD students (Chapters 2 and 3, as well as Chapters 7 and 8). Such teachers also collect and analyze data from formal and informal preassessments of students as well as ongoing assessments of growth (Chapters 3–8) to make decisions about which assessments and teaching practices are best for which purposes, given learners' individual needs.

How

Ultimately, reflective educators are concerned with the question of how the findings of assessments with CLD students are best used. From a best-practice perspective, assessment findings may be used for at least three critical purposes: student monitoring and motivation, instructional and assessment accommodations, and stakeholder reporting. Each of these purposes is addressed throughout the text in ways that are consistent with both the complexities of the CLD student biography and the teacher's challenges in differentiating assessment practices for increasingly diverse student populations.

1. *Student Monitoring and Motivation.* Valid and purposeful assessment findings may be used to:
   - Monitor student progress in level of acculturation, first and second language acquisition, and content-area learning (Chapters 4–8)
   - Identify and document incremental gains (Chapters 2–7)
   - Inform the provision of targeted interventions (Chapters 7 and 8)
   - Enhance student interest, engagement, and motivation (Chapters 1 and 2)
   - Enhance students' self-assessment and reflection on the quality and effectiveness of their learning efforts (Chapters 2 and 6)
2. *Instructional and Assessment Accommodations.* Valid and purposeful assessment findings may be used to:
   - Refine and improve future assessments (Chapters 2 and 7)
   - Adapt and tailor classroom instruction to accommodate CLD students' assets and needs (Chapters 2–8)
   - Inform the classroom teacher's personal understanding of CLD students' potential (Chapters 1–8)
   - Identify systemic adaptations or improvements to core instruction that increase CLD students' success (Chapter 7)
3. *Stakeholder Reporting.* Valid and purposeful assessment findings may be used to inform key stakeholders, including:
   - CLD students as self-monitoring learners (Chapters 2 and 6)
   - Parents, guardians, and family members of CLD students (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, and 8)
   - School and district administration (Chapters 2 and 7)
   - State or federal monitoring (or funding) agencies (Chapters 5, 6, and 8)

Recent educational reform initiatives have placed increased scrutiny on schools and school districts that educate CLD students. In some ways, the expectations of such measures, and the methods they recommend, fail to reflect the reality of today's increasingly diverse classrooms. In other ways, such measures remind us that the purposes of quality classroom assessment practices are numerous, multifaceted, and sometimes intimidating. This text offers a way for educators to organize their perspectives and respond to these complexities as they seek to enhance their assessment practices with CLD students.

SPECIAL FEATURES

To enhance reader interest, accommodate different learning styles, and offer additional insights on topics covered, this text offers the following special features.

Chapter Outlines

By providing an outline near the beginning of each chapter, we have tried to afford our readers both an advance organizer and a fundamental understanding of the content of each chapter.

Chapter Learning Outcomes

It is our belief that learners should know the intended goals of a particular lesson (in this case, the chapter of the text) for them. Therefore, each chapter is introduced with a list of outcomes readers can expect to accomplish as a result of engaging with that chapter.

Key Concepts

This feature of the text is provided in all chapters and reminds the reader of the critical content discussed in that particular chapter. Related features at the end of each chapter, especially the Questions for Review and Reflection, help ensure that the reader's study of the chapter has emphasized these key theories and concepts.

Professional Conversations on Practice

This exceptional feature, included in every chapter, suggests topics for discussion and debate among pre- and in-service educators about critical issues that have been explored or detailed in the content of the associated chapter. The feature is designed to encourage critical thinking, reflection, articulation of new knowledge, and theory-into-practice applications.

Questions for Review and Reflection

This feature is part of each chapter of the book. The questions provide opportunities for self-assessment of content comprehension and readiness for applications to practice. The questions included in these features are applicable to educators at all levels, including preservice teachers, paraprofessionals, in-service teachers, staff specialists, and school administrators.

Text Boxes

Five types of text boxes are used throughout the text to reinforce, emphasize, or expand on chapter content.

- *Accommodative Assessment Practices*. These features offer the reader a glimpse of the bigger assessment picture and highlight ways in which key theories, concepts, and arguments from the narrative might be applied to professional practice with CLD students. These features are frequently structured as vignettes that identify and address assessment challenges related to the four dimensions of the student biography. They are provided in all textbook chapters except the introductory chapter.
- *Assessment Freeze Frame*. These enrichments offer the reader snapshots of key points from the chapter narrative. They are provided in every chapter.
- *Assessment in Action*. These features offer the reader detailed how-to information for adapting, refining, and developing accommodative assessments for CLD students. These features are provided in Chapters 2 through 6, which directly address types of assessments developed by PreK–12 classroom teachers.
- *Snapshot from Classroom Practice*. These teaching and learning enhancements offer the reader a greater level of detail surrounding theory-into-practice applications of key theories or concepts discussed. These features are provided in all textbook chapters except the introductory chapter.
- *Voices from the Field*. These features offer the reader an inside look at what practitioners from the field have to say about assessment for CLD students. They are provided in every chapter.

Figures and Tables

Every chapter of the text offers explanatory or illustrative figures or tables specifically designed to enhance the content of the chapter. Readers can capitalize on these features to understand more fully the concepts and research-based practices discussed in this book. These features also provide educators with quick-guide resources to easily reference key types of assessments used with CLD students.

Assessment Artifacts

Certain chapters also include Assessment Artifacts, which are special figures of interest to readers who already instruct or expect to teach CLD students. These figures are included in the core assessment chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) of the text. The content of these chapters emphasizes differentiated assessments and practices for each of the four dimensions of the CLD student biography (discussed in Chapter 3), the sociocultural dimension (Chapter 4), the linguistic dimension (Chapter 5), and the cognitive and academic dimensions (Chapter 6). The feature also is included in Chapter 7, which guides readers to use data responsively to ensure that educational practices for CLD students are reflective of their needs and assets within each of these dimensions. Assessment artifacts are drawn from the actual field experiences of classroom teachers and typically highlight examples of assessments used with CLD students. Assessment artifacts are included to provide exemplars of teachers' creative resolutions of the many challenges involved in the development of equitable assessments for diverse student populations.

Appendices

The appendices provide teachers with Standards of Best Practice (Appendix A) as well as ready-to-use resources (Appendix B) for their assessment practices with CLD students.

- *Appendix A: Critical Standards Guiding Chapter Content.* As a model for professionalism in practice with diversity, this special addition aligns the content of all chapters of the text with the nationally recognized TESOL/CAEP standards (2010). The TESOL/CAEP teacher standards reflect professional consensus on standards for the quality teaching of P–12 CLD students. In addition, this feature provides teachers with a self-assessment framework as they progress through the text. Teachers can reflect on their own practices with CLD students and families, and determine the extent to which they meet each noted standard of professional practice. Thus, these features provide a road map to excellence as educators continually strive to improve their differentiated assessment practices with CLD students.
- *Appendix B: Resource List.* The resources in this section are drawn from chapter content that addresses the types of assessments developed by PreK–12 classroom teachers. It includes skills surveys as well as checklists and matrices/continua for classroom observation.

Glossary

This feature serves as an auxiliary resource for current readers and for applications of content to practice in the future. Particular attention has been given to key concepts from each chapter as well as those terms likely to seem unfamiliar to current and future educators who have had few educational experiences with CLD students.

References

Assembled in the American Psychological Association's bibliographic style, this feature documents the theory, research, and analyses that support the discussions, content, conclusions, and recommendations of the authors in *Assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. The feature also serves as a resource for preservice and in-service educators of CLD students and those involved in teacher preparation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Assessment that does not highlight the accomplishments and further the potential of the student is like productive efficiency without a valuable product outcome. Similarly, the value of this text to the field and to the practitioners who find it useful will be a function of the accomplishments of those who contributed to it and who collaborated to maximize its potential. Therefore, the three of us wish to acknowledge the many contributions of others who have collaborated with us to make this text possible.

We would like to extend special thanks to and acknowledge Sheri Meredith. Her patience, diligence, sacrifice, and persistence have proved integral to the

organization, quality, and accuracy of this product outcome. We are infinitely grateful for her collaboration.

Likewise, we extend a very special acknowledgment to Melissa Holmes for her conscientiousness, tolerance, and caring. Melissa brought many valuable qualities to this effort, not the least of which were editorial expertise, organizational awareness, attention to readability, and steadfast determination.

Special thanks are also in order for Shabina Kavimandan, who, despite many other pressing obligations, took time to provide insightful perspectives, refinements, and reviews. Her willingness to brainstorm, discuss, and review was extremely valuable.

We wish to acknowledge the significant people in our lives, Esteban Cabral, Dr. Gilbert Davila, and Dr. Nancy Kole, as well as our students, faculty, and staff, whose varied contributions from prior experience with (or as) CLD students in public schools and with diverse school practice have made this work possible. To these people, we each owe our heart and soul.

A number of classroom teachers who serve the differential learning and transition needs of CLD students have provided insights from their professional practices. These are greatly appreciated and have been included primarily in the Assessment Artifacts, Snapshot from Classroom Practice, and Voices from the Field features. The many experiences of these educators highlight the ways professional practice can effectively and mutually accommodate both the assets and needs of the CLD student.

Finally, we would like to thank the following reviewers for their comments on the manuscript: Yukari Amos, Central Washington University; Anthony Anderson, Nevada State College; Tatiana Cevallos, George Fox University; Lois Ann Knezek, University of North Texas; and Tatiana Sildus, Pittsburg State University.

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CHAPTER 1

CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT AMIDST CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

I have a student that has a very difficult time taking multiple-choice exams. But if I verbally give him the test, he has a much easier time completing the test. . . . I also have a student that is an incredible artist. I have asked her to take several vocabulary words and create pictures that portray these words, and I then ask her to explain the term and the picture. . . . If I fail to unveil [my students'] capabilities and strengths, then I am just . . . well, failing them, and shutting doors on a bright future. I do not want to be responsible for turning away from their right to a great education and having them leave my room feeling insignificant and discouraged. In concern for the ELL [English language learner or culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD)] student, my challenge is intensified!

Michael Berndt, Fourth Grade Teacher. Reprinted with permission.

Chapter Outline

Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain the purpose of assessment from an asset-centered perspective.
- Detail U.S. trends in immigration and demographic changes that have an impact on families, communities, and schools.
- Explain challenges to teachers' readiness for student diversity.
- Hold informed conversations about ways educational reforms and related research have influenced shifts in thinking about assessment practices for CLD students.

LEARNING IS NATURAL

The focus of this text is on the assessment of learning in education. Specifically, it focuses on ways to authentically and accurately gauge the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. Readers will find that the ideas presented in this text benefit every student, including those who may not perform well on formal tests as well as those who do.

Although exams and quizzes have long been part of school, the term "assessment" increasingly has become associated with large-scale, externally developed, technology-assisted products used to quantify student skills. The targeted skills are purported to reflect aspects of knowledge or capacities needed to be successful in school and society. The authors of this text agree that assessment is indeed essential to teaching and learning. We are less certain however that "universal," decontextualized skills are sufficient indicators of students' abilities to respond to, learn, and innovate within the rapidly changing world of *their* lives. How can we know what it is they will require?

To prepare students as learners, we first need to acknowledge learning as a natural human state. From the youngest child to individuals at each succeeding age

and stage, we all observe, make connections, assess relevance, and adjust actions, knowledge, or skills to satisfy personal needs. These needs range from basic nutrition, safety, and shelter to the expansion of individual insight and creative endeavor. Prominent models of human need separate social/emotional and cognitive needs from those required for physical survival (e.g., Maslow, 1943, 1970); yet it is also important to consider how these types of needs intertwine. The achievement of basic needs frequently depends on social observations and interactions that start from day one.

Human beings are by nature *testers*, always probing and responding to their physical and emotional worlds. Babies notice and assess the feedback they get as a result of their babbled sounds or cries. Behaviors leading to satisfaction of needs (comfort, milk, smiles) are repeated. Adults may be equally new to such interactions, but they keep trying, adjusting, and learning what works, from their perspectives. Ongoing cycles of observation, (re)action, assessment, and adaptation ensue. The learning is reciprocal and at least somewhat generalizable to the next little or big person the individual meets.

We humans learn by interacting with our physical environment as well. Do babies crawl the same on carpeted floors as on steep, rocky terrain? Even with similar surface and opportunity, do all babies crawl at the same time, in the same way? Is it even essential to crawl in order to walk? How do babies figure out what works for them? Learning throughout our lives is based on cycles of self-awareness, assessment, and adjustment toward satisfaction of a need or drive. To that extent, we have been data-driven all along.

Differentiating between data that reflect human drive or potential and the more isolated metrics of component skills is the critical difference. Returning to our discussion of a developing baby, it is reasonable to conclude that symmetrical, coordinated crawling is positively associated with learning to walk. We might even consider it a "reliable" indicator that the skill of walking will develop. But just as often, the child who develops as a bottom-scooter, side-slider, or sit-to-stander also learns to walk, run, and climb to reach whatever it is he or she needs or desires.

Our goal as educators is to recognize that students come to us with uniquely individual drive and mechanisms to learn. These may look very different from what we assume works best for school, but it has been working *for them*. Our charge is to provide the spaces, means, and opportunities for each student to grow his or her competencies and passion to learn.

Learning comes naturally to teachers, too. While curricula tend to be prescribed, teachers with a "learning mindset" approach instruction as a powerful interactive space rather than as a method to cover material. The essential product is growth. Such teachers value individual differences and determine what students already know. They invite connections and conjecture to spur deeper interests, broader applications, and the development of personal learning tools. It will be *these* tools and resiliencies that best prepare students to successfully meet future individual and community needs.

assessment FREEZE FRAME 1.1 

Our goal as educators is to recognize that students come to us with uniquely individual drive and mechanisms to learn.

More Than One Answer May Apply

The following problem was given to a classroom of urban middle school students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds as part of a criterion-referenced classroom assessment (Glaser & Silver, 1994, p. 22).

Busy Bus Company Problem
Yvonne is trying to decide whether she should buy a weekly bus pass. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, she rides the bus to and from work. On Tuesday and Thursday, she rides the bus to work but gets a ride home with her friends. Should Yvonne buy a weekly bus pass based on the following fare information?

Busy Bus Company Fares
One Way: 1.00
Weekly Pass: 9.00

The classroom teacher was surprised to find that many of these CLD students concluded that Yvonne should purchase the weekly pass instead of paying the daily fare. The teacher considered the daily fare to be more economical.

Anxious to explore the reasoning behind students' decisions, the teacher decided to discuss the problem with the class. This discussion revealed surprising but reasonable applications of out-of-school knowledge and problem-solving strategies to this mathematical problem (Glaser & Silver, 1994). Basically, students who selected the weekly pass argued it was a better choice because it would allow several family members to use it, especially after work and in the evenings, but also on weekends. In effect, these insightful students had reasoned beyond the decontextualized statement of the problem to apply their background knowledge gained from urban living. They applied this knowledge in a way that demonstrated a cost-effective use of public transportation. The teacher became convinced that more than one correct answer existed for the problem. In fact, she concluded that future assessments should explore more thoroughly what CLD and other students knew and were able to do. That is, students needed opportunities not only to provide answers but also to explain their reasoning and their applications of knowledge gained.

This example illustrates several of the rewards and challenges of assessment discussions, adaptations, and teaching practices for CLD students. These students bring to the classroom background knowledge and experiences that are often different from those of other students yet powerfully connected to real-world challenges, dilemmas, and living. Unfortunately, traditional assessments may fail to capture the knowledge that CLD students bring to academic learning. Classroom teachers are often in the best position to create, adapt, and modify assessments and assessment practices appropriately for CLD students so that these measures reflect the authentic, real-world knowledge and abilities of these students. *Assessment*, in this sense, can be defined as a range of procedures used to gather information about what students or other individuals know and are able to demonstrate. It is this definition of assessment, centered on identifying and exploring student assets, that frames the content of this book.

Given the diversity of CLD learners' experiences and prior knowledge, it is not surprising that classroom teachers of increasing numbers of CLD students are searching for resources to help themselves create, adapt, and apply differentiated assessment practices appropriately. This text provides just such a resource, as well as a variety of useful guidelines for PreK–12 classroom teachers of CLD students. Among the sorts of questions this text addresses are those that surface among teachers as their numbers of CLD students increase on an annual and sometimes weekly basis. These teachers' questions often are similar to the following:

- How do I know that Jessie's difficulties with reading, language arts, and social studies do not indicate a disability?

VOICES *from the* FIELD 1.1

When introducing new historical topics, I have students make connections to prior learning, background knowledge, and current events. This helps students to see the big picture of historical trends. Students are gradually brought to higher levels of thinking, and by the end of the unit they can evaluate and argue about historical decisions rather than simply recall them. I affirm the students' knowledge in constructive ways which ask the students to explain their thinking in a way that does not raise their affective filter. . . . I ensure that multiple assessments are used to come to an instructional decision, and students often have the choice of how they will "show what they know."

Travis Hampl, Middle School Teacher. Reprinted with permission.

- Thao has been in my class for 6 weeks. Why doesn't she respond to my questions during the lesson? Why doesn't she speak during group work? How can I evaluate what she comprehends and what she does not?
- I think that Marleny has already learned what we are studying in math right now. How do I find out what she learned while she was in El Salvador?
- We even used the Spanish version of the test! I know that Madai learned this material in Mexico. Why didn't she excel on this assessment?
- I know that my students from Bosnia are improving, but their 6- and 9-week tests don't show it. What's wrong?

The concern of such teachers is evident in their queries. Yet such questions also tend to illustrate why differentiated practices are critical to student (and teacher) success in today's classroom. What is so different about today's classroom that differentiation has become essential? Why is an understanding of our student populations necessary to interpret "standardized" results?

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TODAY'S CLASSROOM?

One major and continuing change in today's public school classroom is the diversity of the student population. The fastest-growing and most heterogeneous group of students today is that which we refer to in this text as CLD students. In the literature of education, these students are sometimes referred to as minority or language minority students, English language learners (ELL), or limited English proficient (LEP) students.

We believe that the term *culturally and linguistically diverse* is the most inclusive and cross-culturally sensitive description of a student whose culture or language differs from that of the dominant culture. The use of this term and its associated acronym are increasingly prevalent in educational literature (e.g., California Department of Education, 2013; Gonzalez, Pagan, Wendell, & Love, 2011; New York State Education Department, 2002). CLD students are those who bring diverse cultural heritages and assets to the school (Baca & Cervantes, 1998; Escamilla, 1999; Herrera, 2010; Herrera & Murry, 2016; New American Economy, 2017). But because diversity does not imply a level playing field, the acronym CLD most appropriately and affirmatively describes students who will

require classroom assessments and assessment practices that are appropriately differentiated for their biographies and their learning needs.

So who are these CLD students? Where did they come from? Like almost all Americans, the majority of CLD students are immigrants themselves or have familial ties to another country (Lurie, 1991; Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2012). Some are recently immigrated; others are second- or third-generation Americans. Others possess a rich Native American heritage. In 2015, children with at least one immigrant parent accounted for more than one quarter (26%) of the population of children in the United States under the age of 18 years (Zong & Batalova, 2017). Second-generation children, that is those who were born in the United States to at least one foreign-born parent, accounted for 88% (15.8 million) of all children with immigrant parents. The Pew Research Center has projected that, by 2050, more than one third of the nation's children below the age of 17 will be immigrants themselves or have at least one parent who is an immigrant (Maxwell, 2014). Therefore, it becomes increasingly valuable for classroom teachers to know something about immigration dynamics in the United States.

Immigrant CLD students and their family members, like immigrants of the past, come to this country for rational, valid, and compelling reasons. They not only contribute to the creativity and productivity of the nation, but they also want to learn English and become productive members of our society. A practical understanding of current trends among immigrant and other CLD students is often crucial to the teacher's appropriate preparation for a changing classroom. This is especially the case for the development and refinement of assessments that are valid and authentic for the populations of students taught.

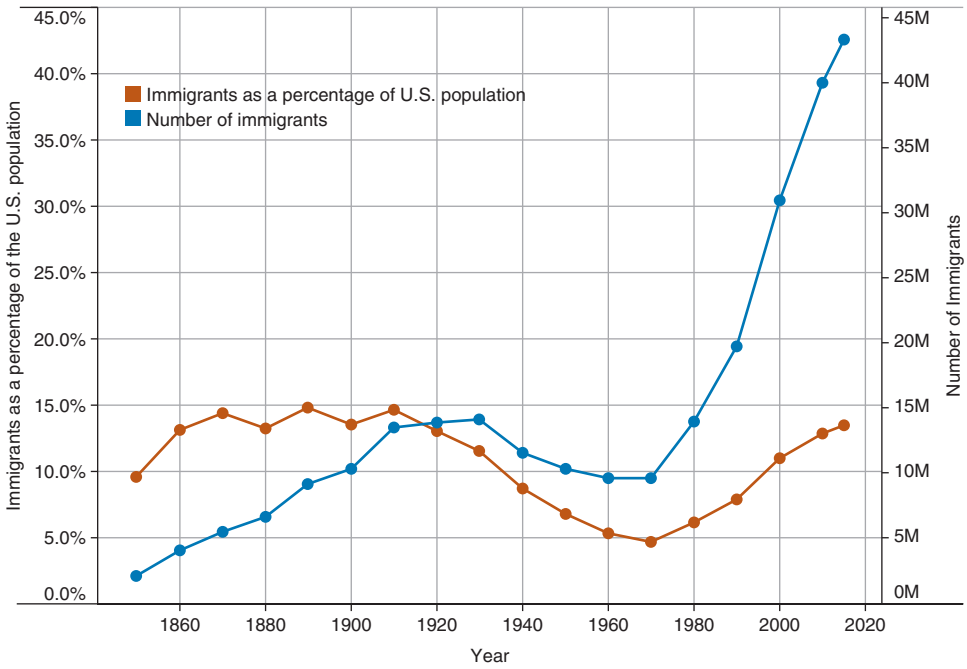
The Next Generation of Students: America's Potential

Radically changing trends in birth rates, fertility rates, aging, and net immigration have resulted in the highest levels of classroom diversity witnessed in the United States in the past century. As illustrated in Figure 1.1, the number of immigrants, as a percentage of the U.S population is just beginning to approach that which resulted largely from European immigration in the late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the same figure illustrates the rise in total immigrant numbers that has occurred steadily since about 1970. The slope of the curve projects rapidly increasing numbers of immigrant children will be entering U.S. schools for the foreseeable future.

Analysts and researchers at the Urban Institute, the Pew Charitable Trust, the National Immigration Forum, the Migration Policy Institute, and the Institute of Education Sciences continuously monitor the rapidly changing demographics associated with the increasing diversity and complexity of today's schools. The recent findings of these researchers indicate that classroom teachers of CLD students should monitor and adjust their professional practices, as necessary, to align with five major immigration trends. The first of these trends may be characterized as *key to productivity*.

According to the Pew Research Center (2017), immigrants are expected to drive future growth in the U.S. working-age population through at least 2035. As the Baby Boom generation transitions to retirement, immigrants and their children are expected to fill the gap between those retiring from, and those entering, the American workforce. They will do so by adding about 18 million people of working age between 2015 and 2035. Not surprisingly then, the CLD immigrant students of today are the youth upon which the country will depend to maintain high levels of productivity and competitiveness in a world economy. On the other hand, policies proposing

Figure 1.1 Number of Immigrants and Their Share of the Total U.S. Population, 1850–2015



Source: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2015 American Community Surveys (ACS), and 1970, 1990, and 2000 Decennial Census. All other data are from Campbell J. Gibson and Emily Lennon, "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850 to 1990" (Working Paper no. 29., U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1999). Originally published on the Migration Policy Institute's Migration Data Hub. (www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-data-hub)

Note: Retrieved August 3, 2017, from www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-population-over-time

to limit or discourage immigration may impact this projection in a variety of ways (Costa, Cooper, & Shierholz, 2014; Edwards & Ortega, 2016; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; New American Economy, 2017):

- Reduction in economic contribution and new business growth
- Insufficient labor force to meet needs of current small businesses, agriculture, and hospitality sectors
- Reduction of personnel and economic contributions by highly skilled, foreign-born laborers (doctors, specialists, engineers)
- Reduction in the jobs and pay for native-born workers that are associated with high-skilled immigration
- Inability to meet the growing demand for bilingual employees in all sectors of the economy

The second of these trends among CLD students and families is *dispersal to nontraditional receiving communities* (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2014). This trend reflects an ongoing diffusion of immigrant families to states not typically associated with high levels of student diversity. Recent immigration has shifted from traditional

receiving states, such as California, Texas, and Florida, to 22 new growth states. Among the latest growth areas are states in the Southeast and the Pacific Northwest. New immigration also is offsetting significant population declines in the central states of the country (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2014; Zong & Batalova, 2017). This trend is especially important for schools and classroom teachers because schools and other institutions in these new receiving states are less apt to have the necessary infrastructures (e.g., bilingual teachers and paraprofessionals, adult English as a second language (ESL) programs, quality second language programming, and differential assessment instruments) in place to meet the needs of these families and their school-age children (Herrera & Murry, 2016).

A third trend among CLD students surrounds *ongoing language acquisition challenges*. In fact, the acquisition of academic English remains one of the major challenges for many first- and second-generation immigrant families and their children (Herrera, Kavimandan, Perez, & Wessels, 2017). The population of immigrants and U.S. natives who speak a language other than English at home has virtually tripled since 1980, when it was estimated at 23.1 million by the Migration Policy Institute (Batalova & Zong, 2016). These patterns suggest that increasing numbers of general education teachers will be called on to develop the capacities and skills necessary to differentiate their practices for students who are English learners.

A fourth trend in immigration surrounds the *changing home and family dynamics* for CLD students. In 2015, children living with at least one immigrant parent represented 26% of all children under age 18 in the United States (Zong & Batalova, 2016). The overwhelming majority (88% in 2015) of these children are U.S. citizens by birth. The number of children who are immigrants themselves has declined 22% since 2000. However, the number of children seeking asylum continues to increase (Mossaad, 2016). In 2015, the number of children from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador seeking asylum increased by 112% from 2014 and 236% from 2013.

Although the nation is experiencing increasing economic growth since the end of the great recession in 2009, not all sectors of the postrecession economy are recovering well, and not all Americans in those sectors are satisfied with their job prospects, positions, or wages. Anti-immigrant sentiment remains high, especially toward unauthorized workers and settlers. There is increasing fear among many immigrant families—fear of exposure, reprisals, deportation, and more. Stress in immigrant families is compounded by isolation, as more parents reduce interactions with the larger community, including those that involve medical, safety, and school supports. The unfortunate irony is that the United States always has drawn momentum from the stories, tenacity, and dreams of those bold enough to pull up roots, undertake uncertainty, and cross land or sea to make the United States their home.

Children of unauthorized immigrants as a substantial percentage of K–12 students is a fifth and final trend in emergent immigration patterns. Recent estimates by the Migration Policy Institute indicate that children (under age 18) of unauthorized immigrants reflect approximately 7% of the total child population, and roughly 30% of all children of immigrants (Capps, Fix, & Zong, 2016). The majority (79%) of these children living with at least one unauthorized parent, however, are themselves U.S. citizens.

Although the citizen children of unauthorized parents are on an equal legal footing with all citizen children, their parents' unauthorized status affects them adversely in a variety of ways. Landale and colleagues (2011) report that unauthorized parents typically work in unstable, low-wage jobs that do not carry health benefits. As a result, CLD children of unauthorized parents are more likely to be poor than

other immigrant children. Landale et al. further add that unauthorized parents often fail to take advantage of public benefit programs for which their children qualify because they fear deportation. These hardships may be intensified by unstable living arrangements and periods of separation from one or both parents.

A review of the research literature by the Migration Policy Institute (Capps, Fix, & Zong, 2016) provides similar findings, noting that that growing up with unauthorized immigrant parents exposes children to risk factors such as reduced frequency of preschool enrollment, reduced socioeconomic progress, higher rates of linguistic isolation, limited English proficiency, and poverty. Researchers currently know little about the family situations of children with unauthorized parents. As such, teachers and other educators should always guard against assumptions about these and any other CLD students.

assessment FREEZE FRAME 1.2

In 2015, children living with at least one immigrant parent represented 26% of all children under age 18 in the United States.

Implications for Unrecognized Student Assets

A recent report from the National Foundation for American Policy found that 83% of America's top high school science students in 2016 were the children of immigrants (Anderson, 2017). Many are children of parents on H-1B visas, which until recently enabled U.S. communities and business to staff unfilled medical and technical positions requiring needed expertise. Others are "Dreamers," achievers who have lived in the United States the majority of their lives. They consider this country their home, and its people their countrymen and women, but they first arrived in the United States in the company an undocumented parent.

We know that in our classrooms today, even more CLD innovators, scientists, and artists wiggle in their seats—neurons excited—making the unforeseen connections that may someday change the world. We need these students to be safe, in school, and fired up! Igniting those fires may hinge on our own abilities as teachers to see the embers. Sadly, many teachers never catch a glint. It is common for CLD students to be underrepresented in classes designed for those with high ability. In one district, identification for gifted programs increased 118% for Latinos and 74% for African Americans when universal cognitive screening was used rather than reliance on achievement or teacher perceptions of student ability. Yet when funds no longer supported use of that screener, representation of CLD and other "disadvantaged" students (e.g., females, low SES) fell back to previously reduced levels (Card & Giuliano, 2016).

The personal and financial cost of unrecognized student talent is huge. If our pool of students recognized as gifted is small and sifted by privilege, we lose the opportunity to be our national best. Finn and Wright (2015) address such failures on the part of our educational system to harness the possibilities that students bring to our classrooms, stating, "The problem is not that the United States lacks smart children; it's that such kids aren't getting the education they need to realize that potential" (p. 11).

Changing Classroom Demographics, PreK–12

With changing immigration trends come redefined classroom demographics, which by necessity require teachers at all levels to embrace adaptive practices and assessment approaches. These changing classroom demographics have been the subject of recent research and analyses (Headden, 2014; Herrera & Murry, 2016; Murry, Herrera, Miller, Fanning, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2015; Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo, 2016).

VOICES *from the* FIELD 1.2

Our community has changed tremendously over the past few years; therefore, my instructional and assessment practices must change to better assist the CLD students in my classroom. I teach in an ethnically and socially diverse district. I have a mixture of Asian, Black, White, Hispanic, Native American, and Central American students. I have students that range from lower-, middle-, and upper-class families. With such a diverse class, I have the opportunity to connect with the students on different levels. I understand that I must adjust my instruction as well as my teaching style to meet the needs of all students, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds and academic abilities. The strategies and skills I have learned throughout my ESL courses have helped me make the learning process productive, intriguing, and fair!

Melody Green, Middle School Teacher. Reprinted with permission.

Race/Ethnicity of CLD Students By far the largest proportion of CLD students is Hispanic. These students represent 24% of all youth ages 5–17, and 78% of all English learners in the nation's public PreK–12 systems (Musu-Gillette, Robinson, McFarland, KewalRamani, Zhang, & Wilkinson-Flicker, 2016). Among others in this age group, 14% are Black, 5% are Asian, and about 4% are from mixed racial backgrounds. The proportion of White students in this age group is 53% (down from 62% in 2000).

Trends in the racial/ethnic composition of U.S. public schools are expected to continue well into the future (Landale et al., 2011; Passel, 2011). Among youth, the number of White school-age students will continue to decline, falling to about 40% of children by 2050. The number of Black children in classrooms will remain about the same (14% to 16%). By contrast, children of Hispanic origin will increase to more than one third of the school-age population. Also expected is an increase in the number of students who have ancestors in two or more racial and/or ethnic groups.

High Poverty Levels Among CLD Students The percentage of children from low-income households, represented by the share qualifying for free and/or reduced-price school lunches, is significantly higher in schools with large numbers of CLD students (Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007). More than 30% of principals and 45% of teachers in these schools rank student health problems as serious or moderately serious. Notable aspects of these trends are especially exacerbated for immigrant CLD students. According to the Migration Policy Institute, 29.4 million children under age 18 in 2015 lived in low-income families—with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty threshold (this measure recognizes poverty as a lack of those goods and services commonly taken for granted by members of mainstream society) (Zong & Batalova, 2017). Of these children, 32% were children of immigrants.

Out of necessity, we as educators should always *check our assumptions* about our CLD and other students and their actual socioeconomic backgrounds through measures such as home visits and informal conversations. Children who do live in poverty tend to experience troublesome health and educational challenges, are more likely to experience parental divorce and live in single-parent families, and are more exposed to violent crime compared to children growing up in more affluent families (Mather, 2009). For many CLD students, poverty persists into adolescence and adulthood, and it is associated with greater risk of dropping out of school,

becoming pregnant as an unmarried teen, and experiencing economic/employment difficulties (Ratcliffe & McKernan, 2012).

Research and analyses suggest other significant implications for increasing numbers of CLD students in poverty (Marzano, 2004; Mather, 2009; Skinner, Wight, Aratani, Cooper, & Thampi, 2010). Marzano (2004) has synthesized the findings of a comprehensive body of research to support arguments that poverty among students and families has negative influences on academic achievement. Based on his analyses, Marzano argues that students who are socialized at or near the poverty line are 70% less likely to pass an academic achievement test than their counterparts who do not experience poverty. Marzano demonstrates that poverty is associated with a variety of other factors detrimental to student success, including:

- An increase in home and family conflicts
- Decreased levels of self-esteem
- Family isolation
- Frequent and disruptive moves from one living unit to another
- Reduced exposure to language (especially academic language) interactions

Marzano's analyses also revealed a disconcertingly strong relationship between poverty and ethnicity. In 2013, 16% of all children under age 18 were living in poverty (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). Among White children, only 9% were living in poverty during this time. This proportion stands in stark contrast to the 28% of Black children, 27% of Hispanic children, and 14% of Asian children who likewise were living in poverty. Fundamentally, these figures indicate that children of color differ considerably from White children in access to material resources during childhood and school-age years.

According to Marzano (2004), students of color are far more likely to enter school with disproportionately low levels of academic vocabulary and the kinds of background knowledge that have traditionally been valued in U.S. classrooms. Even more problematic, however, are the ways in which many educators currently assess the vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary-building processes these students *do* possess. Many of the assets that CLD students bring to the educational setting continue to be unexplored avenues to academic success.

Increasing Incidence of Secondary-Level CLD Students CLD students who are foreign-born are more likely to be students in secondary rather than elementary schools (Mitchell, 2016). According to a recent analysis of U.S. census data, 35% of English learners in Grade 6–12 were born outside the United States, compared with 18% of PreK–Grade 5 English learners. (Note: As this analysis relied on data for children living with at least one parent, additional students might have been excluded.) This trend is practically a reversal of patterns typical among immigrant students since the late 1970s (Fix, Passel, & Ruiz-de-Velasco, 2004).

The sharp increases in the numbers of recently immigrated CLD students who are educated in secondary schools suggest noteworthy implications for classroom teachers. First, these students are far less likely to have received language-programming support services during their elementary school years. Consequently, they are less likely to demonstrate high levels of English language proficiency, especially the cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) skills that promote success in content-area classrooms. A significant number of students immigrating at the secondary level have, by that time, experienced limited, interrupted, or disrupted formal education (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Students immigrating during

the secondary years are less likely to take higher level coursework in high school than those arriving before age 12 (Arbeit, Staklis, & Horn, 2016).

Second, the incidence and history of language-programming services in secondary schools is typically more limited than that for elementary schools (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). A recent study of public school districts indicates that only 3% of districts provided dual language programming, 8% provided bilingual instruction for English learners only, 47% provided sheltered English/content instruction, 61% provided push-in/pull-out ESL instruction, and 68% provided ESL instruction in scheduled class periods (Lewis & Gray, 2016). This study also indicated that districts utilized paraprofessional support by individuals who speak the student's native language (31% of districts) and individuals who do not speak the student's native language (33% of districts).

Third, secondary schools are less likely to have in place the necessary infrastructure and expertise, such as highly qualified content area teachers, that can deliver the differentiated programming, instructional, and assessment practices that CLD students require to be successful (Hopkins, Lowenhaupt, & Sweet, 2015). These include classroom routines to support self-directed learning, goal setting, and continuous monitoring with feedback to foster both collective and individual growth (Bondie & Zusho, 2017). Funding plays a key role, with Federal Title III funds historically having been allocated more regularly to elementary-level programs, instruction, and assessment.

Language Dynamics Among CLD Students Today's public school classrooms are increasingly characterized by the native languages spoken by roughly 4.6 million English learners (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). Sustained levels of immigration from nontraditional countries has increased the diversity of languages spoken. Today, CLD students speak more than 400 different languages (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). In five states, Spanish is not the most common first language; instead, German (Montana), Nepali (Vermont), Ilokano (Hawaii), Somali (Maine), and Yupik (Alaska) top the charts (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015).

Among K–12 CLD students whose first language is not English, Hispanic students are more likely than other subgroups of this population to be characterized as LEP—youth who speak English with difficulty (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). LEP is a government-related designation. More and more CLD students who have been classified as LEP have lived in the United States for many years and are educated in schools in which the overwhelming majority of students are also classified as LEP. In fact, nearly 70% of the country's LEP students enroll in only 10% of elementary schools (Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007). More than half of all students classified as LEP are concentrated in schools where roughly one-third or more of their classmates are designated LEP. According to analyses from the Urban Institute (Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007), so-called high-LEP schools have more difficulty filling teaching vacancies, are more likely to employ teachers with emergency or provisional certifications, and have more new teachers than do schools with fewer LEP students.

Achievement Patterns for CLD Students Academic achievement and progress will be major emphases of classroom-based instructional and assessment practices for CLD students tomorrow and for the foreseeable future. One reason for such emphases are ongoing patterns of low achievement demonstrated by CLD students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Scores from 2013 indicate that the same

patterns have persisted for the last 10 years (National Education Association, n.d.). English learners continue to demonstrate lower levels of proficiency in reading and math than their native English-speaking peers. For example, only 3% to 4% of English learners in eighth grade demonstrated proficiency in reading or math. English learners also have the lowest rate of high school graduation (61%) of all student subgroups.

Significant gaps also exist between White students and students of other races, though the gaps have narrowed some over the past 40 years (National Education Association, n.d.). For example, on the 2013 Grade 4 mathematics test, 34% of Black students performed below the basic level, compared with only 9% of White students. White students in fourth and eighth grade also significantly outperformed Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students on both reading and math. In contrast, Asian/Pacific Islander students consistently outperformed their White peers, as well as peers from other racial and ethnic backgrounds. High school graduation rates also tell a troubling story, with disparities in rates among students of different races evident in the following numbers:

- American Indian students: 69.7%
- Black students: 70.7%
- Hispanic students: 75.2%
- White students: 86.6%

The need is greater than ever for effective classroom-based instructional and assessment practices that reflect the CLD student's culture, first and second language proficiencies, acculturation, and prior schooling experiences (both inside and outside the United States). These experiences are assets on which to build. Instructional models that recognize this power have been shown to promote students' positive socioemotional health (Herrera, 2016) and consistently result in higher achievement trends despite factors that otherwise signify risk (Thomas & Collier, 2002, 2012).

In a nutshell, schools are challenged to maintain high standards of educational quality in an era of educational reform and amidst an increasing scale and pace of changing student and family dynamics. To what extent do in-service teachers tend to demonstrate readiness for a rapidly changing classroom population? This question is the focus of the discussion that follows.

WHAT'S CHANGED ABOUT THE READINESS OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS FOR STUDENT DIVERSITY?

Although the federal government, many states, and some school districts are increasingly responsive to the changing demographics of the U.S. classroom, these efforts have often failed to match the pace of change (Briceno, 2008; Herrera & Murry, 2016; Ojalvo, 2010; Smyth, 2008). For example, in the years following implementation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2002), appropriation increased from $17.4 billion to $24.2 billion (Briceno, 2008). However, addressing the needs of low-income students and English learners to meet requirements of the law during that time amounted to $150 billion.

At the state level, 46 states provide differential funding to support English learners (Millard, 2015). There is great variability in the funding mechanisms (i.e., formula funding, categorical funding, or reimbursements). Among states that fund

English learners through the primary funding formula, three options are used: weights (ranging from 9.6% in Kentucky to 99% in Maryland), dollar amounts, and teacher allocations (Millard, 2015). Yet funding and the physical presence of teachers can only take us so far. These resources must be maximized to accelerate the language development and academic achievement of the learners who sit before us.

General education teachers are often the least prepared for changing CLD student demographics. Surveys and analyses of U.S. teachers by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) are especially alarming (NSDC, 2009, 2010). In 2009, the NSDC found that more than 66% of teachers had *not received even one day of staff development specific to the assets and needs of CLD students* during the previous 3 years of teaching. In fact, although most CLD students are educated in general education classrooms for the greatest portion of the school day, the majority of teachers in these classrooms have had little or no professional development for meeting the differential needs of these learners (Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007).

In a recent study of 11 schools with large English learner populations (ranging from 35% to 90% of the total school enrollment), teachers' training related to the needs of English learners comprised an average of *less than 20%* of their total professional development hours (National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, 2014). In addition, some states continue to allow general education teachers to test-out for ESL certification or endorsement with *no extra hours of staff development* particular to the needs of these students. The dire need for teachers trained to responsively educate this student population is evidenced by the fact that in 2016, 32 states indicated that they had an insufficient number of teachers for English learners (Sanchez, 2017).

Across the United States, English learners represent 9.3% of all public school K–12 students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Research indicates that intensive, long-term professional development (49 or more hours per year) for teachers of these students has the potential to boost student achievement by more than 20 percentile points (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). Yet a 2010 topical analysis of professional learning opportunities for general education teachers found that teachers had fewer sustained professional learning opportunities than they had experienced 4 years prior (National Staff Development Council, 2010). Grade-level teachers were also about half as likely to report time for collaboration with colleagues (i.e., to solve complex education dilemmas of increasing classroom diversity) than they were eight years prior. With fewer opportunities for long-term professional development and collegial collaboration, teachers often are hard pressed to find, design, and innovate creative responses to the complexities of their diverse classrooms.

WHAT'S EVOLVED ABOUT ASSESSMENT PRACTICES FOR CLD STUDENTS?

From the standpoint of schoolwide achievement testing, this question could be answered, "Quite a lot!" . . . or, "Very little." Many states, districts, and educators experienced notable changes in practice and policy with the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act (2002). NCLB was itself a reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was designed to address inequities in education by providing additional funds for districts serving low-income students. In the decades that followed, it became apparent that despite improvements, educational outcomes varied. Personal stories and impersonal statistics revealed cohorts of

students passed from grade to grade, and sometimes onto graduation, without acquisition of basic skills. NCLB was developed to raise district and state accountability for the education of all students regardless of demographic subgroup (e.g., socioeconomic, racial, exceptional, ELL). It was a call to action that "all means all."

Per NCLB, standardized testing at incremental grade levels held students, teachers, schools, districts, and states accountable for demonstrable and steadily increasing standards of performance. In some ways, this trend in assessment focused more proactive attention on CLD students' opportunities to learn, access to differentiated instruction, and meaningful schooling outcomes. Yet not all outcomes of this focus on quantitatively measured performance among students and on educator accountability have been positive. The focus, in some cases, became a major factor in the schoolwide firing of teachers and high levels of student frustration with recurrent testing (Crawford, 2004; Wolf, Herman, & Dietel, 2010).

In response to such concerns, ESEA was reauthorized in 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA was a bipartisan endeavor crafted to retain the spirit of ESEA but lessen the burdens and negative consequences of NCLB. Changes made also reflect acknowledgement that students may take multiple postsecondary paths to success. For example:

- Under NCLB, the federal government required states to stipulate standards for math, reading, and science. The goal was for all students, regardless of circumstance, to make the rates of gain needed to be on grade level by the year 2014. To avoid penalties for not making adequate yearly progress (AYP), some states actually lowered the standards required for each grade.
- Changes under ESSA encourage states to adopt challenging sets of standards in reading, math, and science. For each content area, three levels of achievement are described which align with varying (college, career, technical) requirements for postsecondary education. This allows individual student growth to be a recognized indicator and driver of achievement. Districts are also required to identify targets and improvement goals for areas outside of the curriculum (e.g., attendance) that are thought to positively impact academic and vocational success.

ESSA also allows states to afford districts increased latitude in test type, frequency, and administration of formal standardized assessments (including screeners). However, such tests continue to dominate the tools and vocabulary used in discussions of student growth (Martin, 2016). Therefore, despite the promise of new guidance, educators continue to work in climates (in)formed by assessment of achievement that has become increasingly standardized, norm referenced, and *high stakes*.

Among criticisms regarding these assessments and the consequences of building national educational reform initiatives around them are the negative effects these tests have on classroom climate, instructional practices, and classroom assessment routines. Ongoing analyses on such consequences (Abedi, 2004; Heubert, 2009; Wolf et al., 2010; Martin, 2016) have variously concluded that these standardized, norm-referenced, high-stakes tests:

- Prompt teachers to narrow the curriculum taught in classrooms
- Encourage so-called teaching to the test
- Divert classroom instruction to an emphasis on low-level content and basic skills
- Push students out of the system
- Increase redundancy of instruction
- Result in short- and long-term underestimation of student potential

Indeed, the frequency of assessment and penalties for insufficient gain have led many schools on paths that reduce instructional power, without providing quality information on student growth. Structures intending to be responsive (e.g., RTI, MTSS) can become overly prescriptive, with an emphasis on filling "*holes*" rather than on fostering learning *prowess*. Shifting from data- to asset-driven models is discussed further in Chapter 7.

The negative consequences of high-stakes, formal assessments have been especially recurrent for English learners. Under both NCLB and ESSA, this population of students must perform on two types of accountability assessments: English language proficiency testing, and assessments in reading/language arts, math, and science (Abedi, 2004; Wolf et al., 2010). Given the sheer quantity of assessments required to be taken, underperformance for the subgroup is not necessarily an unexpected outcome (Abedi, 2009).

An emergent body of evidence also indicates that standardized formal assessments and assessment milieus used to measure academic growth among this subgroup of students are often invalid or unreliable at several levels (Abedi, 2004; Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007; Wolf et al., 2010). Dr. Jamal Abedi (2004, 2009), a research partner of the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing at the University of California at Davis, is perhaps the foremost researcher in the nation on this topic. His longitudinal research on high-stakes formal assessments for English learners has found, among other indicators, the following disconcerting issues of validity, reliability, and generalizability:

- *Strong confounding of language and performance:* Students of this subgroup exhibit substantially lower performance than other general education students in areas involving a strong understanding of academic English. That is, subgroup students may possess the content knowledge but may not have the academic English language proficiency to understand the language structure of the formal assessment tools.
- *Substantially lower baseline scores:* Low proficiency in academic English often means that the baseline scores of subgroup students are substantially lower than those of the larger student body. Therefore, the groups are not comparable. The expectation for these students to reach grade level at the same rate as native English-speaking peers is often referred to as trying to "catch a moving train."
- *Heterogeneity in the subgroup population:* States and districts do not consistently classify students whose first language is not English. As a result, the population tested as belonging to the subgroup may be far more heterogeneous than anticipated. With greater levels of heterogeneity, or difference, larger samples of students are needed to provide statistically reliable results. In other words, results about "subgroup performance" often tell us little about what students actually know or need, or how to respond effectively.

For these reasons, Abedi (2009) reports that the formal assessment of CLD students is a much more complex conundrum than was anticipated. Olah (n.d.) agrees, noting that states have rarely checked to see that student performance on English language proficiency exams correlates with performance on the reading portion of statewide exams. She argues that such comparisons could provide valuable information about the language proficiency needed for school achievement. As a result of such critiques of assessment practices in schools, the emphasis of best-practice literature related to the assessment of CLD students is on finding alternatives to these and similar types of tests (Mathews & Kostelis, 2009; Mueller, 2011; Neil, 2010; Soltero-Gonzalez, Escamilla, & Hopewell, 2012).

Of growing value for teachers of CLD students (and relevance under ESSA) are issues and dynamics of teacher-created, formal assessments. These tests, tools, and measures are at the other extreme of the formal assessment continuum. Chapter 6 explores fundamental issues of formal assessment for classroom teachers. Among the key topics and issues are formative and summative assessment, baseline data, rubrics, and criterion-referenced instruments.

The trend toward more authentic assessment practices for CLD and other students tends to emphasize classroom-based assessments in more inclusive areas such as level of acculturation (Chapter 4), language proficiency (Chapter 5), and content-area learning (Chapter 6). Informal assessments that are directly related to classroom practices and instruction—referred to as *authentic assessments* (Chapter 2)—often are essential to the trustworthy assessment of incremental gains in language proficiency and content knowledge among CLD students. The identification of these gains—and the sharing of them with learners—can provide students with powerful motivation and promote student-driven learning.

This text has been designed specifically as a resource for classroom teachers of CLD students (PreK–12). The chapters to follow reflect the latest trends in appropriate and authentic assessment for the differential needs and assets that CLD students bring to the classroom. This book not only examines what is novel about differentiated practices, but also offers background information, details on assessments used in today's classrooms, examples of assessment in practice, and an exploration of how teachers can use assessment results to increase their teaching effectiveness for CLD students.

SUMMARY

This chapter explored how learning, from infancy to adulthood, results from cycles of stimulus/observation, response, assessment, and adaptation as we strive to satisfy our needs and achieve our goals. In this sense, we are data-driven from our earliest days. To effectively meet the needs of CLD students, we must remember that their learning processes are contextualized within their life experiences. Accommodating our assessment practices to support CLD students to reach their full potential requires us to view assessment first and foremost as a process of identifying assets—what students know and are able to do.

Today's classrooms are different in many ways from those of the more recent past. However, the increasing diversity present in 21st-century schools reminds us of the wealth of heritages, cultural traditions, and languages that have been an ever-present reality in our nation's history. Particular trends in U.S. immigration and changes in demographics accentuate conversations about challenges that schools systems and classroom teachers face in their current efforts to provide all students with a high-quality education. The underlying message remains the same: by learning more about our students' backgrounds (e.g., cultures, language proficiencies, acculturation, prior schooling experiences) and the knowledge and skills they bring, we become better equipped to plan, deliver, and assess instruction in ways that advance learning for everyone—including ourselves.

Many resources can support our collective efforts to address the differential needs and assets of CLD students. Adequate funding facilitates the development and implementation of programs and services for English learners. General education teachers especially are in need of opportunities for long-term professional development that targets the needs of this complex student population. Collegial collaboration also is pivotal to the development of innovative, site-specific solutions to dilemmas of daily practice.

Over time, increasing emphasis has been placed on accountability for CLD students' learning. Unfortunately, even the best of intentions can have unintended negative consequences. The outcomes of recent educational reforms (e.g., ESEA, NCLB, ESSA) suggest that overreliance on formal, high-stakes tests can leave both students and teachers disenfranchised and far from achieving the learning goals and expectations we espouse to hold for all students. A demand for more authentic measures of CLD student progress and learning has resulted.

KEY CONCEPTS

Assessment

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students

Nontraditional receiving communities

PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATIONS ON PRACTICE

1. Discuss assessment in terms of identifying and building on students' assets. What are at least two implications of such a mindset for teachers' classroom practices?
2. Defend the use of the term culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student versus alternative terms, including *minority student* and *LEP student.* Why is it important to consider such distinctions in serving the needs of CLD students and families?
3. Reflect on factors that might account for current achievement patterns of English learners. What growth areas might you identify for your own setting of professional practice?

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

1. How might the descriptors *natural*, *individual*, and *data-driven* be used to characterize all learning?
2. In what ways are classroom teachers in the best position to appropriately create, adapt, modify, and accommodate classroom assessments for CLD students?
3. What are five major trends in immigration discussed in this chapter?
4. What is a nontraditional receiving community? What should teachers know about such communities in relation to classroom diversity and assessment?
5. What are at least three ways that poverty serves to "stack the deck" against students and their academic achievement? Describe one way teachers can promote the academic success of students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged.
6. What are at least three patterns that have tended to accompany recent increases in the number of secondary-level CLD students?
7. What group of CLD students is more likely than others to be identified as LEP? What school factors may contribute to the challenges faced by students identified as LEP?
8. What factors discussed in this chapter hinder teachers' readiness for effective practice with CLD students?
9. What are at least five problematic consequences of an increasing emphasis on standardized, norm-referenced high-stakes tests in recent educational reform initiatives?
10. What are at least three issues that add to the complexity of formally assessing CLD students using high-stakes assessments?

CHAPTER 2

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

It is important to have authentic assessment when assessing ESL [CLD] students. Authentic assessment allows teachers to be able to look at the results and know that they truly represent where the students are, at that time. We all know that assessments can often offer different struggles when it comes to ESL [CLD] students. Often students can struggle on some assessments just because of the way the question is asked. Authentic assessments allow teachers to not test the students over language, but test them over content to make it an accurate assessment. Teachers can use authentic assessment in a variety of ways to benefit future learning in the classroom.

Rick Malone, High School Mathematics Teacher

Chapter Outline

Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Justify use of alternative and authentic assessments in today's classrooms.
- Hold informed conversations with administrators, colleagues, and parents about issues of reliability and validity in assessment.
- Explore CLD student learning using multiple types of authentic assessment.
- Create authentic assessment tools to document learning gains.

INTRODUCTION

One of the primary purposes of this text is to explore the range of ways for gathering and interpreting information about culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student learning to inform instruction. For years, standardized and teacher-made tests (e.g., multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank) have dominated our views and practices about measuring student learning. These tests typically require memorization and do little to encourage students' independent thinking. The assessments fail to demonstrate whether or not the students are able to process the new information to produce clear understanding of the material covered. The results of such assessments have not always yielded information useful to classroom teachers for creating instructional accommodations for CLD students. Although the data generated by traditional tests are certainly helpful in comparing students, programs, and schools on quantitative bases, what the data actually mean for each individual student is often much more obscure and tells us little about language and academic growth.

The ability of an assessment tool or strategy to measure incremental gains is especially critical for CLD students, who often are struggling to simultaneously acculturate to new living and school environments, acquire a second and unfamiliar language, and perform according to grade-level standards in the content areas. Not surprisingly, there is increasing recognition that alternative forms of assessment are essential to best practices. Especially needed are assessments that are authentic, that are process- as well as product-focused, and that are capable of measuring incremental gains. Such assessments are the focus of this chapter.

Many classroom teachers are seeking or have already developed their own forms of assessment that provide more usable information about how well their students are learning what is actually being taught in class. These instruments are sometimes referred to as *alternative assessments* because they can supplement formal assessments and may also help refine or enhance current assessment practices. Because alternative assessments usually represent nontraditional or accommodated approaches to measuring student learning, they are often considered more authentic than the formal assessments they replace; however, not all alternative assessments can be characterized as authentic.

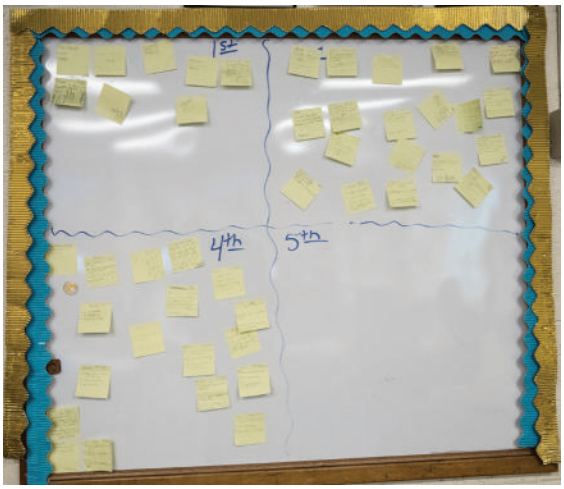
For example, one teacher may provide CLD students with a closed set of responses in a multiple-choice format as an alternative to an open set fill-in-the-blank format. Although such a format may increase the students' abilities to recognize targeted responses, it does not increase the authenticity of the assessment for measuring acquired knowledge and skills. Conversely, a teacher across town may feel that such a multiple-choice format is constraining for CLD students and alternatively provide an open set format to allow for a broader range of potentially appropriate responses. In this case, the alternative design may in fact be considered more authentic if it elicits and credits the students for both on- and off-curricula responses that demonstrate understanding of the desired content.

As is evident from these examples, the terms *alternative assessment* and *authentic assessment* are not strictly synonymous. However, the many common reasons for using alternative and/or authentic assessment approaches leads to overlapping references that can confound our understanding of such means of assessment. Because well-designed alternative assessments are also more authentic and may be used additionally as well as alternatively, we simply refer to these as *authentic* assessments throughout the remainder of this text.

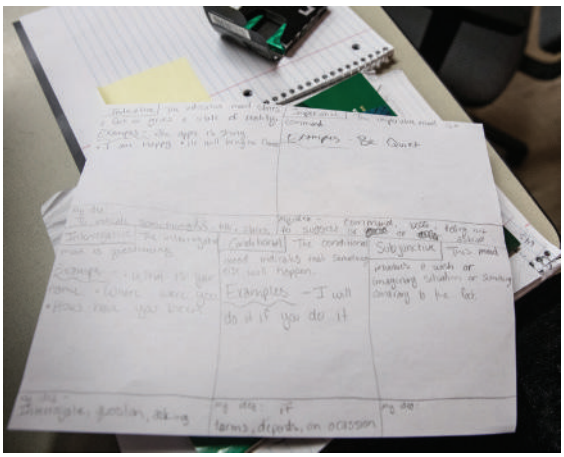
Although the literature of assessment has employed a variety of criteria to define *authentic assessment,* such definitions tend to share certain commonalities (Cooper, 1999; Crawford & Impara, 2001; Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2006; Hancock, 1994; Linn & Miller, 2005). Among these commonalities, authentic assessments:

- Are generally developed directly from classroom instruction, group work, and related classroom activities and provide an alternative to traditional assessments
- Can be considered valid and reliable in that they genuinely and consistently assess a student's classroom performance
- Facilitate the student's participation in evaluation processes
- Include measurements and evaluations relevant to both the teacher and the student
- Emphasize real-world problems, tasks, or applications that are relevant to the student and his or her community.

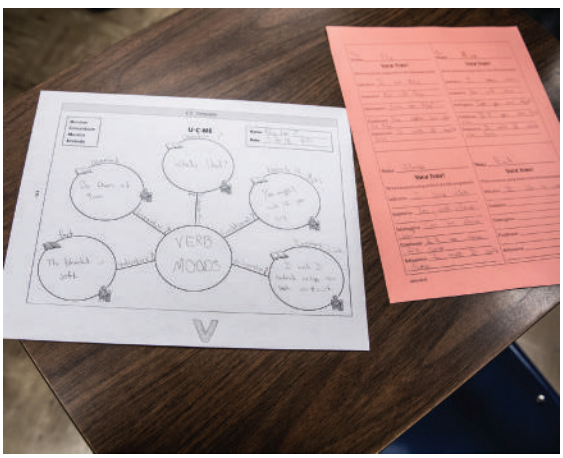
Figure 2.1 Authentic Assessment Embedded Throughout the Lesson



Ms. Kerr began her English lesson by providing the eighth-grade students with an opportunity to record initial thoughts about the target concept. In this case, the focus of the lesson was verb moods. Students from each class used sticky notes to document different forms of verbs that came to mind. These ideas allowed Ms. Kerr to preassess students' background knowledge and provided her with a springboard into the lesson.



As students worked with the curricular material, they used a tool to document their new learning and personal thoughts about each of the new vocabulary terms (indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive verb moods). For each, they wrote the meaning of the term, an example of that form of verb, and their personal ideas. These individual connections increased the relevance of the material and promoted comprehension and retention. While students collaborated with peers to share ideas and worked individually to record information, Ms. Kerr was provided with a wealth of formative assessment data.



Ms. Kerr provided students with a U-C-ME graphic organizer (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011) to support their self-monitoring and evaluation of what they had learned during the lesson. This tool served as a bridge to the more typical, curriculum-bound post-instructional assessment, which required learners to write sentences using verbs in each of the moods. Given the scaffolding they had been afforded through Ms. Kerr's use of authentic assessment throughout the lesson, students were able to approach this final assessment with confidence.

Across the nation, many classroom teachers already have embraced authentic assessment techniques as useful for gathering information that helps them plan, adapt, and individualize instruction. These techniques may prove even more valuable for CLD students because, with careful planning and implementation, teachers can avoid a number of cultural or linguistic biases inherent in traditional assessments.

When assessing CLD students, it is particularly important to design tasks that help us distinguish what we are in fact actually testing (e.g., language, content knowledge, acculturation). We must also assess CLD students in ways that allow them to demonstrate how they understand, access, and apply their knowledge in novel or real-life contexts. Use of authentic assessments need not be restricted to add-on or follow-up components of a lesson. They can often be embedded within the actual context of instruction. Figure 2.1 illustrates how authentic assessments can be integrated in instruction throughout the course of a lesson.

Authentic assessments identify and build on student strengths such as language, prior experiences, interests, and funds of knowledge (Moll, Armanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) to facilitate learning. They typically invite CLD students to become much more engaged, emphasizing student-constructed (rather than prescribed or regurgitated) responses. Student involvement in the assessment process facilitates learning by increasing motivation and ownership and lowering anxiety levels

SNAPSHOT from *CLASSROOM PRACTICE* **2.1**

In this picture, 2nd graders in Ms. Wilhite's class are writing about the topic of *weather*. Ms. Wilhite first had students document their initial connections to the key vocabulary using words (in their native language or in English) and pictures. Then throughout the lesson, as the vocabulary words were read in context, Ms. Wilhite had students discuss word meanings with peers and record new learning on the same tool. This process allowed students to confirm/disconfirm their original associations and document new understandings that would support their writing at the end of the lesson. Strategies such as this enable Ms. Wilhite to authentically assess students' background knowledge, their evolving understandings and perspectives, and ultimately their comprehension of the lesson's vocabulary and content.

Stephanie Wilhite

VOICES *from the* FIELD 2.1

When teachers use observations as forms of assessments and allow students to bring their own schema to each vocabulary word, it helps teachers identify any misconceptions that may need to be addressed during instruction. When the teacher continues to observe and question as the students work in groups to show connections between the words, the assessment process becomes part of the instruction. This allows us as teachers to consider the following: Are the students able to read the words correctly? Are their connections making sense? Are all students participating? If a student is not participating, why? Does he or she need more opportunities exploring the words? Maybe more visuals or manipulatives need to be used. So, in a way, the assessments that are happening during instruction help us with the instruction process.

Mika Rutherford, Kindergarten Teacher

assessment FREEZE FRAME 2.1

Authentic assessments identify and build on student strengths such as language, prior experiences, interests, and funds of knowledge to facilitate learning.

(Chappuis & Stiggins, 2002; Sajedi, 2014). Authentic assessments center on strategies and activities that challenge students and encourage them to integrate knowledge and skills. Well-designed authentic assessments promote higher-order thinking and self-evaluation as students monitor their growth and progress. Because we create and employ authentic assessment to sample what students can actually do as well as what they know, most assessments, regardless of format, include a focus on individual growth and learning over time.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS

When creating authentic assessments, it is important to keep in mind:

- *Why* they are used
- *What* information can be obtained from them
- *How* can this information help improve instruction and learning

As with other forms of measurement, we judge authentic assessments by their reliability and validity as indicators of student learning.

Reliability is best understood as the power of an assessment to gather consistent evidence of skills, regardless of the examiner, time, place, or other variables related to its administration. Reliable tests are also those that prove sensitive to measuring the incremental changes that reflect growth and improvement in the areas being assessed (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2017). This is a critical feature when assessments are used to inform instruction rather than merely provide baseline or end-term indices of achievement. The reliability of an assessment can be compromised or threatened by numerous factors. The presence of distracters (internal such as hunger and anxiety, or external such as ambient noise) can affect the performance of a student or group of students in ways that render those results less reliable or representative than if the assessment had occurred under different conditions.

An important measure of reliability is *inter-rater reliability*. This is the degree to which a student's product or performance is rated the same by different raters or evaluators. Ensuring inter-rater reliability is especially important for authentic assessments, which generally lack the discrete point scales of more objective forms of assessment such as multiple-choice and true/false tests. Inter-rater reliability for authentic assessments is often achieved through well-defined criteria and training for teachers and students in how to rate works according to specified criteria. This practice helps enhance rater reliability, and the resulting focus on key criteria sharpens the teacher's attention to those skills during teaching and learning activities.

assessment FREEZE FRAME 2.2

Reliability is best understood as the power of an assessment to gather consistent evidence of skills, regardless of the examiner, time, place, or other variables of its administration.

Validity refers to the ability of an assessment, process, or product to measure the knowledge or skills it is intended to measure. Teachers of CLD students are particularly concerned with *content validity*, which is the extent to which the assessment tasks and items represent the domain of knowledge and skills to be measured (especially regarding the most critical content). For example, we might question the content validity of a test that purports to measure only computational skills but includes problems such as the following:

> The players on Morgan's baseball team take turns bringing water bottles for their teammates. Last week, Tyler brought 12 bottles, and one player was absent. The coach decided to save the extra bottles and just have Morgan bring the remaining number needed the following week. How many bottles does Morgan need to bring next week so there are just enough for each player on the field?

Teachers should consider the level of knowledge and skills needed to answer this question, as well as language cues a CLD student might misinterpret. Although seemingly simple, this problem requires much more of students than basic computational skills. The question also requires:

- Knowledge of baseball (number of players on the field and on a team)
- An understanding that water bottles come in individual sizes
- The cultural assumption that bottles are not shared
- The linguistic savvy to understand that *just enough* implies exactly the right amount (a one-to-one correspondence), whereas *enough* may signify at least enough for everyone, but more may be fine

Much cultural knowledge is implicit in questions of this sort. An astute teacher may notice such content bias right away or, as often happens, only later begin to wonder why certain groups of students have greater difficulty than others with specific assessment items or formats. Because the goal of assessment is to provide information about student learning related to specific content, assessments must be meaningful indicators of whether—and how—that learning occurs.

assessment FREEZE FRAME 2.3

Teachers of CLD students are particularly concerned with *content validity,* which is the extent to which the assessment tasks and items represent the domain of knowledge and skills to be measured (especially regarding the most critical content).

Another area of assessment validity is *construct validity*, which deals with the question: How well do the skills required for the test items reflect the student's targeted knowledge bases and competencies in that area? For example, a science assessment that focuses on student recognition of target vocabulary in print may fail to sample (and therefore inform

instruction about) the deeper levels of understanding intended by the curriculum. It is important to continually calibrate the purposes of assessment (what we intend to measure) with the outcomes obtained by the tools, and the manner they are used. If the constructs of a given assessment are not well defined, the results will not adequately reflect students' skills in those areas. It is crucial that we consider validity and reliability when choosing and administering all forms of assessment, including those considered authentic, to ensure that they are consistently measuring what they are supposed to measure.

TYPES OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

We can authentically tap into our CLD students' formative (along-the-way) learning processes and summative (endpoint) grasp of curricular material through many different forms of authentic assessment (see Chapter 6 for in-depth discussion of formative and summative assessment). Many types of authentic assessment are popular for the ease with which teachers can adjust them for their own class of diverse learners. Authentic assessments include experiments, projects, observations, interviews, and student narratives. However, these are only a sample of the many ways academic skills can be assessed relative to their uses in the real world. Although a variety of authentic assessments are suitable for use with all students in the classroom, the following discussion explores some of the types most useful with CLD students. Many of these authentic assessments can be adapted for multiple purposes and for almost any content area.

Performance-Based Assessments

If we think of assessments as snapshots of student learning in time, *performance-based assessment (PBAs)* provide a longer exposure with a panoramic lens, or real-time video. PBAs typically involve the "actual doing of a task" (Linn & Miller, 2005, p. 7). This type of authentic assessment prompts higher-order thinking and integration of skills. PBAs encompass a variety of ways to observe and monitor student learning over various spans of time and involve much more authentic applications than do traditional paper-and-pencil tests.

Grade-level teachers who use PBAs generally embrace the idea that knowledge is constructed during learning—that students *discover* knowledge for themselves rather than *receive* knowledge from the teacher. Applying this *constructivist perspective* to learning and assessment facilitates how students take in information as well as how they store and retrieve this information and apply new thinking to novel situations. Some educators think of constructivist learning as teaching students to scuba dive rather than water ski. Because water skiers are able to stay upright and cover a relatively large amount of territory, their skills are easier to see and may, at first glance, be more impressive. Unfortunately, this ability to skim the surface does not speak to what lies underneath and does not guarantee the necessary skills to swim in deep or unfamiliar waters.

By contrast, scuba divers intentionally learn to investigate more deeply and propel themselves to areas of further interest. This can result in far greater

knowledge at ever-deeper levels, as well as an ongoing desire and ability to continue the learning process. As with scuba diving, much of the learning that takes place in constructivist contexts occurs at these deeper levels and may be neither obvious on the surface nor measurable by traditional means. PBAs are designed to create situations that tap into the depth as well as the breadth of student learning. Instead of asking students to reiterate static facts or volumes of superficial content, PBAs allow students to demonstrate how deeply they understand and can navigate the waters of novel concepts, as well as the degree to which they can make new discoveries through self-directed learning.

It is relatively common for classroom teachers to acknowledge hands-on activities, such as PBAs, as appropriate and beneficial for young children. However, these activities are equally powerful for older students. For example, science applications facilitate content instruction and assessment because they generally lend themselves to students' storage of information both as procedural memory (information on the steps or sequences involved in a process) and as declarative memory (factual information about the science content). Figure 2.2 provides an example of a science-related PBA.

Because PBAs help to scaffold student learning naturally and sequentially, they are particularly appropriate for CLD students, who may have little prior exposure to the information, language, or process involved. Teachers can encourage CLD students to create their own personalized scaffolds to document their learning as they engage in PBAs. Learners can use the resulting tools to help answer questions that appear on more traditional assessments.

Figure 2.2 Science PBA

Preparation of a Dry Mount Microscope Slide

This performance-based assessment is designed to document the student's ability to independently prepare a dry mount microscope slide.

The following materials must be among those available to the student:

- Microscope with which the student has familiarity
- Slides
- Cover slips
- Object to be examined

The following steps are considered essential elements of this procedure. Circle each as it is completed by the student. Add observational notes as desired.

1. Place slide on a flat surface.
2. Lay specimen on top of slide.
3. Attend to thickness of specimen (does student seek thinnest sample?).
4. Place cover slip slowly on top of specimen.

If a student has been exposed to the creation of and rationale for both wet and dry slides, this PBA can be modified to require the student to determine and execute the appropriate procedure for one or more objects or organisms.

SNAPSHOT from *CLASSROOM PRACTICE* **2.2**

In this picture, Ms. Melton is seen at the end of the lesson assessing a group of 6th-grade students on their understanding of the characteristics of prisms. The students are working with different shapes that represent a prism and explaining their characteristics. By doing such types of performance-based assessments, a teacher is able to help students discover knowledge for themselves.

Lisa Melton

Portfolios

Ms. Carpenter was a 1st-grade teacher who once believed that her instructional time was best spent directly teaching to curricular goals. She would follow up her lessons with quick, objective quizzes to assess student mastery of content. However, the addition to her class of students who spoke English as a second language inspired her to adopt a host of new teaching and assessment practices. A case in point was how she altered her methods to incorporate the portfolio assessment of language arts objectives related to story skills.

Ms. Carpenter began by leading her class in discussions of books she read aloud, in terms of the main characters, setting, possible solutions, and so forth. Together they discovered and discussed the essential components of a "good story" and formulated a simple class rubric (see Figure 2.3) for judging future story-time selections. Over the next few weeks, Ms. Carpenter intentionally chose stories she knew would be rated either exemplary or poor, according to the class criteria. Such exercises built the students' skills in applying the criteria and reinforced their understanding of the usefulness of the criteria. These skills would be needed when students later assessed their own story-writing efforts.

Figure 2.3 Story Rubric

STORY ELEMENTS

	The Main Character?	The Setting?	The Problem?	The Solution?	Score (add here)
Does this story describe . . .	Yes = 2 A little = 1 No = 0	Yes = 2 A little = 1 No = 0	Yes = 2 A little = 1 No = 0	Yes = 2 A little = 1 No = 0	

One day, after a particularly disappointing selection, Ms. Carpenter guided the group in revising the lower scoring elements of the story. As she wrote the new version on poster paper, she also modeled the use of rebus cue drawings (e.g., I was riding my  and a  drove by.) for words that were unfamiliar or hard to spell.

The next day, students were anxious to write their own original stories. Although all the students were excited about this, Ms. Carpenter's experience told her that many students would not know where or how to start. As she reviewed the story elements featured in the rubric, she focused first on the importance of setting. To demonstrate the vital importance of the setting to a story, Ms. Carpenter told all the students to line up and, with digital camera in hand, she led them on a walk around the school building and grounds. As they talked about different settings, Ms. Carpenter took photos of students in settings they had chosen. Once they returned to class and printed these photos, the students took turns talking about the various settings in which each classmate appeared (e.g., "James is on the bench in front of the school," "Ana is under the big slide near the swings").

Ms. Carpenter hoped these visuals would trigger experiences and memories students could use as scaffolds for writing their first stories. These stories were drafted with an emphasis on content, so Ms. Carpenter encouraged students to use invented spellings and rebus pictures for words they could not spell. Students would search for these words in the dictionary and correct them later.

She then recorded students as they read their short stories aloud in groups. No one interrupted the readings with comments. When the recording was replayed, however, group partners listened for and commented on the simple elements of the story rubric that the class had devised earlier. Group members also attended to key curricular objectives and practiced the important skills of explaining and supporting their opinions.

The primary purpose of the recordings was to document students' developing narrative skills. However, the recordings also documented other parameters of language acquisition such as vocabulary, word order, sentence length, and pronunciation. Because all students were allowed to use rebus pictures for words they could not spell, vocabulary gaps were less of an issue. Students could still demonstrate their knowledge of the concept of setting. At this point, the students were able to add the written story (to be revised later) and the recorded narrative to their portfolios. Both would be strong benchmarks by which to measure future progress. Ms. Carpenter then planned an extension of the lesson to build on this new learning and stimulate students' imaginative thinking skills.

As she carried out the photo-taking activity with her class the following year, Ms. Carpenter remembered observing a CLD student who was not following directions—and yet she *loved* what he was doing. This year she deliberately incorporated that student's "detour into fun" as an extension of the lesson. After writing and recording their first stories, the students cut themselves out of the photos they took during the "setting" exercise. Then came the really fun part. Students were encouraged to place the picture of themselves anywhere and any way (such as upside down) on a blank piece of drawing paper. This step served as the launch point for their creating an entirely new setting and story for their main character. It also helped Ms. Carpenter focus on the next element of the rubric (the problem). She always marveled at how these new stories reflected the students' interests, background experiences, and creativity.

For example, Joel (who was swinging on the monkey bars in his original setting) was suddenly transported to a locale in which he hung precariously from the lower lip of a *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Tuyen, no longer poised at the water fountain, was now bending over to smell the abundant flowers in her grandmother's garden. Ms.

Carpenter noticed how the stories that evolved from this activity were more personal and animated than those elicited by her typical story starters. The students were eager to share these new stories with peers. When the drawings were finished, they were laminated and added to each student's portfolio.

Throughout the year, students had other opportunities to practice and build narrative skills, such as reporting the news (e.g., family, community, world) and retelling events or stories from different perspectives (e.g., the perspective of one of their favorite action figures). As the year progressed and Ms. Carpenter conferenced with students about their portfolio entries, she was amazed at how often students commented that their earlier stories could have been better. Some students even contrasted them to more recent selections. For instance, Magda said, "That story didn't have a very good ending. This one has a better problem and solution. I tell you more about my characters now, too." By the end of the year, Ms. Carpenter felt that she, her students, and their parents had a much better grasp of student progress than they ever could have gained through traditional indicators of achievement.

Portfolio in various forms have been in use for some time. However, early versions often amounted to undifferentiated compilations of student work, sometimes judged merely by overall heftiness or mass. Although portfolios were appreciated as indicators of student (and teacher) effort, many parents felt that this abundance of academic memorabilia provided little information about the actual progress of their children in school. Following are tips for moving away from simply collecting student work and toward a systematic collection of documents/artifacts that exemplify socioemotional, linguistic, and academic growth.

Teaching Tips:

- Create an oral language rubric for informal observation of language production three times a year.
- Create a checklist to document the learner's ability to take risks when working in groups.
- Gather writing samples for each grading period.
- Video the student two or three times each grading period sharing information orally (Simple computer applications for recording speech samples enable creation of powerful audio portfolios of students' developing oral or narrative skills.)

These are but a few suggestions for systematically collecting informal and authentic artifacts produced by the learner that move assessment to a new level.

Portfolios also can include:

- Samples of student work that illustrate either mastery or progress
- The sequential planning, process reflections, and product outcomes of a project
- Some indication of how the student rated him- or herself on the samples, processes, or products included
- Student justification and insight regarding the work included

The criteria for judging portfolio pieces should reflect outcomes that align with curricular standards. In many cases, school districts align these standards with relevant state and/or national benchmarks.

Portfolio assessments are beneficial for CLD students because they offer learners the opportunity to share in their own words what they have gained. Portfolios provide a safe space for students to communicate with the teacher and showcase their work. The tangible proof that they are learning, growing, and contributing is especially motivating for CLD students. Having students create a portfolio sends the message not only that their ideas and thoughts matter, but that regardless of their language proficiency, they can demonstrate their knowledge. The final portfolio serves as a treasure trove of artifacts students can look back on and be proud of.

E-portfolios offer the distinct advantage of increasing accessibility of the portfolio with peers, parents, and other educators. With such access comes opportunities for individuals who are influential to the student to provide additional feedback. The exchange of ideas made possible through electronic sharing can benefit students and the larger learning community. E-portfolios have been shown to positively affect students' literacy and metacognition (Nicolaidou, 2013).

In summary, portfolio assessments have the power to authentically connect classroom instruction and the assessment of its impact on students. They are *alternative assessments* in the sense that:

- They incorporate both teacher and student perspectives on learning and the assessment of learning.
- They offer a longitudinal perspective on academic and language development.
- They measure incremental gains in knowledge, skills, and proficiencies.

Portfolio assessments are *authentic assessments* in that:

- They derive directly from classroom activities.
- They effectively assess student performance.
- They reflect in-process adaptations to instructional methods and assessment.
- They assess learning in a way that is relevant to and motivating for the student.

Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment

Student *self-assessment* can be an extremely valuable tool for learning as well as measurement. When CLD students are engaged in assessing their own work, they more thoroughly and purposefully understand the criteria for high-quality products and performance—and experience greater motivation for meeting those criteria (Sajedi, 2014). Rather than simply attempting to produce work that will satisfy the teacher, students involved in effective self-assessment work toward a positive vision of the instructional goals. This vision is enhanced and authenticated by their own perspectives and interpretations. In addition, many teachers report notable improvements in students' ability to regulate their own behaviors related to time and task management.

Figure 2.4 depicts a self-assessment rubric that can be used to supplement a content scoring rubric. This rubric requires students to assess not only their overall achievement but also the *effort* they actually put into the task. Students' completed self-assessment rubrics then support teacher–student conversations about the task outcomes.

Figure 2.4 Effort and Achievement Comparison Rubric

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Assignment/Project: _____

Effort & Achievement Comparison Rubric	
Effort	**Achievement**
5 = I put maximum effort into this task. I stretched myself to complete this task despite its difficulty. I approached task difficulties as challenges to be overcome. I built new capacities as a result of confronting these challenges. 4 = I put exceptional effort into this task. I stretched myself to complete this task despite its difficulty. I approached task difficulties as challenges to be overcome. 3 = I put moderate effort into this task. I stretched myself to complete this task despite its difficulty. I approached task difficulties as challenges to be overcome. 2 = I put average effort into this task. I stretched myself to complete this task despite its difficulty. 1 = I put limited effort into this task.	5 = I exceeded the objectives of this task. 4 = I met all of the objectives of this task. 3 = I met most of the objectives of this task. 2 = I met at least half of the objectives of this task. 1 = I met less than half of the objectives of this task.
Scale: 5 = Excellent, 4 = Outstanding, 3 = Good, 2 = Improvement Needed, 1 = Unacceptable	

Teaching Tips:

Use student self-assessment results in the following ways:

- Identify patterns of low interest or low self-confidence in the learner
- Discuss why the task was low effort (or what served to motivate high effort)
- Support the learner in setting goals to improve in the area he or she feels least confident
- Create a plan of action to be successful in the future.

Peer-assessment is equally beneficial because it provides students with additional opportunities to identify and evaluate targeted skills related to established criteria. Peer assessment requires students to consider how examples of other students' work meet the criteria. Such comparisons enable students to discern outstanding elements of their own *and* their classmates' performances and products, as well as those components in need of improvement. This type of critical consideration often prompts students to refine their concept of a quality product.

Another advantage of peer assessment is that many students are more apt to engage in dialogue with and accept criticism from peers than from teachers, and they are more likely to do so using language that is uniquely comprehensible to them. This is particularly important for CLD students, for whom peers who share the same native language may more effectively mediate and clarify the concepts of instruction.

Peers: Our Learning Lifelines

Grade Level: 3–6

Materials:

- Students' lesson-based writing samples
- Copies of the Learning Lifeline template (one per student)

Directions:

- Explain to students that oftentimes we arrive at our best learning by collaborating with others. Share with students that now they will be working with a partner to reflect on and continue to learn from their written work.
- Place students in pairs and give each student a copy of the template.
- Model for the whole class how to complete the top portion of the template.
- Provide students with time to read their partners' writing and complete the "I statement" prompts.
- Then ask partners to take turns to share feedback/questions and to have the peer-authors respond and ask their own questions.
- Next, have partners document questions for you that they are unable to answer for themselves using the resources available. Also encourage them to share comments about the peer-assessment process with you.
- Have partners discuss what they learned from each other.
- Encourage each pair to share with the class at least one thing they learned from the process.

Observing Students:

As students work individually to read their partners' writing and evaluate it using the "I statement" prompts, observe CLD students and take time to talk with them about their observations to support understanding. Note patterns in students' comments and questions about their peers' writing. These observations can serve to inform subsequent instruction. Also make notes about recurring questions/comments directed to you, the teacher, so that you can begin to address them within the context of the lesson. Continue to circulate around the room, attending to what students write in their summaries. Use insights gleaned to highlight assets of the learning community.

Differentiating Instruction:

- For English learners who need additional language support, consider having students read aloud their peer's writing, with the author listening and available to clarify vocabulary/meaning as needed. Then students proceed with the activity according to directions.
- Jot down notes about aspects of the peer-assessment process that challenge individual students (e.g., finding evidence of objective attainment within a peer's writing, responding well to criticism, offering constructive feedback, finding value in another's perspective). These notes can inform subsequent decisions about which peers to pair together, which skills to target for continued development, and which tasks might need additional scaffolding.

Additional Notes:

This activity can be repeated as often as desired throughout the academic school year.