Progress Monitoring Language Development through Formative Assessments
Understand a process that teachers can use to evaluate student language development and to adjust instruction to strengthen students’ ability to use language effectively.
What is Formative Assessment?
Why use Formative Assessments?
WIDA Standards and Resources
Process for Language Assessment for Formative Purposes
Analyze Your Student Samples
How do you feel about formative assessment for language development?
“Keeping track of students’ developing language can occur simultaneously with tracking their developing content knowledge. There’s no need to create new assignments to obtain samples of student language.” (Boals et. al, 2015)
30 Second Assessment

Problem #1
Suzie bost sagarrondoak zituzten. Bernie eman bere bi gehiago. Zenbat sagar behar du Suzie orain?

Problem #2
Festa batean, denok elkarri bostekoa besteek batera. Baziren hirurogeitasei esku emate. Zenbat jende festa hartan emateko?

(Trower, 2015)
Problem #1
Suzie had five apples. Bernie gave her two more. How many apples does Suzie have now?

Problem #2
At a party, everyone shook hands with everyone else. There were sixty-six handshakes. How many people were at the party?

(Trower, 2015)
What are Formative Assessments?

- “Formative assessments are ongoing assessments, reviews, and observations in a classroom. Teachers use formative assessment to improve instructional methods and provide student feedback throughout the teaching and learning process.” (Fisher and Frey, 2007)

- “The purpose of this ‘continual taking stock of learning’ is to ‘form new learning.’ Forming new learning requires teachers to intentionally generate evidence about learning, and to interpret the evidence in order to make decisions about pedagogical action to close the ‘gap’ between the learners current status and desired goals.” (Heritage, 2014)

- “Assessment as a pedagogical decision making process, not a measurement process.” (Heritage et. al, 2015)

- Formative assessment should be a “process (not a test) that can be used by teachers and students to reflect on the effectiveness of students’ language and to interact in productive ways to strengthen students’ ability to use language effectively.” (Boals et. al, 2015)
Misconceptions about Formative Assessment

- Formative assessments...
  - Come in kits and can be expensive
  - Take time away from my teaching
  - Take a lot of time to plan
  - Aren’t important because “I know my students”
Why Use Formative Assessments?

- So what? Why should we be tracking EL language development?
  - Improve student achievement in content areas, as well as student acquisition of English
  - Improve teaching practice
  - Students have a right to have access to grade-level content and standards
  - Provide personalized learning experience (Heritage, 2014)
Proficiency levels 1-6 do not measure:

- how much growth each student has made
- how much growth is necessary to attain state targets in a reasonable amount of time
WIDA ACCESS Stepping-Stone Timeline

- **1 year**
- **1 year**
- **1 year**
- **2 years**
- **1 year to hit Literacy 5**

1. **ENTERING**
2. **BEGINNING**
3. **DEVELOPING**
4. **EXPANDING**
5. **BRIDGING**
Formative Assessment Basics
Balanced Assessment System

- Formative
- Interim
- Summative

(Boals et al., 2015)
Comprehensive Assessment System

(Gerzon, Heritage, & Tobiason, 2015a)
Types of Assessments

- Classroom Summative
  - If met goals of unit

- Interim Assessments
  - Information about how well students are meeting medium-term goals

- Formative
  - Provides evidence of learning while instruction is underway

(Gerzon, Heritage, & Tobiason, 2015a)
Assessment Cycles

Long
- Annual assessments
- Long-term goals
- Sampling of student learning

Medium
- Intermediate assessments
- Periodic snapshot of student learning
- Provide more detail to tailor instruction

Short
- Formative assessments
- Long-term goals
- Sampling of student learning

(Gerzon, Heritage, & Tobiason, 2015a)
Formative assessment

- Compares students’ ongoing progress to possible trajectories
- Identify the most productive next steps in instruction
  - Provide immediate feedback or support

“Language assessment for formative purposes”

- Systemic process of language analysis
- Feedback on student progress toward instructional goals for English
- May or may not happen at the time of the instructional moment

(Gerzon, Heritage, & Tobiason, 2015a)
(Boals et al., 2015)
Use chart paper to brainstorm what assessments you are currently using to assess content standards (CAS)
Now...use chart paper to brainstorm what assessments you are currently using to assess language standards (CELP)
Characteristics of Assessment of Language for Formative Purposes

- Linked to CAS and CELP Standards
- Planned or spontaneous
- Embedded in instruction
- Informs instruction
- Authentic
- Provides examples of effective use of new language
- Shared understanding of desired outcome (language objective)
A Deeper Dive into the Resources from WIDA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language Development Standard 1</td>
<td>Social and Instructional language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Development Standard 2</td>
<td>The language of Language Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Development Standard 3</td>
<td>The language of Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Development Standard 4</td>
<td>The language of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Development Standard 5</td>
<td>The language of Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Features of Academic Language

The Features of Academic Language operate within sociocultural contexts for language use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Criteria</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discourse Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic Complexity</td>
<td>Amount of speech/written text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Quantity and variety of</td>
<td>Structure of speech/written text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oral and written text)</td>
<td>Density of speech/written text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organization and cohesion of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variety of sentence types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Forms and</td>
<td>Types and variety of grammatical structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Conventions, mechanics, and fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Types, array, and use of)</td>
<td>Match of language forms to purpose/perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language structures)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word/Phrase Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Usage</td>
<td>General, specific, and technical language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Specificity of word or</td>
<td>Multiple meanings of words and phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase choice)</td>
<td>Formulaic and idiomatic expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nuances and shades of meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collocations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sociocultural contexts for language use involve the interaction between the student and the language environment, encompassing the...

- Register
- Genre/Text type
- Topic
- Task/Situation
- Participants' identities and social roles
## WIDA Performance Definitions: Listening and Reading

![WIDA Performance Definitions: Listening and Reading, Grades K-12](image)

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will process...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Level</th>
<th>Sentence Level</th>
<th>Word/Phrase Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linguistic Complexity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language Forms and Conventions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary Usage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6 – Reaching</td>
<td>Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Level 5 Bridging | • Rich descriptive discourse with complex sentences  
| | • Cohesive and organized related ideas  
| | • Compound, complex grammatical constructions (e.g., multiple phrases and clauses)  
| | • A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas  
| | • Technical and abstract content-area language  
| | • Words and expressions with shades of meaning for each content area |
| Level 4 Expanding | • Connected discourse with a variety of sentences  
| | • Expanded related ideas  
| | • A variety of complex grammatical constructions  
| | • Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas  
| | • Specific and some technical content-area language  
| | • Words and expressions with multiple meanings or collocations and idioms for each content area |
| Level 3 Developing | • Discourse with a series of extended sentences  
| | • Related ideas  
| | • Compound and some complex (e.g., noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase) grammatical constructions  
| | • Sentence patterns across content areas  
| | • Specific content words and expressions  
| | • Words or expressions related to content area with common collocations and idioms across content areas |
| Level 2 Emerging | • Multiple related simple sentences  
| | • An idea with details  
| | • Compound grammatical constructions  
| | • Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas  
| | • General and some specific content words and expressions (including cognates)  
| | • Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas |
| Level 1 Entering | • Single statements or questions  
| | • An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language  
| | • Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Wh- questions, declaratives)  
| | • Common social and instructional forms and patterns  
| | • General content-related words  
| | • Everyday social and instructional words and expressions |

...within sociocultural contexts for language use.
## WIDA Performance Definitions: Speaking and Writing

**Figure H: WIDA Performance Definitions Speaking and Writing, Grades K–12**

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will produce...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Level</th>
<th>Sentence Level</th>
<th>Word/Phrase Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic Complexity</td>
<td>Language Forms and Conventions</td>
<td>Vocabulary Usage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Level 6 – Reaching

Language that meets all criteria through Level 5, Bridging

- **Level 5 Bridging**
  - Multiple, complex sentences
  - Organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas
  - A variety of grammatical structures matched to purpose and nearly consistent use of conventions, including for effect
  - A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas
  - Technical and abstract content-area language
  - Words and expressions with precise meaning related to content area topics

- **Level 4 Expanding**
  - Short, expanded, and some complex sentences
  - Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion
  - A variety of grammatical structures and generally consistent use of conventions
  - Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas
  - Specific and some technical content-area language
  - Words and expressions with multiple meanings or common collocations and idioms across content areas

- **Level 3 Developing**
  - Short and some expanded sentences with emerging complexity
  - Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression of multiple related ideas
  - Repetitive grammatical structures with occasional variation and emerging use of conventions
  - Sentence patterns across content areas
  - Specific content words and expressions (including content-specific cognates)
  - Words or expressions related to content areas

- **Level 2 Emerging**
  - Phrases or short sentences
  - Emerging expression of ideas
  - Formulaic grammatical structures and variable use of conventions
  - Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas
  - General content words and expressions (including common cognates)
  - Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas

- **Level 1 Entering**
  - Words, phrases, or chunks of language
  - Single words used to represent ideas
  - Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Wh-questions, declaratives)
  - Phrasal patterns associated with common social and instructional situations
  - General content-related words
  - Everyday social and instructional words and familiar expressions

...within sociocultural contexts for language use.
Performance Definitions Sort

1. Sort the cards with a partner or two.
2. Do NOT use any other supports.
3. When you finish, you can check your answers using the WIDA Performance Definitions (pp. 8-9 of the ELD Standards Framework booklet).

Get to know the Performance Definitions a little better
The WIDA Can Do Descriptors, Key Uses Edition, K-12 offers a focus on what language learners can do to participate meaningfully in teaching and learning in academic contexts. This edition is organized around four over-arching communicative purposes, called Key Uses: Recount, Explain, Argue, and Discuss.
Performance Definitions
Compared to the Can Do Descriptors

Performance Definitions

Can Do Descriptors

WIDA Performance Definitions - Speaking and Writing Grades K-12

Level 1: Basic
- Comprehension and expression of simple ideas
  - Can follow simple instructions
  - Can use basic vocabulary

Level 2: Developing
- Comprehension and expression of more complex ideas
  - Can follow complex instructions
  - Can use more advanced vocabulary

Level 3: Proficient
- Comprehension and expression of complex ideas
  - Can follow very complex instructions
  - Can use advanced vocabulary

Level 4: Advanced
- Comprehension and expression of the most complex ideas
  - Can follow extremely complex instructions
  - Can use highly advanced vocabulary

Level 5: Proficient
- Comprehension and expression of the most complex ideas
  - Can follow extremely complex instructions
  - Can use highly advanced vocabulary

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 3-5

- Can describe and explain observations
- Can follow and adapt to rules and conventions
- Can use and develop strategies to solve problems
- Can make predictions and interpretations
- Can analyze and interpret data
- Can communicate effectively

The Can Do Descriptors work in conjunction with the WIDA Performance Definitions of the English language proficiency standards. The Descriptors define the skills and knowledge that students are expected to demonstrate at each level of proficiency.
Can Do Descriptors

Should be used in tandem with the Performance Definitions and/or Rubrics . . .
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can Dos</th>
<th>Can’t Dos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide a tool for differentiation</td>
<td>• Are NOT the Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide a sampling of language students</td>
<td>• Are NOT exhaustive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can process and produce at different</td>
<td>• Don’t address academic language in all five ELD Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grade levels and in different domains</td>
<td>• Don’t address ZPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contextualize students’ ACCESS scores</td>
<td>• Don’t represent a trajectory of language development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use the performance definitions to analyze the student writing sample on *The Crow and the Pitcher*
Formative Assessment Process: The Four Stages
Formative Assessment Process: The Four Stages

- Stage 1: Design and Teach
- Stage 2: Sample Students’ Language
- Stage 3: Analyze
- Stage 4: Provide Formative Feedback and Refine Instruction

(Boals et al., 2015)
Stage 1: Design and Teach

Plan:
- Use of consistent academic language in your lesson
- Clear language targets and objectives
  - Language targets may be designed for groups of students at one language proficiency level or individual students
- Language assessment
3. Find $x$.

Here it is.
Consider the CELP standards as well as the interdisciplinary language that may be used in this lesson.

Collaborate with colleagues across departments in your grade level and vertically in content areas to determine interdisciplinary language and consistent uses of academic language.
Student Strengths and Needs

- Plan for student strengths and needs
- Language proficiency levels of each student
  - Consider language domains
- Linguistic scaffolds and supports needed
Language and content are intertwined

- How will students use language in this lesson?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four Domains of Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Features of Academic Language & Proficiency Levels

- **How will students use language in this lesson?**
- **What features of academic language will be used?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Features of Academic Language</th>
<th>Lesson Activities</th>
<th>Linguistic Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic Complexity</td>
<td>Teacher Talk</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Forms and Conventions</td>
<td>Student Talk</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Usage</td>
<td>Texts to be Read or Written</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 1: Design and Teach

Guiding Questions

- What are the particular language features we’re going to focus on? What do those look like? What examples can I show my students?
- Why is that feature important in this lesson? How does its use shape the meaning?
- How can I capture this in an achievable success criteria for my students?
- What supports will students need?
- What method or tool can I develop with my students to help us both monitor their practice with this new language?
Stage 2: Sample Students’ Language

- Student samples can come from any and all types of classroom activities and lessons
- Should be authentic
- Students should be given linguistic supports necessary to have access to the content while challenging them to develop language
“Using every day examples of students’ language makes it easy to embed into daily instruction the frequent monitoring and guidance that is at the heart of the formative assessment process” (Boals et. al, 2015)
Formative Assessments or “Student Samples”

Assessment Tasks

- Instructional events
- Completed by students – not teachers
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in the use of academic language
**Formative Assessments or “Student Samples”**

- Use chart paper to brainstorm what student samples you could gather in the four domains of language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative Assessments within the Four Domains of Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 3: Analyze

- Reflect back on language targets and objectives from lesson plans for each student or group of students
  - Was the student successful? How do you know?
- Use the performance definitions or local assessment tools and rubrics to evaluate students' language
- Asset-based mindset
Formative Assessment Tools

- Assist in analyzing sample student language
- Help keep a record of feedback
- Create a standardized process for analyzing student work
- Make formative assessment formal instead of informal
- Can be used by the teacher, the student, or peers

(Trower, 2015)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Used for...</th>
<th>For Students</th>
<th>For Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Checklist</strong></td>
<td>Are my students becoming more consistent in...?</td>
<td>Helps students remember and learn the steps in a new process or new behaviors to practice.</td>
<td>Captures information quickly and easily; can be used easily by students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recording, in a simple yes/no format, the inclusion of new behaviors or other elements students are working to integrate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Rating Scale** | Getting an informal, continuum-based rating of elements considered important in the lesson or task | • Helps students rate their own comprehension of new material or their comfort with new practices.  
• Focuses students’ attention on metacognitive aspects and personal accountability for learning. | Quickly captures an informal rating of student’s movement toward a goal.     |
| **Rubric**  | More carefully evaluating the quality of specific components of student work and decided which level of performance best describes the work.  
• Requires clearly specified criteria for each performance level  
• Intervals/levels should be equivalent in range | • Involves students in judging their own mastery.  
• Helps develop metacognitive stance and skill.  
• Makes explicit what elements are important and what successful performance looks like. | Assesses student movement toward criteria that will be used later to make a summative assessment of their performance. |
|            |                                                                              |                                                                              |                                                                              |
Use chart paper to brainstorm the types of assessment tools you use or have available in your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Tools within the Four Domains of Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guiding Questions

- Based on the student’s language proficiency level in this domain, did the student meet the expectations of the language target and performance definitions?
  - If not, does the student need more linguistic supports, content supports, etc.?
- Did the student include and effectively organize the necessary components? Was any part missing?
- Was the organization appropriate to the context, in terms of formality, brevity, and objectivity?
- Was the student able to express ideas concisely and compactly, or are the ideas relayed in a conversational pattern of many short, linked sentences?
- Are there signs that the student is attempting new language structures? Misusing previously taught language structures?
- Has the student used the type of vocabulary expected for this assignment?
Stage 4: Provide Formative Feedback & Refine Instruction

- Timely – delivered when the student is teaching
- Simple, specific, brief, focused
- Opens dialogue rather than prescribing
- Framed with clear criteria that enables student to determine what to do to improve rather than just providing strengths and weaknesses – So what? Now what?
- Can come from teacher, peer or self
“At the same time, though, this information has to be used to inform the teaching and learning process. Feedback is formative if it leads to improved student learning.” (Tuttle, 2009)
Your Turn!

With a partner, use the WIDA Performance Definitions to analyze the student sample you brought.

- Provide background for your partner on the grade level, student, and lesson
- Where does the use of language land on the performance definitions?
- What might be your next steps in working with this student? Feedback? Linguistic supports?
How did you find the experience working with the performance definitions?

How can you build formative assessments for language development into your daily/weekly instruction?
“Keeping track of students’ developing language can occur simultaneously with tracking their developing content knowledge. There’s no need to create new assignments to obtain samples of student language.” (Boals et. al, 2015)
Resources

- CDE’s Office of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education - http://www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english
- WIDA - https://www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx
References


