

TEST EVALUATION CHECKLIST

(TEC)



Dr. Catherine Collier



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CrossCultural Developmental Education Services
1004 West 58th Lane
Ferndale, WA 98248-9470

www.crosscultural.com

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WHAT IS THE TEC

The Test Evaluation Checklist (TEC) is a tool for evaluating standardized assessment instruments for use with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. It will assist with selecting appropriate instruments and procedures. TEC is based upon research cited in Educating Minority Handicapped Students (Hoover & Collier, 1988) and Separating Difference from Disabilities: Assessing Diverse Learners (Collier, 2004). The TEC should be used with any instrument or procedure proposed for use in the identification of diverse learners with learning and behavior problems.

WHY USE THE TEC

The team members involved in evaluating the needs of a particular diverse learner should review each individual instrument or procedure that they intend to use in this evaluation for appropriateness and potential modification. Adaptation to correct for content and language bias necessitates an evaluation of cultural and linguistic appropriateness in the most recent edition of the test and in the student's native language, if available. The TEC facilitates and documents your analysis for cultural and linguistic appropriateness.

HOW TO USE THE TEC

The team members involved in evaluating the needs of a particular diverse learner should review each individual instrument or procedure that they intend to use in this evaluation for appropriateness and potential modification. Each review of a standardized instrument or procedure is done in relation to a specific student profile. Assessment administration resource files on groups of students sharing cultural and linguistic characteristics should be kept available for instructional and multidisciplinary staffing teams. This analysis includes a visual and structural overview of the illustrations and items in a test to determine if they are within the student's experiential background. It includes a review of the validity and reliability data as well as the standardization data to determine the representativeness of the population sample.

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC ITEMS

Section 1

Write the name of the test under examination at the top of the form. Write the cultural or ethnic background of the student on the line “culture(s).” Some students are multicultural. You should note all ethnicities or cultures that could be an influence for this student. Write the dialect, patois, language or languages this student speaks on the line “languages.” Write the acculturation level on the line indicated. If you have an AQS score, put it here and add a note about what level this represents. Add the rate of acculturation if you have that information (obtainable from the AQS¹). Under “experience,” note information from this student’s life experiences that you think may influence their ability to perform on this test. Note any other significant factors that you think could be a factor in this student’s performance on this particular test.

Student Background Information
Culture(s):
Language(s):
Acculturation Level:
Experience:
Other factors:

Section 2 Language

Document your analysis of the language of the test by considering the six questions under “Language.” You will need to review the test manual and descriptions of norming and standardization procedures to answer these questions. Your team should include resource personnel from the particular ethnic or cultural community of the student under consideration.

¹ AQS (Collier 2001) Acculturation Quick Screen, CrossCultural Developmental Education Services, Ferndale, WA. Available from www.crosscultured.com

The TEC asks your team to rate the degree to which the instrument, without modifications, addresses areas of known test bias that can affect its validity and reliability for specific populations. This includes questions to consider related to the language of the student and the language of the test instrument and administration. Place a checkmark in the appropriate column under “Degree of Applicability” from [I agree completely] Yes (5) to [I don’t agree at all] No (1), in answer to the question. If answering “Yes” to any item, make notes in the “Comment” section regarding any modifications you will make to the instrument, your administration procedures, or other test activities that will address the question. Add notes concerning any special circumstances that will assist others using the instrument. If answering “No” to any item, make notes in the “Comment” section regarding your student’s abilities or scores from language tests that support your response. Information about the student’s language proficiency and language issues related to this test instrument will be useful during a compliance review or service plan evaluation as well as helpful for other evaluators wanting to use this instrument.

Language	Degree of Language Applicability				
	Yes				No
Issues to consider:	5	4	3	2	1
1. Is the English proficiency necessary for successfully completing the instrument beyond the present academic language of the student?					
2. Does this instrument employ English vocabulary that is colloquial, regional, or unfamiliar to the student?					
3. Does this instrument rely heavily on receptive and expressive English language ability?					
4. Is there a parallel form of the instrument available in this student’s native language or dialect?					
5. If so, are all of the items equivalent in difficulty and intent to the English version?					
6. Does the student have adequate experience with the academic language and academic tasks required?					

Column Totals					
Applicability of Unmodified Content to Student/Group:				Applicability Score	

Total the scores in each column, i.e. all the 5's, all the 4's, etc. Then add these points together and put the total in the box labeled "Applicability Score."

Score Range	Degree of Language Applicability
6-10	Not appropriate for use with this student.
11-15	Will need extensive modification to be valid.
16-20	Must modify most items and procedures.
21-25	Appropriate with specific modifications.
26-30	Appropriate for use with this student without modification.

Remember that the TEC process provides you with documentation that supports your evaluation and placement decisions, particularly regarding potential compliance issues. Therefore, the more detail and explanation you provide, the more useful the TEC will be as a resource for you and other district personnel.

Section 3 Content

Document your analysis of the content of the test by considering the fourteen questions under “Content.” You will need to review the test manual and descriptions of norming and standardization procedures to answer these questions. Your team should include resource personnel from the particular ethnic or cultural community as the student under consideration.

The TEC asks your team to rate the degree to which the instrument, without modifications, addresses areas of known test bias that can affect its validity and reliability for specific populations. This includes questions to consider related to the content of the test instrument. Place a checkmark in the appropriate column under “Degree of Applicability” from [I agree completely] Yes (5) to [I don’t agree at all] No (1), in answer to the question. If answering “Yes” to any item, make notes in the “Comment” section regarding any modifications you will make to the instrument, your administration procedures, or other test activities that will address the question. Add notes concerning any special circumstances that will assist others using the instrument. If answering “No” to any item, make notes in the “Comment” section regarding your student’s abilities or scores from language tests that support your response. Information about the student’s language proficiency and language issues related to this test instrument will be useful during a compliance review or service plan evaluation as well as helpful for other evaluators wanting to use this instrument.

Content	Degree of Content Applicability				
	Agree			Don’t Agree	
Issues to consider:	5	4	3	2	1
1. Is the student’s ethnic and cultural group part of the sample?					
2. Is the experience level necessary for success on this instrument directly related to the assessment objectives?					
3. Given the student’s cultural and experiential background, do any illustrations on this instrument					

represent unfamiliar or misleading content?					
4. Is the student's socioeconomic group part of the sample?					
5. Is the student's language or dialect group part of the sample?					
6. Is the specific focus of concern included in the test?					
7. Are the questions in the test familiar to the student?					
8. Given the student's cultural and linguistic background, do any items on this instrument represent unfamiliar or misleading content?					
9. Does the student have experience with the items illustrated?					
10. Does this instrument rely heavily on receptive and expressive English language ability?					
11. Has the student's level and rate of acculturation been identified?					
12. Will the results of this instrument yield instructionally meaningful information?					
13. Does the research or manual for this instrument report any differences in performance related to sociocultural or linguistic background?					
14. Does the student have experience with the tasks and processes used?					
Column Totals					
Applicability of Unmodified Content to Student/Group:				Applicability Score	

Total the scores in each column, i.e. all the 5's, all the 4's, etc. Then add these points together and put the total in the box labeled "Applicability Score."

Score Range	Degree of Content Applicability
14-26	Not appropriate for use with this student.
27-37	Will need extensive modification to be valid.
38-48	Must modify most items and procedures.
49-59	Appropriate with specific modifications.
60-70	Appropriate for use with this student without modification.

Section 4 Format & Procedures

Document your analysis of the language of the test by considering the eight questions under “Format & Procedures”. You will need to review the test manual and descriptions of norming and standardization procedures to answer these questions. Your team should include resource personnel from the particular ethnic or cultural community as the student under consideration.

The TEC asks your team to rate the degree to which the instrument, without modifications, addresses areas of known test bias that can affect its validity and reliability for specific populations. This includes questions to consider related to the format and procedures used during the administration of the test or screening. Place a checkmark in the appropriate column under “Degree of Applicability” from [I agree completely] Yes (5) to [I don’t agree at all] No (1), in answer to the question. If answering “Yes” to any item, make notes in the “Comment” section regarding any modifications you will make to the instrument, your administration procedures, or other test activities that will address the question. Add notes concerning any special circumstances that will assist others using the instrument. If answering “No” to any item, make notes in the “Comment” section regarding your student’s abilities or scores from language tests that support your response. Information about the student’s language proficiency and language issues related to this test instrument will be useful during a compliance review or service plan evaluation as well as helpful for other evaluators wanting to use this instrument.

Format & Procedures	Degree of Format Applicability				
	Agree	Agree	Agree	Don’t Agree	Don’t Agree
Issues to consider:	5	4	3	2	1
1. Is the testing environment and situation appropriate for this student’s cultural background?					
2. Is the testing environment and situation appropriate for this student’s linguistic background?					
3. Does the instrument demand an understanding of directions beyond the current capacity of the					

student?					
4. Does the instrument demand a level of reading and readiness preskills beyond the current capacity of the student?					
5. Does the instrument demand an understanding of questioning procedures beyond the current capacity of the student?					
6. Does the instrument demand an understanding of answer selection and marking procedures beyond the current capacity of the student?					
7. Does the instrument demand a level of writing and readiness preskills beyond the current capacity of the student?					
8. Does the student have experience with the format and procedures used?					
Column Totals					
Applicability of Unmodified Procedures to Student/Group:				Applicability Score	

Total the scores in each column, i.e. all the 5's, all the 4's, etc. Then add these points together and put the total in the box labeled "Applicability Score."

Score Range	Degree of Format Applicability
8-13	Not appropriate for use with this student.
14-20	Will need extensive modification to be valid.
21-27	Must modify most items and procedures.
28-34	Appropriate with specific modifications.
35-40	Appropriate for use with this student without modification.

Section 5 Statistics

This section includes questions to consider related to the format and administration procedures of the test instrument. Place a checkmark in the appropriate column under “Degree of Applicability” from [I agree completely] Yes (5) to [I don’t agree at all] No (1), in answer to the question. If answering “yes” to any item, make notes in the “comment” column regarding any modifications you will make to the instrument, your administration procedures, or other test activities that will address the specific question. Add notes concerning any special circumstances that will assist others using the instrument. If answering “no” to any item, make notes in the “comment” column regarding student’s abilities or scores from other sources that support your response. Information about the standardization and characteristics of this student’s population in regard to this test instrument will be useful during a compliance review or service plan evaluation as well as helpful for other evaluators wanting to use this instrument.

Statistics	Degree of Applicability				
	Yes				No
Issues to consider:	5	4	3	2	1
1. Has this instrument been standardized on a large enough sample from this student’s specific sociocultural group to warrant reliance on the norms or criterion levels?					
2. Has this instrument been validated for the specific purpose for which it is being considered for this student?					
3. Are the validity and reliability measures within acceptable limits for this particular cultural population?					
4. Has this instrument been standardized on a large enough sample from this student’s specific linguistic/dialectical group to warrant reliance on the norms or criterion levels?					
5. Are the validity and reliability measures within acceptable limits for this particular linguistic/dialectical population?					

Column Totals									
Applicability of Unmodified Procedures to Student/Group:							Applicability Score		

Total the scores in each column, i.e. all the 5's, all the 4's, etc. Then add these points together and put the total in the box labeled "Statistical Application Score."

Score Range	Degree of Statistical Applicability
5-10	Not appropriate for use with this student.
11-15	Will need extensive modification to be valid.
16-20	Must modify specific items and procedures.
21-25	Appropriate for use with this student without modification.

Section 6 Comments

This section provides an opportunity for the examiner to summarize concerns about the test instrument, testing procedures, and general remarks about specific assessment issues in relation to a specific student population or speech/language issue. Add explanations and possible solutions for specific student or testing issues as appropriate. A resource file of the comments can be developed. A resource file of the comments generated should be kept available for instructional support teams and multidisciplinary teams who may use specific standardized tests with particular groups of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. A copy of the TEC should be attached to the test after administration as documentation of sociocultural considerations. Record the date reviewed and the names of the evaluators. A file of all tests reviewed, notes on the procedures followed, and documentation of recommended modifications in content, language, or administration, should be kept available as a resource at the building and district level.

Section 7 Summary Notes on Particular Tests

The resource file of the various checklists generated should be kept available for instructional support teams and multidisciplinary teams that may use specific standardized tests with particular groups of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. A number of summary table forms are included in this manual to assist with these resource files.

1. Name of Test:							
Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation
Comments on test							

Enter the name of each test being used and evaluated on the first line of the summary form. Enter the four applicability scores in the appropriate spaces: Language, Content, Format, and Statistics. Add the interpretation of this score in the appropriate box. Additional information including the type of modifications to the instrument deemed necessary should be put in the “Comments on test” section of this table.

TEST EVALUATION CHECKLIST

TEST INSTRUMENT:					
Student Background Information	Comments				
Culture(s):					
Language(s):					
Acculturation Level:					
Experience:					
Other factors:					
Language					Degree of Applicability
					Yes
					No
Issues to consider:					5
					4
					3
					2
					1
1. Is the English proficiency necessary for successfully completing the instrument beyond the present academic language of the student?					
2. Does this instrument employ English vocabulary that is colloquial, regional, or unfamiliar to the student?					
3. Does this instrument rely heavily on receptive and expressive English language ability?					
4. Is there a parallel form of the instrument available in this student's native language or dialect?					
5. If so, are all of the items equivalent in difficulty and intent to the English version?					
6. Does the student have experience with the academic language and academic tasks required?					
Column Totals					
Applicability of Unmodified Content to Student/Group:					Applicability Score

Content	Degree of Applicability				
	Yes			No	
Issues to consider:	5	4	3	2	1
1. Is the student's ethnic and cultural group part of the sample?					
2. Is the experience level necessary for success on this instrument directly related to the assessment objectives?					
3. Given the student's cultural and experiential background, do any illustrations on this instrument represent unfamiliar or misleading content?					
4. Is the student's socioeconomic group part of the sample?					
5. Is the student's language or dialect group part of the sample?					
6. Is the specific focus of concern included in the test?					
7. Are the questions in the test familiar to the student?					
8. Given the student's cultural and linguistic background, do any items on this instrument represent unfamiliar or misleading content?					
9. Does the student have experience with the items illustrated?					
10. Does this instrument rely heavily on receptive and expressive English language ability?					
11. Has the student's level and rate of acculturation been identified?					
12. Will the results of this instrument yield instructionally meaningful information?					
13. Does the research or manual for this instrument report any differences in performance related to sociocultural or linguistic background?					
14. Does the student have experience with the tasks and processes used?					
Column Totals					
Applicability of Unmodified Content to Student/Group:				Applicability Score	

Format & Procedures	Degree of Applicability				
	Yes				No
Issues to consider:	5	4	3	2	1
1. Is the testing environment and situation appropriate for this student's cultural background?					
2. Is the testing environment and situation appropriate for this student's linguistic background?					
3. Does the instrument demand an understanding of directions beyond the current capacity of the student?					
4. Does the instrument demand a level of reading and readiness preskills beyond the current capacity of the student?					
5. Does the instrument demand an understanding of questioning procedures beyond the current capacity of the student?					
6. Does the instrument demand an understanding of answer selection and marking procedures beyond the current capacity of the student?					
7. Does the instrument demand a level of writing and readiness preskills beyond the current capacity of the student?					
8. Does the student have experience with the format and procedures used?					
Column Totals					
Applicability of Unmodified Procedures to Student/Group:	Applicability Score				

Statistics	Degree of Applicability				
	Yes			No	
Issues to consider:	5	4	3	2	1
1. Has this instrument been standardized on a large enough sample from this student's specific sociocultural group to warrant reliance on the norms or criterion levels?					
2. Has this instrument been validated for the specific purpose for which it is being considered for this student?					
3. Are the validity and reliability measures within acceptable limits for this particular cultural population?					
4. Has this instrument been standardized on a large enough sample from this student's specific linguistic/dialectical group to warrant reliance on the norms or criterion levels?					
5. Are the validity and reliability measures within acceptable limits for this particular linguistic/dialectical population?					
Column Totals					
Applicability of Unmodified Procedures to Student/Group:	Applicability Score				

COMMENTS:

Date Reviewed: _____

Evaluators: _____



Strategies for Gathering Information

Information discussed in this section includes several assessment techniques, with emphasis on specific adaptations needed to develop meaningful instructional information for diverse students. The discussion covers as part of assessment the collection of information from existing records, interviews, observations, testing, work sampling, and analytic teaching. Although mention is made of technical assessment procedures and theories, the emphasis remains on gathering instructionally meaningful information and the adaptation of assessment techniques to address the special sociocultural backgrounds of diverse students. The assessment of sociocultural factors that contribute to learning and behavior problems in different academic or socioemotional areas receives special attention. As discussed by de Valenzuela and Cervantes and citing the 1991 American Psychological Association Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, “if the normative population does not apply to the child, if the test items are culturally or linguistically inappropriate, or if the test must be modified during administration, then it is unethical to use standardized test scores to qualify that student to receive special education services.”²

This type of assessment provides information about the student's current status, the task, the setting, and the efficacy of instructional strategies used. Teacher-made criterion-referenced tests are a common example of informal assessment. While formal tests include a broad range of items from a general curriculum area and use few test items to measure each specific skill, informal assessment devices focus on one or more sub-skills within a curricular area in an attempt to provide a more comprehensive assessment.³

Review of Existing School Records

A review of existing school records can be very revealing, though with many culturally diverse students this information may be incomplete or inaccurate. Points to remember in looking at existing records are:

- What is the language(s) of the home?
- What is the student's language proficiency in the home language? In the English language, if different from home language?
- What is the student's cultural background?
- What are the child-rearing practices of the student's family culture?
- How many years has the student been in the United States? The Community? The School?
- What unusual trauma or stress has the student experienced in getting to the United States?
- How well has the student adjusted to the mainstream culture?
- How well has the student adjusted to the school culture?
- What are the student's previous experiences with schooling?
- How much time does the student spend in interacting with mainstream peers?
- How much time does the student spend in interacting with cultural and linguistic peers?

²Baca & Cervantes, 2003

³ McLoughlin & Lewis, 1986

- What do the student's parents say about the student compared to his or her siblings?
- What is the student's health and developmental history?
- What is the student's response to previous instruction?
- How well does the student perform in various instructional situations?
- What is the student's response to ESL/Bilingual instruction?
- How well does the student perform in various subject areas?
- What changes in the student's performance have occurred over time (e.g., different subjects, schools, and teachers)?
- What are the student's academic and behavioral patterns in and out of the school setting?
- What significant differences have been observed in the student's performance compared to his or her cultural and linguistic peers?
- How well does the student see and hear?

A complete review of various student school records--official course grades, scores, and anecdotal records--can provide useful information about the student, particularly in regard to instructional history. Unfortunately, these records are not always comprehensive, consistent, or even organized meaningfully. Education professionals reviewing student records must interpret grades and scores in relation to other information about the student that may not be available. Also, anecdotal records may vary in subjectivity depending on the experience, background, knowledge, and training of the person who wrote the report.

As with the other assessment techniques, it is important to have specific assessment questions in mind rather than approaching the task in a random, haphazard manner. Clear assessment questions about the student's learning and behavior problems that need to be addressed are a prerequisite to the examination of school records. When available records cannot answer these questions adequately, the teacher will have a better idea about additional information that needs to be obtained. Wiederholt, Hammill, and Brown suggest questions to ask about the information in school records. These may be summarized as follows: (a) is the information current? (b) Is it reliable? (c) Are there any discrepancies in the information? (d) Are there consistent patterns across the available information?⁴ Other related questions are: (a) how familiar was the person who completed the report with the student's culture and language? (b) Was the student's language proficiency assessed in both languages and how recent was the assessment?

A review of existing records is an appropriate initial action for concerned professionals when assessing diverse students and should be designed to answer a comprehensive set of questions. Information essential to planning further assessment and instruction of diverse students may be found in these records.

One of the most important factors to consider before proceeding with the assessment process is the student's cultural and linguistic background. This is fundamental to all other elements of the assessment process, and it is a prerequisite for ascertaining language proficiency and level of acculturation. For example, a teacher may think that Maria is Hispanic because of her name and physical appearance. However, an examination of the records may reveal that she comes from a Central American Indian tribe in a rural area of Nicaragua. This information should raise several potential assessment concerns, including the language she speaks, the most dominant language in

⁴ Wiederholt, Hammill, & Brown, 1983

her home, whether she has been through physical or chemical warfare or has undergone unusual stress in her migration to the United States, her cultural background and the child-rearing practices in her culture, and the reaction of her cultural group to acculturation situations in Nicaragua. If the anecdotal record contains nothing about the student's background, it is critical to obtain this information immediately. Siblings, parents, or other community members may be interviewed to collect this information.

Other important information to obtain from existing records is information that allows educators to make tentative decisions about the student's level of acculturation. This information can be ascertained by examining (a) the student's length of time in the United States and in the current community, (b) the amount of interaction with cultural peers vis-à-vis mainstream peers, (c) ethnicity or national origin, and (d) language proficiency in both languages.

Unless the student is completely new to the school system, information related to language screening should be in existing records. Sometimes only information regarding the student's English language proficiency is available. In school districts with bilingual or ESL education programs, there is usually a screening procedure to determine if the student needs bilingual or ESL instruction. In many school districts, this instrument is the Language Assessment Scales (LAS).⁵ The LAS is available in English and Spanish; some districts have translated the instrument into other languages. Some districts are developing comparable instruments in specific target languages, e.g., the Russian Language Assessment Tool (RLAT).⁶ However, a particular diverse student may have been assessed with the LAS or another language screening instrument in English only. As discussed previously, it is crucial to instructional planning to identify the student's other language abilities. Therefore, the examiner needs to examine the existing records for evidence of the student's other sociolinguistic abilities. If this information does not exist, it must be determined through other assessment techniques, for example with the CLIC or through the interview process.

Interviews

Another technique for gathering information is the interview. There are various considerations when conducting cross-cultural interviews. As with any assessment technique, it is important to have a clear purpose before proceeding. The teacher and other professionals conducting the interview must understand clearly what information is to be ascertained, how it should be obtained, and why it is needed. In addition, the interviewer should record the information unobtrusively and should have a plan for dealing with any unusual reactions or answers. Teachers, parents, students, social workers, nurses, and paraprofessionals may be involved in the interview process. Indeed, varying the participants in the structured interview may result in more meaningful information related to the student's instructional needs. It is also important to vary the location and format of the interview, especially when any of the participants are not from the mainstream culture or have limited English proficiency.

Interviews can be very useful assessment techniques for examining the needs of culturally and linguistically different students. Their effectiveness, however, depends upon the skill of the person who conducts the interview. The interviewer must be familiar with the cultural and linguistic background of the student in order to determine whether a student's behaviors are

⁵ DeAvila & Duncan, 1991

⁶ Stern & Collier, 1999

culturally or linguistically appropriate. If the interviewer is fluent in the student's and parents' native language, these interviews will be more informative and meaningful for subsequent instruction. However, this is not always possible, especially when working with those who speak neither English nor Spanish. Interpreters may facilitate the interview process. In addition, it is important that the interviewer is sensitive to the nuances of cross-cultural communication and interaction.

Some school districts employ special bilingual community liaison personnel to make home visits and to conduct interviews with non-English speaking parents. This approach can facilitate the collection of assessment information; however, it is important that the liaison is trained thoroughly in the techniques and rationale for obtaining information unobtrusively and in a manner that is culturally appropriate. If the interview is not conducted in an appropriate and comprehensive manner, the result may be information of little instructional value and the possible alienation of the family. The results of cross-cultural interviews (if they are conducted appropriately) can provide meaningful information such as:

- a) Parents' perceptions about the student's behavior, developmental history, and upbringing
- b) Family perception and treatment of the student in the home
- c) Parents' perception of the source of the student's learning and behavior problems ⁷

The basic elements for cross-cultural interviews or verbal exchanges include:

- Nonverbal reflection
- Verbal reflection
- Cultural comfort zone.

Nonverbal reflection refers to the interviewing technique of adjusting to the body language and gestures of the person who is being interviewed, though it should not be a mirror copy or obvious imitation. For example, if the person addressed is seated in a particular manner, the interviewer should assume a similar position. If the person interviewed uses many hand gestures, the interviewer should also use hand gestures. If the person addressed avoids eye contact as a sign of respect, the interviewer should try to decrease eye contact.

Verbal reflection refers to adapting one's tone of voice, intonation, latency, and rate of speech to that of the person who is addressed. For example, if the respondent speaks slowly and deliberately, the interviewer should avoid using rapid, excited speech. Tone, intonation, latency, and rate of speech convey different meanings in different cultures. Therefore, an interviewer should listen carefully to the patterns used by the respondent and should reflect them as much as possible.

Latency refers to the amount of time between the utterances of one person and those of another and can convey different meanings in different cultures. Spanish and English speakers tend to have rather short latency periods under certain circumstances (particularly during an argument or other excited exchange). American Indian cultures tend to equate latency with degree of respect and may have long pauses between one person's comment and another's response. In such a

⁷ Hammill, 1987

situation, an interviewer who asks a question and then asks another immediately after the response indicates little or no respect for the person's answer.

Cultural comfort zone refers to the awareness of one's own culture and sensitivity to the culture of the other person in the conversation. Awareness of one's cultural comfort zone includes not sitting or standing too close or too far away from the other person, not touching the person to whom one is speaking unless it is appropriate, responding to any signs of discomfort on the part of the respondent, and asking for clarification regarding the other person's discomfort or how to improve the situation. The interviewer should follow the question outline illustrated in Table 8, Cross-Cultural Interview, providing probes as necessary, and allowing the respondent plenty of time to respond. As shown in the sample interview, the interviewer is gathering information from Juan's parent about Juan's cultural and linguistic background, previous school experience, sociolinguistic development, and learning style. The interviewer is also gathering information that will assist in determining Juan's level of acculturation and degree of adjustment to American culture and society in addition to his response to the culture and environment of the school.

The information from this interview would be used to supplement the information gathered from a review of existing records in an attempt to estimate Juan's level of acculturation and to identify the cultural and sociolinguistic factors that must be addressed in greater detail during the assessment process. The information collected about Juan's experience and his response to the school environment and learning style can be used immediately by the classroom teacher in modifying Juan's instructional plan. An observation of his response to these modifications would then be appropriate, especially as related to earlier observations.

Table 8 Cross-Cultural Interview

For how long have you and your family lived in this community? Tell me about how you come to live in this community.

- A. Probe: Did you come here because of job/family/other?
- B. Probe: How did you decide to move from where you lived before?
- II. How has Juan adjusted to living in this community?
 - A. Probe: What problems has he had with the move from _____?
 - B. Probe: How does he feel about leaving your previous home?
 - C. Probe: What does he miss about his previous home/community?
 - D. Probe: What does he enjoy about this new community?
 - E. Probe: How does he compare to your other children in adjustment?
- III. Tell me about Juan's friends.
 - A. Probe: Does Juan play with children in this neighborhood?
 - B. Probe: What are they like compared to Juan?
 - C. Probe: What languages do they speak while playing?
 - D. Probe: With whom does Juan spend the most time? Tell me about them. How do they compare to your other children's playmates?
- IV. What languages do you speak at home?
 - A. Probe: What language do you use during dinner?
 - B. How do you decide what language to use?
- V. Tell me about Juan's previous school experiences.
 - A. Probe: Did Juan like being in school before?
 - B. Probe: How did he do? What were his favorite subjects?

- C. Probe: Tell me about Juan's attendance.
- VI. Tell me what you think would help Juan be successful in school.
 - A. Probe: When Juan does something you like or don't like, what do you do?
 - B. Probe: When you want to teach Juan how to do something, what do you do?
- VII. Tell me about Juan's early childhood development.
 - Probe: How does he compare to your other children?

Observation

Another technique/strategy for gathering information for planning the interventions is observation. A clear understanding of concerns about the student's behavior or performance is a prerequisite to effective observation. As in the interview technique, it is helpful to have predetermined questions that are to be answered as a means of analyzing the results of the observation, although there are situations when this information may bias the observation. In some circumstances, it is better to observe the student's interactions and behaviors without reference to prior information regarding the teacher's concern. In any observation, however, what is seen as noteworthy is highly subjective; the background, training, and preparation of the observer become a significant factor in the accuracy and usefulness of the observation.

Observation can be an appropriate assessment technique for examining the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. It is highly dependent upon the skill of the examiner who must be familiar with the cultural and linguistic background of the student. When observing student behavior, the observer should know what is culturally or linguistically appropriate for that particular student.

There are also cultural pitfalls that must be avoided when making observations. A structured observation can provide instructionally meaningful information because it is the one assessment technique that permits evaluation within a natural environment. Just as the nature of the student's culture and the nature of school culture are a part of that natural environment, the observer must exercise caution when interpreting observational data. For example, a Navajo student may be observed looking at the floor every time the teacher speaks to him. If the observer knows that this behavior is culturally appropriate as a sign of respect and attention, the act of looking at the floor will not be misinterpreted as an indication of disrespect, defiance, low self-esteem or inattention. If an observer sees an Eskimo girl looking surprised (e.g., raising her eyebrows) when the teacher asks her a question, he might think she did not know the answer, or that she was not familiar with what had been asked. However, an observer familiar with the Eskimo culture knows that raising one's eyebrows is a way of giving a positive response (i.e., saying 'yes'). In many cases, it may be difficult to employ an observer from the same cultural and linguistic background as the student. However, the successful use of this technique requires that the observer is someone who is sensitive to and knowledgeable about the student's culture. In addition, a videotape of the student's behavior in the classroom or playground environment may serve as a basis for discussion by a multidisciplinary cross-cultural team who can address the student's behavior from a variety of perspectives.

The observation focuses on several particular concerns. It provides information about the diverse learner's response to the learning environment in the classroom as well as information about his experiential background, cultural and sociolinguistic development, and learning style. The key elements of the observation are (a) an adequate length of time; (b) an activity which provides comprehensive information about the student's performance; (c) a clear understanding

of the content, strategies, and setting of the activity; and (d) a comprehensive description of the observed behavior. The information from the observation, together with information from existing records and previous interviews of the student's parents enable the observer to draw several conclusions about the student's cultural and background experience, sociolinguistic development, and cognitive learning style. For example, the observer might conclude that the student had basic interpersonal communication skills in English but limited use of cognitive academic language proficiency in English and in Hmong, and, that he responded well when given concrete examples and demonstrations. Table 9 provides an example of a cross-cultural observation. An additional element of the observation may be an examination of the student's work sample.

Table 9 Cross-Cultural Observation

Student: Ba Vang

Grade: 3rd

Teacher: Ms. Hartley

Observer: Ms. Homer

Date: 10/8

Time of day: Morning

Length of observation: 45 minutes

Environment - There were 20 students seated at separate desks placed in clusters around the room. There are several learning centers in the room and the students have decorated the room with materials and pictures appropriate to harvest celebrations.

Activity - Students were working independently at their desks while Ms. Hartley had a group of six students including Ba gathered around a table in the "science center" with a number of globes representing star positions and planets as well as an ephemeris of the current night sky. After positioning the globes, the students returned to their seats to work on a drawing and worksheet about the night sky while another small group came into the science area.

Content - Ms. Hartley asked the students to look at the ephemeris and then use the models of planets and moon to represent where these would be in relation to Earth that night. This was part of their regular 3rd grade science lesson on the Solar System.

Strategies - Ms. Hartley was very positive and supportive using praise and touch to reinforce the students' achievements with the lesson. She had also reviewed the names of the globes and their location on the ephemeris before having the students construct the model.

Setting - This small group was located in the room's science center away from the other students and partially screened from them. All of the students were standing around the table which held the globes.

Observed Behavior - Ba said, "Ms. Hartley, it is a lot of ball," Ba looked at the globes and touched them, but soon his attention seemed to wander and he started trying to get the attention of his cousin in the other section of the room. When Ms. Hartley called his name and asked him to move one of the globes into position, he looked at her and the globes, but did not touch the correct one. He smiled and shrugged. One of the other students asked Ms. Hartley if he could move the globe, as he knew which one and where to place it in relation to the Earth globe. Ms. Hartley asked the student to assist Ba in moving the globe. The student took one of Ba's hands and placed it on the correct globe, and then both moved the globe into place. When Ms. Hartley asked the student why he had not just told Ba where the globe went, he replied that Ba did not understand him very well. Ba did not speak during this lesson, although he did go over to his cousin after the activity and talk to him in Hmong before the cousin went over to participate in the science activity. When Ba was in his seat, he held his pencil and looked at his worksheet, then got up and looked over the partition at his cousin in the science center. When his cousin came out after the completion of the globe activity, he spoke to Ba and motioned him back to his seat. Ba returned to his seat and began to draw small circles on the paper and then colored the space around the circles black.

Summary - Ba has not been in this country very long and is evidently unfamiliar with globes and other representations of the objects in the sky. He uses English in social language, but did not respond to the teachers directions in English. He appeared to grasp the general idea of what needed to be done on the worksheet, but still could not associate his own drawing of a nighttime sky to that which was required. He appeared curious about the lesson and wanted to know more. He may never have seen symbols and models of sky objects before. His performance improved whenever someone gave him concrete or physical examples and guidance.

Work Samples

Analysis of students' work samples is a very meaningful assessment technique for instructional purposes. Samples of student work or production may be collected for any subject or content area as well as student's speech, language, and fine or gross motor performance. Samples may be examined directly in a variety of instructional situations. The analysis of work samples may be informal (e.g., noting the presence or absence of various letters or shapes) or formal (e.g., more systematic analyses such as the Reading Miscue Inventory⁸, or Formal Reading Inventory⁹).

As with other assessment techniques, knowledge of the student's presenting problem and concomitant assessment questions are essential elements of this technique. Work samples can be highly structured or informal depending upon the teacher's needs and circumstances. However,

⁸ Goodman & Burke, 1972

⁹ Wiederholt, 1985

familiarity with and sensitivity to the student's cultural and linguistic background are crucial. For example, if the teacher collects examples of the student's writing and notes that it shows peculiarities in shape and directionality, the teacher should determine the kind of orthography the student used in the native language. The student's use of orthographic characteristics from the native language may continue to pose problems when writing English.

However, it is instructionally meaningful for the teacher to know that this problem is due to a learned behavior and not to a possible perceptual problem. The correct instructional response, then, is to assist the student in transferring and transforming orthographic skills into a more appropriate format. Another example of cross-cultural differences in work samples might be seen in the syntax the student uses in language arts activities. For example, rather than write, "A chair is something that is used in a house," a German student might write, "A chair is something what is used in a house," because of differences between the two words in German. A Navajo student may write or say "Nell my name" rather than "Nell is my name," as this is the direct translation from Navajo. Also a Navajo may say "Man how called?" which is a direct transliteration of "What is that man's name?" in Navajo. In Czechoslovakia, people do not say "The boy is in the sun (shine)." Rather, the expression is, "The boy is on the sun." These and other linguistic differences between English and other languages may pose considerable problems for diverse students in written and spoken classroom work.

Different performance seen on students' work samples may also be due to different instructional experiences. For example, a teacher referred a student to a child study team because of consistent and recurring poor performance in spelling even though this student, who was Hispanic, spoke English as well as her peers. An examination of spelling work samples revealed substitutions such as "through" for "tough," but words such as "rough" and "tongue" were never substituted for "tough." A thorough analysis of work samples led to the conclusion, verified later by a call to her previous school, that she had been in a spelling program which emphasized the use of configuration (i.e., the shape of words) as a strategy. In addition, a search of her health history indicated that she needed glasses, but had not had a new prescription in years. This student could not see clearly enough to distinguish individual letters and was using the configuration strategy to approximate the correct spelling.

If the teacher is not familiar with the student's cultural and linguistic background, student work samples should be examined with the assistance of someone who is sensitive to the student's background. This is a situation where a teacher assistance or child intervention team may be helpful. The concerned teacher could share work samples with the team members and a group discussion may lead to a more comprehensive evaluation of the student's performance. Additional questions about the student's work may be raised and a plan developed for collecting further work samples. Teachers must be aware of linguistic and cultural substitutions or modifications and the possible lack of familiarity with the task or terminology required. These two areas, familiarity and transfer, may influence the student's work samples in any curriculum area.

Analytic Teaching

Analytic teaching, sometimes labeled diagnostic or prescriptive teaching, involves the observation of student behavior in the learning of particular tasks subdivided into their constituent components. The teacher determines the tasks and components based on assessment questions concerning student abilities. For example, if the teacher is unsure of the student's

ability to tell time, she asks the student to perform a sequence of increasingly difficult tasks related to telling time. The teacher instructs the student to count to 12; count by fives; give the definition of a clock; name its parts; and other specific sequential tasks.

During analytic teaching, it is important for the teacher to note what the student can and cannot do in regard to the task. In addition, the teacher notes cultural and linguistic differences, and addresses these by varying the sequence or nature of the analytic tasks. Analytic teaching analyzes a student's behavior during ongoing instructional situations. The procedure, outlined in Table 10, Steps in Analytic Teaching, gathers instructionally meaningful information used to form hypotheses about the nature of the student's learning and behavior problems, in order to determine subsequent steps in assessment or instruction and to monitor student progress.

Table 10 Steps in Analytic Teaching

1. Identify the current instructional condition or baseline performance.
2. Identify an activity that will assess the student's problem(s).
3. Identify the steps necessary to successfully complete the activity.
4. Construct a sequence and completion checklist based upon the steps.
5. Construct a self-analysis checklist based on this sequence for the student to complete.
6. Develop and implement an instructional activity that incorporates the assessment steps and sequence.
7. Observe the student during this activity, noting the results, and have the student complete his self-analysis.
8. Analyze the results obtained from the checklists.
9. Identify and select a new instructional strategy to evaluate.
10. Implement the new instructional strategy for a brief period.
11. Continue to regularly assess the student's performance.
12. Implement a second new instructional strategy if desired.
13. Continue to regularly assess the student's performance
14. Plot the student's performance data for the baseline and the intervention phases on a graph.
15. Compare performance across the interventions. (Steps 1-8 make-up the baseline phase and steps 9-13 are the intervention phases)
16. The teacher should change only one element at a time in intervention. This identifies the instructional factor that produced change in the student's performance.

The steps can be summarized as:

- (a) Selection and identification of the activity
- (b) Task analysis
- (c) Determination of the next stage of analysis based upon the results of the observed behavior.

The following description of a lesson in spelling is an example of how analytic teaching informally assesses a student's cognitive learning style. The first step in the analytic approach is to identify an activity in which the student's success or failure appears related to his approach to

the learning task. Therefore the teacher selects spelling words and outlines the steps the student needs to follow. The teacher works with the student to develop a self-checklist. The steps suggested by the student to learn the new vocabulary may be: Repeat the words as the teacher says and spells them; say them four times; try to spell them correctly without looking; check the spelling and do more practice with those incorrectly spelled.

As the student follows these steps, the teacher observes the student's attempt to learn the new vocabulary and notes the results. The teacher might indicate to the student that the activities that depend on auditory cues may not produce the best results. The teacher instructs the student to try a new approach to learning the vocabulary, such as using different rehearsal strategies. Writing the words as she says them, pausing to picture what the word means, and then writing the word down as the teacher says it out loud, are rehearsal strategies that the student will then use. The teacher then observes how the student performs with a new list of words. The teacher encourages the student to continue to use a particular learning strategy if its use improves the student's performance. The teacher suggests other strategies such as analogy or kinesthetic cues if performance does not improve. The teacher continues to assess the student's performance in these activities and to modify teaching technique if necessary. Analytic teaching is instructionally meaningful and is useful in all aspects of the curriculum, especially as a prereferral intervention activity. Interventions derived from analytic teaching assessment focus on the teaching of enabling skills, that is, sub-skills necessary to perform more complex behaviors.

Curriculum-Based Assessment

Curriculum-Based Assessment measures school skills directly and can contribute to instructional intervention team assessment. The classroom curriculum determines its content. This type of procedure is obtrusive and requires that a test or a series of tasks be added to the instructional situation.¹⁰ CBAs are teacher-made tests designed to measure directly the students' skills at specified levels; they are criterion-referenced, and they are a powerful element of collaborative consultation among the regular classroom teacher and special educators at all stages of the assessment process. The assumption that a curricular area may be divided into discrete steps or facts and that learning itself consists of the mastery of discrete elements is the foundation of CBA. If a student fails to answer a CBA test item correctly, the assumption is that he needs remedial assistance with the unmastered skills and content of the CBA item. Idol, Nevin, and Paolucci-Whitcomb discuss CBA in great detail and provide many examples from different subject areas. They have identified several steps¹¹ illustrated in Table 11, Steps in Curriculum-Based Assessment.

Table 11 Steps in Curriculum-Based Assessment

1. Sample items should be selected from the curriculum.

¹⁰ McLoughlin & Lewis, 1986

¹¹ Idol, Nevin, & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1986

2. Items should be arranged in order of difficulty.
3. Selected items should be administered as a test to the whole class.
4. The test should be repeated at least two times with different items from the same content.
5. Assessment should be conducted across several curricular levels.
6. Student performance as a class should be recorded.
7. Acceptable levels of student performance or mastery are determined which reflect the typical classroom
8. Performance should be determined. This can be accomplished by normative sampling.
9. Curriculum-Based Assessment should be conducted with individual students or groups of students immediately prior to instruction on a topic.
10. Results should be studied to determine which students have already mastered the skills targeted for instruction, which students possess sufficient pre-skills to begin instruction, and which students lack mastery of pre-skills.
11. CBA should be re-administered after instruction on the topic. Results should be analyzed to determine which students have mastered the skills and are ready to begin a new topic, which students are making sufficient progress but require more practice, and which students are making insufficient progress and require teacher modification of some aspect of instruction.
12. Instruction should be modified to reflect student performance (i.e., do not repeat mastered areas and provide more assistance in the unmastered areas).
13. CBA should be re-administered periodically throughout the year to assess long-term retention.

As illustrated in these steps, the classroom teacher may develop CBA in any subject area with which diverse students have particular difficulty (e.g., reading in English). The teacher selects sample vocabulary words and concepts from the reading materials used in the class and arranges them in order of difficulty, using the scope and sequence of the materials as a guide. The whole class takes a test using some of these words and concepts. The teacher repeats this procedure using different items from the reading materials at various levels, and records the class performance. Evaluating the average performance of the class and of reading groups within the class will determine acceptable levels of performance. The teacher may then administer the CBA to the diverse students about whom there is particular concern. Depending upon student performance on the CBA, the teacher will modify the instructional setting, strategies, or content.

Practitioners using CBA procedures must have a clear understanding of what constitutes curriculum. Curriculum is the comprehensive environment of instruction including content, instructional strategies, instructional setting, and student behaviors. Using only the content of instruction in CBA has limited value as a primary assessment technique for diverse students.

Using Interpreters and Translators

Implicit in selecting and using interpreters and translators is assuring that they receive appropriate training and preparation. The key is to provide training before student testing and to review after testing. Translating, especially in an evaluative capacity, can be a very difficult task, and usually requires training for the interpreter in all phases of assessment since the interpreter should be involved in the total assessment process including test modification. The translation of a test instrument or any other material may be checked for validity by having another bilingual person translate the non-English version text back into English. There will be slight variations, but the meaning should remain and the information collected should be meaningful.

In addition to a high level of competency in all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), the interpreter should have some understanding of student development, language variation (dialects, language domains, etc.), and cross-cultural variables. Interpreters need training in the administration of tests, including how to transmit information about role playing, how to cue a student during assessment, how to prompt for responses, and how to probe for pertinent information or responses. Training in confidentiality is also essential. The competence and expertise will vary among interpreters, but what is essential in this important position is a highly developed sense of professional responsibility.

There are several situations where instructional and assessment materials need to be translated into the native language of the student. There are two steps to consider when using interpreters or translators.

- a) Provide training
- b) Identify and implement strategies

Translation Step 1: Provide Training

All education personnel and persons working in situations where bilingual interpreting and translation is used need training and development. There are linguistic, cultural, and professional competencies which must be part of the recruitment and preparation of bilingual persons preparing to become interpreters or translators. The linguistic competencies for translators and interpreters include:

- The ability to understand and converse in L1 and L2 with a high degree of proficiency.
- The ability to understand and use reading and writing skills in L1 and L2 with a high degree of proficiency.
- The ability to say the same things in different ways.
- The ability to adjust to different levels of language usage (colloquial or more formal dialectal variations, social and academic language).
- The capacity to switch with familiarity between different types of interpretation and translation.
- The ability to retain information in memory.
- The knowledge of technical educational terminology.

- The knowledge of the culture of the language interpreted/translated.

Cultural competencies must also be an expected outcome of training and staff development for interpreters and translators. These cultural competencies include but are not limited to:

- 1) An understanding of cross-cultural interaction patterns
- 2) An ability to use cross-cultural communication strategies effectively
- 3) An understanding of subgroups within various cultures
- 4) An understanding of acceptable and expected behaviors within both C1 and C2 interactions.

There are also competencies associated with learning to perform as an education professional, including confidentiality, ethics, and expectations of the school system and other education professionals. Preparation, orientation, and training of translators and interpreters for special education assistance must include training in these competency expectations. These educational competencies include:

- 1) The ability to maintain professional conduct in all situations
- 2) The ability to maintain and to explain the need for confidentiality
- 3) The ability to remain impartial and neutral
- 4) The ability to be straightforward, to not accept an assignment beyond one's capabilities, and being able to ask for help or clarification when necessary
- 5) The capacity to display respect for the authority of the administrator or the diagnostician
- 6) The ability to work as a part of the team with the education staff.

Sometimes school districts with extensive needs for interpreting and translation have an extensive and comprehensive training program for interpreters and translators that also includes courses in child development, tests and measurements, and an orientation to educational theory. The interpreter or translator also needs to learn to work well with the school psychologist, diagnostician, special educator, and other education professionals he or she may be assisting. These comprehensive interpreter or translator training programs are usually integrated into career ladder and professional development programs which prepare bilingual and ESL certificated personnel.

There are also training needs related to preparing education professionals of all backgrounds to work with an interpreter or translator. This training is usually offered through in-service staff development programs and is sometimes part of a general district professional development plan.

The school professional working with an interpreter or translator needs the ability to plan and implement pre- and post-diagnostic conferences with the interpreter or translator. He or she will need to orient and train the interpreter or translator as to the particular purpose and procedures appropriate to formal testing, interview, observations, etc., which will be carried out. The school professional also needs preparation in group and individual interaction dynamics. He or she needs to be able to establish rapport with all participants in the cross-cultural and cross-lingual interaction. This usually involves some training in cross-cultural communication techniques and

strategies. Knowledge of the methods and techniques of interpretation and translation is also useful.

School professionals about to work with an interpreter must be aware and sensitive to the kinds of information loss that is inherent in the interpretation procedure (e.g., omissions, additions, substitutions, etc.). They must have an understanding of the limitations of formal tests administered using an interpreter or translator. Given these limitations, the professional must become proficient in using observation of the student's response to testing, language, behavior and non-verbal communication.

Crosslingual Training

There are a number of special considerations for interpreters and translators. These include omissions, additions, common errors, substitutions, and transformations. Training of interpreters and translators must include how to avoid and self-correct for these problem areas when working crosslingually.

Omissions

Interpreter or translators may omit single words, phrases, or sentences. They may do this when they do not know the meaning of the words, phrases, or sentences or when the words cannot be translated. Omissions also may occur when the interpreter or translator cannot keep up with the pace of the speaker, cannot retain all the details and has forgotten what was said.

Additions

Interpreter or translators may add extra words, phrases, or entire sentences. They may do this when they wish to be more elaborate or when they editorialize. The interpreter or translator may add when they need to explain a difficult concept for which there is no equivalent in the other language.

Substitutions

Interpreter or translators may use words, phrases, or sentences other than the specified ones. They may do this when they make an error or they misunderstand the speaker. This sometimes happens when they cannot keep up with the pace of the speaker and must make up material based on the words that they have heard. The interpreter or translator may become confused about the words (e.g., homonyms) or fail to retrieve a specific word or phrase.

Transformations

Interpreter or translators may change the word order of the statement, sometimes distorting the meaning.

Errors

Some errors may occur due to unequal skill in L1 or L2. Some interpreter or translators may find it easier to interpret from L1 to L2 than from L2 to L1. Some errors may occur due to differences in style. Some interpreter or translators may change the meaning of the message through their personal style of intonation, facial expressions, and gestures.

Interpersonal Training

Training on effective interpersonal communication and sensitivity to the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the home are also important elements when preparing translators and interpreters. In planning parental involvement activities, it is important to plan around the needs of the entire family, rather than to limit the focus narrowly to the needs of the child with disabilities or the needs of the parents. In thinking about the following parent involvement activities, it is always best to assume a family systems perspective to obtain the most positive results. Education professionals should provide parents with resources by collecting brochures and booklets (in both L1 and L2) about: community resources, information concerning the various disabilities in lay-person's terms, and services for care, counseling, disability-related services, adult education and training programs, associations, and clubs. School personnel should work with community leaders concerning the community's needs and goals. They may jointly organize supportive services for families or jointly plan activities for families and make home visits. Personal contact with the whole family is very important for bridging the home/school gap.

When organizing parent meetings/workshops, education personnel should always plan for childcare and "creature comforts." Through discussion with parents, school staff can plan an optimal day of the week, time and place for the meeting. They should have a specific purpose in mind related to parent needs/goals. Parent leadership and involvement in the planning and implementation of events is critical. Examples of parent/child services are:

- * A reading center
- * A parent activity center
- * An information clearinghouse
- * A phone help line

Parents can assist in the classroom, with tutoring, with special events (fairs, shows), with the donation of time, or talent (cooking, sewing, translating, making needed classroom items). School personnel should communicate with the home and hold informal parent "conferences" often. They could send home a "good work" folder of student work products or send photographs or monthly letters reporting on class activities. Some schools send home books, tapes, or home activities to complete. Some schools have parent education workshops where parents can learn about the school. Some of these may involve role-playing interactions with administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals and school clerical/secretarial staff to increase negotiation strategies available to parents. Others may include ESL for parents.

Translation Step 2: Identify and Implement Strategies

There are strategies that make the use of translation and interpretation as effective as possible. These differ slightly in how they are used in the two main situations where translation is most likely, i.e., assessment of ELL/LEP students and conferences with ELL/LEP parents.

Assessment

Before using any standardized norm-referenced instrument, the team needs to have worked with the interpreter or translator to complete the TEC or some other evaluation of the test's reliability and validity for the particular ELL/LEP student. The interpreter or translator may assist in

identifying problem test items or elements of the procedures that may need to be modified. If the test has already been adapted for use with students of this culture or language background or has been translated into the target language (from English), the MDT members should familiarize and train the interpreter or translator to use it.

If the test has not previously been adapted/translated into the first language, the MDT will need to make sure it is done appropriately by using the specific interpreter or translator or another skilled bilingual translator. It is a good idea to have two different persons doing this task to double-check the accuracy of the translation. Be sure to have the English equivalent to follow during the testing session. Literal translations may be dangerous. For example, in one case, the interpreter or translator translated 'What's happening here?' as 'Que esta pasando?' The interpreter or translator was correct, but the question is not one a native speaker of Spanish would use to elicit a comment from a picture. As phrased in Spanish, the question meant 'What is going by?' The student correctly answered, 'Esta pasando un tren.' (A train is passing by). This response was judged as incorrect and taken as such by the assessing school professional.

The MDT or other professionals working with the interpreter or translator need to know the skill level of the interpreter or translator. Choose only the test(s) the interpreter or translator has been trained to give. Suggest the interpreter or translator gives the test(s) to two subjects at least prior to the testing date. The MDT needs to be sure that the parent has received notification indicating an interpreter or translator will be used.

Briefing

The school personnel and the interpreter or translator should meet prior to the testing to review the general purpose of the testing session, and discuss which tests will be administered. During this meeting, the group should discuss test validity and reliability. Care should be taken to avoid unnecessary rephrasing or radically changing test items. The Test Evaluation Checklist may be used to document the necessary changes planned. Interpreter or translators must also watch their use of gestures, voice patterns, and body language so as not to inadvertently provide cues. Information about the student to be tested should be discussed as well as results of the English or other previous testing, if any was done. The interpreter or translator must receive training in how and when to document behavior. Allow the interpreter or translator time to organize the test materials, re-read any test procedures, and ask for clarification, if needed, on any issue.

Interaction

During the actual testing situation, a professional staff member must be present during testing. The interpreter or translator should immediately ask questions as they arise. The professional staff member writes down observations of the student during assessment, and observes the interpreter or translator during the testing watching: body language of the interpreter or translator, use of too many words, use of too many instructions, overusing reinforcement (type and frequency), giving cues to or prompting the student, making sure the interpreter or translator takes notes.

Debriefing

Following the assessment, the professional and the interpreter or translator should meet and discuss the student's responses and errors. The interpreter or translator should give observations of the student, but not try to say what is wrong with the student. The interpreter or translator tells the professional what the student did and said as well as what the correct response was. The professional must be careful not to use professional jargon that the interpreter or translator may

not understand. For tests that have already been appropriately normed/adapted to the target language/cultural group, the interpreter or translator assists in the scoring of the tests. The professional and interpreter or translator discusses any difficulties relative to the interpreter or translator process. It is important to remember that a translated/interpreted test loses its validity/reliability. The objective is to determine, as best as possible, the minimum general skills level of the student. However, it is more important to define areas of strength and weakness that are contributing to the learning process. At best, any test only samples behavior to some statistically satisfactory degree of adequacy. We assume that the sampling is adequate in amount and that the sampling is representative of the area. The students on which tests of learning aptitude are used have had exposure to comparable, but not identical acculturation.

Measurement error will be present in any measurement. Only present test behavior is observed in the sampling process. Future behavior is inferred--any such inferences are presumably based upon observed behaviors. A sharp distinction is drawn between what is observed and what is inferred. The examiner herself/himself is a crucial variable. It is the examiner who decided what test to use, knows its appropriateness to the situation at hand, and is obligated to help the user of the information that is produced, in a psycho-educationally sound manner. A test just lies on the shelf; it is a person who decides whether it is relevant for the task.

Conferences and Meetings

Conferences and meetings follow the same steps: Briefing (meeting to plan the conference), Interaction (the actual conference), and Debriefing (the last meeting to discuss how the conference went). During the Briefing:

- 1) Review the format of the conference or how the meeting will actually be run.
- 2) Review the purpose for the conference.
- 3) Review the critical pieces of information that must be discussed.
- 4) Review the critical questions that need to be asked to obtain information from the parents or from others.

During the conference:

- 1) The professional and the interpreter or translator should make the conference place comfortable and non-threatening.
- 2) The conference should be kept to a small group whenever possible.
- 3) The professional, through the interpreter or translator, should introduce the parent(s) to everyone at the meeting. Each person involved should give his or her name and position and specific role in relation to the students.
- 4) The professional and interpreter or translator should arrange the seating so the parent is not isolated and can see both the interpreter or translator and the speaker.
- 5) The professional through the interpreter or translator should then state the purpose of the meeting and tell the parent about how long it will last.
- 6) The professionals should always use language that is appropriate for the parent(s). The interpreter or translator interprets all comments made by the professionals and parents.

- 7) The professional through the interpreter or translator, summarizes the conference and may also want to ask final questions, discuss follow-up and take time to reassure the parent(s).

While conducting a debriefing after the conference or meeting, the interpreter or translator and other professionals should:

- 1) Discuss the information collected.
- 2) Discuss any problems relative to the conference itself.
- 3) Discuss any problems relative to the interpreter or translator process.

Overcoming Communication Barriers

Education professionals who are not bilingual should have someone available who is when they talk to parents. They need to make an attempt to learn words, phrases, and to say something positive about the child in the family's preferred language. Professionals should also be sure that printed materials for parents are available in their preferred language. Schools should provide a sign language interpreter for parents who are deaf or hearing-impaired. All personnel involved in education should learn as much as possible about the cultures that students represent through talking with parents and other staff, reading books, attending in-service sessions, and viewing films. Family structures, values, and child-rearing practices vary greatly. Professionals should use the cultural differences as strengths rather than working at cross-purposes. Instead of lumping all groups together, district personnel must recognize the many differences that exist within groups of Hispanics, Anglos, Blacks, and Pan-Asians. Each country, each region, and most importantly, each individual has unique ways of interpreting their cultural experience. Professionals should weed out the stereotypes and prejudices that have been acquired through their own cultural roots and try to approach people individually and openly. Educators can use cultural differences to bring schools and families together. They can utilize celebrations and the special traditions that go with them as ways of learning and working together. Educators should never feel that they have to apologize for their own culture or ethnicity. Everyone has something special to contribute.

Summary Notes on Particular Tests

1. Name of Test:							
Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation
Comments on test							
2. Name of Test:							
Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation
Comments on test							
3. Name of Test:							
Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation

Comments on test

4. Name of Test:

Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation

Comments on test

5. Name of Test:

Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation

Comments on test

6. Name of Test:

Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
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Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation
Comments on test							

7. Name of Test:							
Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation
Comments on test							

8. Name of Test:							
Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation
Comments on test							

9. Name of Test:							

Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation
Comments on test							

10. Name of Test:

Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation

Comments on test

11. Name of Test:

Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation

Comments on test

12. Name of Test:

Language		Content Score		Format Score		Statistics Score	
Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation	Score	Interpretation

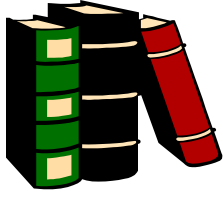
Comments on test

About the Author

Dr. Catherine Collier has over 35 years experience in cross-cultural, bilingual, and special education. She completed her Ph.D. with research into the referral of Hispanic students to special education programs. For eight years, she was a classroom teacher, resource room teacher, and diagnostician for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Arizona and Alaska. She was the director of a teacher-training program for the University of Alaska for seven years, preparing Yup'ik Eskimo paraprofessionals for certification as bilingual preschool, elementary, and special educators. For eight years, Dr. Collier worked with the BUENO Center for Multicultural Education, Research, and Evaluation at the University of Colorado, where she created and directed the Bilingual Special Education curriculum/Training project (BISECT), a nationally recognized effort. She continues to present at the annual Bilingual Special Education Institute sponsored by the BUENO Center as well as to the Bilingual School Psychology summer program sponsored by Fordham University in New York City. She was the Director of Resource and Program Development for the American Indian Science and Engineering Society as well as being a Sequoyah Fellow. She remains active in social justice issues.



Dr. Collier is the author of several books and articles on cross-cultural and multilingual special education. She works extensively with school districts on professional and program development for at-risk diverse learners. Dr. Collier provides technical assistance and process/performance evaluations to departments of education regarding programs serving diverse learners. She is the principal developer of the screening and software program “Acculturation Quick Screen” and many assessment and intervention instruments and materials. Her most recent publications are Separating Difference from Disability: Assessing Diverse Learners and Cognitive Learning Strategies for Diverse Learners, a chapter on acculturation in the new edition of Multicultural Handbook for School Psychologists (Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers) and three chapters in the fourth edition of The Bilingual Special Education Interface, published by Prentice-Hall Publishing.



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CrossCultural Developmental Education Services
1004 West 58th Lane, Ferndale WA 98248-9470
www.crosscultured.com