

Formal and Informal Assessment of Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners

Assessment Practices for Monitoring the Performance of Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners

Performance standards define a student’s academic responsibilities and, by implication, the teaching responsibilities of the school. What is done to determine whether students have lived up to their academic responsibilities? Their work is evaluated to see whether it is “good enough” by comparison with the standards.

Assessments can provide important information to help guide and inform instruction. To do so, they must be strictly aligned with standards, educational strategies, and resources. There are two main types of assessment — formal, standardized assessment, and ongoing, informal classroom assessment. Both types are essential to effective instruction.

Formal assessment in New York State consists of the standardized tests and on-demand assessments administered to all students in specific grades as part of the statewide and local district assessment programs. These examinations measure the mastery of critical skills and concepts at key developmental milestones. Individual progress is shown, but students are also compared to others in their grade.

Informal assessment consists of the evidence teachers collect in class on a continuous basis to measure the progress of their students in mastering the skills and content taught. It provides continuous feedback to students, teachers, and parents. Each student is compared only to his/her own prior level of achievement.

New York State ELA Assessment System

The new content standards are the foundation of New York’s new assessment system. Regents examinations are being revised to align them closely with the new content standards. Successful performance on all Regents examinations is the standard of achievement for all students, including LEP/ELLs. These examinations include multiple measures and more performance indicators applied to real-life or work situations. The new forms of assessment are learner-centered, knowledge-based, and responsive to the constituencies they serve. The new assessment system as a whole provides accurate information on what students know and can do.

Key Concepts:

- ◆ Performance standards
- ◆ Multiple measures
- ◆ Formal assessment
- ◆ Standardized testing
- ◆ Informal assessment
- ◆ Rubrics
- ◆ Study and test-taking skills
- ◆ Authentic assessment
- ◆ Anecdotal records
- ◆ Portfolio evaluation

*Speak of me as I am.
Nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in
malice.*

William Shakespeare

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO NOTE that a passing score on the Comprehensive Regents Examination in English is now required in order to graduate from high school.

English language learners are not exempt from this requirement for any reason.

Table 6 Matrix for Fourth-Grade Assessment in English Language Arts

SESSION 1 (45 minutes)		
Standard	Task Design	Performance Indicators
Reading for Information and Understanding	<p>Students will read a number of passages, which include texts from different genres.</p> <p><i>Students will then:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>respond to a set of multiple choice questions about each of the reading passages.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather and interpret information from children's books, magazines, etc. • Use strategies such as prior knowledge, structural and context clues, and an understanding of letter-sound relationships to get meaning from print. • Support inferences about information and ideas with reference to text features, such as vocabulary and organizational patterns.
SESSION 2 (50 minutes)		
Listening and Writing for Literary Response and Expression	<p>Students will listen to a selection read to them by the teacher. Students are encouraged to take notes during the reading of the selection.</p> <p><i>Students will then:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>write a brief explanation of quotations from the selection;</i> • <i>write a short essay interpreting a sentence from the selection;</i> • <i>choose a statement about the selection's purpose, and write a short essay explaining their choice;</i> • <i>write an extended personal response related to the selection.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and use strategies for taking notes, and organizing and categorizing information. • Recognize some features that distinguish the genres and use those features to aid comprehension. • Understand the literary elements of setting, character, plot, theme, and point of view, and compare those features to other works and to their own lives. • Use inference and deduction to understand the text. • Present personal responses to literature that make reference to the plot, characters, ideas, vocabulary, and text structure. • Explain the meaning of literary works with some attention to meaning beyond the literal level. • Observe the conventions of grammar and usage, spelling, and punctuation.
SESSION 3 (50 minutes)		
Reading and Writing for Information and Understanding	<p>Students will read two complementary sources of information on the same topic, including a map or chart.</p> <p><i>Students will then:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>write two paragraphs using structures for conveying information, such as cause and effect, similarity and difference;</i> • <i>write a short essay to clarify a sentence from the text;</i> • <i>write a short essay explaining the graphic information on the topic;</i> • <i>write an extended response that requires analysis, interpretation, and use of information from both sources.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather and interpret information from a variety of sources. • Select information appropriate to the purpose of the investigation and relate ideas from one text to another. • Select and use strategies for organizing and categorizing information. • Use strategies such as prior knowledge, structural and context clues, and an understanding of letter-sound relationships to get meaning from print. • Use a few traditional structures for conveying information, such as chronological order, cause and effect, and similarity and difference. • Use details, examples, anecdotes, or personal experience to explain or clarify information. • Include relevant information and exclude extraneous material. • Observe basic writing conventions, such as correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, as well as appropriate sentence and paragraph structures.

Table 7 Matrix for Eighth-Grade Assessment in English Language Arts

SESSION 1 (90 minutes)		
Standard	Task Design	Performance Indicators
<p>Reading for Information and Understanding -and- for Critical Analysis and Evaluation</p> <p><i>TIME: 45 MINUTES</i></p>	<p>Students will read a number of passages, which include texts from different genres.</p> <p><i>Students will then:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>respond to a set of multiple choice questions about each of the reading passages.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret and analyze information from textbooks and nonfiction books for young adults. • Analyze, interpret, and evaluate information, ideas, organization, and language from academic and nonacademic texts. • Understand that different points of view depend on the particular interests and values of the individual, and recognize those differences in perspective in text.
<p>Listening and Writing for Literary Response and Expression</p> <p><i>TIME: 45 MINUTES</i></p>	<p>Students will listen to two selections read to them by the teacher. Students are encouraged to take notes during the reading of each selection.</p> <p><i>Students will then:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>complete a chart based on the listening selections;</i> • <i>write two short essays explaining each of the selections;</i> • <i>write an extended response interpreting information from both listening selections.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a wide variety of strategies for selecting, organizing, and categorizing information. • Recognize different levels of meaning. • Produce interpretations of literary works that identify different levels of meaning, and comment on their significance and effect. • Understand that different points of view depend on the particular interests and values of the individual, and recognize those differences in perspective in presentations. • Present responses to and interpretations of literature, making reference to the literary elements found in the text and connections with personal knowledge and experience. • Use standard English effectively.
SESSION 2 (90 minutes)		
<p>Reading and Writing for Information and Understanding -and- for Literary Response and Expression</p> <p><i>TIME: 90 MINUTES</i></p>	<p>Students will read two selections of different genres (e.g., a poem and a short story, an excerpt from a play and a literary essay, etc.) on a common topic or theme.</p> <p><i>Students will then:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>complete a chart based on information from the first selection;</i> • <i>write a short essay interpreting the text, using details to explain;</i> • <i>write a second short essay interpreting the second selection, using details to explain;</i> • <i>write an extended response that requires analysis, interpretation, and use of information from both sources;</i> • <i>write an extended response related to both texts, based on personal experience or prior knowledge.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a wide variety of strategies for selecting, organizing, and categorizing information. • Organize information according to an identifiable structure, such as compare/contrast or general to specific. • Compare and synthesize information from different sources. • Understand and identify the distinguishing features of major genres and use them to aid interpretation and discussion of literature. • Identify significant literary elements and use those elements to interpret the work. • Recognize different levels of meaning. • Develop information with appropriate supporting material, such as facts, details, illustrative examples, or anecdotes. • Present responses to and interpretations of literature, making reference to the literary elements found in the text and connections with personal knowledge and experience. • Use standard English effectively.

CONSIDERATIONS for LEP/ELLs

- ✓ Provide an optimized test-taking environment that is both organized and comfortable.
- ✓ Know what NYS testing modifications are available for LEP/ELLs to maximize the students' advantage.
- ✓ Help LEP/ELLs to establish personal habits and routines that will minimize their test-taking anxiety.

In native language arts classrooms, as in English as a second language classrooms, teachers should recognize and place critical importance on developing the students' abilities to determine and apply the particular skills, strategies, and understandings implicit in the ELA assessments' design and tasks involved. The ELA performance indicators used in New York State's formal assessment system can be adapted to assess students' overall development in language arts, both in the native language and in English. In this way, native language arts and ESL programs and teachers can link students' linguistic development to performance measures that are meaningfully related to the State assessments, and that will assist limited English proficient/English language learners in achieving the ELA standards.

In addition to these assessments, the New York State Education Department has developed an Early Literacy Profile for Grades 1-3. The Early Literacy Profile is an assessment designed to provide information about students' progress in various aspects of literacy development. It consists of a set of standardized tests that are to be completed in the context of classroom life, collected at designated times of the year (October and May), and evaluated in relation to developmental scales. The dimensions described in the scales are key components of preparation for achievement of the ELA standards at the elementary level.

Tables 6, 7, and 8a/8b outline the tasks involved in all of the English language arts assessments, including the Comprehensive Regents Examination in English.

Table 8a Matrix for Comprehensive Regents Examination in English

SESSION 1 (3 hours)		
Standard	Task Design	Performance Indicators
<p>PART I</p> <p>Listening and Writing for Information and Understanding</p>	<p>Students will listen to a brief informational speech (three to five minutes) read to them by the teacher.</p> <p><i>Students will then:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>respond to a set of multiple choice questions about the speech;</i> • <i>write an extended response that requires that they interpret and analyze information presented in the speech.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret and analyze complex informational texts and presentations. • Use a combination of techniques to extract salient information from texts. • Make distinctions about the relative value of specific data, facts, and ideas. • Write research reports, feature articles, and thesis/support papers on a variety of topics. • Present a controlling idea that conveys an individual perspective and insight into the topic. • Support interpretations and decisions. • Use standard English skillfully.
<p>PART II</p> <p>Reading and Writing for Information and Understanding</p>	<p>Students will read two complementary sources of information on the same topic, including a graphic. They will be given a specific purpose for reading and responding.</p> <p><i>Students will then:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>respond to a set of multiple choice questions about the text;</i> • <i>write an extended response that requires analysis, synthesis, and use of information from both sources for a particular purpose (e.g., to make a recommendation, solve a problem, draw a conclusion, etc.).</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret and analyze complex informational texts and presentations. • Use a combination of techniques to extract salient information from texts. • Make distinctions about the relative value of specific data, facts, and ideas. • Write research reports, feature articles, and thesis/support papers on a variety of topics. • Present a controlling idea that conveys an individual perspective and insight into the topic. • Use a wide range of organizational patterns. • Support interpretations and decisions. • Use standard English skillfully.

Table 8b Matrix for Comprehensive Regents Examination in English

SESSION 2 (3 hours)		
Standard	Task Design	Performance Indicators
<p>PART III</p> <p>Reading and Writing for Literary Response and Expression</p>	<p>Students will read two selections of different genres (e.g., a poem and a short story, an excerpt from a play and a literary essay, etc.) on a common topic or theme.</p> <p><i>Students will then:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond to a set of multiple choice questions about both selections; • write an essay in which they interpret the texts and discuss their interpretations with reference to key literary elements or techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read independently and fluently across many genres of literature. • Identify the distinguishing features of different genres and use those features to interpret the work. • Recognize and understand the significance of a wide range of literary elements and techniques and use those elements to interpret the work. • Produce literary interpretations that explicate the multiple layers of meaning. • Use standard English skillfully.
<p>PART IV</p> <p>Reading and Writing for Critical Analysis and Evaluation</p>	<p>Students will be expected to focus on the analysis of literary texts and will use specific criteria (“critical lens”) to evaluate texts they have read.</p> <p><i>Students will be presented with a quotation or statement about literature and will then be asked to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain the quote; • state their opinion (agreeing or disagreeing with the quote); • select two works from the literature they have read that support their opinion; • discuss specific elements of these two works as they develop their support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze, interpret, and evaluate a wide range of texts. • Evaluate the quality of texts from a variety of critical perspectives. • Make precise determinations about the perspective of a particular writer. • Present well-developed analysis of issues, ideas, and texts. • Make effective use of details, evidence, and arguments. • Use standard English skillfully.

Matrix based on Comprehensive Regents Examination in English Test Sampler Draft distributed in spring 1998

All ELA assessments are scored in two discrete ways: 1) multiple choice answers are either correct or incorrect, and constitute only a portion of the student’s total score; and 2) each writing task is scored holistically using a **rubric**, which describes a continuum of performance from Level 6 (most proficient) to Level 1 (least proficient). These rubrics are adjusted depending upon the specific tasks required on the assessments. Criteria for the rubrics are derived from five qualities of performance: *meaning, development, organization, language use, and conventions*. The score for the multiple choice questions and the scores for the writing tasks are combined to determine the student’s total score on each assessment. An example of the rubric used for scoring the Comprehensive Regents Examination in English Sampler is illustrated in Table 9.

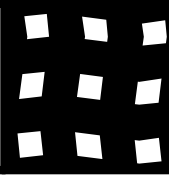
Table 9 PART 1 Scoring Rubric: *Listening and Writing for Information and Understanding*

Quantity	6 Responses at this level:	5 Responses at this level:	4 Responses at this level:	3 Responses at this level:	2 Responses at this level:	1 Responses at this level:
MEANING: the extent to which the response exhibits sound understanding, interpretation, and analysis of the task and text(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •reveal an in-depth analysis of the text •make insightful connections between information and ideas in the text and the assigned task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •convey a thorough understanding of the text •make clear and explicit connections between ideas in the text and the assigned text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •convey a basic understanding of the text •make implicit connections between information and ideas in the text and the assigned task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •convey a basic understanding of the text •make few or superficial connections between information and ideas in the text and the assigned task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •convey a confused or inaccurate understanding of the text •allude to the text but make unclear or unwarranted connections to the assigned task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •provide no evidence of textual understanding •make no connections between information in the text and the assigned tasks
DEVELOPMENT: the extent to which ideas are elaborated using specific and relevant evidence from text(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •develop ideas clearly and fully, making effective use of a wide range of relevant and specific details from the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •develop ideas clearly and consistently, using relevant and specific details from the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •develop some ideas more fully than others, using specific and relevant details from the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •develop ideas briefly, using some details from the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •are incomplete or largely underdeveloped, hinting at ideas, but references to the text are vague, irrelevant, repetitive or unjustified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •are minimal, with no evidence of development
ORGANIZATION: the extent to which the response exhibits direction, shape, and coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •maintain a clear and appropriate focus •exhibit a logical and coherent structure through skillful use of appropriate devices and transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •maintain a clear and appropriate focus •exhibit a logical sequence of ideas through use of appropriate devices and transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •maintain a clear and appropriate focus •exhibit a logical sequence of ideas but may lack internal consistency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •establish, but fail to maintain, an appropriate focus •exhibit a rudimentary structure but may include some inconsistencies or irrelevancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •lack an appropriate focus but suggest some organization or suggest a focus but lack organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •show no focus or organization
LANGUAGE USE: the extent to which the response reveals an awareness of audience and purpose through effective use of words, sentence structure and sentence variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •are stylistically sophisticated, using language that is precise and engaging, with notable sense of voice and an awareness of audience and purpose •vary structure and length of sentence to enhance meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •use language that is fluent and original, with evident awareness of audience and purpose •vary structure and length of sentence to control rhythm and pacing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •use appropriate language, with some awareness of audience and purpose •occasionally make effective use of sentence structure or length 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •rely on language from text or basic vocabulary, with little awareness of audience or purpose •exhibit some attempt to vary sentence structure or length for effect, but with uneven success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •use language that is imprecise or suitable for the audience or purpose •reveal little awareness of how to use sentences to achieve an effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •are minimal •use language that is incoherent or inappropriate
CONVENTION: the extent to which the response exhibits conventional spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, capitalization, grammar, and usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •demonstrate control of the conventions with essentially no errors, even with sophisticated language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •demonstrate control of the conventions, exhibiting occasional errors only when using sophisticated language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •demonstrate partial control, exhibiting occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •demonstrate emerging control, exhibiting occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •demonstrate lack of control, exhibiting frequent errors that make comprehension difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •are minimal, making assessment of conventions unreliable •may be illegible or not recognizable as English

Matrix based on Comprehensive Regents Examination in English Test Sampler Draft distributed in spring 1998

Study Skills and Test-Taking Skills

The use of native language and ESL strategies promotes the development of study skills and test-taking skills and helps to bridge LEP/ELLs' knowledge for succeeding on the high-stakes assessments.



All students will need a strong foundation in listening, reading, and study skills if they are to achieve the higher goals of the NYS learning standards and successfully develop the ELA abilities or skills which enable students to systematically plan, access, organize, record, encode, and use information on their own. These skills include, among others, the following: organizing, managing time, listening, sequencing, visualizing, picking out main ideas, summarizing, reading in the content areas, taking notes, studying for tests, and improving memory. When taught in isolation, study skills rarely transfer; therefore, it is recommended that study skills instruction be embedded in the curriculum. This approach will provide students with multiple opportunities to develop a repertoire of strategies across the disciplines and throughout the grades. Curriculum-embedded skills instruction provides concrete support for the LEP/ELLs student, while increasing the capacity for all students to succeed with the new assessments.

Study skills instruction provides tools for organizing language experiences and offers structures which allow students to organize information in a variety of ways. As students read and/or listen with the purpose of synthesizing or interpreting meaning from a variety of sources, they will do so more effectively if they know how to employ a variety of learning strategies. As they write and/or speak with the purpose of communicating their ideas, they will do so more clearly and coherently if they know how to use graphic organizers and good note-taking strategies.

The following skills and strategies will help limited English proficient/English language learners be more successful with school and with the new ELA assessments:

- **Higher-Level Thinking Skills and Study Strategies** - these skills help raise the level of student understanding from simple recall and comprehension to analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, as described in Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning. These skills include brain-based strategies for "stop-and-process activities" and "active" study strategies (including: reciting, writing, drawing, visualizing, and using interactive study partners).
- **Listening Skills** - these strategies will help students gather more meaning from auditory information. They will give students practice in focusing on what is being said. In addition to providing students opportunities to identify main ideas and supporting details in order to summarize what they have heard, these strategies will give students the opportunity to speak as a way of processing auditory information. They will also provide students with a schema for concentrating on listening passages, thus laying the foundation for listening and taking notes.
- **Organizational and Time-Management Skills** - these skills will help students manage "the business of school" by helping them stay on top of daily homework assignments, keep track of long-term assignments, and manage time and materials more effectively.
- **Strategies for Information Gathering** - these strategies will address the need of all students to develop an organized approach to recording key ideas. Students will learn the importance of keeping an organized notebook, simplifying note taking, using visual tools for graphically organizing ideas, and developing easy tools for report writing.

CONSIDERATIONS for LEP/ELLs

- ✓ LEP/ELLs come with different experiences in test taking. Some tasks on the NYS assessments may be totally unfamiliar to them.
- ✓ Assess LEP/ELLs' prior experiences with test taking.
- ✓ Incorporate study and test-taking skills as part of regular ESL and/or native language arts instruction.
- ✓ Make sure LEP/ELLs are familiar with the manner in which they will be assessed.
- ✓ Ensure that LEP/ELLs understand examination prompts such as compare, critical lens, selection.
- ✓ Encourage LEP/ELLs to review and discuss each other's notes to enhance their note-taking skills.
- ✓ Familiarize parents of LEP/ELLs with the NYS assessments, and encourage them to provide an appropriate place for studying at home.

- **Strategies for Increasing Comprehension of Printed Material** - these strategies will empower students to become more strategic readers by providing them direct instruction in reading skills at all grade levels. Students will learn to use the textbook as a resource. In addition, they will be taught to employ pre-reading, guided reading, and post-reading strategies to help them acquire and integrate knowledge contained in text. In the past, literacy skills have focused on fiction material in most classrooms. Now, in addition, teachers must pay particular attention to nonfiction material, as it appears on all three new ELA assessments and involves a different set of comprehension skills (vocabulary is specialized, organizational patterns in text format must be recognized, typographical layout offers clues to understanding).
- **Test-Taking Strategies** - these strategies remain similar to traditional test-taking strategies in that they are designed to make students comfortable with the format of the assessment. Students must become familiar with the language of the assessment (“mostly,” “support,” “include,” “quotations,” “identify,” “Planning Page,” etc.) and the expectations for each part. (The sessions will be timed, notes written on the Planning Page will not count and must be transferred to the final answer beginning on the next page, examples from the listening or reading passage must be used in the writing, etc.) Students can be taught to focus on the key words in written directions by circling or underlining them. Students should be given practice developing their own questions as they read so that they can internalize the difference between who, what, where, when, why, and how questions and other more sophisticated types of questions. Students must be given opportunities in class to practice on-demand writing, which appears on the assessments and is unlike process writing, which involves several steps and is untimed. Finally, it must become common practice for students to check each of their written responses with the following in mind: Did I answer what was asked? Did I answer all parts of the question? Did I give specific examples from the reading/listening passage(s)? Did I proofread for spelling and mechanics?

Informal Assessments for Evaluating Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners’ Progress

No single behavior, strategy, activity, or task can provide a comprehensive picture of student learning. Only a variety of measures, examined carefully over a period of time, can give an accurate and complete picture of a student’s progress, strengths, and needs. The basic assumptions about the teaching and learning of language arts (see page 19) underlie the need for teachers to observe LEP/ELLs at all stages of the processes of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and to informally assess their progress, help them evaluate their own work, and formulate instructional strategies according to their needs. With ongoing informal assessment (and evaluation) as an integral part of the classroom routine, and appropriate instruction, students will progress.

“How assessment procedures and information are used is what raises the assessment process to the level of evaluation. If data collection is being used only for accountability, for grading and reporting to parents — as it usually is — meaningful evaluation is not taking place. The goal of evaluation, like the goal of teaching, is to make the learner self-monitoring, self-regulating, and independent. The highest goal in evaluation is to have students and teachers able to reflectively appraise their own work and set new directions for teaching and learning.”

(Routman, 1991)

The following informal assessment instruments and activities are some examples of methods which teachers use in both the native language and in English to inform instruction so that their students will successfully demonstrate the skills required in the new standards and in the State formal testing program, which conforms to those standards.

- **Class records of reading/writing** - these noncompetitive whole class charts, showing a list of titles read and pieces written, are constructed in a cooperative celebration of the students' work. The charts direct students to others with a common interest, and provide help in organizing conferences. They keep the teacher informed about the quantity and variety of student work.
- **Conference log on reading, writing, performance, and use of technology** - the teacher's anecdotal record of observations of each child's speaking, listening, reading, and writing behavior. The record may be used for parent conferences and shared with the student. It shows the student's strengths and helps the teacher develop appropriate strategies to further improve performance.
- **Interest inventory** - a checklist which indicates a student's interests and attitudes and assists teachers in making instructional decisions about appropriate reading materials. The checklist is reviewed by the student several times during the year to determine continuity of interest.
- **Interviews** - the teacher asks individual students to respond to questions about skills, attitudes, and knowledge and then uses this information to set goals for both teaching and learning.
- **Journal** - a student-written notebook containing unedited, self-selected topics about personal experiences, thought processes, commentary on schoolwork, etc.
- **Learning log** - notes by students about what they learned, how they learned it, and how well they did, to assist them in monitoring their growth and ability to control their learning.
- **Observation** ("kid watching") - the teacher observes students in natural learning situations and gains information about physical, emotional, social, and intellectual behaviors which impact upon instruction and achievement, and makes instructional decisions accordingly.
- **Oral reading** - a diagnostic survey or running record to assess a student's fluency, phrasing, reading behavior and strategies for decoding and fixing errors.
- **Peer evaluation** - students provide feedback to each other by formulating criteria for judgment and providing constructive commentary on their work through conferences in groups or pairs.
- **Portfolios** - a collection, accumulated over a long period of time, of self-selected student records and responses to reading selections, other reports, or projects; writing samples in a variety of genres; and student evaluation of work. Audiotapes and videotapes may be included. Portfolios are used to make instructional decisions, and they yield developmental information. They show organization of thoughts and student priorities.
- **Reading folder** - an individual student record of books read, notes on books, and responses to reading. Its purpose is to encourage student self-evaluation, record keeping, and responsibility for learning and growth. Folders are used by the teacher to monitor individual growth and development, the amount and level of reading, areas of interest, and response to literature.

CONSIDERATIONS for LEP/ELLs

- ✓ Determining LEP/ELLs' native language proficiency will help predict English language development.
- ✓ Use appropriate informal assessments to help to bridge LEP/ELLs' native language knowledge into English.
- ✓ Assess LEP/ELLs' language knowledge in multiple situations and contexts.
- ✓ Familiarize LEP/ELLs with different types of informal assessment instruments.
- ✓ Match informal assessment instruments to the desired skills and behaviors to be developed among LEP/ELLs.
- ✓ Make sure that informal assessments help to improve instruction of LEP/ELLs.
- ✓ Depending on the focus of the evaluation, meaning may be emphasized over form.

- **Rubric** - a rubric is a scale that defines and differentiates levels of performance. Rubrics may be either analytic or holistic, and can be used as instructional tools as well as assessment tools. Both analytic and holistic rubrics can be task-specific, generic, or developmental in nature. Use of rubrics in informal assessments conveys expectations for students' work and achievement in ways that students can understand and use. Rubrics also clarify what teachers want from students, and help students monitor their own performance and accomplishments. *[See Appendix E for Samples of Informal Assessments in English and the Native Language: Literacy Scales K-12.]*
- **Writing folder** - a collection of individual student samples of written work at various stages, lists of possible writing topics, notes on teacher/peer conferences, and skills to be improved. It is another means of having students take ownership of their own work and become aware of their progress. The teacher assesses students' demonstrated writing skills, progress over time, areas of interest, specific needs for instruction and ability to organize thoughts and integrate information into written work.
- **Written tests and homework assignments** - the teacher checks for students' understanding of information and concepts by using open-ended questions which require higher-order reasoning skills.

Growth in literacy is characterized by diversity, not uniformity (Dyson, 1985). Schools tend to expect students to follow a single developmental model in acquiring uses of language. This model assumes a straight-line progression in learning, moving from simpler to more complex. In reality, some stages may be repeated, and some simple behaviors may come later than more complex ones (Heath, 1986). Educators must be attentive to the important individual variations evidenced by their students.

Keeping in mind the content/philosophy of both formal and informal testing programs and the new standards, it is essential to have LEP/ELLs respond orally and in writing to assignments which call for the gathering of information from a variety of sources and the critical analysis of both fiction and nonfiction. Interdisciplinary thematic instruction also must be considered vital. Most of the questions in New York State's formal assessments are open-ended, so that students must learn to express their opinions and to base those opinions on valid information.

Applying the content and philosophy of the standards and assessment system is of critical importance in NLA and ESL language arts instruction. The following section will illustrate, clarify, and demonstrate ways in which these standards can be applied to the instruction of LEP/ELLs in bilingual and ESL classrooms.