

An Enchanted Assessment Quest

Text Version

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Introduction and Learning Objectives

This document is a text-based alternative to *An Enchanted Assessment Quest*, a gamified course designed to help all K–12 educators develop their assessment literacy. Whether or not you specialize in multilingual education, this information will build your skills and confidence in assessing and supporting multilingual learners.

After reading this document, you will be able to do the following:

1. Outline the federal legislation that drives WIDA and state assessment policies.
2. Summarize the kinds of English language proficiency (ELP) assessments used in K–12 settings and the direct connection between standards and assessment.
3. Using WIDA ACCESS as an example, describe the value and purpose of WIDA assessments.
 - a. Describe the unique steps of developing and validating a WIDA assessment.
 - b. Accurately interpret test scores and determine appropriate applications/score use.

WIDA estimates that you will need approximately 60 minutes to read this document and complete the included quizzes and reflection questions. Please note that the same quizzes from the gamified course are embedded in this document, with answer keys included at the end.

WIDA generally uses the term “multilingual learner” (ML) to refer to the K–12 students we serve. However, the term “English learner” (EL) is used in reference to some policies, as the federal government uses this term to identify students who qualify for language support services. Likewise, we refer to our members as “states/members” for consistency, even though WIDA is a consortium of 42 member states, territories, and government agencies.

Section 1: Assessment Foundations

Learning Objective: Outline the federal legislation that drives WIDA and state assessment policies.

1.1 Identifying English Learners

In 2015, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. This reauthorization required that each state create uniform identification and exit procedures for English learners (ELs) within a state. It also required that school districts identify students who are potential ELs within 30 days of enrollment in a school.

The goal of this legislation is to offer language support services to ELs so that their level of English proficiency does not hinder their academic progress.

States typically use a home language survey to identify potential ELs. If the home language survey indicates that a student may be a potential EL, states can choose to administer screening tools to measure a student's English language proficiency. This is where WIDA comes in—WIDA Screener can be used to identify students as ELs!

Each state sets its own criteria, such as scores on a screening assessment, to determine EL status. Check out your state's page on the [WIDA website](#) to learn more about your state's criteria!

1.2 Supporting English Learners

Once a student is identified as an EL, the student becomes eligible for language instruction educational programs (LIEPs). Some examples of LIEPs are ESL programs, developmental bilingual programs, and newcomer programs.

In 2001, an earlier reauthorization of ESEA, called the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, required that states adopt English language proficiency (ELP) instructional standards to support ELs' full and meaningful access to educational opportunity. This is where WIDA comes in again—the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, help states meet this requirement.

1.3 Assessing English Learners

NCLB (2001) also required that states annually administer a valid and reliable ELP assessment that measures and reports student proficiency scores for listening, reading, speaking, and writing tests. This assessment must be aligned to the state's ELP standards.

States meet this federal requirement by annually administering WIDA ACCESS to students identified as ELs. The goal of this requirement is to ensure that ELs are making progress toward English proficiency. Scores can also help educators identify students who might need additional language support services.

1.4 Reclassifying English Learners

Per NCLB (2001) and ESSA (2015), each state determines its own "exit criteria" for ELs who have achieved English proficiency. This is also known as "reclassification" (from EL status to fluent English proficient status).

Timing is critical when it comes to reclassification. If exited too soon, a student is denied language support services and if exited too late, a student might be denied access to aspects of the general curriculum—both scenarios can impact academic growth.

Each state sets its own reclassification criteria, which must include a proficiency score from an ELP assessment that allows a student to participate in content instruction without language support services, but can also include other sources of information, such as educator input. Check out your state's exit criteria on its member/state page on the WIDA website.

1.5 Monitoring Reclassified Students

Another requirement of NCLB (2001) was that states monitor exited ELs for two years, and that they be re-tested for English proficiency if they are not progressing academically as expected. An important update of ESSA (2015) was to monitor these students for four years (two more than required by NCLB) after reclassification. These students no longer take an annual ELP assessment nor do they receive language support services. The goal of the federal requirement is to monitor these students to ensure that they can continue to meaningfully participate in content classrooms just like their never-EL classmates.

1.6 Knowledge Check: Assessment Foundations

Mark each question as true or false. There are 5 questions.

1. Each state sets its own identification and reclassification criteria.
☐ True
☐ False
2. States are required to monitor reclassified ELs for eight years.
☐ True
☐ False
3. Once students are identified as ELs, they become eligible for language support services that are only informed by a state's content standards.
☐ True
☐ False
4. In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. This reauthorization requires that states use common identification and exit criteria for all ELs in a state's public schools.
☐ True
☐ False
5. ESSA of 2015, which reauthorized the NCLB Act of 2001, specifies that states administer a valid and reliable ELP assessment to students identified as ELs at least twice a year.
☐ True
☐ False

1.7 Reflection: Assessment Foundations

What are 1–2 specific guidelines from your state that influence assessment practices for MLs in your school or district?

Section 2: Assessment Types and Standards

Learning Objective: Summarize the kinds of assessments used in K–12 settings and the direct connection between standards and assessment.

2.1 Assessment Types

There are two key types of K–12 large-scale assessments:

1. **Norm-Referenced Assessments:** Norm-referenced assessments compare a student's performance to that of a larger group to determine the student's relative standing compared to peers, using percentile rank or a score on a bell curve. For example, if a student's test score corresponds to the 75th percentile, you know this student is performing at or above 75 percent of students who took the test. Common examples include most annual state content assessments and the SAT or ACT.
2. **Standards-Based Assessments:** Standards-based assessments measure a student's performance against a predetermined standard or goal (a criterion). WIDA ACCESS is an example of a standards-based assessment because it measures if an English learner has reached a certain proficiency level in relation to the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition.

2.2 Assessment Types by Purpose

Assessments also differ by purpose within the educational cycle:

- **Screening Assessments:** Screening assessments are the first step! These assessments are used to identify individuals who may need further evaluation or intervention. The screening process can involve questionnaires, checklists, or standardized assessments. As an example, [WIDA Screener](#) is designed to identify English learners who may benefit from English language support services.
- **Interim Assessments:** An interim assessment is a periodic assessment administered at different intervals during the school year to evaluate student learning and skills. It provides insights into student growth and areas needing improvement. As an example, [WIDA MODEL](#) (Measure of Developing English Language) is a suite of English language proficiency assessments for grades K–12. As a flexible, on-demand language proficiency assessment, WIDA MODEL can be administered at any time during the school year, depending on the needs of the district, school, teacher, or student.
- **Summative Assessments:** A summative assessment evaluates student learning toward the end of a course or unit and is used to determine a student's overall understanding and proficiency. Common examples include final exams, end-of-unit tests, or final projects, which are graded and could be high-stakes. [WIDA ACCESS](#) is an example of a summative assessment that annually measures students' English language development.

2.3 The WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition

The WIDA ELD Standards Framework is the foundation of the WIDA suite of assessments, including WIDA Screener, WIDA MODEL, and WIDA ACCESS. The WIDA English Language Development Standards were first released in 2004, but in this document, we are focused on the latest edition of the Standards Framework, the 2020 Edition.

There are five Standards Statements within the Framework:

- **Standard Statement 1**, Language for Social and Instructional Purposes, applies to a range of school settings and covers a range of activities such as establishing routines, asking for clarification, and following procedures. As such, it works both independently from, and in conjunction with, the other Standards Statements.
- **Standards Statements 2–5** focus on ways multilingual learners can communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content areas: Language for Language Arts (Standard 2), Language for Mathematics (Standard 3), Language for Science (Standard 4), and Language for Social Studies (Standard 5).

In 2020, WIDA updated the ELD Standards Framework, which kicked off a review of our assessments. As one example, the Listening and Reading tests on WIDA ACCESS were revised to include a greater emphasis on Standard Statement 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes.

In addition to the five WIDA ELD Standards Statements, there are three other components of the 2020 Edition:

- **Key Language Uses (KLUs)** represent prominent language uses across the disciplines: narrate, inform, explain, and argue. KLUs bring focus and coherence to the language of schooling, helping educators prioritize and organize curricular planning for content and language integration. KLUs represent the most prominent ways students use language as they investigate and explain phenomena, support claims with evidence, and share stories about their experiences.
- **Language Expectations** point to common, visible ways students need to use language to meet grade-level academic content standards. They are like language destination points on a map that we want all students to reach. Educators can use them to set curricular priorities in order to support students in expanding what they can do with language.
- **Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)** describe typical ways multilingual learners might develop across six levels of English proficiency. They help us see how students are growing in their language development as they move toward meeting Language Expectations. However, language development is not a linear process—students may take various paths to develop language.

More information about the [WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition](#) is available on the WIDA website.

2.4 Knowledge Check: Assessment Types and Standards

Complete each statement with the appropriate term or example. There are 5 questions.

1. _____ describe typical ways multilingual learners might develop across six levels of English proficiency.
 - ☐ Key Language Uses
 - ☐ Language Expectations
 - ☐ Proficiency Level Descriptors
2. WIDA ACCESS is a(n) _____ assessment because it focuses on measuring a student's mastery of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition.
 - ☐ Norm-referenced
 - ☐ Standards-based
 - ☐ Interim
3. _____ assessments compare a student's performance to that of a larger group to determine the student's relative standing compared to peers.
 - ☐ Norm-referenced
 - ☐ Standards-based
 - ☐ Summative
4. _____ assessments are used to identify children who may need further evaluation or intervention, such as English language support services.
 - ☐ Summative
 - ☐ Interim
 - ☐ Screening
5. Of the five WIDA ELD Standards, _____ highlights the ways in which students communicate to establish working relationships with peers that support learning.
 - ☐ Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes
 - ☐ Standard 5: Language for Social Studies
 - ☐ Standard 2: Language for Language Arts

2.5 Reflection: Assessment Types and Standards

Beyond WIDA ACCESS, do your MLs take any other standards-based assessments? If so, which ones and how do you use data from these assessments? And what about norm-referenced assessments?

Section 3: Assessment Development and Validation

Learning Objective: Describe the unique steps of developing and validating a WIDA assessment.

3.1 Assessment Development Overview and Partners

WIDA is part of a public, non-profit educational institution, the [University of Wisconsin–Madison](#), and the [Center for Applied Linguistics](#) (CAL) is a non-profit based in Washington, DC. Together, WIDA and CAL develop WIDA ACCESS, using the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition, to guide the development of test content. This is a multi-year process that involves various steps, and the cycle continues indefinitely, as WIDA ACCESS is always being reviewed and improved!

WIDA ACCESS is used as an example below, but keep in mind that all WIDA assessments follow a similar, rigorous development process.

3.2 WIDA ACCESS Development Steps

The development process for WIDA ACCESS includes five high-level steps:

1. Theme Generation and Item Writing

The very first step of WIDA ACCESS test development is theme generation. Educators are recruited to help WIDA and CAL brainstorm grade-level appropriate topics for the four language domains (Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing). These topics can include everything from layers of the Earth for grade 4–5 students to the life of Shirley Chisholm for grade 9–12 students.

Next, the item writing begins! Current and former educators contribute to this process, and they also review test items in development to check them for authenticity and to ensure that items reflect the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition. WIDA assessment specialists lend their expertise to item writing to make test content accessible for a varied student population.

2. Bias, Sensitivity, and Content Reviews and Field Testing

School- and district-level educators participate in annual [Bias, Sensitivity, and Content Reviews](#) of newly developed test content to verify its appropriateness for students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Once educators' feedback is incorporated, the new content is ready to be embedded into a field test for the upcoming school year. Field tests are opportunities for students to engage with newly developed test items. This crucial step in the test development process helps confirm test content is functioning as expected.

3. Post-Field Test Analysis and Final Review

WIDA and CAL test developers, assessment specialists, and psychometricians come together to conduct a post-field test analysis of the performance of the new test content and make final selections of items to appear on WIDA ACCESS.

Then, a final review by state- and district-level educators from across the consortium takes place to approve the content that appears on the updated version of WIDA ACCESS.

4. User Acceptance Testing and Launch

Next, WIDA conducts User Acceptance Testing, which is a quality assurance process. This “test of the test” helps WIDA identify any issues that might have crept into WIDA ACCESS as the test was assembled in the test delivery platform.

The updated test goes live when the WIDA ACCESS testing window opens in December. The end of this phase kicks off another cycle of test development for future updates to WIDA ACCESS—in this way, WIDA ACCESS is continuously being reviewed and improved.

5. Standard Setting

Once WIDA ACCESS has been updated to reflect a new edition of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, a standard-setting meeting is scheduled. During a standard-setting meeting, a large group of educators from across the consortium helps establish the “cut scores” for WIDA ACCESS.

Cut scores are the points where student scores move (cut) from one proficiency level to the next. For example, a cut score determines when a student moves from Level 3 to Level 4. Once these cut scores are established, WIDA can issue score reports showing students’ proficiency levels.

3.3 Validation

A critical step in the creation of any WIDA assessment is validation, a process by which WIDA researchers investigate how users interpret test scores and utilize them for various purposes. The goal of the research is to promote beneficial outcomes for multilingual learners such as the appropriate application of students’ scores to teaching and learning practices.

There are ample opportunities for educators to contribute to test validity, too! Educators are invited to participate in focus groups, classroom observations, and pilot studies. Research strengthens the validity and reliability of WIDA ACCESS, and it ultimately promotes academic success for multilingual learners.

3.4 Knowledge Check: Assessment Development and Validation

Choose the correct answer. There are 8 questions.

1. Educators contribute to test validity by participating in which activity?
 - ☐ Focus groups
 - ☐ Classroom observations
 - ☐ Pilot studies
 - ☐ All of the above
2. What happens during the theme generation step of WIDA ACCESS test development?
 - ☐ Grade-level appropriate topics are identified for use in test content.
 - ☐ Motifs are created for the illustrations used in WIDA assessments.
 - ☐ Characters like Nina and Ms. Lee are developed to boost student engagement.
 - ☐ Topics are flagged for the annual Bias, Sensitivity, and Content Reviews.
3. How do educators contribute to item writing for WIDA ACCESS?
 - ☐ By approving graphics for test content
 - ☐ By checking items for authenticity and alignment with the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition
 - ☐ By ensuring that test content is aligned to state policies
 - ☐ By sharing updates with their colleagues about revisions to WIDA ACCESS
4. Which of the following is one of the reasons WIDA conducts a Bias, Sensitivity, and Content Review for WIDA ACCESS?
 - ☐ To ensure that test content appropriately represents students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds
 - ☐ To ensure that WIDA ACCESS is accurately translated into multiple languages
 - ☐ To ensure that statistics for all items are accurate and acceptable
 - ☐ To ensure compliance with federal and state ELP policies

5. What is the purpose of a field test?
- ☐ To examine how students respond to newly developed test content
 - ☐ To confirm that newly developed graphics are interesting
 - ☐ To gather student and educator feedback on newly generated themes
6. What happens with the information gathered during a WIDA ACCESS field test?
- ☐ The performance of newly developed test content is analyzed by WIDA and CAL test developers.
 - ☐ Some items are selected for the final version of the updated test and others are discarded.
 - ☐ State- and district-level educators from across the WIDA Consortium review the final version of the test.
 - ☐ All of the above
7. When is WIDA ACCESS reviewed and improved?
- ☐ Continuously, through a series of ongoing test development phases
 - ☐ Every three years during user acceptance testing
 - ☐ According to a schedule set by members of the WIDA Consortium
8. What happens during a standard-setting meeting?
- ☐ Educators help develop new standards for the test being reviewed, e.g., WIDA ACCESS.
 - ☐ Educators help establish cut scores for the test being reviewed, e.g., WIDA ACCESS.
 - ☐ Educators help issue score reports for the test being reviewed, e.g., WIDA ACCESS.

3.5 Reflection: Assessment Development and Validation

Which step in the test development process did you find most interesting and why?

Section 4: Score Interpretation and Application

Learning Objective: Accurately interpret test scores and determine appropriate applications/score use.

4.1 Raw Scores

Results from WIDA assessments are translated into actionable score reports, such as the Individual Student Report (ISR) for WIDA ACCESS. Generating these reports begins with raw scores, which are a tally of a student's correct answers. Because raw scores don't account for item difficulty, WIDA relies on a team of psychometricians who use advanced statistics to convert raw scores into meaningful measures of student performance. These psychometricians also analyze test data on an ongoing basis, helping to ensure that WIDA assessments are valid, reliable, and fair.

4.2 Score Types on the WIDA ACCESS Individual Student Report (ISR)

The ISR for WIDA ACCESS contains scores for the four language domains (Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing) as well as four composite areas (Oral Language, Literacy, Comprehension, and Overall), which are combinations of particular domain tests.

Below are the types of scores found on the ISR:

- **Scale Scores and Confidence Bands:** Remember how raw scores don't account for item difficulty? That's where scale scores and confidence bands come in. WIDA and our test development partners collaborate to convert raw scores into scale scores. For WIDA ACCESS, scale scores range from 100–600 (with 600 being the highest). These scores precisely track student growth over time and across grades. Specifically, scale scores allow educators to compare student performance across grades within each domain. For example, you can track how much a student's writing ability increases from grade 6 to grade 7, or you could compare the speaking skills of your school's third graders to that of the fifth graders when evaluating curricula. However, you should never compare scale scores across domains as a 400 in listening is not the same as a 400 in reading!

A confidence band captures the expected score variation in student performance. Confidence bands are a reminder that if a student takes the same test multiple times on the same day but under different conditions (e.g., well rested vs. not well rested), the student's scores will be similar across different scenarios, but not the same.

- **Proficiency Level Scores:** Proficiency level (PL) scores provide interpretations of scale scores. They describe a student's performance according to the WIDA English Language Proficiency Levels that range from 1–6 (with 6 being the highest). PL scores are domain specific (Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing).

Also, PL scores shouldn't be compared across grades, as PL scores convey grade-appropriate expectations. For example, if a 3rd and 8th grade student both earn a PL score of 4.0 on the Listening test, this indicates that the eighth grader received a higher scale score. Since proficiency levels are grade specific, the eighth grader must perform better than the third grader to earn the same PL score.

PL scores can be used for placement (including reclassification of ELs) or programming purposes.

- **Composite Areas:** The WIDA ACCESS ISR also includes proficiency level and scale scores for Oral Language, Literacy, Comprehension, and Overall, which are the composite areas of the four language domain tests. As an example, the Oral Language composite area is 50% Listening and 50% Speaking.

It is important to highlight the role of scale scores for the composite areas. A student's scale scores in Listening and Speaking are used to calculate a student's Oral Language scale score, which is then converted into an Oral Language proficiency level score. Please review your state's guidelines on the WIDA website for using the scores provided for the composite areas.

4.3 Knowledge Check: Score Interpretation and Application

Choose the correct answer. There are 8 questions.

1. Which type of score is most helpful to understand student growth across grades within each domain?
☐ Raw scores
☐ Scale scores
☐ Proficiency level scores
2. Which type of score is a tally of students' correct answers on each item?
☐ Raw scores
☐ Scale scores
☐ Composite area scores
3. Which type of score yields descriptors that convey grade-appropriate expectations based on the standards?
☐ Confidence bands
☐ Scale scores
☐ Proficiency level scores

4. Which type of band captures the score variation in student performance?
- ☐ Fixed band
 - ☐ Confidence band
 - ☐ Sliding band
5. Which type of scores do not take item difficulty into account?
- ☐ Raw scores
 - ☐ Scale scores
 - ☐ Proficiency level scores
6. Which type of score is typically used for placement or reclassification of English learners?
- ☐ Raw scores
 - ☐ Scale scores
 - ☐ Proficiency level scores
7. Which type of score includes a confidence band to capture the expected score variation in student performance?
- ☐ Raw scores
 - ☐ Scale scores
 - ☐ Proficiency level scores
8. Which type of score is used to calculate composite area scores, such as Oral Language, Literacy, Comprehension, and Overall?
- ☐ Confidence band
 - ☐ Scale scores
 - ☐ Proficiency level scores

4.4 Reflection: Score Interpretation and Application

Based on what you have learned, how would you use proficiency level scores and scale scores differently?

Section 5: Appropriate and Inappropriate Score Usage

Learning Objective: Accurately interpret test scores and determine appropriate applications/score use.

5.1 Appropriate Uses for WIDA Assessment Scores

Now that you understand different types of scores, it's important to note that scores for different WIDA assessments have specific, appropriate uses:

WIDA Screener scores are used for identifying and classifying students as English learners.

WIDA ACCESS scores are used for numerous purposes:

- Monitoring the progress of ELs
- Programming (hiring teachers, budgeting, etc.)
- Placing students into appropriate language instruction educational programs (LIEPs), including reclassifying ELs (reclassified ELs exit their EL status and no longer receive support through LIEPs)

5.2 Inappropriate Uses for WIDA Assessment Scores

Likewise, there are also inappropriate uses for WIDA assessment scores:

- Teacher evaluation (because student performances do not reflect teacher efficacy)
- Measuring students' ability in content areas, such as English Language Arts
- Placing students into special education or gifted education programs
- Using proficiency level scores (instead of scale scores) to track growth over time

5.3 Knowledge Check: Appropriate and Inappropriate Score Usage

Categorize each scenario as an appropriate or inappropriate use of assessment scores. There are 5 scenarios.

1. A school principal reviews a teacher's portfolio of student work compiled throughout the year. The principal comments on the teacher's innovative approach but states that because the teacher's students' scores on WIDA ACCESS are not meeting expectations, the principal cannot recommend the teacher for Distinguished Teacher Status.
☐ Appropriate use
☐ Inappropriate use
2. An English teacher reflects on a multilingual student's performance across the course of a grading period. The teacher decides to use the student's score report from WIDA ACCESS to determine the student's final grade in English Language Arts.
☐ Appropriate use
☐ Inappropriate use
3. A teacher administers WIDA Screener, calculates the student's score, and then navigates to the State Education Agency's website to review state-specific guidelines. The teacher makes a note saying that the student does not require language support services.
☐ Appropriate use
☐ Inappropriate use
4. School administrators gather to review scores from WIDA Screener. One of them proclaims, "Looking at the increased number of students identified as multilingual learners across grades, I recommend that we hire additional teachers to support them in our district."
☐ Appropriate use
☐ Inappropriate use
5. A teacher carefully reads a student's score report from WIDA ACCESS. The teacher pulls out a roster for the school's special education program. "Looking at these scores, I know this student needs additional support," the teacher says. "Special education will provide that."
☐ Appropriate use
☐ Inappropriate use

5.4 Reflection: Appropriate and Inappropriate Score Usage

In what ways do appropriate uses of WIDA assessment scores best support MLs in your school or district?

Section 6: Knowledge Check Answer Keys

In the following answer keys, correct answers are indicated with a check mark. Feedback is included after each question to help reinforce your understanding of the content.

6.1 Key: Assessment Foundations

1. Each state sets its own identification and reclassification criteria.

☒ True (Correct)

☐ False

Individual states establish their own identification and reclassification criteria for ELs. Schools use home language surveys and scores on WIDA Screener in their identification process. Students are reclassified and no longer required to participate in language support services based on their performance on WIDA ACCESS. Some states include educator input, student portfolios, or scores on state content assessments as additional data points for reclassification.

2. States are required to monitor reclassified ELs for eight years.

☐ True

☒ False (Correct)

Per the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), states are required to monitor reclassified ELs for four years to ensure they can meaningfully participate in content classrooms without language support services.

3. Once students are identified as ELs, they become eligible for language support services that are only informed by a state's content standards.

☐ True

☒ False (Correct)

Per federal laws, states are required to adopt English language proficiency (ELP) instructional standards, such as the WIDA English Language Development Standards, 2020 Edition. ELP standards help teachers support students identified as ELs.

4. In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. This reauthorization requires that states use common identification and exit criteria for all ELs in a state's public schools.

☒ True (Correct)

☐ False

ESSA, a federal law, sustained the ELP assessment reporting mandate from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), and it required the use of common identification and exit criteria for ELs throughout a state. Also, potential ELs must be identified within 30 days of entering a school district.

5. ESSA of 2015, which reauthorized the NCLB Act of 2001, specifies that states administer a valid and reliable ELP assessment to students identified as ELs at least twice a year.

☐ True

☒ False (Correct)

States are required to administer a summative ELP assessment, such as WIDA ACCESS, to K-12 ELs once a year. The ELP assessment must report proficiency scores for listening, reading, speaking, and writing tests.

6.2 Key: Assessment Types and Standards

1. _____ describe typical ways multilingual learners might develop across six levels of English proficiency.

☐ Key Language Uses

☐ Language Expectations

☒ Proficiency Level Descriptors (Correct)

Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs) help educators see how students are growing in their language development, which is not a linear process. Students will take various paths to develop English language proficiency for academic contexts.

2. WIDA ACCESS is a(n) _____ assessment because it focuses on measuring a student's mastery of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition.

☐ Norm-referenced

☒ Standards-based (Correct)

☐ Interim

Standards-based assessments like WIDA ACCESS focus on measuring a student's mastery of a predetermined set of criteria or standards.

3. _____ assessments compare a student's performance to that of a larger group to determine the student's relative standing compared to peers.

☒ Norm-referenced (Correct)

☐ Standards-based

☐ Summative

Norm-referenced assessments determine a student's relative standing compared to peers, using percentile rank or a score on a bell curve.

4. _____ assessments are used to identify children who may need further evaluation or intervention, such as English language support services.

☐ Summative

☐ Interim

☒ Screening (Correct)

Screening assessments could involve questionnaires, checklists, or standardized assessments.

5. Of the five WIDA ELD Standards, _____ highlights the ways in which students communicate to establish working relationships with peers that support learning.

☒ Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes (Correct)

☐ Standard 5: Language for Social Studies

☐ Standard 2: Language for Language Arts

Standard 1, Language for Social and Instructional Purposes, applies to a variety of school settings and covers a range of activities such as establishing routines, asking for clarification, and following procedures.

6.3 Key: Assessment Development and Validation

1. Educators contribute to test validity by participating in which activity?

- ☐ Focus groups
- ☐ Classroom observations
- ☐ Pilot studies
- ☒ All of the above (Correct)

Educators help support test validity by participating in focus groups, classroom observations, and pilot studies for WIDA test development and research projects.

2. What happens during the theme generation step of WIDA ACCESS test development?

- ☒ Grade-level appropriate topics are identified for use in test content. (Correct)
- ☐ Motifs are created for the illustrations used in WIDA assessments.
- ☐ Characters like Nina and Ms. Lee are developed to boost student engagement.
- ☐ Topics are flagged for the annual Bias, Sensitivity, and Content Reviews.

During theme generation, educators are recruited to help WIDA and CAL test developers brainstorm grade-level appropriate topics for the different language domains.

3. How do educators contribute to item writing for WIDA ACCESS?

- ☐ By approving graphics for test content
- ☒ By checking items for authenticity and alignment with WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition (Correct)
- ☐ By ensuring that test content is aligned to state policies
- ☐ By sharing updates with their colleagues about revisions to WIDA ACCESS

During item writing, current and former educators review test items in development to check them for authenticity and to ensure that items reflect the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition.

4. Which of the following is one of the reasons WIDA conducts a Bias, Sensitivity, and Content Review for WIDA ACCESS?

- ☒ To ensure that test content appropriately represents students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Correct)
- ☐ To ensure that WIDA ACCESS is accurately translated into multiple languages
- ☐ To ensure that statistics for all items are accurate and acceptable
- ☐ To ensure compliance with federal and state ELP policies

During the Bias, Sensitivity, and Content Reviews, school- and district-level educators ensure test items are free of material that might favor any subgroup of students over another on the basis of gender, race or ethnicity, disability, home language, religion, culture, region, or socio-economic status.

5. What is the purpose of a field test?

- ☒ To examine how students respond to newly developed test content (Correct)
- ☐ To confirm that newly developed graphics are interesting
- ☐ To gather student and educator feedback on newly generated themes

During field tests, students engage with newly developed test items to help confirm that test content is functioning as expected.

6. What happens with the information gathered during a WIDA ACCESS field test?

- ☐ The performance of newly developed test content is analyzed by WIDA and CAL test developers.
- ☐ Some items are selected for the final version of the updated test and others are discarded.
- ☐ State- and district-level educators from across the WIDA Consortium review the final version of the test.
- ☒ All of the above (Correct)

During a post-field test analysis, WIDA and CAL test developers, assessment specialists, and psychometricians analyze the performance of newly developed test content and make final selections to appear on WIDA ACCESS.

7. When is WIDA ACCESS reviewed and improved?

- ☒ Continuously, through a series of ongoing test development phases (Correct)
- ☐ Every three years during user acceptance testing
- ☐ According to a schedule set by members of the WIDA Consortium

The WIDA ACCESS testing window opens in December, but that is not the end of test development and refinement. This process is an ongoing one that consists of many phases of review and improvement.

8. What happens during a standard-setting meeting?

- ☐ Educators help develop new standards for the test being reviewed, e.g., WIDA ACCESS.
- ☒ Educators help establish cut scores for the test being reviewed, e.g., WIDA ACCESS. (Correct)
- ☐ Educators help issue score reports for the test being reviewed, e.g., WIDA ACCESS.

During a standard-setting meeting, educators from across the WIDA Consortium help establish the cut scores for the test being reviewed, e.g., WIDA ACCESS.

6.4 Key: Score Interpretation and Application

1. Which type of score is most helpful to understand student growth across grades within each domain?

- ☐ Raw scores
- ☒ Scale scores (Correct)
- ☐ Proficiency level scores

Scale scores precisely track student growth over time and across grades. Even if a student's proficiency level remains the same for two years in a row, scale scores can pinpoint the learner's progress within that proficiency level.

2. Which type of score is a tally of students' correct answers on each item?

- ☒ Raw scores (Correct)
- ☐ Scale scores
- ☐ Composite area scores

Raw scores are a tally of a student's correct answers.

3. Which type of score yields descriptors that convey grade-appropriate expectations based on the standards?

- ☐ Confidence bands
- ☐ Scale scores
- ☒ Proficiency level scores (Correct)

Proficiency level scores convey grade-appropriate expectations, and for that reason, shouldn't be compared across grades.

4. Which type of band captures the score variation in student performance?

- ☐ Fixed band
- ☒ Confidence band (Correct)
- ☐ Sliding band

Confidence bands are a reminder that if a student takes the same test multiple times on the same day but under different conditions (e.g., well rested vs. not well rested), the student's scores will be similar across different scenarios, but not the same.

5. Which type of scores do not take item difficulty into account?

- ☒ Raw scores (Correct)
- ☐ Scale scores
- ☐ Proficiency level scores

Raw scores are relevant for generating score reports, but they don't take item difficulty into account; therefore, they are not included on WIDA score reports.

6. Which type of score is typically used for placement or reclassification of English learners?

- ☐ Raw scores
- ☐ Scale scores
- ☒ Proficiency level scores (Correct)

Proficiency level scores are typically used for placement (including reclassification of ELs) or programming purposes.

7. Which type of score includes a confidence band to capture the expected score variation in student performance?

☐ Raw scores

☒ Scale scores (Correct)

☐ Proficiency level scores

Scale scores include a confidence band that captures the expected score variation in student performance.

8. Which type of score is used to calculate composite area scores, such as Oral Language, Literacy, Comprehension, and Overall?

☐ Confidence band

☒ Scale scores (Correct)

☐ Proficiency level scores

Combinations of scale scores from the domain tests are used to generate the four composite areas of Oral Language, Literacy, Comprehension, and Overall.

6.5 Key: Appropriate and Inappropriate Score Usage

1. A school principal reviews a teacher's portfolio of student work compiled throughout the year. The principal comments on the teacher's innovative approach but states that because the teacher's students' scores on WIDA ACCESS are not meeting expectations, the principal cannot recommend the teacher for Distinguished Teacher Status.

☐ Appropriate use

☒ Inappropriate use (Correct)

It is inappropriate to use assessment scores for teacher evaluation because student performances do not reflect teacher efficacy.

2. An English teacher reflects on a multilingual student's performance across the course of a grading period. The teacher decides to use the student's score report from WIDA ACCESS to determine the student's final grade in English Language Arts.

☐ Appropriate use

☒ Inappropriate use (Correct)

It is inappropriate to use assessment scores to measure a student's ability in content areas like English Language Arts.

3. A teacher administers WIDA Screener, calculates the student's score, and then navigates to the State Education Agency's website to review state-specific guidelines. The teacher makes a note saying that the student does not require language support services.

☒ Appropriate use (Correct)

☐ Inappropriate use

It is appropriate to use assessment scores for identifying and classifying students as English learners (or not).

4. School administrators gather to review scores from WIDA Screener. One of them proclaims, "Looking at the increased number of students identified as multilingual learners across grades, I recommend that we hire additional teachers to support them in our district."

☒ Appropriate use (Correct)

☐ Inappropriate use

It is appropriate to use assessment scores for programming decisions, such as hiring teachers or budgeting.

5. A teacher carefully reads a student's score report from WIDA ACCESS. The teacher pulls out a roster for the school's special education program. "Looking at these scores, I know this student needs additional support," the teacher says. "Special education will provide that."

☐ Appropriate use

☒ Inappropriate use (Correct)

It is inappropriate to use WIDA ACCESS scores to place students into special education or gifted education programs.

Credits and References

An Enchanted Assessment Quest Course Design and Development

- Jason Kemp, Assessment Researcher
- Alicia Kim, Assessment Researcher
- Fabiana MacMillan, Director of Test Development
- Laura Marshall, Learning Experience Designer
- Sharon Pearce, Project Manager

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