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TESOL Assessments of Language Proficiency and Content Knowledge

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Abstract

Assessment is essential for language minority students. TESOL teachersshould assess their students at all levels of proficiency for language and content knowledge in both English and in their native language. This paperreviews a variety of authentic assessment methods that can be used to reveal ELL student's learning, achievement and progress. After discussing the reliability and validity of authentic assessments, it examines language proficiency assessment measures for evaluating both primary language proficiency and English language proficiency of ELL students including oral language assessment, reading assessment, and writing assessment. It then explores various instruments to assess content area that aims to monitor student progress in attaining instructional objectives to determine if adaptations to instruction are required to better meet ELL students' needs. Finally, it reviews effective pre instructional assessments, which can help TESOL teachers to evaluate the knowledge, skills, and capacities of ELL students prior to their participation in a new course of instruction,as well aspost instructional assessmentsto evaluate their linguistic skills and academic knowledge.

Keywords:instructionalassessments, TESOL, ELL, language proficiency, content knowledge

1. Introduction

TESOL teachersoften find the results from traditional or standardized tests using multiple choice and fill-in-the-blankquestionsdo not offer a good measurement of individual student (DelliCarpini, 2009). Given the diverse cultural and academic background of ELL learners, it is imperative for teachers to embrace authentic assessments created directly from classroom activities and instructions. By focusing on realworld tasks and involving students in the process, theseassessments can help teachers to reveal student learning, achievement, motivation, and attitudes on instructionally relevant classroom activities (Banta et al., 2009). Authentic assessments can take many forms. Some popular authentic assessments that teachers can adapt for multiple content areas and various purposes in their ELL class include performance-based assessment, portfolios, constructed-response items, teacher observations, writing samples, oral interviews, dialog journals, and story retelling, etc. (Love & Cooper, 2004).For example,using performance-based assessment, teachers can ask ELL students to construct responses orally or in writing and then evaluate their responses based on a predefined rubric. Portfolio assessment, which is a systematic collection of work selected by ELL students themselves, such as reading logs and writing samples, can be used to analyze their progress, and learning over time regarding instructional objectives.

To evaluate student's language skills and content knowledge, TESOL teachers should rely on authentic measures that are both reliable and valid. Reliability refers to the consistency of the assessment in producing the same score on different testing occasions or with different raters (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). It indicates the power of an assessment to gather consistent evidence of skills, regardless of the examiner, time, place, or other variables related to its administration (Herrera, et al., 2013). Examples of reliable assessments include holistic rubric for writing assessment and analytic scoring rubric with individualized rating given to each of the separate components in a scale(Herman, 1992). On the other hand, validity refers to the ability of an assessment process or product to measure the knowledge or skills it is intended to measure.In content area, validityis the correspondence between curriculum objectives and the objectives being assessed, and the assessment should benefit both teaching and learning processes (Darling-Hammond, 1994).

2. Assessment of Language Proficiency

Research has indicated that knowledge and skills from the primary language are transferable and can support English acquisition (Cummins, 2000; Goldenberg, 2008). For instance, Miller et al. (2006)'s study revealed that Spanish and English oral language skills contribute to reading within and across languages. Therefore, TESOL teachers are encouraged to assess both primary language proficiency and English language proficiency of their students.Because the primary language is a purposeful component of academic instruction, as in bilingual or dual language programs, the assessment of a student's primary language proficiency is important in understanding issues related to English acquisition and student achievement (Rhodes, et al., 2005). Due to the fact that many ELL students have knowledge bases and language skills in one language they may not possess in the other, classroom teachers can plan for optimal levels of academic challenge and support by assessing these knowledges and skills the ELL students already possess in their primary language (Herrera et al., 2013).

The ability of an ELL student to benefit from and participate in the general curriculum depends greatly on his or her proficiency in English (Huang & Flores, 2018). Assessment of English language proficiency can help teachers to determine the appropriate educational placement for ELL students so that they can receive the language support for content-area instruction (Herrera et al., 2013).An informal language proficiency assessment uses home language surveyto identify ELL students who may qualify alternative language services. Teachers can ask if the student had academic instruction in native or English language. The scale of language proficiency can be beginner, intermediate, fluent in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teachers can also collect information from parents of ELL students, such as if they can communicate in English, read, and write fluently in native or English language, have access to children's books in native or English language, or assist kids with homework, etc.

2.1 Oral Language Assessment

Oral language is a communicative action focusing on the specific function or performance. As oral language development of ELL students progresses in both English and native languages, TESOL teachers can encourage them to use native language as an instructional aid and resource for classroom assessment (Gottlieb, 2016). The goal of oral language assessment of ELL students is to capture a student's ability to communicate for both basic communicative and academic purposes (Pray, 2005). Academic language is central to both language development and conceptual development, and its proficiency directly connects to student achievement in content areas (Gottlieb, 2016). Academic language proficiency refers to the ability to make complex meanings explicit in either oral or written modes by means of language itself rather than by means of paralinguistic cues such as gestures or intonation (MacSwan&Rolstad, 2006). Table 1presents an example of assessing how well ELL students can use academic oral language functions.In practice, oral language assessment may take different forms, e.g., oral interviews, story retelling, and debates.

Table 1.Self-Assessment of Academic Oral Language Functions

Task	Difficulty Level (1 – Worst, 5 – Best)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Describe objects and people					
Describe past events					
Ask questions in class					
Ask for explanation					
State an opinion					
Agree and disagree					
Summarize a story					
Give an oral presentation					
Understand others in a group					

Source: Adapted from Bachman & Palmer (1989).

Interviews. Using a prepared list of questions or tasks, TESOL teachers can conduct oral interviews with students at all level of language proficiency. During the discussions/conversations, teachers can evaluate language functions, such as describing and providing information or an opinion.

Underhill (1987) offered some sample questions, e.g., “Can you say something about your family?” “What subjects are you studying?” “How do you ask a teacher to repeat the directions?” “Can you describe what you did yesterday?” “How do you spend your spare time?” “What do you say to someone you meet for the first time?”

Story Retelling. Teachers can ask ELL students to retell stories that they have read, which evaluates language functions used in oral communication, such as describing, summarizing, andgiving information. Besides measuring the oral language proficiency, story retelling is also a commonly used activity for reading assessment that focuses on comprehension skills.The story should be appropriate for the student’s language level and age as this activity assesses both oral and reading skills. The teacher may choose to read the story orally to the students to assess both listening comprehension and speaking abilities. Commonly used criteria include accuracy in describing the setting and the characters, presentation of a sequence of events, and useof a range of vocabulary and appropriate syntax (Brown & Yule, 1983).

Debates. Although more extensive preparations are expected, debates provide ELL students opportunity to engage in using extended amounts of language for convincingly defend one side of a topic. Teachers can evaluate language functions, such as describing, explaining giving/asking for information, persuading, and agreeing/disagreeing (O’Malley &Pierce, 1996). Students are put into pair or a small group, each talking in turn and responding to questions from the other side. After two to three rounds of the constructive speeches and rebuttal speeches from both sides, teachers can allocate some time for debriefing and discussion. Each debate group will reflect on their performance and seek feedback from the teacher and the audience, i.e. their peers not in the current debate, which creates a chance for all students to ask questions and to contribute their own thoughts and opinions on the arguments presented during the debate.

2.2 Reading Assessment

Reading is a complex cognitive task that demands knowledge of sound-symbol relationships, grammar, and semantics to predict and confirm meaning (Peregoy& Boyle, 2017). Our mental information representation and processing during reading rely on both verbal units and visual objects (Paivio, 1990). Information is processed more efficiently and stored in long term memory more successfully when presented both verbally and visually (Baddeley, 1992). For ELL students, reading involves two partially interconnected verbal systems corresponding to their native language and English, both associated with the same nonverbal/image system (Sadoski &Paivio, 2013). Reading in native language could impact ELL student’s English reading development. Students with better literacy in their first language often achieve the same level of proficiency in English as their peers whose native language is English (Slavin& Cheung, 2004). Besides diverse background knowledge and educational experiences, ELL students usually come from different cultural environments. Miscue analysis and retelling datasuggest that ELL students’ reading comprehension was superior when given stories that are more culturally relevant (Ebe, 2010). TESOL teachers can develop a holistic rubric using a five-point scale to interpret the reading comprehension skills of their students. Retellings, reading logs, and reciprocal teaching are some commonly used assessment activitiesfor reading, which can also be applied to content-area assessments.

Retellings. As aforementioned, teachers can use retellings to help ELL students to develop oral language proficiency. However, instead of asking students to read aloud, which concentrates on pronunciation and intonation rather than reading comprehension, teachers often find that retelling is a more efficient tool for assessing reading comprehension. In practice, ELL students can use a story map that incorporates the story structure with headings such as setting, main characters, major events, etc. (O’Malley &Pierce, 1996). A story map can assist ELL students to sketch their ideas out about the story in writing before they start to talk about it. In addition, if an ELL student is yet able to tell the story through oral or written language, he or she can resort to a picture map, i.e., drawing pictures to tell the story (Routman, 1994). Research have revealed that students with reading deficiency usually have trouble creating a gestalt image, i.e., a complex organized unit created by the visualization of the whole more than the sum of its parts, due to their slow and dull sensory information from imagery, and they often get stuck on parts and pieces (Bell, 1991). Meanwhile, students with good comprehension and expression skills can create mental representations from oral or written language, and their sensory system may easily bring parts to whole through imagery. Based on the bilingual dual coding model, Wang and Li (2019) discussed using multimedia to visualize and verbalize language comprehension, which can help ELL students in generating concept imagery through a series of steps:

(1) sentences in a short self-contained story are presented in order; (2) students draw a picture representing the meaning of each sentence; (3) students verbalize a summary to retell the story by describing each picture; (4) the gestalt image is formed as students develop the capacity to build mental images sentence by sentence.

Reading Logs. Reading logs, also referred to as reading journals or reading diaries, ask students to document the type and quantity of reading they do both in and out of class (Pak &Weseley, 2012). It is a popular tool used by TESOL teachers in monitoring student's reading progress.In practice, teachers can require ELL students to keep a record of the text read in both English and their native language, as well as encourage students to write a brief impression or critique of the reading (Carlisle, 2000). By combining a reading project with writing tasks, reading logs allow ELL students to read a large amount of texts at their language level on a wide range of topics based upon each student's own knowledge, interests, and experience. The purpose of such "extensive reading" is to catch the text's main idea instead of a detailed understanding of its grammatical and thematic element, which would become "intensive reading" (Lyutaya, 2011). ELL students should find reading enjoyable as they understand literary ideas, learn new vocabulary, acquire reading strategies, and as a result, improve their English proficiency. Table 2 shows asample rubric for both summative and formative assessment by rating in eight categories.

Table 2. Rubric for Reading Logs Assessment

Category	Description	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Observations	Ask relevant questions about the plot, characters, setting, and language.				
Quotations	Quotations from the text are accurate and relate to some important feature in the story.				
Comparisons	Note differences and similarities between characters, themes, and language, etc.				
Reflections	Write about feelings or relate events from the story to their personal story or to current events.				
Summaries	Present a coherent review of a chapter or the whole story.				
Analyses	Write insightfully about the motivations of the characters, the resolution of the plot, or the reliability of the narrator.				
Synthesis	Demonstrate the relationships between the story and other events, such as relating the underlying theme to human experience.				
Vocabulary	Illustrate proper strategies with various difficult words, grammatical structures, and colloquial expressions.				

Source: Adapted from Lyutaya (2011).

Reciprocal Teaching. As an instructional approach designed to improve reading comprehension, reciprocal teaching encourages students to use reading strategies, such as summarizing, questioning, and predicting (Palincsar& Brown 1983). Students are usually assigned to a small group and read the first paragraph of a text silently. Each student in the group will get a turn to summarize the paragraph and ask a question about the content, identify a comprehension problem that is relatively difficult, and predict what might happen in the next paragraphwhile the teacher observing and evaluating their questions and responses (O'Malley &Pierce, 1996). Spörer, et al., (2009) investigated the effects of strategy instruction and reciprocal teaching in improving students reading comprehension skills. They found that students who practiced reciprocal teaching in small groups outperformed students in instructor-guided and traditional instruction groups on a standardized reading comprehension test.

2.3 Writing Assessment

Writing is an interactive process in which students apply various strategies to make meaning based on their knowledge and experiences (Peregoy& Boyle, 2017). Writing assessment is often used for identification or placement in ELL programs as well as monitoring student progress and determining the instruction changes (Brown &Abeywickrama, 2010).

To choose appropriate writing assignments, TESOL teachers need to understand the English language proficiency level of their students. Table 3 shows a sample holistic rubric for interpreting the written work of the students.

Process Writing. Besides common writing strategies that are applicable to content-area assessment, TESOL teachers can put students in Process Writing, an interactive learning process involving the construction of narratives on issues they have personal interest in through three stages: pre-writing, writing, and post-writing (Hudelson,1989). They can use a checklist to monitor the strategies students have applied in each stage. For instance, students may have formulated topics and created outlines in pre-writing stage, adopted strategies like review, backtrack, and substitution during writing, and completed word-level editing, sentence-level revision, and composition-level rewriting in post-writing.

Table 3. Rubric for Writing Assessment with ELL Students

Level	Criteria
5	Present multi-paragraph organization with clear development of ideas Demonstrate evidence of smooth transitions Use varied, vivid, precise vocabulary consistently Write with few grammatical or mechanical errors
4	Present multiple paragraphs logically with some parts not fully developed Show some evidence of transitions Use varied and vivid vocabulary appropriate for purpose Write with some grammatical or mechanical errors without affecting meaning
3	Present a paragraph logically Apply various sentence structures Use vocabulary adequate to purpose Write with grammatical or mechanical errors rarely affecting communication
2	Begin to write a paragraph by organizing ideas Write mostly simple sentences Use high frequency vocabulary Write with grammatical or mechanical errors occasionally affecting meaning
1	Write simple sentences or phrases Use limited or repetitious vocabularyand spell inventively Use little or no mechanics that frequently diminish communication

Source: Adapted from Prince William County Public Schools, Virginia.

Writing Conference. Teachers can use a writing conference with the students to explore the applications and interests of ELL students, such as writing to communicate, writing in other subjects or various genres, writing for pleasure, and editing/commenting writing of others, During the conference, teachers can choose questions according to the selection of the topic, the purpose of the writing, and the instructional focus for each individual student, such as "Why did you choose to write this topic?" "Did you write about what you read?" "Did you make a pre-writing plan before you write?" "Did you edit what you wrote?" etc. (O'Malley &Pierce, 1996).

3. Content-Area Assessment

The primary purpose of using content-area assessments is to monitor student progress in attaining instructional objectives and to decide if adaptations to instruction are required to better meet student needs (Brown, 2005). However, TESOL teachers in the content areas often face challenges to identify if students understand the concepts and procedures integral to the subject area although they are still learning English (Short, 1993). The practical ELL classroom teaching indicates that language and content are highly interdependent in most content areas. As many language assessment activities can be used for content-area assessments, content-area assessments can also be used to determine if ELL students are ready to advance to a higher level of English language instruction (Pawan& Craig, 2011). In addition, because new information in content areas is usually learned most effectively by building on prior knowledge, before giving content-area assessments, it is essential for TESOL teachers to first obtain background knowledge of their students (Gagne et al., 1997).

3.1 Formative vs. Summative Assessment

Two types of content-area assessments commonly used are formative assessment and summative assessment, both based on standards and indicators of curricular learning. Formative assessments refer to tools and strategies employed by grade-level and other teachers to determine what and how students are learning so that instruction can be modified accordingly while it is still in progress (Herrera, 2013). While formative assessments tell teachers what is currently happening so that they can make necessary adaptations along the way, summative assessments measure knowledge or skills of the students upon finish of instruction (Black & William, 2010). However, teachers should be aware that the difference between formative and summative assessment is primarily related to the ways in which assessment results are used, as many assessments developed for formative purposes can be used for summative purposes and vice versa (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). Authentic content-area assessments can be used to monitor students' reading comprehension, vocabulary skills, and thinking skills, etc. (O'Malley &Pierce, 1996).

Reading Comprehension. The methods developed for assessing English language proficiency, such as retellings and reading logs, can be applied to content-area assessments as well. For example, teachers can assess ELL students' reading comprehension by asking them to show written notes, discuss in groups, respond to short-answer or multiple-choice questions, and summarize their understanding of the text (Shanahan et al., 1982). Furthermore, teachers can use cloze test, which is efficient in identifying the reading materials that benefit ELL students most from instruction as well as evaluating if a content area text is appropriate for the reading level of the student being assessed (Gellert&Elbro, 2013).

Vocabulary Skills. Vocabulary and concepts are often difficult for ELL students in content area reading. Traditional ways of assessing vocabulary in classroom use matching items and multiple-chose questions, which rely on rote learning of word definitions or associations (Katz et al., 2004). Teachers can use other assessment tools, such as recognizing or generating attributes and examples, sensing or inferring relationships, applying concepts to various contexts, and generating novel contexts (Simpson, 1987). It is important for TESOL teachers to match the item format to the subject area and use a variety of formats across modules and tests.

Thinking Skills. Instruction and assessment studies have discussed the development of thinking skills in curriculum and standards (Sulaiman et al., 2015). Teachers can assess ELL students' higher order thinking skills by using various techniques that assist them to properly respond. Assessment of thinking skills will also let teachers to decide how ELL students are performing in an important part of the curriculum and provide feedback to these students about the types of thinking that may help them in becoming more effective learners.

3.2 Classroom Examples

Content-area assessments cantell classroom teachers about how well ELL students are learning academic material when they are also acquiring English language (Ovando&Combs, 2018). It is often difficult for TESOL teachers to find authentic content-area assessments for students who have diverse cultural and linguistic experience. Because of a lack of reading comprehension skills, vocabulary to present their thoughts, ability to form appropriate questions, or simply not confident to engage with others verbally, ELL students may not be able to effectively participate in classroom discussions and activities (Katz et al., 2004). Besides the language proficiency assessments discussed early, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) presented some more examples of content-area assessments in a variety of subjects.

Problem Solving. Students in science or mathematics subjects usually need to acquire two types of knowledge. Declarative or conceptual knowledge, which describes facts that we know such as labels and classifications, can be assessed through oral interviews and cloze test, etc. Procedure or skill-based knowledge, which comprises things that we know how to do, can be assessed through scientific inquiries and experiments. ELL students often find the procedure for solving math problems is difficult because in addition to execute the right calculations, they must comprehend the verbal or written message and determine proper operations as well. Table 4 shows a sample scoring rubric to rate students' performance in terms of their understanding of the problem, the strategies they have used to find an answer, and the accuracy of their solution (O'Malley &Pierce, 1996).

Reading Response Time. As a popular assessment for integrated language use in content area reading, Reading Response Time focuses on integrative languages activities and mirrors the type of feedback individuals might receive outside the classroom.

Students are required to prepare a report of personal response to reading materialsappropriate to their language level. It is important for teachers to encourage students to write their personal response to what they read rather than summarizing the story. The session starts with a student presenting the report to the rest of class, after which other students give oral feedback as the teacher takes notes. The advantage of using Reading Response Time in TESOL classrooms is that teachers can integrate assessment of reading, writing, and speaking with the students' conceptual understanding of the books reflected in the report (O'Malley &Pierce, 1996).

Table 4. Scoring Rubric for Problem Solving in Mathematics

Level	Understanding	Strategies	Accuracy
Excellent	Identify the question and problem components accurately	Use various strategies, e.g., making lists or tables, drawing pictures, finding patterns, and working backwards.	Correct solution and correctly labeled
Good	Identify the question but ignore one problem component	Use strategies incompletely for the problem or for getting the correct answer	Correct solution with incorrect labels or correct labels with minor calculation error
Satisfactory	Identify the question but ignore some problem components	Use improper strategies for the type of the problem or reach a sub-goal and do not finish	One or more correct subcomponents but wrong overall solution without correct labels
Poor	Do not identify the question and ignore some problem components	Start with wrong strategy and make no attempt for alternative methods, do not reach sub-goals, do not finish	Wrong solution without correct sub-components or labels

Source: Adapted from O'Malley & Pierce (1996)

Literature Circlesis another integrated assessment of reading and oral proficiency as one student presents a personal response to readings and other students ask questionsin a small group. TESOL teachers can adapt questions to individual students and the books they have read to make questions unpredictable to students. Teachers should also understand that ELL students' cultural dispositions or a lack of background knowledge and schemata needed for the book being discussed may prevent them from sharing personal insights and opinions with peers whose native language is English (Carrison& Ernst-Slavit, 2005). Literature Circles is used for intermediate and advanced ELL leaners in upper elementary, middle school or even high school classroom because itsintegrated assessment of reading comprehension, oral reading fluency, word attack skills, and oral reading, etc., for a group of students in a short session (O'Malley &Pierce, 1996). A significant benefit is the interaction among students in the group and between students and the text. It encourages students to be active participants first in reading their books and second in the group discussions and projects or activities that are integrated into the structure. Literature Circles gives students powerful strategies to build confidence and enhance their language and literacy skills. Students can practice a variety of skills, such as reading aloud, shared and independent reading, oral language, making personal connections, and critical thinking.Students actively engaging in discussions usually have increased motivation on reading and participation, as well as improved accuracy and comprehension(Carrison& Ernst-Slavit, 2005).

4. Preand PostInstructional Assessment

Pre-instructional assessment, or pre-assessment, is crucial for ELL learners because it collects data about their knowledge, skills, and capacities prior to participation in a new lesson or course of instruction (Herrera et al., 2013). Teachers can use measures like pretests, observations, conversations, and classroom discussions to obtain such information. Espinosa and Soto (2018) explained these forms of pre-assessment tools as well as their use and benefits for learning English as a foreign language. They also discussed in detail how some non-traditional tools, for instance, biography cards, can help teachers to collect valuable data of their ELL students in sociocultural, academic, and linguisticdimensions.

Teachers need to track ELL students' progress in both language and content areas over time and have observations. Effective post instructional assessment is often based on the teacher's need to decide and document whether language objectives and content objectives, e.g., vocabulary, reading comprehension, critical concepts, etc., have been met.

To recognize and plan for assessing both skill-based and fact-based knowledge, the teachers can use many strategies and techniques aligned with standards to assess ELL students' linguistic and academic growth as well as cognitive learning processes (Herrera et al., 2013).

4.1 Understandingthe Background of ELL Learners

Pre-assessmentfor ELL learnersusually involves their biopsychosocial history, education history, and language history (Herrera et al., 2013). Human experience, e.g., health, physical and mental readiness for schooling, socioeconomic situation, immigration status, are the major facets of biopsychosocial histories (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Living in a different culture, ELL learners often find themselves frustrated, anxious, or even depressed because their normal ways of thinking and interacting with people may seem odd to others in this new environment (Igoa, 2013). This could generate negative impact on both their academic and social development because it makes them feel uncomfortable approaching people for information or help. Therefore, teachers need to develop effective interventions and activities to prevent such cultural shock and to support ELL students when they face difficulties with acculturation. They should be prepared to recognize and react appropriately to students' behaviors that exhibit disengagement from or rebellion against the new culture.Because aligning academic experiences and language is also useful for native language instruction, classroom teachers should be concerned with ELL students' prior education, such as enrollment, attendance, and achievement (Herrera et al., 2013). ELL students' language history, i.e., the linguistic dimension of the student biography, plays an important role in the success of classroom teachers as well. ELL students with stronger native language skills usually have better linguistic resources to resort to as they acquire a second language. Their language use patterns often indicate the social, emotional, and academic issues (Herrera & Murry, 2016).

4.2 Pre-Assessment Resources

School conferences is a commonly used resources for pre-assessment. Teachers can interview parents on topics such as family structure, languages spoken at home, and students' exposure to literacy activities at home. It is also possible to obtain information about students' prior academic experiences in order to identify how they learned English in the past, e.g., grammar-based method or communicative way (Espinosa & Soto, 2018). In addition, teachers need to enhance communication with all families by using culturally responsive interaction practice. Jordan et al. (1998) addressed the importance of developing teacher-parent partnerships across cultures with effective school conferences, which can provide helpful pre-assessment information given that initial impressions of teachers introduce few or misleading insights into a student's skills and talents. However, because of parents'trust or respect of the teacher, they often defer an academic issue to the teacher and agree with the teacher'scomments instead of sharing evidence of their children's difficulties (Herrera et al., 2013). Despite these challenges in the context of productive teacher-parent discussions, school conferences represent an effective means of family-school communication and offer a building block for good teacher-parent partnerships (Khasnabis, 2018).

Home visits is another resource that can also create opportunities for observing language use in context and gain valuable information for pre-assessing the student's level of acculturation, content-area capacities, academic background, and more (Whyte &Karabon, 2016). During the home visit, it is important for teachers to look for and ask about evidence of ELL students' skills and knowledge in multiple contexts. A student's culture profile includes information like ethnicity, native language, other languages spoken at home, English language proficiency, and culture characteristics, etc. Reflection on the home visit illuminate details that can significantly inform content area instruction and assessment practices.

4.3Post Assessmentof Linguistic Skills

It is critical for teachers to systematically analyze and document language growth of ELL students. Effective language assessment should incorporate tools to evaluate a student's oral language development, listening capabilities, reading comprehension, and writing skills (Lems et al., 2009). Students' language development can be tracked along an adapted continuum of skills throughout the school year. Parents may provide teachers important language information about the student, such as reviewing classroom discussions or school events, giving opinions, reading effectively, and showing strong linguistic behaviors in his or her native language (Herrera et al., 2013). Table 5gives an example of the scales for the assessment of English language development in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Table 5.An Example of Scales for the Assessment of English Language Development

Scale/Skill	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Early Production	Understand learned expression and new vocabulary in context.	Use isolated words, phrases, and vocabulary in classroom.	Identify letters, learned words, and phrases. Decode most English sounds.	Copy words or phrases, and write letters or simple expressions from memory.
Speech Emergence	Understand basic directions. Participate in conversation.	Ask and answer simple questions. Respond to simple statements.	Read and comprehend main ideas and facts.	Create basic statements and questions. Write simple messages.
Fluency	Understand academic content and instructions. Retell details from presentations.	Participate in discussions Give reasons. Retell a story or event.	Read and comprehends authentic text materials.	Write complex narratives. Compose with tenses. Compare topics. Use vivid and specific language.

Source: Adapted from Herrera et al. (2013)

4.4Post Assessment of Academic Knowledge

Teachers should encourage ELL students to apply vocabulary and concepts they have learned in class to higher-order thinking problems that include opportunities for both collaborative and independent evaluations (Alderson & Banerjee, 2002). Examples of effective post instructional assessments of academic knowledge among ELL students who have limited English proficiency, include P-W-L-L (prior-what-learned-life) maps, cultural literary response maps, and reflection journals (Herrera et al., 2013). P-W-L-L maps accommodate instruction for ELL students who can articulate the prior (P) academic and experiential knowledge about the subject, raise questions regarding what (W) remains unknown, relate what was learned (L) and take the learning to higher level by connecting it to their own life (L) experiences. Using cultural literary maps, ELL students can organize and classify the main ideas in a story they read or write, and link the story to their life experiences or cultural background. Furthermore, teachers can use reflection journals to assess ELL students' learning and capacity building as well as their language development. The structured response in journal writing allows ELL students to tie the content objectives with what was learned in the past and how the new knowledge is applied to future learning.

Studies have revealed teaching and assessing cognitive learning strategies and the role these strategies play in ELL student academic achievement in content areas (Bialystok, 2001; Montes, 2002). In general, cognitive learning strategies empower the learner with asset of tools for solving a complex problem in a logical and effective manner. ELL students who are encouraged to think about both the processes of their own thinking and the effectiveness of those processes tend to enhance their own academic performance across content areas (Marzano, 2004). Some popular cognitive learning strategies include Analyze Draw Decide (ADD) and Prediction Time Line (PTL) (Herrera & Murry, 2016). For example, using the ADD strategy, teachers can ask ELL students to analyze what happens in a story, draw a visual schema based on their prior experience, and decide about the best course of action. While using the PTL strategy, teachers can pose a problem for ELL students, and ask them to make predictions about what might happen next at critical points throughout the lesson. Students then check what they write leading to their predictions against answers as the lesson proceeds. Finally, they analyze the prediction accuracy and reflect on the information that led them to these predictions after the lesson.

5. Conclusion

Assessment is essential for language minority students who have diverse academic experience and cultural background. TESOL teachers should assess students at all levels of proficiency for language and content knowledge in both English and in their native language. This paper explored a variety of authentic assessment tools that can be used to reveal ELL students' learning, achievement and progress. TESOL teachers can use language proficiency assessment measures to evaluate both primary and English language proficiency of their students including oral language assessment, reading assessment, and writing assessment. For content area assessment, many practical classroom instruments have been developed to monitor student progress in attaining instructional objectives and to determine if adaptations to instruction are required to better meet needs of ELL students.

Finally, TESOL teachers can use pre-instructional assessment to collect data about the knowledge, skills, and capacities of ELL students prior to their participation in a new course of instruction. They are also encouraged to use strategies for post instructional assessment of knowledge and content-specific language development concurrently.

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