

#### Call to Action

Collect and report accurate information on your students!

"If we want grades to be accurate indicators of mastery, then we have to remove any barrier to students coming to know the material, as well as any barrier to their successful demonstrations of mastery. To not do either of these tasks makes any subsequent grades earned false; they are based on misinformation,



#### References

Abedi, J. (2006). Language issues in item development. In S. M. Downing & T. M. Haladyna (Eds.), Handbook of Test Development (pp. 377-398). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Fairbairn, S. (2006). English language learners' performance on modified science test item formats: A pilot study. Doctoral Dissertation. lowa City, IA.

Fairbairn, S. (2007). Facilitating greater test success for English language learners. Practical Assessment Research & Evaluation, 12(10). Available online: <a href="http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=12&n=11">http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=12&n=11</a>

Fairbairn, S., & Jones-Vo, S. (2016). Engaging English Learners by Providing Access to Standards: A Team-based Approach to Schoolwide Student Achievement. Thousand Oaks, CA: Convin

Kopriva, R. J., Emich, J. E., Hiopolito-Delgado, C. P., & Cameron, C. A. (2007). Do proper accommodation assignments make a difference? Examining the impact of improved decision making on scores for English language learners. Educational Measurement Lisus 8, Pages 20(2), 114.

Measurement: Issues & Practices, 26(3), 11-20.
Menken, K. (2000). What are the critical issues in wide-scale
assessment of English language learners? Issue Brief No. 6.
Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual
Education. Retrieved September 30, 2006, from http://
www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/issuebriefs/ib6.htm

Solano-Flores, G., Trumbull, E., & Nelson-Barber, S. (2002). Concurrent development of dual language assessments: An alternative to translating tests for linguistic minorities. International Journal of Testing, 2(2), 107-129.

Stevens, R. A., Butler, F. A., & Castellon-Wellington, M. (2000).
Academic language and content assessment: Measuring the progress of English language learners (ELLs). (Resarch Report No. 552). Losa Angeles, CA: National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST). Retrieved September 6, 2014, from http://www.cse.ucla.edu/products/reports/TR552.pdf.

Wormeli, R. (2006). Fair isn't always equal: Assessing and grading in the differentiated classroom. Portsmouth, NH: Stenhouse.

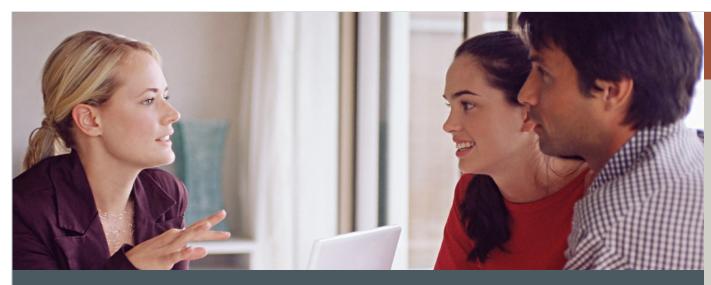


Prepared by: Shelley Fairbairn, Ph.D.

# Accurate Assessment of English Learners



How can you get accurate information about what your ELs know and can do?



### What we know about assessing ELs

## Concerns with Traditional Approaches:

- Interpreting ELs' large-scale test scores in the same way that non-ELs' scores are interpreted leads to inaccurate understandings of what ELs know and can do. (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2016)
- A test in English is a test of English. (Menken, 2000)
- Translating tests is problematic. (Solano-Flores, Trumbull, & Nelson-Barber, 2002)
- Test language is a separate kind of language (Stevens, Butler, & Castellon-Wellington, 2000)

- Accommodations aren't always that effective! (Kopriva, Emich, Hipolito-Delgado, & Cameron, 2007)
- Test formats (such as multiple-choice) are not always familiar to ELs. (Fairbairn, 2007)
- Comparing ELs to non-ELs in normreferenced testing is not helpful. (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2016)

#### Promising Practices:

- The language of the test should match the language of instruction. (Solano-Flores, Trumbull, & Nelson-Barber, 2002)
- Simplified/plain English on tests helps ELs better show their learning. (Abedi, 2006)

#### What you can do:

#### **Key Practices:**

(Fairbairn, 2007)

These key practices will help you to facilitate test success for ELs:

#### With regard to language:

- 1. Use simple grammar and sentence structures.
- 2. Use active voice rather than passive.
- 3. Use common vocabulary whenever possible.
- 4. Include visual support.

#### With regard to test preparation:

- 1. Align testing with instructional practice.
- 2. Teach students how to negotiate different item/test formats.
- 3. Ensure that students know the "rules of the testing game."
- 4. Allow students to experience the testing conditions.
- 5. Teach specific test-taking strategies.

For further clarification about these strategies, see <a href="https://pareonline.net">https://pareonline.net</a>