

Assessment of Multilingual Students

Description



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Definition

(Bailey & Wolf, 2021; Department of Education; Wikipedia)

- Multilingual students (MS):** also known as multilingual learners (ML), are students who are fluent in more than one language. This includes students who are learning English as a second language, also known as "English learners (ELs)" or "English language learners (ELL)".
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP):** NAEP assesses student performance in reading, writing, and science at grades 4, 8, and 12.
- State Achievement Tests:** In Washington, Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) and Washington Assessment of Science (WCAS).
- Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT):** The SAT is widely used for college admissions. It tests reading, mathematics, and writing skills.
- ACT (American College Testing):** The ACT is another college admissions test. It tests reading, mathematics, science reasoning, and writing.
- English Language Proficiency Tests:** These assess the language proficiency of English learners. Examples include the WIDA ACCESS test and the CELDT (California English Language Development Test).



History of Assessment of Multilingual Students in American Education (U.S. Department of Education)

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1 Early 20th Century

Multilingual students were often assessed using standardized tests designed for native English speakers, leading to inaccurate representations of their abilities.

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2

1960s-1970s

Legislation, such as the Bilingual Education Act (1967), aimed to provide better support and assessment methods for multilingual students.

3

1980s-1990s

The civil rights movement highlighted the need for more equitable and inclusive assessment practices for multilingual students.

Statistics

(Bailey & Wolf, 2021; National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance; Washington State Department of Education; National Center for Education Statistics)

- The percentage of public school students in the United States who were English learners (ELs) increased from 9.2 percent in fall 2010 to **10.3 percent, or 5.0 million students** in fall 2020.
- In 2017, 14% of grade 4 ELs were proficient in math and 9% were proficient in reading, compared to a 35% national average.
- In 2015–16, 84 percent of students nationwide graduated from high school on time, compared to 88 percent, well below the rate for non-ELs.
- In Washington state, about 10% of all P-12 students are English learners (ELs), a higher percentage. Over 130,000 students in Washington state participate in language instruction, representing more than 230 languages. In the 2014–15 school year, 67% of the students were followed by Russian, Vietnamese, Somali, and Chinese.

Examples of Accommodations in Assessment Students

(National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance)

Education Statistics)

NAEP: Universal Design

- Text-to-Speech: Allows students to have text read aloud.
- Highlighter Tool: Helps students emphasize key information.
- Equation Editor: Enables students to interact with mathematical symbols and formulas.
- Orientation to Topics: Provides guidance on test content.

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SAT

- Time and one-half (+50%): Extends the test duration.
- 14-point test booklet: Larger font size.
- Large-print answer sheet (no bubbles): Easier to read and mark.
- Extra breaks: Additional breaks during testing.

ACT

- One and one-half time on breaks: Extended break times.
- Large print test booklet: Larger font size.
- Bilingual dictionaries and translated instructions (for non-English speaking students).

Cons of Accommodations of Multilingual Stud

(Menken, 2010; Celata, 2021; Espinosa, n.d.; Rivera et al., 2006)

- 1** Content Knowledge Evaluation
Critics argue that certain accommodations and the validity of test scores may be compromised by the nature of the uniformity.
- 2** Standardized Testing
Opponents argue that standardized accommodations are not tailored to each ELL. Also, allocating resources for accommodations may impact overall educational quality.
- 3** Fairness and Equity
ELLs may receive different testing conditions and scores. Concerns arise about fairness when accommodations are not provided to all speakers do not.

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Pros of Accommodations of Multilingual Students

(Menken, 2010; Celata, 2021)

Linguistic and Cultural Bias

Standardized tests may not accurately reflect the knowledge and abilities of multilingual students due to cultural and linguistic biases.

Stress and Anxiety

Assessments can be a source of stress and anxiety for multilingual students, potentially impacting their performance.

Narrow Curriculum

An over-reliance on narrow curriculum may limit opportunities for multilingual students to explore their strengths and interests.

Differential Item Functioning (DIF) Examples for Multilingual Student Assessment (Popham, 2012; Mahoney, 2008)

Vocabulary Knowledge

Multilingual students may struggle with unfamiliar vocabulary, even if they have conceptual understanding, leading to DIF.

Cultural References

Assessment items that rely on cultural references unfamiliar to multilingual students can result in DIF.

Language Structures

The way language is used in assessment items can create DIF for multilingual students, even if they have the necessary knowledge.

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Addressing Bias and Fairness in Multilingual Student Assessment

(Abedi, J., 2010; National Center for Education Evaluation and Research)

Language Accommodations

Providing language accommodations, such as translations or extended time, can help level the playing field for multilingual students.

Cultural Relevance

Ensuring that assessment content and format are culturally relevant and responsive can improve the accuracy of results.

Authentic Assessments

Using performance-based or portfolio assessments can better capture the knowledge and skills of multilingual students.

Stakeholder Collaboration

Engaging multilingual students and community members in the assessment process can help address potential biases.

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Strategies for Equitable A Multilingual Students (Bailey)

1

Universal Design

Adopting a universal design for learning approach that is accessible and inclusive for all students.

2

Formative Assessments

Utilizing formative assessments throughout the learning process to monitor and support the progress of multilingual students and provide ways to demonstrate their full range of abilities.

3

Professional Development

PD equips educators in Title III compliance, data analysis, and monitoring assessment for bias, selecting appropriate assessment tools so that all students receive fair and unbiased assessments.

Conclusion and Key Takeaways



Recognize Unique Needs

Assessments should acknowledge the unique linguistic and cultural backgrounds of multilingual students.



Ensure Fairness

Assessment practices must be designed to be fair and unbiased for multilingual students.



Promote Equity

Equitable assessment can open doors to educational opportunities for multilingual students.



Support

Assessments should be designed to support the success of multilingual students.

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Category

1. Uncategorized

Date Created

August 9, 2025

Author

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