

Assessment of all students

Profession, Student



Running head: Assessment Assessment of English Language Learners

Student NameGrand CanyonUniversity: ESL 534 August 8 2012 With the implementation of the No Child Left behind Act of 2001, states are required to assess ELL students to determine if students are making adequate progress towards their language developmentgoals. The purpose of the NCLB act is to challenge students to meet higher standards, close the achievement gap, and ensure that all students have the same opportunities to reach their full potential.

There has been much criticism regarding the NCLB act and the high stakes testing that has developed as a result, especially when it comes to ELL students. ELL students not only have to learn required content objectives as other students, but have the challenge of learning the English language simultaneously. Students, schools, and teachers are evaluated with standardized test annually to ensure the initial goals are met.

The concern that many have with standardized testing is they do not show the overall progress of the student which may lead to inaccurate results regarding a student's language proficiency. English Language Learners are a diverse group with different languages, cultures, and backgrounds. Their language acquisition can be effected by many things including socio-economic factors and educational backgrounds. Understanding language acquisition theories can give critical insight into how assessments should be developed.

Some of the popular theories of language acquisition include the threshold hypothesis, which states that a student's language skills need to reach a critical level before students can benefit from bilingualism (Cummins, 1979)

<https://assignbuster.com/assessment-of-ell-students/>

and the Critical/ Sensitive period hypothesis which states that students who are not exposed to a second language before puberty will never reach the proficiency of a native English speaker (Bailey & Heritage, 2010). According to Hakuta 2000, it takes several years for ELL students to reach the level of proficiency needed to learn new academic content through a second language. This theory and others should cause educators to question the current objectives that we have for ELL students and the time frame that ELL students have for meeting those objectives. Language proficiency assessments are an important tool used to measure students' progress as well as record their starting point. Stiggins and Chappuis 2005 argue that students make conclusions about their capability of learning based on the assessments that teachers provide. and that " feedback delivered once a year from standardized district, state, national, or international is far too infrequent and broadly focused to be helpful (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005 p. 2). Stiggins and Chappuis believe that our current educational system places far too much emphasis on assessments and that one test does not provide an accurate measure of a school's or student's success. Instead, they argue that student involved assessments are more beneficial for the student and teacher and set the student up for success. With student involved assessments student and teachers work as partners to monitor their achievement creating an environment where students feel secure and know what is expected of them and what it takes for them to meet their goals (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005).

Within the last ten years there have been numerous debates centered over how or if ELL students should participate in standardized testing. Some have

argued that standardized test can be biased against ELL students because they don't take into account cultural differences in language structure. Standardized test provide only a snap shot of the learning and growth that has taken place for ELL students and is not a way to accurately monitor the progress of students. With standardized testing we shift the attention from learning and building knowledge for the future to focusing on short term results.

With unrealistic goals for standardized testing it can be difficult to tell the difference between schools that are serving the needs of ELL students and those that are not. References Bailey, A. L. and Heritage M. (2010). English Language Proficiency Assessments Foundations: External Judgments of Adequacy. Evaluating the validity of English language Proficiency Assessments. (An Enhanced Assessment Grant). Retrieved August 2, 2012 from <http://www.library.gcu.edu> Stiggins, R. and Chappuis, J. Using Student-Involved Classroom Assessment to Close Achievement Gaps Retrieved August 2, 2012 from <http://www.library.gcu.edu>