WIDA FOCUS ON
Language Growth

In This Issue

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CONSORTIUM

Introduction

Ms. Estrada, an ESL teacher at Pablo Neruda Middle School in Butte, Montana, is stopped in the hallway by Mr. Miller, a seventh grade science teacher. He wanted to discuss Antonio, an ELL student they have both taught for two years now. Antonio seems very engaged during hands-on activities and is great at following oral directions, as well as asking questions. Specifically, Antonio does a wonderful job speaking about science. He describes in detail his science conclusions when he has a word bank and is able to use graphic organizers to report conclusions, but Mr. Miller is concerned with the lab reports Antonio has produced. Mr. Miller hasn't seen much improvement in the written lab reports over time, and has noticed his summaries consistently lack complexity and cohesion when Antonio creates them independently. Mr. Miller asks if Ms. Estrada notices similar strengths and areas of concern with Antonio's writing in language arts and math. She shares that she generally agrees, but has seen Antonio write with more clarity and detail on personal topics and when he has the opportunity to interact with peers in English and Spanish as part of the writing process.

This conversation sparked Ms. Estrada to further investigate Antonio's academic language growth in writing over time. She wants to know if he is making adequate growth in academic language and if there are better ways to support him to further his English language development. Back in her office, she pulls out Antonio's file that contains his ACCESS for ELLs Teacher Reports for the past few years and various formative assessments that Ms. Estrada and Antonio's content teachers have submitted. As she studies them, she is bewildered on how to comprehend, interpret, and relay so much information to others. She is particularly overwhelmed as to how she will explain and illustrate the language growth of her ELL students on the ACCESS for ELLs. Ms. Estrada leans back in her chair, takes a deep breath, and reflects on the best way to undertake this task. She begins pondering the following questions:

1. How do I know my ELLs are making adequate growth?
2. What scores or groups of scores should I use to look at growth?
3. How do I communicate this information to others?

Ms. Estrada recalls that her district ESL/bilingual coordinator attended a WIDA Data Literacy workshop. She brought back WIDA growth charts that ranked students by grade cluster. As she begins searching through her files for the handouts, she remembers that WIDA offers many of these resources online at www.wida.us.

This WIDA Focus Bulletin aims to help educators, like Ms. Estrada, understand the ACCESS for ELLs Teacher Report, investigate student growth, and use this data to make instructional decisions about student progress in language proficiency.

WIDA Resources for Looking at Growth

- Interpretive Guide
- Performance Definitions
- Can Do Descriptors
- Interpreting ACCESS for ELLs Webinars

Status and Growth

School districts in the U.S. use a variety of assessments of students' performance to support teacher instruction and assess student learning, and ELLs often have even more test scores than others. Some assessments are required by state and federal law. Others are selected by districts

or schools, and some are developed by teachers. They measure knowledge in academic content areas like reading, mathematics, and science. They can also measure students' intelligence, physical and psychological capacities, and English language proficiency.

From these measures, a veritable cornucopia of scores is generated. There are raw scores, percent scores, proficiency scores, scale scores, percentile ranks, deciles, quartiles, grade equivalents, and the list goes on. From this mix of numbers, categories and values, educators, parents, and students make all kinds of decisions. Typically, these decisions fall into two categories: decisions about status and decisions about change or growth. **Status** refers to students' current ranking, proficiency, capacity, or ability. It tells us what students know and are able to do. This is extremely important to know. It helps us understand where individual students or groups of students are relative to what we are measuring. Educators can use this information to tailor instruction to students' current needs. But it's not the whole story. Status doesn't tell us what learning has occurred. This is where examining **growth** is valuable.

Examining growth allows us to identify student change over time, be it change in proficiency, skills, capacity, or ability. In this Focus Bulletin, we will take a close look at growth, specifically change in scores on WIDA's large-scale test of English language proficiency, ACCESS for ELLs.

ACCESS for ELLs Scores

Raw Scores: The number of items a student answered correctly out of the total number of items on the test

Scale Scores: A mathematical transformation of a raw score. These scores are useful for tracking individual growth of a student

Proficiency Level: Describe a student's performance in terms of the six WIDA language proficiency levels

Kindergarten ACCESS Scores

Instructional: Used for instructional purposes

Accountability: Used for NCLB accountability purposes and high stakes program decisions

Types of Test Scores

First, we need to talk about ACCESS for ELLs results and how we might use them to examine student growth. ACCESS for ELLs offers three types of scores on the Teacher Report: raw scores, scale scores, and proficiency level scores. Later, we will show where to find each of these scores and discuss what you can and cannot do with them.

RAW SCORES

Raw scores are the actual number of items or tasks that students answer correctly. A variety of different types of raw scores are provided on WIDA score reports. However, raw scores are the least valuable type of score to monitor growth. They are not directly comparable across grades or tiers, and should not be used as a primary means to track student growth. Raw scores also do not indicate the difficulty of the items and therefore, educators should use raw scores with caution when planning instruction. That being said, the data presented in raw scores can help educators and administrators understand student performance within certain environments. For example, if a student answered more items correctly within the language of mathematics than the language of social studies, educators could use this information to reflect on the language supports, types of tasks, and the opportunities for interaction the student has in the different settings. However, using raw scores to generalize beyond that context is limited.

SCALE SCORES

Scale scores are transformations of raw scores. They are developed in such a way that they may be compared across grades and tiers. They are comparable within language domains or composites but not across them. This is an important point! You can compare changes in Listening scale scores but you cannot make comparisons betweenchanges in multiple domains, such as comparing changes in Listening to changes in Reading. ACCESS for ELLs scale scores comprise a single vertical scale from kindergarten to 12th grade, making these scores ideal for tracking student growth.

WIDA ELP LEVELS

1	2	3	4	5	6
ENTERING	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	EXPANDING	BRIDGING	REACHING

PROFICIENCY LEVEL SCORES

Proficiency level scores are an interpretation of the scale scores. They describe student performance in terms of the six WIDA language proficiency levels. They are presented as whole numbers followed by a decimal. The whole number indicates students' language proficiency level based on the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards. The decimal indicates the proportion within the proficiency level range that students' scale scores vary, rounded to the nearest tenth. Proficiency level scores are not interval data, meaning that the interval between each value is not equal. The interval between corresponding scale scores for 2.4 to 3.4, for example, are not necessarily the same as between a 3.4 and a 4.4. Proficiency level scores are less productive than scale scores for tracking growth because they are not equal intervals across the clusters. However, for the purposes of observing growth in the classroom and planning instruction, proficiency level scores in conjunction with the WIDA ELD Standards Framework and the Can Do Descriptors offer a description of what students can do at their current level of language proficiency. Furthermore, by using the WIDA ELD Standards, educators can help students progress in their language development to the next proficiency level.

Understanding the Teacher Report

The Teacher Report can serve as a useful starting point for planning language instruction and assessment, as well as to understand what to infer when looking at individual growth. Below is the Teacher Report for Antonio. Ms. Estrada can examine his language growth and development within all four domains. Let's take a closer look at the Teacher Report to see what information is provided and then Ms. Estrada's reflections on her interpretations of the different sections.

WIDA CONSORTIUM

ACCESS for ELLs® English Language Proficiency Test

Teacher Report – 2013

District: Sample Montana District		Student: Antonio	
School: Pablo Neruda Middle School		State ID: 123456789	District ID:
Grade: 7	Tier: C	Grade Level Cluster: 6-8	Birth Date: 02/07/1999

The confidence band is a graphic representation of a student's likelihood of scoring within that particular range for that domain.

Demographic Information About the Student

Report Purpose: This report provides information regarding the levels of social and academic English language proficiency the student has attained. Social language is used to communicate for everyday purposes. Academic language is used to communicate the content of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. This report can be used to monitor progress from year to year and to help determine instructional strategies by content areas and standards. Please refer to the ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Summary for more information on the meaning and use of these scores. You may also refer to the complete Interpretive Guide for Score Reports at www.wida.us for more detailed information.

Student's level of English proficiency by language domains

Student's Scale Scores by Domain. Scale scores are helpful for looking at individual growth from year to year.

Student's ELP Level by Domain. To contextualize these numbers, look at the corresponding proficiency level on the grade level Can Do Descriptors for examples of the language a student at the level will be able to produce, use, and comprehend.

Language Domain	Scale Score (Possible 100 - 600)	Confidence Band See Interpretive Summary for definitions 100 200 300 400 500 600	Proficiency Level (Possible 1.0 - 6.0)
Listening	358	319 |——◆——| 397	3.9
	408	370 |—◆—| 446	5.3
Reading	366	352 |◆—| 380	3.6
Writing	356	335 |—◆—| 377	2.9
Oral Language^A	383	354 |——◊——| 412	4.9
Literacy^B	361	347 |–◊| 375	3.7
Comprehension^C	364	349 |——◊—| 395	3.8
Overall Score^D (Composite)	368	355 |◊–| 381	4.0

Student's Composite Scale Scores

Student's Composite Proficiency Levels

A - Oral Language = 50% Listening + 50% Speaking
B - Literacy = 50% Reading + 50% Writing
NA - Not Attempted = Student Booklet is marked with a Non-Scoring Code of Absent, Invalidate, Declined or Deferred Special Education/504

C - Comprehension = 70% Reading + 30% Listening
D - Overall Score = 35% Reading + 35% Writing + 15% Listening + 15% Speaking
Overall Scores are computed when all 4 domains have been completed

Student's performance by WIDA English Language Development Standards
Due to varying numbers of items and their levels of difficulty, raw scores should be used with caution. See the Interpretive Guide for Score Reports for details.

COMPREHENSION (Listening and Reading)

Student's Raw Scores for Comprehension by Standard Remember, raw scores do not distinguish between easy and hard items.

English Language Development Standards	# of Items Correct	Total # of Items
Social & Instructional Language	4	6
Language of *Language Arts*	8	12
Language of *Mathematics*	8	12
Language of *Science*	1	9
Language of *Social Studies*	4	9

SPEAKING TASKS

English Language Development Standards Score based on # of tasks student met or exceeded	Raw Score	Total # of Items
Social & Instructional	3	3
Language Arts/Social Studies	4	5
Mathematics/Science	3	5

NA - Not Attempted = Student Booklet is marked with a Non-Scoring Code of Absent, Invalidated, Declined or Special Education/504 Exemption

Student's Raw Scores for Speaking Performance by Standard

WRITING TASKS

Student's Raw Scores for Writing Performance by Standard

English Language Development Standards Scores based on writing rubric	Linguistic Complexity		Vocabulary Usage		Language Control	
	Raw Score	Total Possible Points	Raw Score	Total Possible Points	Raw Score	Total Possible Points
Social & Instructional	3	6	3	6	3	6
Language Arts		0		0		0
Mathematics & Science	4	6	4	6	4	6
Language Arts & Social Studies	4	6	3	6	3	6

Description of Proficiency Levels

- 1 Entering – Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual and graphic support
- 2 Emerging – Knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual and graphic support
- 3 Developing – Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual and graphic support
- 4 Expanding – Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language
- 5 Bridging – Knows and uses social English and academic language working with grade level material
- 6 Reaching – Knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by this test

April 13, 2013

WIDA's ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports gives a comprehensive explanation of what information is included in the Teacher Report and this guide offers potential uses and limitations of the included data. The Interpretive Guide is available free online at www.wida.us.

WiDA CONSORTIUM

ACCESS for ELLs® English Language Proficiency Test

Teacher Report – 2013

District Sample Montana District	**Student:** Antonio	
School Pablo Neruda Middle School	**State ID:** 123456789	**District ID:**
Grade: 7 **Tier:** C **Grade Level Cluster:** 6-8	**Birth Date:** 02/07/1999	

Report Purpose: This report provides information regarding the levels of social and academic English language proficiency the student has attained. Social language is used to communicate for everyday purposes. Academic language is used to communicate the content of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. This report can be used to monitor progress from year to year and to help determine instructional strategies by content areas and standards. Please refer to the ACCESS for ELLs® Interpretive Summary for more information on the meaning and use of these scores. You may also refer to the complete Interpretive Guide for Score Reports at www.wida.us for more detailed information.

> Ms. Estrada takes note of the scale scores as she will use these to help her look at Antonio's growth.

> Ms. Estrada looks at not only Antonio's overall proficiency level score but also his proficiency level scores in the individual domains. By doing this, she notes Antonio's strong speaking skills. She begins to think about how she can use this strength to help him build his writing skills with activities such as orally planning or working with a partner for writing tasks.

Student's level of English proficiency by language domains

Language Domain	Scale Score (Possible 100 - 600)	Confidence Band See Interpretive Summary for definitions 100 200 300 400 500 600	Proficiency Level (Possible 1.0 - 6.0)
Listening	358	319 |———♦———| 397	3.9
	408	370 |—♦———| 446	5.3
Reading	366	352 |♦—| 380	3.6
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Oral Language[A]	383	354 |——◊——| 412	4.9
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Overall Score[D] (Composite)	368	355 |◊—| 381	4.0

A - Oral Language = 50% Listening + 50% Speaking
B - Literacy = 50% Reading + 50% Writing
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C - Comprehension = 70% Reading + 30% Listening
D - Overall Score = 35% Reading + 35% Writing + 15% Listening + 15% Speaking
Overall Scores are computed when all 4 domains have been completed

Student's performance by WIDA English Language Development Standards

Due to varying numbers of items and their levels of difficulty, raw scores should be used with caution. See the Interpretive Guide for Score Reports for details.

> Although the raw scores do not distinguish easy from hard items, Ms. Estrada finds it interesting to see Antonio's writing performance across the various features of academic language and sees the value of sharing this with all the content area teachers who work with Antonio.

COMPREHENSION (Listening and Reading)

English Language Development Standards	# of Items Correct	Total # of Items
Social & Instructional Language	4	6
Language of *Language Arts*	8	12
Language of *Mathematics*	8	12
Language of *Science*	1	9
Language of *Social Studies*	4	9

SPEAKING TASKS

English Language Development Standards Score based on # of tasks student met or exceeded	Raw Score	Total # of Items
Social & Instructional	3	3
Language Arts/Social Studies	4	5
Mathematics/Science	3	5

NA - Not Attempted = Student Booklet is marked with a Non-Scoring Code of Absent, Invalidated, Declined or Special Education/504 Exemption

WRITING TASKS

English Language Dvelopment Standards Scores based on writing rubric	Linguistic Complexity Raw Score	Linguistic Complexity Total Possible Points	Vocabulary Usage Raw Score	Vocabulary Usage Total Possible Points	Language Control Raw Score	Language Control Total Possible Points
Social & Instructional	3	6	3	6	3	6
Language Arts		0		0		0
Mathematics & Science	4	6	4	6	4	6
Language Arts & Social Studies	4	6	3	6	3	6

Description of Proficiency Levels

- 1 Entering – Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual and graphic support
- 2 Emerging – Knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual and graphic support
- 3 Developing – Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual and graphic support
- 4 Expanding – Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language
- 5 Bridging – Knows and uses social English and academic language working with grade level material
- 6 Reaching – Knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by this test

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In the Teacher Report, Ms. Estrada can see that Antonio received an overall proficiency level score of 4.0. By looking at the WIDA ELD Standards and the whole number of the proficiency level score, Mrs. Estrada determines that Antonio is at the *Expanding* English proficiency level. When she looks at his proficiency level scores in the individual domains, she can see Antonio has strong oral language skills but could still benefit from support in the reading and writing domains. To put Antonio's scores into context, Ms. Estrada looks up the Grades 6-8 Can Do Descriptors. By highlighting Antonio's proficiency level scores in each domain, she can gain a sense of the language he can process and produce, which is valuable information to share with Mr. Miller and other content area educators who work with Antonio. To deepen her understanding of what Antonio can currently do and how to support his academic language growth to the next proficiency level, Ms. Estrada also looks at the WIDA Performance Definitions. Finally, she flags a grade 7 matrix in her WIDA ELD Standards book that offers an example strand on the topic of Scientific Inquiry. This strand focuses on the domain of writing, which she thinks Mr. Miller would find useful, and notes how they could collaborate to transform this strand to fit Mr. Miller's next science class to help him contextualize what language practice and support he can offer Antonio.

Looking at Antonio's raw scores for writing tasks, Ms. Estrada notes that she wants to discuss incorporating more opportunities to support and write across the content areas. She also makes a plan to collaborate with Mr. Miller to brainstorm how they could incorporate more writing tasks and instruction regarding vocabulary usage as well as language control by working on language forms and conventions during science class.

This investigation of the Teacher Report provides Ms. Estrada a look at where Antonio is now in his language development. But this only offers information on language development at one small point in time and Ms. Estrada wants to know if Antonio's writing has changed over time; to do this she will need to look at his growth by using the scale scores.

> When looking at growth of a 1st grader, educators can use the kindergarten accountability score as well as the Grades 1-2 Can Do Descriptors to help see where a student is at now and how far she or she has progressed in his or her academic language development.
>
> More information on the kindergarten score report can be found in the Interpretive Guide for Score Reports at www.wida.us.

Looking at Individual Growth

Research on second language learners has shown that student growth varies dependent upon proficiency level or grade level. Cook, et al, established the following principle when looking at ELL student growth: *lower is faster, higher is slower.* That is, lower grade levels or proficiency levels grow faster than higher grade levels or proficiency levels. This should be kept in mind when examining student growth patterns on ACCESS for ELLs. In part, this trend is characteristic of child second language acquisition. Thus, we should expect that growth rates will likely decrease as students progress up grades and/or proficiency levels.

Figure 1 displays the ACCESS for ELLs growth charts for all WIDA students presented by grade level clusters. Each graph includes two types of ACCESS for ELLs scores to demonstrate the growth pattern for that particular grade level cluster: composite scale scores and proficiency level scores. On the horizontal axis, there are three sets of numbers. The first set (2.0-2.4, 2.5-2.9, etc.) represents students' initial composite proficiency level score found on the previous year's score report. The second set of numbers represent the percentile rankings, while the third set of numbers represent the actual scale score gain for students within that percentile ranking. The vertical axis shows the composite scale score growth range. To prepare for looking at individual growth, locate the relevant grade level growth chart and review the previous year's scale score and proficiency levels.

IN PREPARING TO USE THE GROWTH CHARTS FOR YOUR STUDENTS, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Obtain the student's WIDA ACCESS for ELLs Teacher Report from the previous two years (at least).
2. Write down his/her proficiency level from last year, you will use this as the initial proficiency level.
3. Solve the following equation for students you have questions about in their language development.
   Student's Scale Score from this year – Student's Scale Score from last year = GROWTH!
4. Plot the students' scores on the growth charts to see if they are on target, meaning their data point falls within the colored lines (see example on next page).
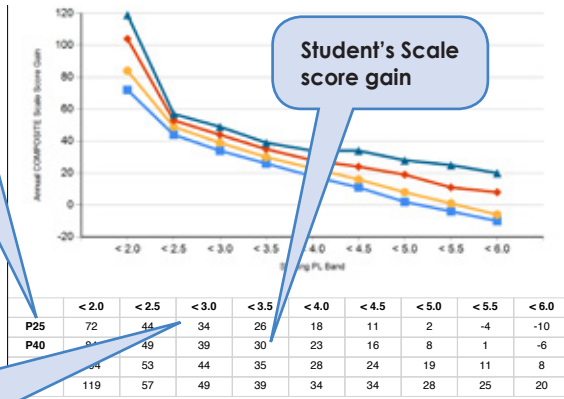
These are the percentile growth charts for all WIDA states. Each state's growth charts may be slightly different.
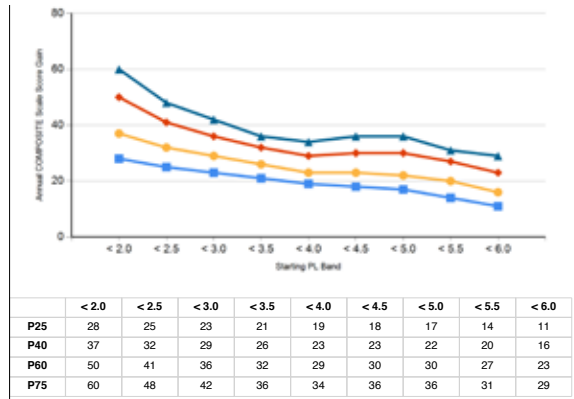
FIGURE 1

Percentiles

P25 — P40 — P60 — P75

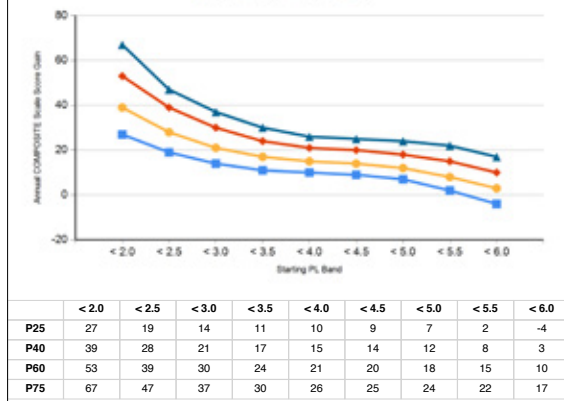### KINDERGARTEN
Composite Scale Score Growth
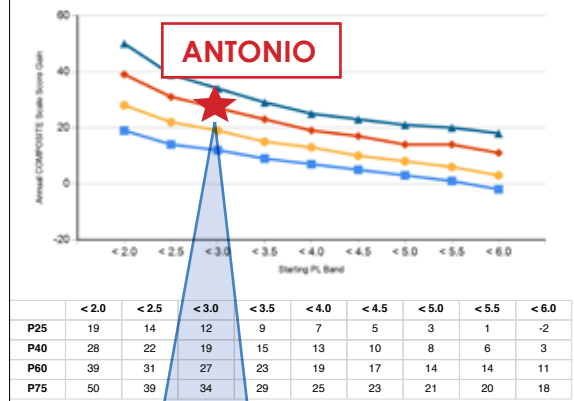
GRADES 1 & 2
Composite Scale Score Growth

Percentile Rank: a statistic that represents scores at or below which a certain percentage of scores fall.

Student's Scale score gain

Initial Proficiency Level that is found on the previous year's ACCESS for ELLs report

	< 2.0	< 2.5	< 3.0	< 3.5	< 4.0	< 4.5	< 5.0	< 5.5	< 6.0
P25	72	44	34	26	18	11	2	-4	-10
P40		49	39	30	23	16	8	1	-6
		53	44	35	28	24	19	11	8
	119	57	49	39	34	34	28	25	20

	< 2.0	< 2.5	< 3.0	< 3.5	< 4.0	< 4.5	< 5.0	< 5.5	< 6.0
P25	28	25	23	21	19	18	17	14	11
P40	37	32	29	26	23	23	22	20	16
P60	50	41	36	32	29	30	30	27	23
P75	60	48	42	36	34	36	36	31	29

GRADES 3 TO 5
Composite Scale Score Growth

GRADES 6 TO 8
Composite Scale Score Growth

	< 2.0	< 2.5	< 3.0	< 3.5	< 4.0	< 4.5	< 5.0	< 5.5	< 6.0
P25	27	19	14	11	10	9	7	2	-4
P40	39	28	21	17	15	14	12	8	3
P60	53	39	30	24	21	20	18	15	10
P75	67	47	37	30	26	25	24	22	17

ANTONIO

	< 2.0	< 2.5	< 3.0	< 3.5	< 4.0	< 4.5	< 5.0	< 5.5	< 6.0
P25	19	14	12	9	7	5	3	1	-2
P40	28	22	19	15	13	10	8	6	3
P60	39	31	27	23	19	17	14	14	11
P75	50	39	34	29	25	23	21	20	18

GRADES 9 TO 12
Composite Scale Score Growth

	< 2.0	< 2.5	< 3.0	< 3.5	< 4.0	< 4.5	< 5.0	< 5.5	< 6.0
P25	11	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	-4
P40	20	15	12	11	10	8	7	6	2
P60	31	23	20	18	16	14	13	12	8
P75	41	31	27	24	21	19	18	17	13
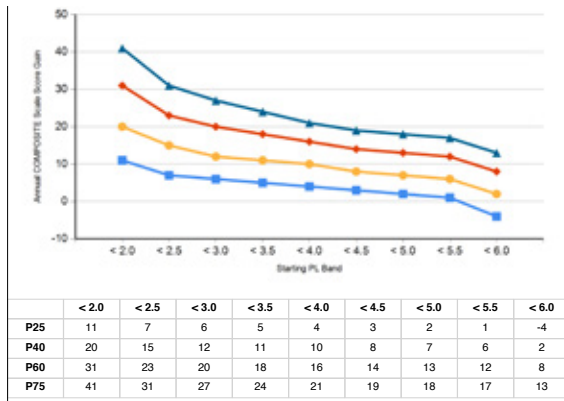
Ms. Estrada pulled out Antonio's score report from the previous year. He received a composite scale score of 340 and had a proficiency level score of 2.9. Next she calculated his growth:

368-340= 28 scale score points of growth

Then she plotted his growth score on the 6-8 growth chart which is represented by the star. Antonio's score fell within the 60th percentile of all 6 th-8th grade students who took ACCESS for ELLs and who started 6th grade with the same initial proficiency level.

By studying the Teacher Report in conjunction with calculating and plotting his growth score, Ms. Estrada acquired information that will help guide her language instruction and assessment for Antonio. She learned many of Antonio's strengths and was able to see that he continues to need support in his reading and writing. He is making the growth expected for a student at his proficiency level, too. This information will be helpful for Antonio's other teachers so that they can all build on Antonio's strengths to further develop his academic language.

Using Information for Change

Looking at data for growth can help focus instruction, curriculum development, and formative assessment to further English language development for ELLs. In this section, we provide a series of questions that might help Ms. Estrada frame how to use information for her own instruction to support Antonio's English language development as well as for dialoguing with Mr. Miller and other educators who work with Antonio. These questions can be used as launch points to understand, monitor, and effect change.

1. **Where are we now?**

   This is a question about status.

   - What resources could be used to answer this question?
   - What are the student's strengths (e.g., abilities in certain language domains or particular features of academic language)?
   - How can educators build on these strengths to increase ELLs' capacities in other domains and disciplines?

   WIDA Resources to answer this question:
   W-APT score reports
   MODEL score reports
   ACCESS for ELLs score reports

   Instructional Component:
   ELD Standards
   Can Do Descriptors

2. **What growth has occurred?**

   This is a question about looking at change or growth over time by utilizing multiple years of data and resources (formative assessments, interim assessments, summative assessments, rubrics, etc.).

   WIDA Resources to answer this question:
   ACCESS for ELLs score reports
   WIDA Speaking and Writing Rubrics
   Alternate ACCESS for ELLs score reports

3. **Where are we going?** This is a question about the future. These questions can be used to help you and your students.

   - Where do you or your students want to be in one year, two years, etc.? What areas would you like to specifically target for accelerated growth?
   - How are you going to support your students to get there and how will you measure their learning?

   WIDA Resources to help answer, "where are we going?"
   FLARE
   LADDER
   WIDA Professional Development

   Instructional Component:
   ELD Standards

Using this Bulletin

The best way to use this bulletin is to gather your ACCESS for ELLs data on status and growth from as many years as possible. Plot the scores of the students you have questions about. How are they doing? Are they on track? Are they within the growth range exhibited on the WIDA growth chart? If not, think about why. What supports and scaffolds might need to be included in the instruction of your ELLs? The three questions included in the prior section along with the checklist below can serve as self-reflection tool to look at where your ELL students are now and to think about how this may affect teacher instruction, curriculum development, and future assessments.

Growth Discussion Questions

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Discuss what metrics of status you use.

- ❑ What data points and resources are available to determine students' status in their academic language development?

- ❑ What are your ELL students' strengths?

- ❑ What are your strengths as educators working with ELLs? How are you currently collaborating with other educators?

- ❑ What are your collaborating educators' strengths?

WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?

Discuss where you've come from.

- ❑ How do you value change?

- ❑ Do you measure growth? If so, how?

- ❑ Do you build in time for reflection about growth?

- ❑ What do you do with your data on growth?

- ❑ Where would you get information on growth?

- ❑ What does your growth information say about growth in your classroom?

- ❑ What would help you to better understand how your students grow?

- ❑ How do you share your knowledge on student growth with other educators?

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Discuss where you see your class, school, or district going.

- ❑ When you look at where you are and where you've come from, how does that affect your ideas on where should you be going?

- ❑ What are some indicators of success for you?

- ❑ How do these indicators of success support student growth for the better?

- ❑ Do you have plans in place to get where you want to go? If so, what are they?

- ❑ How will you know you are successful?

- ❑ How will you know when your students have met their language goals?

- ❑ In what ways can WIDA's Features of Academic Language, Performance Definitions, and standards matrices be used as resources to create tools for language assessment in your context?

Conclusion

The questions Ms. Estrada has regarding the language growth of ELL students in her classroom are not uncommon among educators in the WIDA Consortium. This Focus Bulletin sought to introduce educators to the concept of growth. It outlined the basic tenets of individual growth on the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. This bulletin defined the different types of scores that teachers and administrators are likely to encounter when reviewing score reports. The teacher score reports are very useful and practical in that they provide an enormous amount of data which allow educators like Ms. Estrada to make informed decisions on where to start language instruction to meet the needs of her students. Ultimately, it is paramount that educators realize that while growth is a socially accepted measure of language development, many other factors (e.g., cognitive, behavioral, cultural) not measured by assessments can also impact the data. Hence, being able to understand your data along with exploring other factors that affect student growth can be an invaluable asset in improving your language instruction to foster student success in the classroom.

Considering the Sociocultural Context

It is important to remember to take the whole student into account as there are many other factors that need to be considered when making decisions regarding student growth. Such sociocultural factors that impact a student's learning may come from within and outside the classroom. However, as educators, we should focus on the factors we can influence, such as instructional practices, curriculum materials, and opportunities for interaction, while keeping an awareness of those we cannot change.

References & Further Reading

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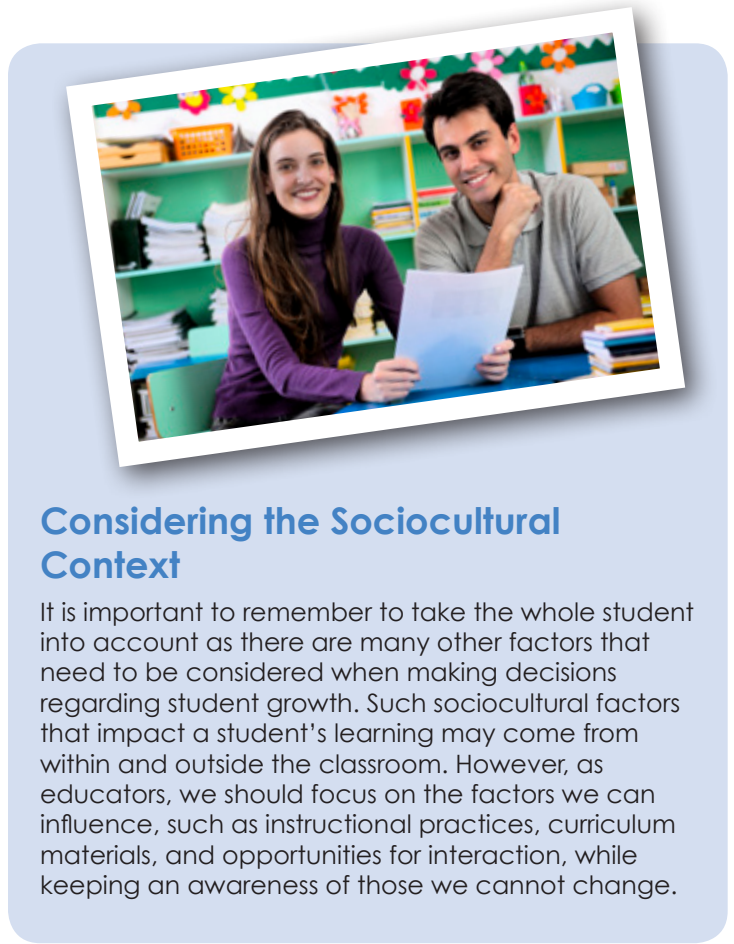
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About WIDA

WIDA is a consortium of states dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English language learners. To this end, WIDA has created English language development standards and tests aligned with those standards, such as ACCESS for ELLs. Research and professional development activities importantly complement the WIDA standards and assessment products.

To learn more about the products and services available through WIDA, please visit www.wida.us.