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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this manual, which accompanies a video program, is to provide general background information for foreign language teachers who are, or soon will be, teaching in total, partial, or two-way immersion classrooms. Part of a series of video programs, this manual highlights special immersion programs for immersion teachers while planning for, implementing, and interpreting assessments in the immersion classroom. The program describes the following: planning assessment of content and language; using a variety of assessment tools; and using assessment results to gauge the effectiveness of instruction. This manual and the video program have been designed to complement each other and may be used in a variety of ways. Activities for assessing content and language, feedback, evaluation methods (including observation, conferences, interactive diaries, testing), and an evaluation plan (including record keeping) are the focus of the manual. Appended materials include a Spanish and French classroom scenario, an immersion planning sheet, an assessment planning sheet, and recommended background reading. (VWL)

ASSESSMENT IN THE IMMERSION CLASSROOM

Division of Academic Skills
Office of Instruction and Program Development
Montgomery County Public Schools
Rockville, Maryland

1991

ASSESSMENT IN THE IMMERSION CLASSROOM

TEACHER'S ACTIVITY MANUAL

Montgomery County Public Schools
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Photograph by William E. Mills

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PREFACE

Video production

The production of this video program and manual was funded by a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Title VI, International Research and Studies: Improving Foreign Language Methodology Through Immersion Teacher Training. This grant was developed and implemented by the Office of Instruction and Program Development, Division of Academic Skills, Foreign Languages, Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Maryland, from July, 1989, to June, 1991. The activities for this grant were carried out by Eileen Lorenz, immersion resource teacher and Myriam Met, foreign language coordinator.

The production of this program would not have been possible without the cooperation and support of the elementary immersion staff and students of the three Montgomery County Public Schools immersion programs: Oak View, Rock Creek Forest, and Rolling Terrace elementary schools. Montgomery County Public Schools television services staff members also made significant contributions.

Upon request, this manual and video program will be distributed to school districts and institutions of higher education to be used for nonprofit training workshops and research projects. Requests for these materials should be accompanied by a $25 check ($30 for international orders) made payable to Montgomery County Public Schools. Requests should be addressed to:

Foreign Language Coordinator
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the video program and manual

The purpose of the program and manual is to provide general background information for foreign language teachers who are, or will soon be, teaching in total, partial or two-way immersion classrooms. The tenth in a series of video programs Assessment in the Immersion Classroom highlights special considerations for immersion teachers while planning for, implementing and interpreting assessments in the immersion classroom. The program describes:

- Planning for assessment of content and language
- Using a variety of assessment tools
- Using assessment results to gauge the effectiveness of instruction

How to use the video program and manual

The Teacher's Activity Manual and the video have been designed to complement one another and may be used in a variety of ways. Because the examples presented in the video program are based on information presented in the article, it is strongly recommended that the viewer first read the article in the section, "Background Reading," complete the Previewing Activity in the Teacher's Activity Manual and then view the video program. An outline of the video program may be found immediately following the Previewing Activity. This outline may assist you in taking notes during the program. In addition, the viewer will probably find it helpful to refer frequently to the "Background Reading" materials while completing related activities included in the manual.

The video and accompanying activity manual may be used effectively by either one teacher or a group of teachers. Multiple viewings to review specific sections of the video provide opportunities to use the program to support a variety of objectives.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1

Previewing Activity

Imagine that you are planning a Grade 2 social studies unit entitled **"Our Community."** The instructional objectives indicate that at the end of the unit students should be able to:

- describe the characteristics of our community
- identify our community workers and the goods and services they provide
- identify the forms of transportation and communication available in our community
- describe how our community is changing
- indicate ways people are working together to plan for change

Plan three assessments for this unit using the questions on the following page to guide you.

ASSESSMENT PLANNING WORKSHEET

GRADE LEVEL: MONTH DURING ACADEMIC YEAR:
UNIT OF STUDY:

- WHO WILL USE THE RESULTS AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE?
  - teacher
  - parents
  - educational administrators

- WHEN WILL YOU ASSESS?
  - end of lesson/ unit/year
  - other

- WHAT WILL YOU ASSESS?
  - Content objectives
  - Language objectives
  - Student approach (work habits, learning strategies, etc.)

- HOW WILL YOU ASSESS?
  - Define what will be assessed
  - Define what responses will demonstrate varying degrees of mastery
  - Identify ways to measure
    - Portfolio
    - Systematic observations
    - Conferences
    - Interactive diaries/learning logs
    - Tests
      - Closed-ended
      - Limited response
      - Open-ended

- HOW WILL YOU KEEP A RECORD OF STUDENT PROGRESS?
  - Checklist
  - Narrative reports (anecdotal records)

ASSESSMENT TOPIC OUTLINE

I. Who will use the results and for what purpose?
   - teachers
   - parents
   - educational administrators

II. When will you assess?
   - end of lesson/unit/year
   - other

III. What will you assess?
   - content objectives
   - language objectives
   - student approach (work habits, learning strategies, etc.)

IV. How will you assess?
   - What will be assessed
   - What responses will demonstrate mastery
   - Types of assessments:
     - portfolio
     - systematic observations
     - conferences
     - interactive diaries/learning logs
     - tests
       - closed-ended
       - limited response
       - open-ended

V. How will you keep a record of student progress?
   - checklists
   - narrative reports (anecdotal records)

ACTIVITY 2

Assessing Content and Language

Teaching language and content at the same time is one of the biggest challenges faced by elementary foreign language immersion teachers. And of course, in order to obtain feedback about the degree of understanding achieved by students in both areas, appropriate assessment of language and content must take place. For this reason, assessment activities should be an integral part of the planning process.

On the following pages are descriptions of two instructional activities from teacher guides which accompany the Montgomery County Public Schools social studies curriculum. The lessons described have been adapted for the immersion classroom by veteran teachers. The first activity is for a Grade 2 total immersion social studies lesson; the second activity is for a Grade 5 total immersion social studies lesson. As you review each lesson, imagine that you are in the planning stages for a unit related to these social studies objectives. Think about how you might plan for assessing students' language and content understanding. Try to develop at least three approaches for assessing the objectives. Once you have finished your list, you may want to review the section in the background reading "Methods of Evaluation" that discusses assessment tools. Are there any additional methods you wish to add to your list? Compare your list of suggested methods of assessment with those methods you used in the previewing activity and, if possible, with an immersion colleague's list.

ACTIVITY 2

Assessing Content and Language

ACTIVITIES

Montgomery County Public School Grade 2 Social Studies Unit: Our Community*

Performance Objective: Identify natural and cultural features of our community

Description of Content

Things that are not man-made are natural features. Things that are man-made are cultural features.

Natural Features	Cultural Features
o hills	o swings
o trees	o houses
o windbreaks	o bridges
o gullies	o roads
o mountains	o fences

Language objectives:

Content-obligatory language

Vocabulary	Grammar	Functions
natural features man-made things natural cultural features	Question formation Example: Is it man-made? Negation Example: It is not man-made.	Describing (natural and man-made features.) Requesting information

Content-compatible language

Vocabulary	Grammar	Functions
traffic light branch/trees collage rock classify the same as different from	Plural of nouns Subject-verb agreement Example: Gullies are natural features.	Comparing (natural cultural features)

*Page 4 Montgomery County Public School Grade 2 Social Studies Instructional Guide

ACTIVITY 2

Assessing Content and Language

Suggested Immersion Classroom Activities

Display a collection of symbols, pictures, or real objects that represent natural and cultural features found around the school. For example, the collection might include a small picture of a traffic light, a branch to represent trees or vegetation, and a small rock or pebble. Place two large circles of yarn on the floor and explain to students that, one at a time, they will classify the items from the collection into two groups of related objects. As students place items in the circle in which they believe they belong, you will tell them if their placement is correct or incorrect. Once all items have been classified correctly, ask students what they think might be the common characteristic(s) shared by items in each circle. Ask students to tell you what they think might be the differences between the two classifications of items. During this activity you will guide students to define cultural and natural features in the second language through the use of the objects, body language, drawings and questioning strategies. With your assistance, students will formulate a definition of natural and cultural features which you will record and post in the classroom. At the end of the activity, the terms natural and cultural features will be presented to students and a written label for each circle will be placed with the items in the collection. Both collections will remain on display in the classroom.

The following day, the class will take a walk around the school neighborhood. Ask students to observe everything they see during their walk. You may want to divide the class into pairs of groups of 4 and ask each group to note what they observe on a checklist which you provide (or to sketch natural and cultural features as they observe them). On your return to the classroom, give students the opportunity to draw larger versions of the natural and cultural features that they noted during the outing. As a class, record a list of the features dictated by students and once again using Venn diagrams, ask students to classify their pictures as natural or cultural features.

This activity may be followed by the construction of a wall collage made up of natural and cultural features noted by students during their walk. These two collages may be displayed in the class. Depending on the class and the point in the academic year when this activity is performed, you may wish to ask students to label the natural and cultural features for the collage.

ACTIVITY 2

Assessing Content and Language

I. List below three possible methods of assessment for the performance objective described on the previous pages. For each method of assessment, explain briefly how you would assess **content** and **language** objectives separately.

Methods of assessment:

1. Content objectives Language objectives

Method:

2. Content objectives Language objectives

Method:

3. Content objectives Language objectives

Method:

ACTIVITY 2

Assessing Content and Language

Montgomery County Public Schools Grade 5 Social Studies Unit: Opening A New World*

Performance Objective: List characteristics of early European and African cultures that influenced colonial lifestyles.

Description of Content

Ideas such as freedom, self-government, loyalty, education, agricultural methods, hard work, and cooperation were brought to America by people from Europe and Africa.

Language objectives:

Content-obligatory language

Vocabulary	Grammar	Functions
early settlers	Use of past tenses	Expressing an opinion
reasons for immigration		Defending an opinion
land/open space		Describing
education		
religious freedom		
daily needs		
food		
clothing		
weapons		
luxury items		
transportation		

Content-compatible language

Vocabulary	Grammar	Functions
symbols	Noun/adjective agreement	Expressing agreement and disagreement
potato		Expressing whether something is considered impossible
shovel		
seeds		
clothing		
entertainment		
dancing shoes		
carriage		

*Page 4 Montgomery County Public School Grade 5 Social Studies Instructional Guide

ACTIVITY 2

Assessing Content and Language

Suggested Immersion Classroom Activities

Discuss with students the fact that the early settlers came to America for many different reasons such as lack of opportunities to own land or to gain an education as well as a desire for religious freedom. Point out that the Africans came to America as slaves, not for the same reasons as Europeans. Ask students to assume the roles of early European settlers and to select items from a collection of necessary materials and goods they would have brought to the New World. Request that students support their selections with reasons. The collection might contain a potato to represent food, a small shovel to represent tools, a packet of seeds for planting, a shirt to represent clothing, and a knife to represent weapons. Include in this collection items that probably were not brought by the early settlers, such as a dancing shoes to represent entertainment, perfume to represent luxury items, and a carriage to represent transportation. Once students have explored the possibilities of this collection as a class, it may be organized into a center activity. Working in pairs, students could classify items in Venn diagrams with one circle containing those items early settlers would have selected to bring to the New World and one circle representing items early settlers would have left behind. Items placed in the intersection would represent those about which students may hold differing opinions. For example, one student may believe that a family heirloom would have been left behind, while another may feel strongly that it would have been brought to the New World.

On another day, review the collection of items students identified as necessary materials and goods that settlers would have brought to the New World. Display a second collection of symbols or pictures that represent ideas that settlers would have brought along. Discuss with students what idea each item from the collection might represent. For example, a small purse with coins may represent wealth, a picture of several different places of worship may represent a desire for religious freedom, a question mark over a picture of mountains, forests and deserts may represent exploration and adventure or a picture of fields of corn and grain may represent available land. As a homework assignment, ask students to bring in other symbols of additional ideas brought by settlers to the New World. Add these items to the collection.

ACTIVITY 2

Assessing Content and Language

II. List below three possible methods of assessment for the performance objective described above. For each method of assessment, explain briefly how you would assess **content** and **language** objectives.

Methods of assessment:

1. Content objectives Language objectives

Method:

2. Content objectives Language objectives

Method:

3. Content objectives Language objectives

Method:

ACTIVITY 3

Feedback loop

The feedback loop (Figure 1 - Genesee) provides a summary of how evaluation affects the learning cycle. Genesee points out that the evaluation component of the feedback cycle is comprised of two parts:

1) collecting information about learning outcomes, and
2) interpreting information about learning outcomes.

As an immersion teacher, interpretation of information about learning outcomes will be influenced by the language and the content. Examining and interpreting evaluation outcomes will help you as you plan follow-up lessons. Because you are teaching students in a second language, one of the first issues that you will want to examine when students experience difficulties understanding a concept is whether or not the level of language used during a lesson or activity has interfered with learning.

I. Imagine that as a Grade 5 immersion teacher, you are about to teach a math lesson where the objective is: *students will solve problems requiring making change for up to $10.* The language objectives for this lesson are:

Content-obligatory language

Vocabulary	Grammar	Functions
Numbers 1 - 500 dollars cents change	Use of present tense Example: _____ costs _____.	Requesting and giving information

ACTIVITY 3

Feedback loop

Content-compatible language

Vocabulary	Grammar	Functions
Items selected by the teacher to be "purchased"	Interrogative sentences	Comparing - more/less expensive

First, you survey students' background knowledge about making change up to $5 (Grade 4 math objective). You demonstrate and involve student volunteers in making change for a variety of purchases from one to five dollars. Then you give small groups of students a sack of items with prices. Each student "purchases" an item with a $5 bill. Another student in the group makes change for the purchase, using a "bank" of play money provided for each group. During the review activity, you observe students' performance informally and note that at least one-half of the class is experiencing difficulties. Before introducing the more advanced instructional objective, you decide to collect further information about what students have previously learned and retained.

I. Think about the role of evaluation in the feedback cycle. Describe three methods of assessment that you would use to obtain more precise information about students' skill about making change for up to $5. Since gathering information about what students know and do not know is only the first step, as you plan your assessments, consider the factors listed below that will influence your interpretation of assessment results.

ACTIVITY 3

Feedback loop

Factors that influence outcomes of student learning.

- language--not understood by students*
- instructional techniques--too abstract, not enough context provided*
- sequence of instruction-- concept taught too early in the year*
- insufficient time spent learning and practicing the concept
- need for additional information about students':
  - attitudes or level of interest
  - work habits
  - learning strategies
  - background skills and knowledge

*Factors of particular interest to immersion teachers.

Although these factors are considered by all teachers as they review a learning situation to determine why students have and have not fully understood a concept, the starred factors are of particular interest to immersion teachers. Perhaps the language used by the teacher during the lesson was too new and unfamiliar to the students. This concern would of course be compounded if the instructional techniques during the lesson did not include the use of real objects, representations of objects or body language to make sure that students were understanding the concept being taught. And finally, if a concept is taught too early in the year, students may not have adequate background knowledge and experience in the immersion language to grasp it. For example, teaching students the science objective that proper nutrition is necessary for human growth, before teaching them the social studies objective regarding the four food groups may not be the best learning sequence. Providing students with background knowledge about the four food groups and language

ACTIVITY 3

Feedback loop

necessary to understand and/or discuss foods and the appropriate categories first will help them to understand the relationship between nutrition and human growth.

II. Note below what steps you would take to review the Grade 4 math objective *students will make change up to $5.* What would you would you do to decide how to reteach/review students' language and content understanding?

Steps to review the lesson

1.

2.

3.

III. Describe how the review lessons you have planned above could also be used as assessments to determine where and why students are experiencing the most difficulty. Explain why you think each review lesson would be an appropriate assessment tool.

ACTIVITY 4

Methods of Evaluation - Observations

Observation is a practical and frequent method of assessment in the immersion classroom that provides regular opportunities to evaluate students' communicative skills, as well as concept mastery. Genesee describes two types of observations--planned and unplanned.

Planned observation activities include assessment of students' oral presentations, dioramas, posters, role plays, interviews and demonstrations. An important step as you plan an observation activity is to decide what role language will play in your assessment. Activities in which little or no language is required may be used effectively to evaluate students' level of understanding of content objectives. Evaluating students' understanding of content independent of their immersion language proficiency is particularly important for teachers of beginning immersion students. Frequently, beginning immersion students understand a concept but have not had enough experience in the immersion language to express themselves. Therefore, observations which do not rely on language are good methods of assessing content understanding. For example, asking students to demonstrate a concept, such as how to weigh items using nonstandard units of measure with a balance scale can provide you with an assessment of a student's grasp of this concept, unbiased by a student's level of language proficiency.

ACTIVITY 4

Methods of Evaluation - Observations

In the upper elementary grades, observation provides you with the opportunity to plan assessment activities that require students to demonstrate their understanding of the content and their level of proficiency. Such assessments allow you to measure students' grasp of content-obligatory and content-compatible language. It also provides you with opportunities to judge whether or not students' language proficiency is progressing at the same rate as their subject matter knowledge.

In the background reading, Genesee recommends four considerations when planning classroom observations. They are:

a. Identify why and what you want to observe, including content objective and language objectives--content-obligatory and content-compatible language.

b. Define what kinds of responses or behaviors you expect as evidence that learning has taken place. This will help you know what to observe and help you limit what you observe.

c. Identify how you want to observe. This means deciding if you will observe individual students or groups of students. Will you observe activities planned specifically for evaluation or routine lessons? Decide if the activity will require language or will be primarily nonverbal, i.e., demonstration. And finally, decide how many observations you will make--one or several.

d. Choose and devise a method of recording your observations--either a narrative report or a checklist.

ACTIVITY 4

Methods of Evaluation - Observations

I. Plan two observations for the Grade 3 math objective *students will estimate, measure and record lengths in centimeters and meters.* One observation will take place during routine classroom activities and one will take place as a planned observation activity. As you plan your two observations, keep in mind that students' learning activities included many hands-on experiences.

Use the questions below to help plan the two assessments.

1. Why will you observe students? What do you want to observe?

Language Content

2. List the kinds of responses or behaviors you expect as evidence that learning has taken place.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

ACTIVITY 4

Methods of Evaluation - Observations

4. How will you observe?

Individual students	**or**	Groups of students
Specific evaluation activity	**or**	Routine lessons
Language activities	**or**	Nonverbal activities

Number of observations_____

5. How will you record your observations?

Narrative report	**or**	Checklist

ACTIVITY 5

Methods of Evaluation - Conferences

Conferences are a form of observation. When planning conferences, you will want to weigh the benefits of structuring conferences for individuals or small groups of students, depending on the objectives being assessed.

During conferences, you may observe what students can and cannot do and when and where students are experiencing difficulties. Another advantage of this form of assessment is that conferences provide you with opportunities to gain valuable information about the successful and unsuccessful learning strategies that students are using. Through careful questioning or use of "think-aloud" strategies, you can help a student describe what he/she is thinking while performing a task and thereby gain insight into a student's learning processes.

In addition, conferences allow for one-to-one interaction between you and a student or a small group of students. These exchanges give students opportunities to offer extended answers and to participate in meaningful discussions. During conferences, you will have more chances to evaluate students' incidental language skills than you do during whole class and large group discussion.

As he does with all assessment methods, Genesee stresses in the background reading section the importance of advanced planning of conferences. He recommends thinking about the following questions:

- What do you want to evaluate?
- What tasks do you want to use?
- What kind of an interview protocol do you want to use?

ACTIVITY 5

Methods of Evaluation - Conferences

Genesee also points out that deciding beforehand on specific questions and the sequence of questions helps to provide uniformity in both content and language assessment during conferences.

I. Imagine that during a social studies unit on the westward movement, you have been working with Grade 5 students on the instructional objective: *Students will identify land and water routes traveled by frontier people.*

The focus of this objective is the historic period from 1840 until 1860. This period includes major movement of settlers to Oregon, because of the attraction of the land, and to California because of the attraction of gold. You decide to compare and contrast two major overland trails with two alternative water and water-land routes. The overland trails were the Oregon Trail from Independence, Missouri to Fort Vancouver, Oregon; and the California Trail from Independence, Missouri to Sacramento, California. The alternate routes were the water route travelers took by clipper ships from the east coast around South America to the west coast port of San Francisco; and the route followed via clipper ships from the east coast, south to the Isthmus of Panama, west across the Isthmus by wagon or on foot, travelers continuing their journey via clipper ship to San Francisco. While railroads were fairly well established by 1850, they served primarily the eastern portion of the United States, and therefore the study of the role of railroads was not included in this objective.

You divide the class into cooperative groups of students, four students per group. Each cooperative group is a family about to make the westward journey with $1,000 as resources. Each group receives a map of North and South America with the possible routes clearly marked. First students will read, and then read while listening to an audiotape of several travelers' descriptions of their westward journey. One traveler describes the overland journey following the Oregon Trail to Fort Vancouver; a second traveler describes the journey via clipper ship around the tip of South America to the port of San Francisco; and a third traveler describes the journey via clipper ship from the east coast to the Isthmus of Panama, across the Isthmus of Panama on foot, and up the coast by clipper ship to the port of San Francisco. Included in the description of the overland journey are excerpts of journals of pioneers who traveled by wagon and those who traveled on

ACTIVITY 5

Methods of Evaluation - Conferences

foot. "Family groups" of students are given two lists of necessary items and expenses for their journey to the west coast--one list of items for the overland route and one for the water route. The family groups must discuss the pro's and con's of each route considering the descriptions they have read and listened to, the modes of transportation available, and the expenses they must incur. Students make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of each route and each mode of transportation. Once a family has selected the route they wish to follow, they must justify their choice.

ACTIVITY 5

Methods of Evaluation - Conferences

Plan a conference to evaluate each group's progress when this activity is completed.

Use the form on the following page to plan this assessment. First, identify your content and language objectives. Then compile an unedited list of all questions that you might ask during this assessment. Classify the questions according to the categories fact, opinion and open-ended questions. Decide if you will ask students to perform any tasks during the conference. The next step is to identify which questions best measure both the content and language objectives you have selected for this assessment activity. Once you have identified these questions or tasks, sequence them for the conference.

Be sure to plan for scoring techniques and a mechanism to require all students to contribute to discussion questions.

ACTIVITY 5

Methods of Evaluation - Conferences

Conference Planning Sheet

Content objectives

Language objectives

List of possible questions to include in conference

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Classifications of questions

Factual Opinion Open-ended Tasks

Sequential order of questions selected for the conference

List of possible responses that will demonstrate varying degrees of mastery.

List possible criteria for assessing student responses (Example: excellent/satisfactory/needs improvement)

ACTIVITY 6

Methods of Evaluation - Interactive diaries

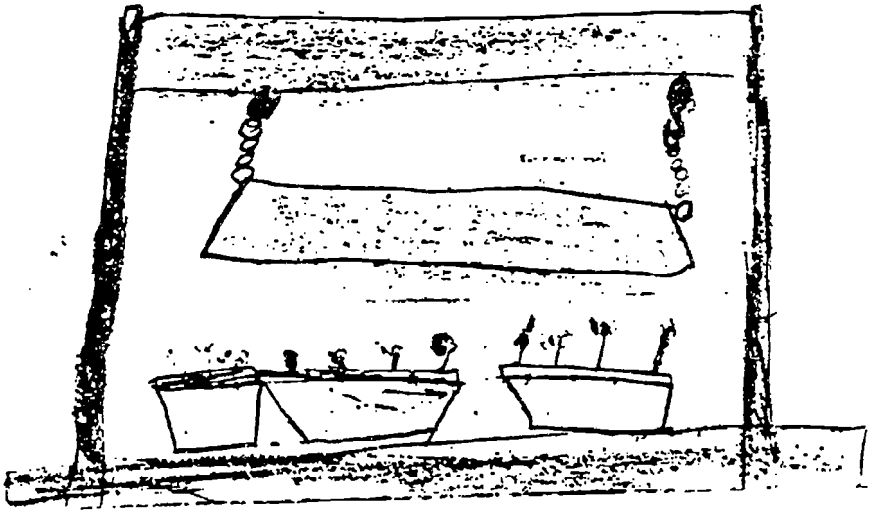
Interactive diaries are students' written reflections about a lesson or an activity. Interactive diaries are a way for students to converse through writing with their teacher. An interactive diary might include students' observations or questions that relate to either the content of the lesson or the actual lesson itself. This means that students must feel comfortable in expressing their thoughts and opinions about a lesson openly.

Interactive diaries allow you to collect information about teaching and learning processes such as students' learning strategies, work habits, and impressions of classroom activities. They are particularly helpful when evaluating students' writing skills and they also provide students with opportunities for written personal expression in a situation about classroom situations, but which do not include the "academic demands" of other writing assignments. Nonjudgmental feedback that focuses on communication and supportive comments is crucial as you the teacher read and respond to students' diaries.

1. On the following pages are two examples of student diaries--one in French and one in Spanish. Read one or both of these diaries and respond in either French or Spanish as if you were the teacher. Discuss your comments with a colleague if possible.

Predicciones de lo que va a pasar a la semilla.

Yo creo que la semilla se crese muy rapapido.
Yo creo que la semilla se crese muy grande. Y es incrible. Megusta semilla.



Apprentissage le 13 mai

En sciences sociales, on nous prépare pour le jour de pionnier.

et je peux voir que ça va être très bien, parce que mon groupe a des idées évidente.

En lecture, notre groupe a fini "Chemin secrets de la liberté". C'était assez bien, mais un peu difficile à comprendre. Le test de sciences était très facile, mais je sais que j'ai eu au moins 3 fautes. Et la meilleur parti est qu'il y a seulement un mois et 6 jours de plus!

ACTIVITY 7

Methods of Evaluation - Testing

Genesee defines tests as, "..one or more standard tasks which all students are expected to respond to in more or less the same way." Although he clearly points out that tests do not allow for much individualization, he emphasizes that this can be viewed positively or negatively, depending on the situation. He summarizes that tests are most useful when:

1. you want systematic and uniform feedback about student learning;
2. there is a clearly defined set of learning objectives to be tested;
3. there are clearly defined criteria for evaluating learning;
4. the test is a good representation of learning objectives; and
5. you have other pertinent information about learning on which to base decisions.

A brief description of the three most commonly used test tasks follows. You may wish to review the more in-depth descriptions found in the background reading, the section entitled Types of Tests Tasks.

Closed-ended tasks are frequently referred to as multiple choice questions. These tasks are useful for assessing language comprehension--listening or reading; recognition of specific facts, information or interpretations. They are not useful for assessing independent thinking skills, originality or ability to organize and present new information or ideas.

ACTIVITY 7

Methods of Evaluation - Testing

Closed-ended tasks are helpful when assessing immersion students' mastery of content while making limited demands on language skills. They are easy to score because possible answers are limited. Developing closed-ended tasks is difficult because close attention must be paid to ensure that the items in the assessment truly measure the objectives of a lesson in a way that does not penalize students either because of language or focus of test items.

Limited-response test tasks are ones in which you limit the range of possible student responses. They include cloze reading tests, picture vocabulary tests, grouping or matching tasks, transformation tasks, identification tasks and dictation tests. They can be helpful when assessing students' ability to produce or generate a limited range of certain kinds of answers, information and concepts.

Open-ended test tasks are ones for which response alternatives are unlimited. They include essays, information gap items, role-plays, interview, letters and diaries. Open-ended tests are characteristically simple to construct and difficult to score.

Read and if possible discuss with a colleague each of the situations described below. Use the Assessment Planning Sheet in Appendix D to develop the designated type of assessment task.

ACTIVITY 7

Methods of Evaluation - Testing

I. **Closed-ended test** - Imagine you are a kindergarten teacher and have been working on the following objective: *Students will group animals according to the way they move.* You have focused students' attention on creatures that walk, swim, fly and crawl and have used some of the experiences described below. You introduced animals from each category using stuffed animals. After a visit to the zoo, the class planned and completed a large mural with many creatures representing each mode of locomotion. Additionally, students worked in small groups, guided by you or possibly an instructional assistant, if you have one. They classified small plastic replicas of animals according to their mode of locomotion.

Review the criteria for closed-ended tests and develop a 5-item assessment for this objective. You will probably want to develop this test in your immersion language in order to consider how you would present each item so that kindergarten students would understand easily. Make a list of possible:

- responses that will demonstrate students' varying degrees of mastery; and
- criteria for assessing student responses (Example: excellent/satisfactory/needs improvement)

ACTIVITY 7

Methods of Evaluation - Testing

II. Limited-response test - Imagine you are a Grade 3 teacher and have been working on the following mathematics objectives:

Students will solve two-step addition and subtraction problems.
Students will subtract 3-place numbers without regrouping.
Students will add 3-place numbers without regrouping.

You have reviewed basic addition and subtraction facts through in-class practice and homework assignments. Additional instructional activities have included review of place value up to 1,000 with manipulative materials, practice with problem solving situations involving multi-step, 3-place addition and subtraction operations. Students have solved problems in groups and working alone. An example of a two-step problem students solved follows:

> The school cafeteria manager was preparing lunches. She used a basket of 30 apples and 27 oranges, and a basket of 44 apples. How many more apples than oranges were used?

Review the criteria for limited response tests and on the following page develop a 5-item assessment that would test students' mastery of these objectives. You will probably want to develop these test items in your immersion language in order to consider how you would word each item so that Grade 3 students would easily understand the problem solving situations. On the following page, make a list of possible:

- responses that will demonstrate students' varying degrees of mastery; and
- criteria for assessing student responses (Example: excellent/satisfactory/needs improvement)

ACTIVITY 7

Methods of Evaluation - Testing

III. **Open-ended tests** - Imagine that you are a Grade 6 teacher and that you have been working on the following social studies objective:

Students will identify important economic concepts related to the development of civilization in Ancient Egypt.

Class discussions and student research have focused on regions of Africa from which Ancient Egypt obtained products and raw materials. Imports included skins, ostrich feathers, ebony, wild animals and ivory. Egypt obtained gold, copper and amethyst from Nubia and incense from Punt. Students have constructed maps of Egypt in cooperative groups and discussed the role of the Nile River in the development of trade. The surplus products of Ancient Egypt have been identified as pottery, furniture, wool, glass, jewelry, linen and ivory.

ACTIVITY 7

Methods of Evaluation - Testing

Review the criteria for open-ended tests and develop an assessment that would test students' mastery of this social studies objective. You will probably want to develop this test in your immersion language in order to consider how you would word each item so that Grade 6 students would easily understand while at the same time be challenged to integrate their more advanced knowledge of the immersion language into their responses. Make a list of possible:

- responses that will demonstrate students' varying degrees of mastery; and
- criteria for assessing student responses (Example: excellent/satisfactory/needs improvement)

ACTIVITY 8

A Plan for Evaluation

Effective evaluation should be an integral part of the planning process. This means that whether you're considering your long-range, medium-range or short-term daily lessons, careful consideration should be given to which forms of assessment will help you determine if you have achieved your goals. As you plan your evaluations, Genesee suggests that the following questions be kept in mind:

1. Who will use the results of evaluation and for what purpose?
2. When will I evaluate?
3. What will I evaluate?
4. How will I evaluate?
5. How will I record the results of my evaluation?

We will discuss questions 1, 2 and 3 below. Question 4 has already been discussed and Question 5 will be the subject of Activity 8.

I. As you consider the question "Who will use the results of evaluation and for what purpose?", review the assessments you planned for Activities 3 (Observations), 4 (Interviews/conferences), 5 (Interactive diaries), and 6 (Open-ended, limited-response, closed-ended tests). Assuming that you developed each of these assessment tools for your own information, think about whether you would adjust test items if these were to be shared with educational administrators. With parents? If so, how? Discuss adjustments that you might make to each form of assessment with a colleague.

ACTIVITY 8

A Plan for Evaluation

II. Consider the question "When will I evaluate?", and review once again the assessments you planned for Activities 3 - 6. For each assessment tool, identify when it would be best used in its current form--at the end of lesson, at the end of the unit or at the end of several units. What modifications would be necessary to make for each one of these assessment tools in order to change when it would be administered? For example, if you have developed a limited-response test to be used at the end of a lesson, what modifications would you make to use portions of this test at the end of a unit?

III. Consider the question "What will I evaluate?". Use the grid on the following page to list the methods of evaluation that you think would be most effective for each of the learning category listed below.

Content objectives
Language objectives
Students' learning strategies
Students' study habits
Effectiveness of instruction

Learning Categories		Effective Methods of Evaluation
Content Objectives		
Language Objectives		
Student Learning Strategies		
Student Study Habits		
Effectiveness of Instruction		

ACTIVITY 9

A Plan for Evaluation - Record keeping

Genesee describes six advantages to keeping good records of assessments. These include helping you:

1. keep track of important information about student learning and the effectiveness of instruction;
2. form sound impressions of student achievement and progress;
3. accurately identify persistent difficulties and problems of individual students;
4. report individual student progress to other educational professionals and parents;
5. assign formal grades which reflect student progress;
6. monitor, evaluate and re-design your instructional plans more effectively.

The record keeping methods Genesee explores include: student portfolios, teacher's journals, narrative reports, and checklists. Can you think of any others to add to this list? Use the grid on the following page to list under each one of these methods the strengths and weaknesses of each system.

Record Keeping Method	+	-
Student portfolio		
Teacher's journal		
Narrative reports (anecdotal record)		
Checklists		

ACTIVITY 10

Review Activity

Now that you have viewed the video program and completed the activities in the Teacher's Activity Manual review the three assessment tasks that you developed for the Previewing Activity (Grade 2 social studies unit entitled **"Our Community."**) The instructional objectives for this unit are that students should be able to:

- describe the characteristics of our community
- identify our community workers and the goods and services they provide
- identify the forms of transportation and communication available in our community
- describe how our community is changing
- indicate ways people are working together to plan for change

The main points to consider as you develop assessment tools, covered in the video program, are found on the following page. Based on the information presented in the program, are there any modifications or changes you want to make to your three original assessments. What are they? If possible, discuss these changes with a colleague.

GRADE LEVEL: MONTH DURING ACADEMIC YEAR:
UNIT OF STUDY:

- WHO WILL USE THE RESULTS AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE?
  - teacher
  - parents
  - educational administrators

- WHEN WILL YOU ASSESS?
  - end of lesson/ unit/year
  - other

- WHAT WILL YOU ASSESS?
  - Content objectives
  - Language objectives
  - Student approach (work habits, learning strategies, etc.)

- HOW WILL YOU ASSESS?
  - Define what will be assessed
  - Define what responses will demonstrate varying degrees of mastery
  - Identify ways to measure
    - Portfolio
    - Systematic observations
    - Conferences
    - Interactive diaries/learning logs
    - Tests
      - Closed-ended
      - Limited response
      - Open-ended

- HOW WILL YOU KEEP A RECORD OF STUDENT PROGRESS?
  - Checklist
  - Narrative reports (anecdotal records)
  - Test scores

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SPANISH SCENARIO

You are about to see a math/science lesson in Grade 2 Spanish partial immersion class, taped during the month of January. Most students in this class have been in the program since kindergarten.

The math objectives for this lesson are that students will:

- *estimate a reasonable answer to a problem and check it; and*
- *weigh and record using non-standard units on a balance scale.*

The language objectives for this lesson are:

Content-obligatory language

Vocabulary	Grammar	Functions
poner en la balanza	Present tense - poner	Making comparisons - pesar más/menos; más/menos pesado
igual	ir a + infinitivo	
Está balanceado		Predicting - Qué parte de la _____ va a pesar más?
Los números 1 - 100		

Content-compatible language

Vocabulary	Grammar	Functions
comida	Negation - no pelar	Reporting
cáscara	tener que + infinitivo	Expressing agreement/ disagreement
naranja	necesitar + infinitivo	Expressing obligation (Example: You need to ___.)
osos		

During preceding lessons, these students had a variety of hands-on experiences comparing the weights of many objects. They had multiple opportunities to compare the weights of two objects by holding one object in each hand, estimating weight as a human balance. Students estimated the weight of a variety of objects and then weighed the objects on a balance scale, using plastic bears as non-standard units of weight.

APPENDIX A

SPANISH SCENARIO

VIEW THE SPANISH SCENARIO NOW. THINK ABOUT THE TYPES OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS THAT YOU COULD PLAN TO USE DURING AND AFTER THE LESSON.

I. Now that you've watched the scenario, plan below at learst two different assessments that you could use during this lesson. Be sure to keep in mind that you should assess students' level of understanding of the math concept as well as their understanding and use of the language. For each assessment, plan a scoring technique and decide how you will record the results. You may wish to refer to Appendix D.

Assessment 1

Assessment 2

II. Imagine that the results of your assessment during this lesson indicated the following levels of students' understanding:

Content	Language
1. Total mastery (3 students)	1. Good understanding. Student speaking limited to one or two words or short phrases (12 students)
2. Partial understanding (20 students)	2. Adequate understanding. No student initiated speaking (11 students)
3. Very little understanding (2 students)	3. Very little understanding. No student initiated speaking. (2 students)

Following the guidelines on the Assessment Planning Sheet in Appendix D, outline below your next lesson.

III. Thinking about this lesson, examine the assessment options listed below. Select three different assessment tasks to determine: a) students' level of understanding of the math concept and b) their understanding and use of the language during the two weeks devoted to this objective. One of these tasks should be an end-of-unit assessment. As you plan to assess these objectives, remember that hands-on, experiential instructional strategies have been used extensively to teach these math concepts. Indicate how you wil score each assessment and how you will keep a record of student progress (i.e., checklist, narrative reports or grade book).

Assessment options:

- Portfolio
- Systematic observations
- Interviews/conferences
- Interactive diaries/learning logs
- Tests
  - Closed-ended
  - Limited response
  - Open-ended

APPENDIX B

FRENCH SCENARIO

You are about to view a social studies lesson in a Grade 6 total immersion class, taped during the month of February. The social studies objectives for this portion of the unit on Ancient Egypt* are that students will:

- indicate the location of Egypt, using maps showing the location of the Mediterranean civilization
- identify the environmental characteristics of Egypt
- describe how the environment influenced the development of the Egyptian civilization

During lessons that preceded the one presented in the video program, students participated in a variety of discussions and experiences. Using maps and globe, they located Egypt and discussed prominent topographic features such as the Nile River Valley, sandy desert, marshy delta area and lowlands. Students worked cooperatively to make group maps. Students viewed several film strips, narrated by their teacher in French, about geographic and climatic conditions that influenced many aspects of daily life in Ancient Egypt. In small groups, students discussed ways that farmers might have been able to adapt their life style to periods of drought and flooding along the banks of the Nile River.

*These objectives extend beyond the lesson presented in the video.

The language objectives for this portion of the unit on Ancient Egypt are:

Content-obligatory language

Vocabulary	Grammar	Functions
les paysans	Narration in the	Describing
les paysannes	present and past tense	Explaining
le fermier		Sequencing events
le fellah		Imparting and seeking
L'Ancienne Egypte		factual information
le Nil		Expressing cause and
la vallée du Nil		effect
la saison de la moisson		
la récolte		
en crue		
le désert		
le delta		
la plaine		

VIEW THE FRENCH SCENARIO NOW. THINK ABOUT THE CONTENT-COMPATIBLE LANGUAGE THAT YOU MIGHT IDENTIFY FOR THIS LESSON AND/OR THIS UNIT. MAKE A LIST OF WAYS TO ASSESS CONTENT-OBLIGATORY AND CONTENT-COMPATIBLE LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES.

Remember that content-compatible language objectives are based on three factors:

- teacher judgment of language that needs review or practice;
- teacher judgment of language that may be taught easily with a content objective; and
- the immersion language scope and sequence.

APPENDIX B

Content-compatible language

Vocabulary | Grammar | Functions

Assessments:

VIEW THE FRENCH SCENARIO A SECOND TIME. THINK ABOUT THE TYPES OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS THAT YOU COULD PLAN TO USE DURING AND AFTER THE LESSON.

II. Now that you've watched the scenario a second time, plan on the next page at least two different forms of assessment that you could use during this lesson. Be sure to keep in mind that you should assess students' level of understanding of the social studies objectives as well as their understanding and use of the language. For each form of assessment, plan a scoring technique and decide how you will record the results. You may wish to refer to Appendix D as you plan.

III. Imagine that the results of your assessment during this lesson indicated the following levels of students' understanding:

Content	Language
1. Total mastery (4 students)	1. Good understanding, as demonstrated by student initiated speech. Includes short phrases and extended explanations during group projects and large group discussions. (10 students)
2. Partial understanding (21 students)	2. Adequate understanding demonstrated by students' short answers, including heavy reliance on concrete materials and visuals when posing questions or participating in discussions. Some attempts to refer to sophisticated language (i.e., expressing "harvest" as the "time of year when crops are gathered."). Few occasions of spontaneous speech. (15 students)
3. Very little	3. Little understanding as demonstrated by minimal student initiated speech. Student speech does not include specialized language or attempts to express sophisticated thoughts using simple language. (0 students)

IV. Examine the options listed below and identify three different ways that you could assess students' level of understanding of the social studies objective as well as their understanding and use of the language during the two weeks devoted to these objectives. One task should be an end-of-unit assessment task. As you plan to assess these objectives, keep in mind that while students have had some hands-on experiential learning, many of their learning experiences have been based on learning through reading and discussion. Additionally, because this is a Grade 6 total immersion class, students' level of language should be fairly advanced. Indicate for each assessment how you will keep a record of student progress (i.e., checklist or narrative reports or grade book).

Assessment options:

- Portfolio
- Systematic observations
- Interviews/conferences
- Interactive diaries/learning logs
- Tests
  - Closed-ended
  - Limited response
  - Open-ended

Appendix C

Immersion Lesson Planning Sheet

Objective/concept

Content-obligatory language

Vocabulary Functions Grammar

Content-compatible language

Vocabulary Functions Grammar

Activities (identify the following steps for each lesson)

1. Survey students' background knowledge (language and contnet)
2. Introduce new concept
3. Provide opportunities for student practice
4. Summarize lesson

Assessment

Materials needed

Follow-up activities

ASSESSMENT PLANNING SHEET APPENDIX D

GRADE LEVEL:
POINT IN ACADEMIC YEAR
UNIT OF STUDY

WHO WILL USE THE RESULTS AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE?
- teacher
- parents
- educational administrators for accountability

WHEN WILL YOU EVALUATE?
- end of lesson/ unit/year
- other

WHAT WILL YOU EVALUATE?
- Content objectives
- Language objectives
- Student approach (work habits, learning strategies, etc.)

HOW WILL YOU EVALUATE?
- Define what will be assessed
- Define what responses will demonstrate varying degrees of mastery
- Identify ways to measure
  - Portfolio
  - Systematic observations
  - Interviews/conferences
  - Interactive diaries/learning logs
  - Tests
    - Closed-ended
    - Limited response
    - Open-ended

HOW WILL YOU KEEP A RECORD OF STUDENT PROGRESS?
- Checklist
- Narrative reports (anecdotal records)
- Test scores

Have you devised assessments that reflect how students have been taught?

BACKGROUND READING

ASSESSMENT IN THE IMMERSION CLASSROOM

Fred Genesee
McGill University

This article is about assessment in immersion classrooms. While the basic needs for assessment are the same in immersion classes as in non-immersion classes, there are some differences which will influence how, when and why immersion teachers assess student learning and performance. Much of the difference between assessment in immersion programs and in non-immersion programs arises from the fact that immersion students need to acquire a whole new language in addition to the academic knowledge and skills that make up the regular school curriculum. Since most immersion students have little opportunity to learn the second language outside the classroom, they are dependent on the immersion program for most of their language learning. In immersion programs, there is an emphasis on learning language as a means of communication, be it communication about school work or about social and personal matters. From the point of view of assessment, this means that, in addition to assessing their students' progress in the content areas, immersion teachers need to assess their students' ability to use language to communicate effectively and appropriately in a variety of academic and non-academic contexts. This is referred to as performance assessment. Immersion teachers need a variety of assessment methods to do this.

This also means that immersion teachers need to assess their students' language development at all times, even when the explicit focus of attention is not on language. In other words, immersion teachers need to assess their students' language proficiency during mathematics lessons as well as during language lessons and during formal instructional periods as well as during non-instructional periods (e.g., at recess and in the hallways). Immersion teachers need efficient and effective methods of assessment at their disposal, including some that can be used unobtrusively while other activities are taking place.

Immersion teachers also need methods of assessment that will allow them to distinguish between content and language learning since incomplete second language development may make it difficult at times for immersion students to express what content they have learned. This is generally not an issue when assessing non-immersion students who are likely to have the language skills needed to demonstrate their mastery of content. Thus, immersion teachers sometimes need methods of assessment that do not depend on language or, at least, require only basic language skills in order to make accurate assessments of their students' content learning. This also means that immersion teachers need to use a variety of methods to assess

learning to make sure that their assessments are accurate and not biased by the use of particular methods of assessment.

Finally, immersion teachers need to know how to use assessment to motivate language learning. The premise behind immersion is that students will learn the language skills they need to master academic skills and knowledge; that is, content-obligatory language skills. Research on immersion programs in Canada suggests that students are remarkably successful at attaining the same level of academic achievement as students learning through their native language. At the same time, it appears from other studies that immersion students do not master some important content-obligatory language skills, such as past and future tense forms, indirect pronouns, and idiomatic usage, such as expressions of age, hunger, and thirst (e.g., j'ai six ans, faim, soif). This suggests that they develop communication strategies -- such as circumlocutions, avoidance, and non-idiomatic or simplified forms -- which compensate for lack of certain language skills. Immersion teachers need to be systematic and conscientious in evaluating and planning instruction in order to motivate acquisition of these important language skills which appear to go unlearned if not attended to systematically.

There are other language skills which are not absolutely necessary for mastery of content material but are compatible with content material and are important if the students are to achieve high levels of **general** communicative proficiency in the target language (for example, names of common objects, activities or events). Elsewhere in this series, these have been referred to as **content-compatible language skills**. Including these kinds of language skills as part of the instructional objectives in immersion is an important way of expanding the language skills of immersion students beyond what is necessary for content learning.

There is yet a third category of language skills that are important in immersion programs; I refer to these as **incidental language skills**. They include language skills which students need for effective communication with their teachers or with their classmates about non-academic, social matters -- for example, greetings, disagreeing, inviting, apologizing, promising, etc. Although they are not tied to academic content or regular school subjects, these language skills are nevertheless important for the students' general communicative competence. They are most evident within the school context when the children are playing together at recess or lunch time or when they are interacting socially with one another or with the teacher during breaks in instruction or between classes.

Since content-compatible and incidental language skills are not strictly necessary for mastery of content, they may not be seen to be as important as content-obligatory language skills by teachers and students alike. Therefore, they may not get the attention they deserve. This, in turn, can limit the range of language skills that immersion students learn to those that are necessary for learning school subjects. Teachers can indicate to students that these other

language skills are important to learn by systematically assessing them. In other words, skillful assessment can motivate acquisition of these skills, along with content-obligatory language skills, by setting standards of communicative performance that include content-compatible and incidental language skills in addition to content-obligatory language skills.

Some General Characteristics of Classroom Assessment

Before discussing some specific methods of assessment that can be useful in the immersion classroom, let us discuss assessment in general. Classroom assessment is part of a feedback loop (Figure 1) -- within general curriculum guidelines, teachers engage their students in learning activities which have specific objectives and are tailored to meet the particular needs and characteristics of their students. The effects of these activities on student learning are assessed in some way, and then the results of the assessment are interpreted and used to make decisions about the next round of instruction. If assessment indicates that instructional objectives have not been achieved, then decisions need to be made about how to modify further instruction so that it is more effective. If assessment indicates that the objectives have been achieved, then the teacher moves on to the next unit of instruction, and the cycle begins again.

You probably noticed in this brief description that there were really two distinct components:

1) assessment; and
2) interpretation and decision-making.

The first component includes collecting information about learning and performance and the second component includes interpreting the results of assessment and making decisions about instruction based on one's interpretations. These two components make up "evaluation". Assessment alone is not all there is to evaluation; the results of one's assessment must be interpreted and used for making educational decisions. It is important to distinguish the interpretation component of evaluation from the assessment component because the same assessment information about learning outcomes can be interpreted in different ways and can lead to different instructional decisions. For example, in a unit about the water cycle, your assessment of student learning might reveal that many of the students do not seem to understand evaporation and, therefore, how clouds are formed. As a result, you decide that more instruction is required. However, the specific form of additional instruction you provide will depend on your interpretation of why the students did not understand how clouds are formed in the first place. If you think that it is because you spent insufficient time on this part of the unit, then you might go back and spend more time on it. If, however, you think it is because they did not understand the vocabulary and terminology you used to describe evaporation, then you might clarify these terms before reviewing this section of the unit.

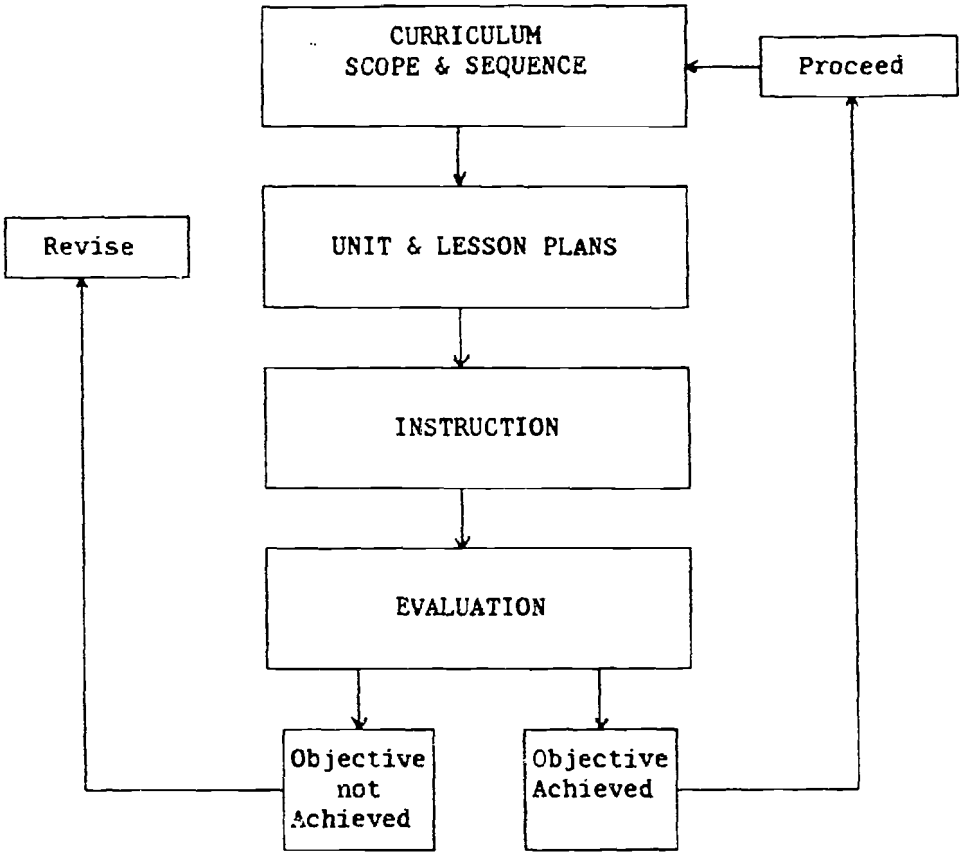

CURRICULUM
SCOPE & SEQUENCE
Proceed
Revise
UNIT & LESSON PLANS
INSTRUCTION
EVALUATION
Objective not Achieved
Objective Achieved

FIGURE 1

Alternatively, you might decide that the sequencing of instruction was inappropriate -- the unit was taught too early in the year so that the material was too abstract for the students; it would have been more effective had it been taught later in the year, after the students had been exposed to some of the material in a more concrete and perhaps non-linguistic form. As a result, you might change the sequence of instruction the next time to reflect these concerns.

You can see from the above example, that information about learning outcomes alone may not be sufficient for you to understand why students have or have not learned what you intended. In some cases, you may need to collect more and different kinds of information before you come up with an suitable interpretation and decide what to do next. This raises another important point about assessment in the classroom -- it often entails collecting different kinds of information. As one would expect, minimally, assessment in the classroom entails collecting information about what students have or have not learned. Other kinds of information can be useful for understanding why learning did or did not occur and ultimately for making instructional decisions. Such information might include:

1) students' attitudes or interest in the activities or materials that were used in the unit;
2) their work habits;
3) their learning strategies; and
4) their background skills and knowledge.

Students may have failed to learn the objectives of a unit of instruction because they found the activities or materials uninteresting; they simply may not have done their homework; they may have used inappropriate or ineffective learning strategies; or they may have lacked necessary language or conceptual background knowledge or skills. It is important to know why learning did not occur as expected so that appropriate follow-up instruction can be planned.

There are many different methods of assessment that can be used for classroom evaluation. Tests can be useful for collecting information about learning outcomes. But, they are not particularly useful for collecting information about students' attitudes, motivation, interests, and learning strategies. Other methods of assessment are needed to collect these kinds of information -- for example, systematic observation, interviews/conferences, and diaries. Each of these alternative methods, as well as tests, will be discussed in more detail in a later section. Before doing this, however, let us talk about planning assessment.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Effective assessment requires planning. The best time to plan assessment is when you plan instruction. Practically speaking, planning for assessment should be an integral part of planning each unit. Ideally speaking, it will also be part of any general planning that takes place at the beginning of the school year. It is important to plan instruction and assessment activities together in order to insure that instruction lends itself to assessment and that the results of your assessment are useful for instructional planning. This is also important in order to schedule time for assessment activities. Useful assessment takes time. If it is not planned along with instruction, it is likely that the time that is necessary for assessment activities, such as conferences and diary writing, will not be available.

When thinking about a plan for assessment, the following questions are relevant:

1) Who will use the results of assessment and for what purposes?
2) When will I assess?
3) What will I assess?
4) How will I assess?
5) How will I record the results of my assessments?

Let us consider each of these now.

Who Will Use the Results of Assessment and for What Purposes?

The results of assessment can be used for different purposes and by different people. Teachers are certainly the primary users of the results of assessment. They use assessment to make decisions about current instruction and about their students: which objectives to teach the students and when; what kind of instruction to provide students; when to advance students to the next unit of instruction, when to provide remedial or additional instruction to students, etc. The results of assessment in the classroom can also be used to plan instruction for future groups of learners. For example, evaluative comments by current students, in their diaries or during conferences, can indicate that they found a social studies unit on oligarchic, democratic and monarchic forms of government uninteresting, too difficult or confusing; as a result, you may decide to change the materials and activities the next time you teach the unit. This decision may have no impact on your current instruction and students, but it will influence future instruction. In these cases, the information is used internally -- by teachers themselves to plan current and future instruction. The results of assessment can also be used internally by older students who want to direct their own studying and learning.

The results of classroom assessment can also be used externally, that is, by people outside the classroom. Teachers are often accountable to educational administrators, on the one hand, and to parents, on the other hand, to teach the curriculum completely and competently. While

school authorities may carry out some assessment for accountability purposes, teachers themselves are often required to provide information for this purpose. Accountability is particularly important for immersion teachers because immersion programs are often regarded as "special" and in many cases even "experimental". This means that immersion teachers are often called upon more than"regular" teachers to account for what they do and how effective they are.

Deciding who will use the results of assessment is important because this may affect the method and frequency of assessment as well as the form of recording keeping you use. Assessment for accountability purposes -- for parents and school authorities -- requires systematic and comprehensive information about all students. It also requires record keeping that is well organized, clear and concise since the information is public and will be made accessible to others. In comparison, evaluation for instructional planning is more internal and, therefore, private. Thus, it may be more anecdotal and more frequent in order to monitor the effectiveness of each instructional unit and perhaps even each lesson; and record keeping can be in terms that are meaningful to the teacher her/himself without being comprehensible to outsiders.

When Will I Assess?

Although it is true that most teachers continuously assess their students and their own teaching informally, there are particular times when additional attention and time are needed for systematic assessment. In later sections of this paper, assessment at the end of each unit of instruction is frequently used as an example. Assessing student performance at the end of an instructional unit makes sense since most curricula are organized in terms of units of instruction and, moreover, most teachers plan in terms of units of instruction. Assessing student performance at the end of major units is useful for deciding whether the students are ready to proceed to the next unit and for planning the next unit. Assessment at the end of each unit of instruction can also provide useful information about how effective the unit was -- Was it too difficult or easy? Was enough time allotted? Were the materials adequate and interesting? Did students have the necessary language and conceptual background skills? and so on. Answers to the latter questions will not necessarily lead to decisions about current students and instruction, but they can be useful for planning how to teach the unit to the next group of students. Assessment after each lesson can also be useful -- for planning the next lesson or for planning for future instruction with another group of learners. In these cases, assessment may be less extensive and systematic than after a unit of instruction, but it could be nonetheless important.

With older students, it may also be useful to assess learning after several units, several weeks or months, or even at the end of the year in order to determine how much students have retained from earlier instruction and how much they have consolidated or integrated skills, knowledge or concepts taught over a longer period of time than a lesson or a single unit. Indeed a developmentally-sound curriculum will consist of integrated and overlapping objectives that aim for learning that is cumulative. Thus, assessment of student achievement after the fourth unit, for example, should reflect language, conceptual and content achievement resulting from all previous units of instruction.

While it is a matter of some personal choice of when to assess, this decision will also depend, to some extent, on how the results of assessment are to be used and who will use them, as discussed in the preceding section. Assessment at the end of each unit of instruction is probably useful for both internal and external purposes; in other words, it is of interest to teachers for planning instruction, to students for organizing their own learning, to school authorities for accountability, and to parents who are interested in their children's progress. Assessment after each lesson can be used internally -- by teachers as they plan day-to-day instruction and by students as they plan their studying and learning activities. It is probably not very useful externally -- for accountability purposes, since it provides more detail than necessary. Summative evaluation (at the end of the year) is probably of most interest to parents and school authorities and perhaps older students. It is not particularly useful to teachers because it fails to capture important changes in student learning that occur throughout the year.

What Will I Assess?

Clearly the focus of all assessment, whether it is for internal or external purposes, is student learning -- teachers need to assess what and how much students have learned in order to make decisions about student advancement and to monitor the effectiveness of instruction. Assessing student achievement is also clearly important for accountability purposes. In these cases, decisions about what aspects of student learning to assess are based on objectives -- those specified in the program scope and sequence and those that you add -- such as content-compatible and incidental language skills, as discussed earlier. As was noted earlier, it is often necessary in classroom assessment to interpret student achievement and that this requires collecting information about students' learning strategies, their study habits, and their reactions to instructional activities and materials. In other words, it is not enough to look just at student achievement; it is important to look at what underlies it as well. Systematic observation, diaries, and conferences are useful ways of collecting these kinds of information. Such information is particularly important if assessment is undertaken for internal purposes because it can help you decide what kind of instruction would be suitable next.

Parents, of course, are also interested in the achievement of their children. Many parents also often want feedback about their children's study habits, learning strategies, interests, etc, because they are probably interested in what kind of students their children are. Indeed, many school report cards include categories related to students' work habits, social skills, etc.

There is a final category of information which is of interest primarily to teachers; namely, information about instruction itself, such as the effectiveness of instructional materials and activities, sequencing of instructional objectives and units, time allotments for particular units, etc. These kinds of information can be collected through teacher observation and from students' comments in diaries and during conferences.

These distinctions among student attainment, student attitudes, work habits and learning strategies, and instruction are somewhat arbitrary. There may be other ways of conceptualizing what kinds of information are important for evaluation purposes which suit individual teachers better. The important point here is to recognize that different kinds of information are involved in classroom evaluation and that different methods of assessment may be required for collecting different kinds of information.

How Will I Assess?

We will consider four methods of assessment in this section: observation, interviews/conferences, interactive diaries, and tests. It is not intended that all of these be used at all times. Rather, it is a question of which one or ones are most appropriate for particular purposes at particular times. In fact, not all of these methods are useful or practical for collecting all kinds of information. As was already pointed out, tests are useful for collecting information about learning outcomes, but they are not useful for collecting other kinds of information. Alternative methods of assessment, such as diaries, conferences, and observation, are needed here. These alternative methods of assessment can also be used to collect information about learning outcomes -- an oral interview can reveal a lot about oral language skills and diaries can reveal a lot about writing skills.

These alternative methods of assessment are especially useful in immersion classrooms for assessing performance -- that is, when you want to assess students' ability to communicate in interactive contexts, such as one-on-one conversations, classroom discussions, or play situations. They provide immersion teachers with a range of assessment methods and, therefore, the flexibility they need to respond to their special evaluation needs. Finally, some methods -- diaries and conferences -- can be used for instructional purposes and, therefore, they allow immersion teachers to make efficient use of their time.

Let us now consider each of these methods of assessment.

1) **Observation**

Observation is basic to assessment. In fact, all methods of assessment, including interviews, interactive diaries and tests, can be thought of as specialized methods for eliciting behavior to be observed under specific conditions. A major advantage of observation over other methods of assessment is that it can be done unobtrusively, without interfering with or altering what is being observed, and it does not necessarily take time away from other activities. Observation can be used to assess students' language use during routine school activities that are not intentionally evaluative -- during regular classroom instruction, at recess or lunch, in the hallways or playground, and so on. In other words, it is a useful method of performance assessment and, therefore, is of particular importance to immersion teachers who need to assess the communication skills of their students at all times throughout the school day.

Of course, observation can also be used to assess learning during activities that are planned especially for evaluation purposes, such as oral presentations, dioramas, posters, role plays, or demonstrations. When planning special assessment activities, it is important to decide how much importance language should play in the activity. Activities that require no or little language are useful for assessing mastery of content objectives when you want to assess content learning independently of language. This may be especially true in the early grades when the students' language development is limited. In comparison, it may be appropriate to use activities in the higher grades which call for language in order to assess whether the students' content-obligatory language skills have kept up with their mastery of the content to be assessed.

In fact, most immersion teachers observe their students constantly for evidence of successful learning or difficulty. They plan their instruction from day to day and even from moment to moment based on their informal observations of how well their students are doing. Thus, observation is not new for immersion teachers. However, the challenge facing immersion teachers is how to organize their observations in an efficient and effective way at the same time that they are actively engaged in classroom management and instruction. This requires planning. Without a plan, your observations may be fragmented and disorganized and, therefore, less effective. Effective use of observational information also requires systematic record keeping. If records of observations are not kept systematically, then much valuable information will be forgotten or recalled inaccurately. We will talk more about record keeping in a later section.

What follows is a simple set of guidelines for planning classroom observations. These guidelines can be used for planning observation of either routine activities and events or special activities intended for evaluation purposes.

First, identify why and what you want to observe before beginning to observe. The primary reason for observing is to assess student learning. In this case, decisions about what to observe can be based on learning objectives. While content objectives are usually described in the curriculum scope and sequence, language objectives may not be. Nevertheless, it is important to identify beforehand the language objectives you have for your students. This is especially important in the case of content-compatible and incidental language objectives since these might be overlooked otherwise. As noted earlier, focusing on particular objectives as part of your plan for evaluation will indicate to students that these are important to learn. As well, observing content-compatible and incidental language skills can indicate to you where students are experiencing communication difficulties or gaps and, therefore, where more systematic language instruction might be called for. Just because content-compatible and incidental language skills are not obligatory for learning content does not mean that they cannot be taught systematically in language arts, for example.

Second, define beforehand what kinds of responses or behaviors you expect as evidence that successful learning has taken place. This is important for two reasons: 1) in order to know what to observe; and 2) in order to limit what you observe -- there is an unlimited number of things that one could observe in and outside the classroom, but only a small number of things can actually be observed at one time. Therefore, be reasonable; select a limited number of objectives to observe -- those that are most important, in your opinion, or those that seem to cause most difficulty for students, for example. Of course, always be sensitive to unanticipated responses or behaviors from your students that might give you additional insight into their learning.

Third, identify how you want to observe. This entails a number of decisions:

a) Do you want to observe individual students or groups of students? Observing individual students is more time consuming and demanding, but it can provide useful information about the progress of individual children -- for example, children who are experiencing difficulty or children who have just joined the class. Observing groups of students takes less time and it can give you a general sense of overall learning.

b) Do you want to observe activities planned for evaluation (e.g., role plays) or routine lessons and activities? In fact, immersion teachers will observe both; it is really a question of when to focus on one more than the other. Observing planned activities usually means selecting a specific and limited set of objectives to focus on. It also means that you can control to some extent what the students do and, therefore, what you will observe. Observing routine activities lends itself to observing a wider range of objectives.

c) Do you want to observe the students in an activity that requires language or one that is largely non-verbal (e.g., demonstrations)? In the early grades, when students may have

acquired limited language skills, you may want to use demonstration-type activities that require little language to assess how well students are learning content, whereas in the higher grades, when language learning has advanced, you may want to use activities that call for more language.

d) Do you want to observe on one specific occasion or on more than one occasion? In general, it is preferable to make repeated observations in order to insure the reliability of your judgments. It also may be advisable to focus specific language objectives on different occasions and under different circumstances in order to assess how much students can generalize the language skills they acquire, for example during their social studies class, to appropriate situations in the schoolyard.

Fourth, and finally, choose and devise a method of recording your observations; more will be said about this later. It is important to devise an efficient and systematic method of recording your observations; otherwise, they risk being forgotten or distorted over time.

2) **Interviews/conferences**

Interviews are most useful for assessment in the immersion classroom in the form of "conferences" during which students perform certain tasks while the teacher looks on. Student conferences are particularly useful for assessing reading, writing, and problem solving skills -- students are asked to read a passage and answer questions about it, to write a short text, or to solve mathematical or conceptual problems in the presence of the teacher. This can be done individually or in small groups. Conferences allow the teacher to observe directly what the students can do and also where they are having difficulty, as evidenced by their hesitations, errors, false-starts, and self-corrections. The latter kinds of information can give the teacher some clues about the specific strategies the students are using to perform the task. This can be supplemented by direct questioning of the students as to how they approached each task, why they are having difficulty, and how they go about overcoming their difficulties. When used in this way, interviews are sometimes referred to as "think aloud protocols".

Individual conferences can be an occasion to ask students about their work habits, their understanding of the purpose of classroom activities and assignments, their satisfactions and/or frustrations with their own learning and with teaching, etc. Some or all of this information can be used to explain individual student learning, or lack of learning. The teacher can use this information to develop strategies for helping students overcome their difficulties. Conferences with individual students about their school work can also give the teacher a close look at their students' content-obligatory language skills -- asking a grade 5 student to explain the transformation of liquids into gases would call for the use of complex, conjoined sentences (such as "if-then" or "when-then").

Individual student conferences have the added advantage in the immersion classroom that they give students opportunities to converse with their teacher in the second language on a one-to-one basis about matters of general interest to them. Such opportunities are often difficult to provide in the daily routines of most immersion classrooms. Extending conferences in this way permits the teacher to assess students' mastery of content-compatible and incidental language skills -- asking students to describe what they like to do when they go home or on weekends or to recount conversations they have had with friends or family members allows the teacher to assess the students' proficiency with narrative and indirect dialogue, both of which are common in everyday language usage. Using conferences in these ways is a type of performance assessment since it is assessing the students' communicative performance in an interactive situation. Conferences also allow the teacher to help individual students with particular communication problems, for example, by modelling appropriate social language with individual students.

Conferences can also be done with small groups of students. For example, students might be asked to read aloud stories they have written themselves; to explain to classmates the significance of historical or current events, or to solve problems on the blackboard. The teacher along with the student's classmates observe or listen, ask questions, and provide assistance. These kinds of activities have the advantage of providing immersion students with opportunities to use language in ways that go beyond the simple question-answer formats that characterizes much ordinary classroom language use. In comparison with individual conferences, group conferences allow the teacher to evaluate more students at one time.

It is advisable to plan conferences in advance. Think about what it is exactly that you want to assess and what tasks you want to use. Generally, it is advisable to use the same tasks or same kinds of tasks you use to teach. It can be useful when planning individual conferences to devise an interview protocol which specifies the questions and sequence of questions to be asked of each student. This will help insure that you tap the specific knowledge, concepts, and skills that you want to assess. It also insures uniformity so that you can form general impressions of all your students in addition to forming impressions of individual students. If the questions are chosen carefully, you can elicit content-obligatory and content-compatible language skills. Planning questions ahead of time does not prevent you from asking unplanned questions.

In order for conferences to provide accurate and useful information about student learning **in general**, you should chose a representative sample of students. In this case, give all students a chance to participate; do not select only the volunteers because they may be the ones who are having the least difficulty. Every student should come to expect that he/she will participate at some time. When doing individual conferences with all your students, set a time

limit for each so that they do not take up too much time.

Conferences may be awkward and perhaps not very useful at first if students are not sure what to expect or what is acceptable. They may require training and practice to become comfortable with the process. This is particularly true if you are seeking their opinions or feelings about what is going on in class and how they are doing. Once they become familiar with general procedures, they will welcome the chance to talk with you.

3) **Interactive Diaries**

Interactive diaries or dialogue journals can be used to assess students' writing skills and to collect information about teaching and learning processes: for example, students' learning strategies, work habits, impressions of classroom activities, feelings about their own learning, etc. As writing samples, diaries can be particularly useful, if they are done routinely, because they provide a continuous record of writing development. Because of their personal, student-centered nature, they have the added advantage in the immersion classroom that they allow immersion students opportunities to express themselves in writing in personal ways and at length through the second language. This, in turn, allows immersion teachers opportunities to assess their students' ability to express themselves personally in writing using the second language without the academic demands that usually apply during other classroom activities. As noted earlier, it is often difficult to provide such opportunities during regular instructional periods.

It is important when using diaries to assess writing that feedback to the students not be explicitly judgmental. Teachers' comments should focus on communication and should be supportive and only indirectly evaluative (for example, "I am not sure what you mean by this; can you say it in another way?" Or, provide a "corrected" paraphrase of the students' entry and ask if this is what he or she means). It is also important that non-judgmental feedback be given so that students' comments about classroom activities are spontaneous and candid.

As with conferences, students will probably need some training when beginning to use diaries in order to become familiar with the general procedure and with your particular expectations. It may be helpful to give specific guidelines in order to let students know that it is alright to express their feelings about what is going on in class. It is advisable to set aside regular times for students to write in their diaries; and teachers should collect and read their students diaries in a regular and timely fashion if they are to be truly interactive.

A special use of interactive diaries is the **learning log**. In this case, students write in their diaries after each lesson in a unit in math, for example. In this way, they can monitor or "log" their learning of the content in a particular unit. This can help them and their teachers see progress towards achieving the objectives of the unit and identify areas of difficulty in attaining those objectives.

4) **Testing**

Tests consist of one or more standard tasks which all students are expected to respond to in more or less the same way. For example, a test in which students have to write a composition consists of a single task. In comparison, arithmetic tests and science tests often consist of a series of questions which students must answer; each of the questions in the test can be thought of as a separate task. Such tests consist of multiple tasks. Unlike the other methods of assessment we have discussed, tests do not allow for much individualization. While this can be undesirable at times, at other times, when you want systematic, uniform feedback about students, it can be viewed as an advantage. Testing is most useful when you know specifically what you want to assess and you have fairly specific criteria for assessing learning. This follows from the fact that it is difficult to select appropriate test methods or tasks and to grade or score tests if you are not sure what you are looking for and if you have poorly defined expectations about what students should have learned. Viewed differently, testing is not a useful method of assessment when you are exploring what students can or cannot do.

In order for performance on a test to indicate what students know and, therefore, what they have learned, test tasks must be selected carefully to match the objectives that were taught. In other words, successful performance on the test task or tasks must correspond to what one would expect if the learning objective were achieved. For example, if the objective of a grade 5 unit on human migration is to understand reasons for the movement of people from one region to another, then the test should seek to determine if the students can explain migratory patterns and not simply describe them. The point here is that the skills, concepts and/or knowledge demanded by the test tasks should correspond to the skills, concepts and/or knowledge described by the learning objective. We will discuss some general test task types and their advantages and disadvantages shortly.

In order for test performance to be an accurate assessment of how much learning has occurred and how effective instruction has been, it is important that the test tasks be an adequate sample of what has been taught. In other words, all objectives should be tested and more important objectives should make up a larger portion of the test than less important objectives. It is generally a good idea to make a list all of the objectives that were taught in order of importance before devising the test and to choose which objectives to evaluate from the list according to their importance. If the skills, concepts and knowledge included in a test are indeed representative of the objectives that were taught, then students who do well on the test (i.e., get a high score) have probably learned most of the important objectives while students who have done poorly on the test have not. If, however, the content of the test does not match the objectives, then student test performance is difficult to interpret. In this case, it is also difficult to know whether instruction has been successful.

When selecting test tasks, immersion teachers need to consider how much and what kinds of language skills should be called for in order to complete the test successfully. In some cases, it might be appropriate to chose tasks that require relatively little language in order not to handicap students with limited language proficiency. For example, an appropriate way to test mastery of place value for ones and tens among grade 1 students might be to use manipulatives, such as Dean's blocks or cusinaire rods, which require limited verbal responding. Here the emphasis is on mastery of the mathematical concepts. In other cases, such a test might provide an incomplete assessment of student achievement -- a test of grade 4 students' understanding of information presented in a line graph could be answered by one or two word responses, but it would not indicate much about their ability to communicate their knowledge using language. In comparison to grade 1 students, grade 4 students would be expected to have acquired the appropriate content-obligatory language skills in this case.

It is generally not advisable to use test results alone when making decisions about students since students may do poorly on a test for reasons that have nothing to do with what they actually know; for example, they may have been tired the day of the test; they may have misunderstood the test question; or the test itself may have been misleading or inadequate for some reason. Decisions about students based on test results should always be backed up by other kinds of information about student performance. Indeed, this is a good rule to follow when making decisions about students at all times -- do not base your decision on only one source of information.

To summarize, tests are most useful when:

1) you want systematic and uniform feedback about student learning;
2) there is a clearly defined set of learning objectives to be tested;
3) there are clearly defined criteria for evaluating learning;
4) the test is a good representation of learning objectives; and
5) you have other pertinent information about learning to base decisions on.

Types of Test Tasks

There are many different types of test tasks. Different tasks provide different kinds of information about learning. It is important to choose test tasks carefully so that they are a valid indication of learning. It is generally advisable to choose test tasks that are familiar to the students and that match the ways in which the objectives were taught. Unfamiliar test tasks are unfair to students because they pose unfamiliar task demands -- students may not recognize what is called for. Test tasks that do not match instruction might not tell you what students have learned because they tap different concepts, skills and knowledge than those that were taught.

In some cases, however, the instructional methods used in class are not a suitable basis for assessment. You may use certain methods of instruction to teach skills that the students are having difficulty with, but the method of instruction itself does not match your general objective. For example, you may use phonics drills to give students practice with certain sound patterns that are posing problems when they speak. If your ultimate objective is that the student be able to speak accurately and fluently, you would not test their learning of these sounds using the rote patterns that were part of instruction. Rather, you might test learning by assessing their use of these sound patterns in their spoken language -- an oral interview, for example.

Selecting the most appropriate test tasks is a matter of sound judgement based on a good understanding of your objectives and what specific kinds of tasks can and cannot tell you about learning. Selecting test tasks is also a matter of practicality. Some tasks are easy to devise but time-consuming to grade; others are difficult to devise and easy to grade. Avoid the tendency to use test tasks that are easy or interesting to use -- this can result in tests that are not representative of instruction. One way of classifying test tasks is according to the kinds of responses/answers that they call for. Roughly speaking, it is possible to distinguish between open-ended, limited, and closed-ended response tasks. These different types of test tasks entail different construction and scoring procedures. Moreover, they tell you different things about learning and, therefore, can be useful at different times or for different purposes. Let us consider each of these briefly now.

Closed-ended test tasks. Closed-ended tasks include a stem followed by alternative responses or answers. Student must select their responses from among the alternatives. These are what are commonly referred to as multiple-choice questions. The response alternatives can take different forms: a single word, a phrase or sentence, a paragraph, or even a non-language form, such as a picture, graph or table. The response might take the form of a judgement of correct/incorrect, appropriate/inappropriate, or true/false.

Closed-ended test tasks are useful for assessing language comprehension, either listening or reading, depending on whether the test is in a written or oral modality. They are not useful for assessing language production skills since, in fact, students do not have to produce a response; rather they simply have to recognize the correctness or appropriateness of a response. The same is true with respect to assessing achievement in content areas. Closed-ended response tasks are useful for assessing recognition of specific facts, information or interpretations. Students do not have to generate a response. Therefore, these kinds of tasks are not useful for assessing independent thinking skills, originality, or the ability to organize and present new information or ideas. They are not useful for performance assessment.

Although generally not favored for classroom evaluation, multiple-choice tests are one way to assess immersion students' mastery of content which make limited demands on their language skills. This is particularly true if non-verbal, pictorial response alternatives are provided. Responses to closed-ended test tasks are scored correct or incorrect, and only one total score is usually generated. Thus, these tasks are very easy to score. However, they provide relatively limited information about student achievement. They are relatively difficult to construct because care must be taken to avoid ambiguous, trivial or tricky questions.

Limited-response test tasks. In limited-response tasks, the range of possible responses is not fixed but is limited by the examiner. A number of closed-ended tasks can be used as limited response tasks if the response alternatives are removed; for example, a cloze reading test without alternatives for filling in the blanks is a limited-response task. Other examples of such tasks include elicitation tasks with prompts that are carefully constructed to elicit specific responses from students (e.g., picture vocabulary tests; compare two sets of objects for one-on-one correspondence); grouping or matching tasks (e.g., the student identifies how a group of items or a set of pictures are functionally similar); transformation tasks (e.g., change a declarative sentence into a question); identification tasks (e.g., identify the person associated with each of a series of historical events presented in the test); and dictation tests.

In comparison with closed-ended tasks, limited-response tasks do not require simple recognition of a correct alternative. Therefore, they can be used to assess students' ability to produce or generate certain kinds of answers, information, concepts, etc. If the response possibilities are limited in certain ways, these kinds of test tasks can be useful in immersion for assessing some content objectives while making limited demands on immersion students' language skills.

Responses to limited-response tasks can vary and can include acceptable, appropriate or novel, in addition to correct/incorrect. As a result, scoring limited response tasks is somewhat more complex than scoring closed-ended response tasks since judgement is called for.

Open-ended test tasks. In these kinds of tasks, the response alternatives are largely unlimited; the student is free to give a wide variety of possible responses. The teacher has relatively little knowledge beforehand of the students' specific responses. Examples of open-ended language tasks are: essays, information gap, role-plays, interviews, letters, and diaries. They are suitable for assessing speaking, writing and other kinds of language skills that call for language production (e.g., conversational skills, letter and essay writing). Examples of open-ended content tasks include any oral, written or non-language presentations or assignments, such as essays, speeches or projects in specific subject areas. They are useful for assessing recall of information previously presented as well as the ability to think

independently, creatively, critically, and spontaneously.

Open-ended tasks are relatively simple to construct; only general instructions are usually provided. However, they are the most complex type of task to score since the students' responses are not predictable and, therefore, a great deal of subjective judgment is called for. In order to insure some fairness and consistency in scoring, special care should be taken to establish scoring criteria. In fact, it is useful to devise a scoring "protocol" which specifies the rules to be used for scoring each test.

Guidelines for constructing closed-ended and open-ended test tasks are presented in Appendices A and B.

Record Keeping

Good record keeping is essential if assessment is to be useful and effective. It will help you:

1) keep track of important information about student learning and the effectiveness of instruction;
2) form sound impressions of student achievement and progress;
3) accurately identify persistent difficulties and problems of individual students;
4) report individual student progress to other educational professionals and parents;
5) assign formal grades which reflect student progress, if this is required in your school; and
6) monitor, evaluate and re-design your instructional plans more effectively.

Like assessment activities themselves, record keeping is an ongoing process that takes time -- it should take place not only after each unit, but every day, after specific lessons, and even during lessons. Effective assessment requires a combination of recording methods, some for daily recording and some for periodic recording; some which focus on students and some which focus on instruction; and some which are narrative and some which are checklists. In this section, we will consider student portfolios, teacher's journals, narrative reports, and checklists.

1) Student Portfolios

A useful way to monitor and record student progress is to collect samples of student work throughout the year in individualized files or portfolios. The work samples can be originals, such as writing samples, drawings, and work sheets, or copies, including photocopies of paper-and-pencil work or photographs of science and history projects. Students themselves can be asked to select their best or favorite work to include in their portfolio. In this way, they can participate actively and learn to take pride in building up their own portfolios. In fact, the portfolios should be readily accessible so that students can add new work or consult old work whenever they want. Each work sample should be dated and include a brief description of the

work -- what lesson or unit was being taught and what the student was trying to do, for example. Teachers and older students may want to include additional comments about each work sample so that subsequent progress can be assessed more easily against comments made about earlier work samples. In the immersion classroom, this gives immersion students the added opportunity to use the target language to talk about their own learning.

Student portfolios are valuable because they provide a record of each student's level of ability at the beginning of the year and their subsequent progress during the year. They can be consulted by teachers, parents and students themselves to review where progress has been made and where there might still be room for progress. More specifically, teachers can consult them whenever decisions are to be made about specific students, for example, for referral, grading, advancement, etc. Encouraging students to contribute to and review their own portfolios helps them become actively involved in assessing their own progress. Portfolios can be particularly important in the immersion classroom in order to show students the real progress they have made in learning the target language since the beginning of the school year. It is easy to take language development for granted if there is no concrete documentation of how much progress has been made. Sharing student portfolios with parents also gives them concrete evidence, which they might not otherwise have, of their own children's achievements in language and the content areas throughout the year.

2) **Teachers' Journals**

Teachers' journals are like student journals or diaries -- they are ways for teachers to record observations, impressions, and other information about teaching and learning that they consider important. Keeping a journal gives teachers time to reflect on their own classroom behavior and their reactions to classroom events and to monitor their own effectiveness with a new group of students, a new curriculum or new instructional units. Journals can be particularly useful for beginning immersion teachers whose initial reactions to classroom events are likely to be relatively general and unorganized. This can also be true for experienced immersion teachers who are beginning a new curriculum or unit and are not sure what to look for. In both cases, journal writing provides a way of **exploring** what is generally important. With time and experience, more specific ways of observing students will emerge that lend themselves to checklists.

Of course, journal entries can also refer to specific aspects of teaching and learning -- such as impressions of students' reactions to specific instructional materials, the effectiveness of particular instructional activities, etc. Such entries can be referred to later when planning to teach those lessons or units again -- they can help refresh your memory about how things worked last time. When planning to keep a journal, consider how you want to use it for future

instruction. This should suggest ways of organizing it so that it is maximally useful at a later time.

To be useful and effective, journal writing should be done regularly and at reasonably frequent intervals -- ideally, at the end of each day or even after key lessons. Journal writing may be done less frequently -- for example, at the end of each week; but, intervals of more than a week should be avoided since important observations will be lost or distorted. In order to regularize journal writing, schedule time to write in your own journal at the same time that your students are writing in theirs. Because of their personal, anecdotal nature, journals are not particularly well suited for external evaluation purposes; rather, they are most useful for internal evaluation purposes by teachers themselves.

3) Narrative Reports

Teachers need ways of recording important spontaneous, unexpected or unique observations throughout the day -- for example, about activities that worked particularly well or poorly, the accomplishments of particular students, student behaviors which suggest that they are having difficulty with a particular skill or concept, etc. In fact, teachers make these kinds of observations all the time. Many of them, however, are forgotten because there are so many things going on to deal with. Narrative reports are useful for keeping track of these observations about instructional activities while they occur and for monitoring student performance during ongoing activities. They are similar to teachers' journal entries except that they are made throughout the day while the students are working and playing and, therefore, they tend to be briefer and more specific than journal entries.

Narrative reports can be made on file cards or clip boards with paper left in strategic locations around the classroom so that you can record your observations quickly and easily no matter where you are or what you are doing. Alternatively, they can be recorded in a book or journal kept especially for this purpose. As with student portfolios, it is important to date each entry and describe briefly the context in which the observation was made. It is also useful to organize your comments according to student name or instructional unit in order to facilitate retrieval of information about specific students, units of instruction, or lessons. If this is done, then reports can be reviewed when assessing the progress of particular students or when assessing the effectiveness of particular units, activities, etc.

As noted at the outset, immersion teachers need to monitor all aspects of their students' language development and they need to do this at all times during the school day. Narrative reports can be particularly useful for this purpose because they are relatively open-ended and, therefore, lend themselves to recording all aspects of language use. They are also particularly useful for immersion teachers because they are an unobtrusive way of recording observations about students' language proficiency during activities, such as play or spontaneous discussions

among themselves, which the teacher has no control over and, indeed, may not even be part of. As with journals, they can be especially useful for new, inexperienced immersion teachers who have not yet developed systematic or precise ways of observing their students. Narrative reports are useful for all teachers, however, for keeping track of those events and reactions which make each group of students unique and somewhat unpredictable. Keeping narrative records also helps to sharpen and focus teachers' attention on what is happening around them so that important events are not overlooked.

4) **Checklists**

Checklists consist of lists of pre-designated categories for recording observations about teaching and learning. In order to devise a checklist, it is necessary to know what you want to observe and what criteria you want to use to assess what you are observing. When this is not possible or unclear, then journal writing or narrative reports are more useful. In addition to checking off those categories from the list that best describe what you are observing, you can include additional comments to complement your ratings (see example checklists in Appendix C). While checklists prepared by others can be useful in classroom assessments, the best checklists are those that are devised by teachers themselves to meet their particular instructional needs and objectives. Your initial attempts at preparing checklists will probably not be completely satisfactory; be prepared to revise them as you work with them. Moreover, checklists will need revising as your instruction changes. Indeed, this is true of all of the recording methods discussed here.

It is possible to devise checklists which focus on students and instruction separately or together. Checklists which focus on instruction can include categories pertinent to the effectiveness of specific aspects of instructional units -- the materials and activities, the content of the unit, time allocation, sequencing, etc (see Appendix C for an example). If you use activity-centres, it can be useful to place a checklist pertinent to particular activities at the appropriate centres so that you can record your observations of your students while they are working. Alternatively, checklists might be completed after a lesson or unit when you have had a chance to observe it in its entirety.

Checklists which focus on students will include observational categories pertinent to what and how much students have learned and, as well, can include categories pertinent to student learning strategies, their work habits, their level of involvement in instructional activities, their use of specific instructional materials, or even their general behavior in class (e.g., for grade 1 students, you might include a category **"follows instructions and abides by rules"**). It can be useful sometimes in student-focused checklists to allow for repeated entries so that you can monitor student performance over time. This can be done very simply by including a number of columns where you enter your ratings or comments at different times. Student-

focused checklists can be a particularly useful form of assessment when every student is asked to do the same thing, such as explain a science project to their classmates or report to the class information they have collected about local plants and animals, etc. Information collected in this way is comprehensive and concise. It is useful for both internal and external evaluation purposes -- it can be shared easily with parents or other educational professionals to document individual student performance.

Checklists can be devised to meet the special evaluation needs of immersion teachers. For example, they can be used to assess students' use of the target language outside the classroom --. in the schoolyard or in the lunchroom. In other words, they can be used to monitor students' development of incidental social language skills, such as disagreeing or negotiating, and to devise objectives and instructional strategies, such as role plays or debates, to promote development of these kinds of language skills.

Of course, checklists can also be devised to assess student learning in the immersion classroom. Checklists for use in immersion classrooms should always include observational categories that refer to attainment of both language and content objectives. Moreover, a distinction should be made between content-obligatory language and content-compatible language skills. It can be useful when assessing immersion students' mastery of content to include categories which refer to the use of non-verbal demonstrations of knowledge or skill -- for example, the use of diagrams or other visuals or a demonstration. Appendix C contains a sample checklist for assessing an objective from a grade 3 science unit on **Plant Growth and Development** prepared by the National Science Resources Center (1991). This checklist has been devised to assess the attainment of one particular content objective within this unit: **students' will describe the main stages in the life cycle of a plant, from planting a seed to harvesting new seeds.** It includes categories pertinent to the students' acquisition of content-obligatory and content-compatible language skills related to this content objective.

Other objectives of equal importance from this unit that could be assessed include:
-students will improve their observation skills (including making accurate observations, noting observations, describing new observations, and comparing new with previous observations);
-students will improve their prediction skills;
-students will understand the relationship between bees and cross-pollination.

The last objective, like the one related to the checklist in Appendix C, is an objective which refers to knowledge to be acquired by students. There are many possible ways to assess this objective. One way would be to have students present creative dramatizations of the pollination process using paper models of bees and flowers. The first two objectives refer to skills or processes to be acquired by students. The development of students' observation and prediction

skills may be best assessed during the unit. This could be done by observing the students as they observe the growth of plants: by having students make daily records of the growth of plants; and by having them make written predictions about future growth.

It is important to keep in mind that there is no single way to assess student learning -- perhaps you can think of other ways of assessing these objectives yourself. The checklist in Appendix C is only one example of one way of assessing this particular objective. Other methods, or modified versions of this one, could be used in addition to or instead of this one.

CONCLUSIONS

To be effective, assessment should be an integral part of instructional planning. Indeed, a number of the assessment activities described here can also serve instructional purposes -- student conferences, interactive diaries, and even open-ended test types, such as essays, oral presentations, or demonstrations. If assessment is planned along with instruction, then time will be made available for assessment; assessment activities that compliment instruction can be selected; and instructional activities that are sensitive to the results of assessment can also be planned.

Effective assessment should also be an ongoing part of classroom activities and, in the case of immersion, of school life in general. Therefore, it is essential to plan assessment activities that can be used efficiently and comfortably throughout the school day, both in class and outside the classroom. Tests are clearly an assessment activity that can be used only in the classroom whereas observation can take place at any time anywhere in the school.

Effective assessment entails the collection of overlapping information about teaching and learning. Decisions about instruction and especially about students should always be based on converging but different sources of information. This will insure sound, reliable decision-making. This is particularly important for immersion teachers who must conduct a comprehensive assessment of their students' language development at the same time as they distinguish students' language development and their progress in the content areas.

Effective assessment must be practical. I have described a number of different methods of assessment and record keeping and how to use them. It is not intended that all the methods described here be used at all times for all purposes. Nor is it intended that these methods be used in exactly the way they have been described here. Adaptations will be called for in order to make them appropriate for your classroom. Each immersion teacher must decide which methods best meet her/his needs and how to use them effectively. It is possible that each method of assessment and each method of record keeping described here could be useful as part of an overall assessment plan. It is a question of when to use which methods, for what purposes, and how. To be effective, each teacher needs a unique assessment plan consisting of a unique combination of methods to correspond to her or his unique circumstances.

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APPENDIX A

Guidelines for making closed-ended test tasks

Closed-ended response tasks are suitable for testing skills involved in reading and listening because they involve comprehension skills. They do not require the test taker to produce or generate a response. Furthermore, closed-ended response tasks can be particularly suitable for beginning level learners precisely because they do not require language production and because they are highly structured. Their use is not restricted to beginnners, of course, and they can be made as complex as desired depending on the particular nature of the task and its content.

As pointed out already, most closed-ended test tasks are some form of what is commonly known as multiple-choice questions, although there are some variations which are not. Matching tasks in which the test taker must match one set of items, such as specific words, to another set, such as different "parts of speech" or grammatical terms are an example. However, even this format can be conceived of as multiple- choice in that the grammatical items constitute a set of multiple-choice answers only one of which is correct as a descriptor of each word. Multiple-choice question formats include a stem, or prompt, and alternative responses. The stem is, in effect, the question. The alternatives that are not correct are called distractors.

Closed-ended test tasks attempt to control in precise ways the particular response required to perform the task. Thus, they are especially useful for assessing particular aspects of language, such as certain grammar rules, functions, vocabulary, etc. A great deal of care is called for in making up these tasks in order to avoid ambiguous or misleading tasks that are confusing to the test taker and produce answers that are meaningless to the examiner. Thus, closed-ended tasks, and multiple-choice questions in particular, are difficult to construct. However, they are relatively easy to score. Scoring is simply a matter of checking whether the correct alternative was chosen.

APPENDIX B

Guidelines for Constructing Open-ended Test Tasks

In contrast to closed-ended test tasks, open-ended tasks do not control in a precise way the specific responses to be made by the test taker. This follows from the fact that in an open-ended task, each learner is relatively free to respond in whatever way he/she chooses. For example, in an oral interview each test taker can respond to the interviewer's questions in a unique way, using different language structures, vocabulary, etc. Although the responses in open-ended tasks are not tightly controlled, different open-ended tasks will nevertheless elicit different kinds of language. For example, a **conversation** task will elicit different discourse skills than an **oral report** or **interview** task. Because they tend to be less structured than closed-ended tasks, open-ended test tasks are often used to evaluate advanced level learners. In contrast, beginning level learners often need the structure imposed by closed-ended and limited response test tasks. Oral tests for beginners, for example, often include such tasks as picture naming and question answering. It is important to appreciate, however, that multiple-choice tasks, although not well suited for testing oral production, can be very demanding.

Open-ended test tasks are suitable for testing speaking and writing skills because they require language production. They tend to be used to evaluate higher order skills, such as discourse and sociolinguistic skills, in particular, which cannot be elicited easily using closed- ended or limited response test tasks. In fact, **all** language skills are involved in responding to open-ended tasks. For example, a written composition includes samples of grapheme, word and sentence grammar skills in addition to discourse and sociolinguistic skills. Therefore, it is possible to score open-ended tasks for virtually all language skills.

A great deal of judgement is called for in scoring open-ended tasks because each student's response to the task can be different from other students' responses but no less correct or appropriate. Consequently, scoring open-ended tasks is much more demanding and requires much more forethought than scoring closed-ended tests. Whereas the value of closed-ended tasks is directly related to the care that goes in to making them up, the value of open-ended tasks is related to the care that goes in to scoring them.

Because the specific responses to be made by the test takers in open-ended tasks are not controlled in any precise way, such tasks are relatively easy to construct. Open-ended tests are also relatively easy to construct because they usually consist of only one item (e.g., write a 250 word essay on a topic of your choice), although this is not always the case. In contrast, tests consisting of closed-ended tasks always include a number of different items. There is much less technical guidance needed to devise open-ended test tasks compared to multiple- choice closed-ended tests. The guidelines that we suggest in this section take the form of General Questions that you can ask about open-ended tasks rather than specific technical suggestions of the type that were provided for multiple-choice tests.

General Questions

In constructing open-ended test tasks, it is useful to ask the following general questions:

1. Is the task *appropriate* with respect to program objectives and instructional activities?

2. Is the task *understandable* with respect to expected performance and evaluation standards?

3. Is the task *feasible* with respect to topic, difficulty and time?

Appendix C

PLANT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENTS

I. Content objective:

Students will describe stages in the life cycles of plant--from planting a seed to harvesting new seeds.

RATING CATEGORIES
Students describe:

a) the inside of the seed ACCURATE PARTIALLY ACCURATE INACCURATE

Comments_____

b) each of the following stages in plant development:

- germination ACCURATE PARTIALLY ACCURATE INACCURATE

Comments_____

- seedlings ACCURATE PARTIALLY ACCURATE INACCURATE

Comments_____

- leaf development

ACCURATE PARTIALLY ACCURATE INACCURATE

Comments_____

- development of flowers (cross pollination)

ACCURATE PARTIALLY ACCURATE INACCURATE

Comments_____

- development of pods (new/mature pods)

ACCURATE PARTIALLY ACCURATE INACCURATE

Comments_____

Students' use of visual/support material indicates an understanding of the content*.

ACCURATE/ PARTIALLY ACCURATE/ INACCURATE
COMPREHENSIVE/INCOMPLETE

Comments_____

*Use of visuals/diagrams and models are particularly important as support tools for immersion students as they try to demonstrate non-verbally what they have learned.

II. Language:

1. Content-obligatory language:
   - use of specialized vocabulary (cotyledon, pods, germination, to harvest, to germinate, etc.)
     excellent satisfactory needs improvement
   - use of ordinal numbers (first stage, second stage, etc.)
     excellent satisfactory needs improvement
   - descriptions of the characteristics of the different stages of development (Seedlings, seed coat splits, white cotyledons, seed leaves, unfold, etc.)
     excellent satisfactory needs improvement
   - descriptions of plant parts (cotyledons- white, round, green, like, etc.)
     excellent satisfactory needs improvement

2. Content-compatible language:
   - vocabulary (crucifers, cabbage, Brussel sprouts, to develop, to produce etc.)
     excellent satisfactory needs improvement
   - use of comparatives (bigger than, smaller than, the same size as, more/less leaves than, etc.)
     excellent satisfactory needs improvement

3. General language:
   Richness: **excellent good poor**
   Appropriateness: **excellent good poor**

Comments:

Presentation*

Speaking style**:			
clarity	**excellent**	**satisfactory**	**needs improvement**
speed	**excellent**	**satisfactory**	**needs improvement**
stress/intonation	**excellent**	**satisfactory**	**needs improvement**
Interest/enthusiasm	**excellent**	**satisfactory**	**needs improvement**
Physical poise (posture)	**excellent**	**satisfactory**	**needs improvement**
Rapport with other students	**excellent**	**satisfactory**	**needs improvement**
Organization	**excellent**	**satisfactory**	**needs improvement**

Introduction
Sequencing
Ending (summary/conclusion)

*Use of this checklist is optional; it is most helpful if presentations are relatively formal and you wish to assess the presentation itself. This checklist should be adapted to reflect particular presentation skills you wish to emphasize.

**This category can be of particular interest and importance to the immersion teacher because the items here are closely related to students' overall level of language proficiency.