

Evaluation Adaptations for ELs

(from Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model, Third Edition)

The Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA) at Kansas State University, based on recommendations made by Deschenes, Ebeling, & Sprague (1994), summarized nine types of assessment adaptations that permit teachers to more accurately determine students' knowledge and understanding. We have modified them somewhat to enable teachers to more accurately assess, and give grades when necessary, to English learners. The following are possible assessment adaptations for English learners that are congruent with the SIOP Model and that hold high academic expectations for ELs:

- **Range:** Adapt the number of items the English learner is expected to complete, such as even or odd numbers only (see Leveled Study Guides in Chapter 2 as another example). Determine percentages of correct responses based on the number of items assessed.
- **Time:** Adapt the amount of time the English learner has for completing a task, such as providing more processing time and/or breaking tasks into manageable chunks. Unless there is a requirement to have a timed test, allowing additional time should not impact a student's score or grade.
- **Level of Support:** Adapt the amount of scaffolding provided to an English learner during assessments, by asking an aide, peer assistant, or parent volunteer to read and/or explain the task, or even read aloud (and translate, if necessary and possible) the items for the assessment. *Remember the difference between assessing an EL's ability to read and follow written directions and his or her ability to complete a task or answer questions about a content topic.* If you are looking for a student's content knowledge (not his or her ability to read directions), it is fine to have someone else help with reading or clarifying what the expectation for the task is.
- **Difficulty:** Adapt the skill level, type of problem or task, and the process for how an English learner can approach the task, such as allowing a calculator, dictionary, or simplified instructions. Once again, you are not reducing the expectation that the English learner should know the material – you're just making it easier for him or her to demonstrate understandings.
- **Product:** Adapt the type of response the English learner is allowed to provide, such as permitting drawings, a hands-on demonstration, a verbal, and, if necessary, a translated response. Whereas native speakers may be required to write a paragraph summary or essay, it may be reasonable for an English learner to submit an illustration, poster-board explanation, or other kind of product that doesn't rely so much on sophisticated English usage.
- **Participation:** Adapt the degree of active involvement of an English learner in assessment, such as encouraging individual self-assessment, assistance in creating rubrics, and cooperative group self-assessment. As you have read often in this book, content learning is enhanced for all students, but especially for English learners, through interaction and group work. English learners can certainly be involved in their own assessment progress, particularly in the upper grades.