

CHAPTER 1

CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT AMIDST CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY



I have a student that has a very difficult time taking multiple-choice exams. But if I verbally give him the test, he has a much easier time completing the test. . . . I also have a student that is an incredible artist. I have asked her to take several vocabulary words and create pictures that portray these words, and I then ask her to explain the term and the picture. . . . If I fail to unveil [my students'] capabilities and strengths, then I am just . . . well, failing them, and shutting doors on a bright future. I do not want to be responsible for turning away from their right to a great education and having them

leave my room feeling insignificant and discouraged. In concern for the ELL [English language learner or culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD)] student, my challenge is intensified!

Michael Berndt, Fourth Grade Teacher



Chapter Outline

What's Different About Today's Classroom?

The Next Generation of Students: America's Potential
Changing Classroom Demographics, PreK–12

What's Changed About the Readiness of Classroom Teachers for Student Diversity?

What's Evolved About Appropriate Assessment Practices for CLD Students?



Objectives



- Explain at least one operational definition of the term *assessment*.
- Explain why classroom teachers should value a student's ability to demonstrate real-world applications of knowledge.
- Specify the meaning of the acronym CLD.
- Explain why increasing student diversity in U.S. classrooms is not entirely the result of recent immigration. Discuss factors, other than immigration, that might account for these changes.
- Describe five major trends in evolving immigration patterns for the United States, as well as implications for classroom teachers.
- Discuss the implications for classroom assessment practices of increasing poverty rates (incidence) among CLD students and families.
- Specify factors associated with poverty that are deterrents to student success in the classroom.
- Discuss patterns that have accompanied recent increases in the number of secondary-level CLD students, as well as implications for classroom assessment practices.
- Specify which groups of CLD students are more likely to be identified as limited English proficient, as well as factors in the students' home situations that may contribute to these patterns of identification.

- Describe how schoolwide achievement-testing practices have or have not changed in today's public school classrooms and the implications for elementary and secondary teachers.
 - Discuss the readiness of classroom teachers for diversity and implications for CLD student achievement.
 - Describe why CLD student assessments are often pivotal to judgments about school and teacher efficacy.
 - Explain at least three reasons why high-stakes, formal assessment questions are often not valid, reliable, or generalizable for CLD students.
 - Describe at least five problematic consequences of an increasing emphasis on standardized, norm-referenced, high-stakes tests in recent education reform initiatives.
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The following problem was given to a classroom of urban middle school students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds as part of a criterion-referenced classroom assessment (Glaser & Silver, 1994, p. 22).

Busy Bus Company Problem

Yvonne is trying to decide whether she should buy a weekly bus pass. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, she rides the bus to and from work. On Tuesday and Thursday, she rides the bus to work but gets a ride home with her friends. Should Yvonne buy a weekly bus pass based on the following fare information?

Busy Bus Company Fares

One Way: 1.00

Weekly Pass: 9.00

The classroom teacher was surprised to find that many of these culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students concluded that Yvonne should purchase the weekly pass instead of paying the daily fare. The teacher considered the daily fare to be more economical.

Anxious to explore the reasoning behind students' decisions, the teacher decided to discuss the problem with the class. This discussion revealed surprising but reasonable applications of out-of-school knowledge and problem-solving strategies to this mathematical problem (Glaser & Silver, 1994). Basically, students who selected the weekly pass argued it was a better choice because it would allow several family members to use it, especially after work and in the evenings, but also on weekends. In effect, these insightful students had reasoned beyond the

decontextualized statement of the problem to apply their background knowledge gained from urban living. They applied this knowledge in a way that demonstrated a cost-effective use of public transportation. The teacher became convinced that more than one correct answer existed for the problem. In fact, she concluded that future assessments should explore more thoroughly what CLD and other students knew and were able to do. That is, students needed opportunities not only to provide answers but also to explain their reasoning and their applications of knowledge gained.

This example illustrates several of the rewards and challenges of differential assessment discussions, adaptations, and teaching practices for CLD students. These students bring to the classroom background knowledge and experiences that are often different from those of other students yet powerfully connected to real-world challenges, dilemmas, and living. Unfortunately, traditional assessments may fail to capture the knowledge that CLD students bring to content-area learning. Classroom teachers are often in the best position to create, adapt, and modify assessments and assessment practices appropriately for CLD students so that these measures reflect the authentic, real-world knowledge and abilities of these students. *Assessment*, in this sense, can be defined as a range of procedures used to gather information about what students or other individuals know and are able to demonstrate.

Given the diversity of CLD learners' experiences and prior knowledge, it is not surprising that classroom teachers of increasing numbers of CLD students are searching for resources to help themselves create, adapt, and apply differentiated assessment practices appropriately. This text provides just such a resource, as well as a variety of useful guidelines for PreK–12 classroom teachers of CLD students. Among the sorts of questions this text addresses are those that surface among teachers as their numbers of CLD students increase on an annual and sometimes weekly basis. These questions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How do I know that Jessie's difficulties with reading, language arts, and social studies do not indicate a disability?
- Thao has been in my class for six weeks. Why doesn't she respond to my questions during the lesson? Why doesn't she speak during group work? How can I evaluate what she comprehends and what she does not?
- I think that Marleny has already learned what we are studying in math right now. How do I find out what she learned while she was in El Salvador?
- We even used the Spanish version of the test! I know that Madai learned this material in Mexico. Why didn't she excel on this assessment?
- I know that my students from Bosnia are improving, but their six- and nine-week tests don't show it. What's wrong?

The concern of these teachers is evident in their queries. Yet such questions also tend to illustrate why differentiating classroom assessments and assessment practices is so critical to teacher and student success in today's classroom.

These observations beg the question: What is so different about today's classroom that such differentiation of tools and practices has become essential? In the real world of today's classroom teacher, from elementary schools to high schools, from rural communities to large cities, these changes have begun with the students in the classroom.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TODAY'S CLASSROOM?

What has changed—and is continuously changing—in today's public school classroom is the diversity of the student population. The fastest growing and most heterogeneous group of students today is that which we refer to in this text as culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD). In the literature of education, these students are sometimes referred to as minority or language minority students. This literature has also variously referred to CLD students whose first or native language is not English as English language learners (ELL) or limited English proficient (LEP) students.

We believe that the term *culturally and linguistically diverse* is the most inclusive and cross-culturally sensitive description of a student whose culture or language differs from that of the dominant culture. The use of this term and its associated acronym are increasingly prevalent in educational literature (e.g., Herrera & Murry, 2011; New York State Education Department, 2002; Sandberg, 2007; Spartz, 2007). CLD students are those who bring diverse cultural heritages and assets to the school (Baca & Cervantes, 1998; Escamilla, 1999; Herrera, 2010; Herrera & Murry, 2005, 2011). But because diversity does not imply a level playing field, the acronym CLD most appropriately and affirmatively describes students who will require classroom assessments and assessment practices that are appropriately differentiated for their biographies and their learning needs.

So who are these CLD students? Where did they come from? Like almost all Americans (Lurie, 1991; Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2012), CLD students are immigrants from another country. Some are recently immigrated; others are second- or third-generation Americans (see Table 1.1). Immigrant youth constitute almost one-quarter of the child population in the United States (Passel, 2011). This is the highest proportion in the last ninety years. Therefore, it becomes increasingly valuable for classroom teachers to know something about immigration dynamics in the United States.

CLD students and their family members, like immigrants of the past, come to this country for rational, valid, and compelling reasons. They not only contribute to the creativity and productivity of the nation, but they also want to learn English and become productive members of our society. A practical understanding of current trends among immigrant and other CLD students is often crucial to the teacher's appropriate preparation for a changing classroom. This is especially the

Table 1.1 Population Under Eighteen, by Generation and Race or Hispanic Origin, 2009

| Category | All Children | Hispanic Origin | Non-Hispanic Origin | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------|-------|------------|
| | | | White | Black | Asian | Mixed Race |
| Number (thousands) | | | | | | |
| All children | 74,699 | 16,587 | 41,545 | 10,713 | 3,197 | 2,120 |
| Immigrant youth | 17,326 | 10,009 | 2,876 | 1,361 | 2,717 | 355 |
| Share of all children | | | | | | |
| Immigrant youth | 23.2 | 60.3 | 6.9 | 12.7 | 85.0 | 16.7 |
| First generation | 3.8 | 9.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 | 21.1 | * |
| Legal immigrant | 2.3 | 3.9 | 0.9 | 1.7 | 17.4 | * |
| Unauthorized immigrant | | | | | | |
| Second generation | 19.4 | 51.3 | 5.9 | 10.7 | 63.9 | 16.3 |
| Legal parent(s) | 14.0 | 30.2 | 5.5 | 9.4 | 56.5 | 16.0 |
| Unauthorized parent(s) | 5.4 | 21.1 | 0.4 | 1.3 | 7.4 | z |
| Third and higher generations | 76.8 | 39.7 | 93.1 | 87.3 | 15.0 | 83.3 |
| Native parents | 75.8 | 35.8 | 93.0 | 87.0 | 14.5 | 82.6 |
| Puerto Rican–born† | 0.2 | 1.0 | * | * | * | * |
| Puerto Rican parent(s) | 0.8 | 2.9 | 0.1 | 0.3 | * | 0.6 |
| U.S.-born as % of immigrant youth | 84 | 85 | 85 | 84 | 75 | 97 |

*Less than 10,000 population.

†Includes persons born in all U.S. territories.

Notes: White, black, and Asian include persons reporting only single races; Asian includes Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. American Indians not shown separately.

Source: J.S. Passel (2011), *Demography of Immigrant Youth: Past, Present, and Future*. *The Future of Children*, 21(1). Page 24. (Princeton, NJ: The Future of Children: A collaboration of The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and the Brookings Institution).

case for the development and refinement of assessments that are valid and authentic for the populations of students taught.

The Next Generation of Students: America's Potential

Radically changing trends in birth rates, fertility rates, aging, and net immigration have resulted in the highest levels of classroom diversity witnessed in the United States in the past century. Already about one-quarter of the youth population, the number of immigrant youth is expected to grow to about one-third of the youth population by 2035 (Passel, 2011). Analysts and researchers at the Urban Institute, the Pew Charitable Trust, the National Immigration Forum, the Institute of Education Sciences, and similar centers continuously monitor the rapidly changing demographics associated with the increasing diversity and complexity of today's schools. The recent findings of these researchers indicate that classroom teachers of CLD students should monitor and adapt their professional practices to align with five major demographic trends.

The first of these trends may be characterized as *key to productivity*. Culturally and linguistically diverse immigrant students were responsible for the entire growth in the number of young children in the United States between 1990 and 2009 (Fortuny, Hernandez, & Chaudry, 2010). On the other hand, during this same time period, the percentage of public school students who were white decreased from 68 to 55 percent (Institute for Education Statistics [IES], 2011). Increasingly, CLD students are the youth upon which the country will depend to maintain high levels of productivity and competitiveness in a world economy. Passel (2011) has forecasted that immigrants and their children will provide nearly all of the growth in the U.S. labor force for the next forty years.

The second of these trends among CLD students and families is *dispersal to nontraditional receiving communities* (Fortuny et al., 2010). This trend reflects an ongoing diffusion of CLD, especially immigrant, families to states not typically associated with high levels of student diversity. In fact, recent immigration has shifted from traditional receiving states, such as California, Texas, and Florida, to twenty-two new growth states. Among the top ten of these new receiving states in growth are Georgia, Indiana, and New Hampshire. The proportion of young immigrant children living in the twenty-two new growth states has increased by more than 92 percent in the past decade (Fortuny et al., 2010).

The Urban Institute has asserted that this trend is especially important for schools and classroom teachers for two reasons (Fix, Passel, & Ruiz-de-Velasco, 2004; Fortuny et al., 2010). First, this new population is more recently immigrated, younger, more likely to exhibit limited English skills, and less likely to draw significant income from employment. Second, schools and other institutions in these new receiving states are less apt to have the necessary infrastructures (e.g., bilingual teachers and paraprofessionals, adult English as a second language (ESL) programs, quality second language programming, and differential assessment instruments) in place to meet the needs of these families and their school-age children.

A third demographic trend among CLD students surrounds *ongoing language acquisition challenges*. For example, 27 percent of children of immigrants are English language learners. This percentage is highest for 5-year-olds, at 37 percent (Fortuny et al., 2010). More than half (60 percent) of young immigrant children have at least one parent who is not fluent in English. These patterns suggest that increasing numbers of general education teachers will be called on to develop the capacities and skills necessary to differentiate their practices for CLD students who are language learners.

A fourth trend in demographics surrounds the *changing home and family dynamics* for CLD students. The overwhelming majority (over 90 percent) of young children (age 0 to 8 years) of immigrants are U.S. citizens. Of these, most are citizens by birth. However, only about half of these children live in families where at least one parent is a U.S. citizen (Fortuny et al., 2010). In some cases, CLD children have at least one unauthorized parent.

Although the citizen children of unauthorized parents are on an equal legal footing with all citizen children, their parents' unauthorized status affects them adversely in a variety of ways. Landale and colleagues (2011) report that unauthorized parents typically work in unstable, low-wage jobs that do not carry health benefits. As a result, CLD children of unauthorized parents are more likely to be poor than other immigrant children. They further add that unauthorized parents often fail to take advantage of public benefit programs for which their children qualify because they fear deportation. These hardships may be intensified by unstable living arrangements and periods of separation from one or both parents. Researchers currently know little about the family situations of children with unauthorized parents. As such, teachers and other educators should always guard against assumptions about these and any other CLD students.

Decreasing inflows of unauthorized immigrants to the United States is a fifth and final trend in emergent demographic patterns. Recent analyses indicate that these inflows have radically decreased by about 66 percent (Passel, 2011). In addition, the number of unauthorized immigrants leaving the United States has increased for countries other than Mexico. These changes represent the first notable reversal in this population over the past two decades and have been most marked (a 22 percent decrease) among immigrants from Central America, South America, and the Caribbean (Passel & Cohn, 2010). These changes are most significant for teachers of CLD students in Florida, Nevada, and Virginia.

Changing Classroom Demographics, PreK–12

With changing immigration trends come redefined classroom demographics, which by necessity require public school teachers at all levels to embrace adaptive practices and assessment approaches. The changing classroom demographics have been the subject of recent research (e.g., Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007; Fortuny et al., 2010; Institute for Education Statistics, 2010; Passel, 2011). Among these changing demographics, several are of special significance to teachers of CLD students.

Increasing Classroom Populations of CLD Students Although more than one in five children in the United States has at least one immigrant parent, 75 percent of elementary-age CLD students are second- or third-generation U.S. citizens, born in the United States (Grantmakers for Education, 2010; Passel, 2011). Tragically, these latter, native-born students are more likely to be disconnected from our school systems.

By far the largest proportion of CLD students is Hispanic; these students represent 22 percent of all youth under age 18 (Passel, 2011). Among others in this age group, 14 percent are African American, 4 percent are Asian, and about 3 percent are from mixed racial backgrounds. Currently numbering more than 5 million in the nation's PreK–12 systems, English language learning CLD students are the fastest growing group among student populations in schools (Grantmakers for Education, 2010).

These trends are expected to continue well into the future (Landale et al., 2011; Passel, 2011). Among youth, the number of white school-age students will continue to decline, falling to about 40 percent of children by 2050. The number of African American children in classrooms will remain about the same (14 to 16 percent). By contrast, children of Hispanic origin will increase to more than one-third of the school-age population. Also expected is an increase in the number of students who have ancestors in two or more racial and/or ethnic groups.

VOICES *from the FIELD* 1.1

Our community has changed tremendously over the past few years; therefore, my instructional and assessment practices must change in order to better assist the CLD students in my classroom. I teach in an ethnically and socially diverse district. I have a mixture of Asian, African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Indian, and Central American students. I have students that range from lower-, middle-, and upper-class families. With such a diverse class, I have the opportunity to connect with the students on different levels. I understand that I must adjust my instruction as well as my teaching style to meet the needs of all students, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds and academic abilities. The strategies and skills I have learned throughout my ESL courses have helped me make the learning process productive, intriguing, and fair!

Melody Green, Middle School Teacher

High Poverty Levels Among CLD Students The percentage of poor children, represented by the share qualifying for free and/or reduced-price school lunches, is significantly higher in schools with large numbers of CLD students (Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007). More than 30 percent of principals and 45 percent of teachers in these schools rank student health problems as serious or moderately serious. Notable aspects of these trends are especially

exacerbated for immigrant CLD students. The Population Reference Bureau (PRB) has recently analyzed this group and reports that more than one-fifth of CLD children in immigrant families lived in poverty in 2007, and nearly half lived in families with low incomes—below 200 percent of the poverty threshold (this measure recognizes poverty as a lack of those goods and services commonly taken for granted by members of mainstream society). According to the PRB, immigrant CLD children represent one of every five children living in the United States, but they make up over one-fourth of the 13.1 million children living in poverty (Mather, 2009).

Out of necessity, we as educators should always *check our assumptions* about our CLD and other students and their actual socioeconomic backgrounds through measures such as home visits and informal conversations. Children who do live in poverty tend to experience untoward health and educational outcomes, are more likely to experience parental divorce and live in single-parent families, and are more exposed to violent crime compared to children growing up in more affluent families (Mather, 2009). For many CLD students, poverty persists into adolescence and adulthood, and it is associated with greater risk of dropping out of school and lower earnings for them as young adults.

Recent research and analyses suggest other significant implications for increasing numbers of CLD students in poverty (Marzano, 2004; Mather, 2009; Skinner, Wight, Aratani, Cooper, & Thampi, 2010). Marzano (2004) has synthesized the findings of a comprehensive body of research to support arguments that poverty among students and families has negative influences on academic achievement. Based on his analyses, Marzano argues that students who are socialized at or near the poverty line are 70 percent less likely to pass an academic achievement test than their counterparts who do not experience poverty. Marzano also demonstrates that poverty is associated with a variety of other factors detrimental to student success, including:

- An increase in home and family conflicts
- Decreased levels of self-esteem
- Family isolation
- Frequent and disruptive moves from one living unit to another
- Reduced exposure to language (especially academic language) interactions

Marzano's analyses also revealed a disconcertingly strong relationship between poverty and ethnicity. In the United States, about one in every seven persons (14 percent) lives at or below the poverty line (Gabe, 2010). Among non-Hispanic whites, the figure drops to 9 percent. However, for Hispanics, the figure is typically over 25 percent; for African Americans, this likelihood increases to almost 26 percent (Gabe, 2009). Fundamentally, these figures indicate that children of color differ considerably from white children in access to material resources during childhood and school-age years.

For Marzano (2004), these analyses indicate that students of color are far more likely to enter school with disproportionately low levels of academic vocabulary

and the kinds of background knowledge that have traditionally been valued in U.S. classrooms. Even more problematic, however, are the ways in which many educators currently assess the vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary-building processes these students *do* possess. Many of the assets that CLD students bring to the educational setting continue to be unexplored avenues to academic success.

Increasing Incidence of Secondary-Level CLD Students CLD students who are foreign-born and recently immigrated are also more likely to be students in secondary rather than elementary schools (Passel & Cohn, 2010). This trend is practically a reversal of patterns typical among immigrant students since the late 1970s (Fix et al., 2004). The sharp increases in the numbers of recently immigrated CLD students who are educated in secondary schools suggest noteworthy implications for classroom teachers. First, these students are far less likely to have received language-programming support services during their elementary school years. Consequently, these students are less likely to demonstrate high levels of English language proficiency, especially the cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) skills necessary for success in content-area classrooms. Second, the incidence and history of language-programming services in secondary schools is typically more limited than that for elementary schools (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Third, secondary schools are less likely to have in place the necessary infrastructure, as well as the differentiated programming, instructional, and assessment practices that CLD students require to be successful (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Finally, federal Title III funds have historically been allocated more regularly to elementary-level programs, instruction, and assessment.

Language Dynamics Among CLD Students Today's classroom is characterized increasingly by the native languages spoken by CLD students. Sustained levels of immigration from nontraditional countries has increased the diversity of languages spoken by CLD students whose first language is not English. Today, these students speak more than 150 different languages (Migration Policy Institute, 2010). In seven states, Spanish is not the most common first language.

Among CLD students whose first language is not English, Hispanic students are more likely to be identified as limited English proficient (LEP; a government-related designation) than are Asian students—or the K–12 population as a whole (Capps, Fix, Murray, Ost, Passel, & Hernandez, 2005). More and more CLD students who have been classified as LEP have also lived in the United States for many years and are also increasingly educated in schools in which the overwhelming majority of students are also classified as LEP. In fact, nearly 70 percent of the country's LEP students enroll in only 10 percent of elementary schools (Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007). More than half of all students classified as LEP are concentrated in schools where roughly one-third or more of their classmates are also designated LEP. According to analyses from the Urban Institute (Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007), so-called high-LEP schools have more difficulty filling teaching vacancies, are more likely to employ teachers with emergency or

provisional certifications than are other schools, and have more new teachers than do schools with fewer LEP students.

Poor Achievement Among CLD Students: Trends for Educators to Watch Academic achievement trends associated with CLD students, especially those whose first language is not English, suggest ongoing implications for public schools and classroom teachers. For example, academic achievement and adequate yearly progress will be major emphases of classroom-based instructional and assessment practices for CLD students tomorrow and for the foreseeable future. One reason for such emphases are ongoing patterns of low achievement demonstrated by CLD students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). In 2009, white students at grade 12 scored 27 points higher in reading than African American students and 22 points higher than Hispanic students. According to the Institute for Education Statistics (IES, 2011), neither score gap was notably different from the respective score gaps in previous assessment years.

On the 2009 NAEP mathematics assessment, white students at grade 12 scored 30 points higher than African American students and 23 points higher than Hispanic students. Again, neither score gap was significantly different from corresponding score gaps in 2005 (IES, 2011). Not surprisingly, the status dropout rates for Hispanics have consistently exceeded those for white students *each year* since 1989 (IES, 2011). Among other implications, the need is greater than ever for effective classroom-based instructional and assessment practices that reflect the CLD student's culture, first and second language proficiencies, issues of acculturation, and prior schooling experiences (both inside and outside the United States). In a nutshell, schools will be challenged to maintain high standards of educational quality in an era of educational reform and amidst an increasing scale and pace of changing student and family dynamics.

In effect, the demands on the capacities and readiness levels of classroom teachers for the radically changing tapestry of the classroom are evolving in ways that reflect recent and shifting trends in national, state, and local demographics. So we must ask this question: To what extent do inservice teachers tend to demonstrate readiness for a rapidly changing classroom population? This question is the focus of the discussion that follows.

WHAT'S CHANGED ABOUT THE READINESS OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS FOR STUDENT DIVERSITY?

Although the federal government, many states, and some school districts are increasingly responsive to the changing demographics of the U.S. classroom, these efforts have often failed to match the pace of change (Briceno, 2008; Herrera & Murry, 2011; Ojalvo, 2010; Smyth, 2008; Thompson, 2004). For example, since implementation in 2002, the total federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act

appropriation has increased by 40 percent, from \$17.4 billion to \$24.2 billion (Briceno, 2008). However, when the needs of low-income and ELL student are considered, the total cost requirement to meet NCLB standards would amount to \$150 billion. At the state level, differential funding for CLD students, especially those whose first language is not English, ranges from as much as an extra 50 percent in New Mexico to as little as 10 percent in Arizona (Education Commission of the States, 2006). In addition, some states (e.g., Kansas) continue to allow general education teachers to test-out for ESL certification or endorsement with *no extra hours of staff development* particular to the needs of these students.

General education teachers are often the least prepared for changing CLD student demographics. Recent surveys and analyses of U.S. teachers by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) are especially alarming (NSDC, 2009, 2010). In 2009, the NSDC found that more than 66 percent of teachers had *not received even one day of staff development specific to the assets and needs of CLD students* during the previous three years of teaching. In fact, although most CLD students are educated in general education classrooms for the greatest portion of the school day, the majority of teachers in these classrooms have had little or no professional development for meeting the differential needs of these students (Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007).

Today, one in ten PreK–12 students is learning English as a second language (Grantmakers for Education, 2010). Recent research indicates that intensive, long-term professional development (49 or more hours per year) for teachers of these students has the potential to boost student achievement by more than 20 percentile points (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). Yet a 2010 topical analysis of professional learning opportunities for general education teachers of CLD and other students found that teachers had fewer sustained professional learning opportunities than they had experienced four years prior (National Staff Development Council, 2010). Grade-level teachers were also about half as likely to report time for collaboration with colleagues (i.e., to solve complex education dilemmas of increasing classroom diversity) than they were eight years prior.

WHAT'S EVOLVED ABOUT APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES FOR CLD STUDENTS?

From the standpoint of schoolwide achievement testing, at least one answer to this question is, Very little! In fact, most prevailing practices used in assessing achievement have changed little in the past fifty years (Abedi, 2009; Fair Test, 2011; McGarry, 2008). On the whole, if any significant change has taken place, it is that the assessment of achievement has become increasingly standardized, norm referenced, and institutionalized.

Since the enactment of NCLB in 2002, the assessed performance of CLD students, especially those whose first language is not English, has become a pivotal issue in the perceived success of schools and teachers in educating these students.

Testing at incremental grade levels now holds students, teachers, schools, districts, and states accountable for demonstrable and steadily increasing standards of performance. In some ways, this trend in assessment has focused more proactive attention on CLD students' opportunities to learn, access to differentiated instruction, and meaningful schooling outcomes. Yet not all outcomes of this prevailing focus on quantitatively measured performance among students and on educator accountability have been positive. The focus, in some cases, has been a major factor in the schoolwide firing of teachers and high levels of student frustration with recurrent testing (Crawford, 2004; Wolf, Herman, & Dietel, 2010).

There is also a growing body of criticism regarding these assessments and the consequences of building national school reform initiatives around them (Abedi, 2004, 2009; Fair Test, 2011; Wolf et al., 2010). Especially criticized are the negative effects these tests have on classroom climate, instructional practices, and classroom assessment routines. Ongoing analyses on such consequences (Abedi, 2004; Heubert, 2009; Wolf et al., 2010) have variously concluded that these standardized, norm-referenced, high-stakes tests:

- Prompt teachers to narrow the curriculum taught in classrooms
- Limit and negatively affect the quality of content-area instruction
- Encourage so-called teaching to the test
- Divert classroom instruction to an emphasis on low-level content and basic skills
- Push students out of the system
- Increase redundancy of instruction

Mounting evidence indicates that these consequences are especially exacerbated for CLD students (Abedi, 2004, 2009; Escamilla, 2011; Heubert, 2009; Uriarte, 2002).

Untoward consequences of high-stakes, formal assessments have been especially recurrent for CLD students whose first language is not English. This population of students must perform on two types of accountability assessments: Title III English language proficiency testing, and Title I assessments in reading/language arts, math, and science (Abedi, 2004; Wolf et al., 2010). Not surprisingly, therefore, Abedi (2009) reports that underperformance for the subgroup is not necessarily an unexpected outcome. Unfortunately, this subgroup of students often becomes a scapegoat for stakeholders in a growing number of schools that do not achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) (Anderson, Butcher, & Schanzenbach, 2010; LaChapelle, 2007).

However, an emergent body of evidence indicates that standardized formal assessments and assessment milieus used to measure AYP among this subgroup of students are often invalid or unreliable at several levels (Abedi, 2004; Cosentino de Cohen & Clewell, 2007; Wolf et al., 2010). Dr. Jamal Abedi (2004, 2009), a research partner of the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing at the University of California at Davis, is perhaps the foremost researcher in the nation on this topic. His longitudinal research on high-stakes formal assessments for CLD students whose first language is not English has found,

among other indicators, the following disconcerting issues of validity, reliability, and generalizability:

- *Strong confounding of language and performance:* Students of this subgroup exhibit substantially lower performance than other general education students in areas involving a strong understanding of academic English. That is, subgroup students may possess the content knowledge but may not have the academic English language proficiency to understand the language structure of the formal assessment tools.
- *Substantially lower baseline scores:* Low proficiency in academic English often means that the baseline scores of subgroup students are substantially lower than those of the larger student body. In terms of AYP, therefore, the groups are not comparable.
- *Heterogeneity in the subgroup population:* States involved with NCLB do not consistently classify CLD students whose first language is not English. As a result, the population tested as belonging to the subgroup may be far more heterogeneous than anticipated. With greater levels of heterogeneity, or difference, larger samples of students are needed to provide statistically reliable results.

Thus, Abedi (2009) reports that the formal assessment of CLD students is a much more complex conundrum than was anticipated. Olah (n.d.) agrees, noting that states have rarely checked to see that student performance on English language proficiency exams (required of CLD students whose first language is not English) correlates with performance on the reading portion of statewide exams. She argues that such comparisons could provide valuable information about the language proficiency needed for school achievement. As a result of these and other critiques of assessment practices in schools, the emphasis of best-practice literature on the assessment of CLD students in diverse classrooms is on finding alternatives to these and similar types of tests (Mathews & Kostelis, 2009; Mueller, 2011; Neil, 2010).

Also relevant to classroom teachers of CLD students are issues and dynamics of teacher-created, formal assessments. These tests, tools, and measures are at the other extreme of the formal assessment continuum. Although not the primary focus of this text, Chapter 6 will explore and explain fundamental issues of formal assessment for classroom teachers. Among the key topics and issues of formally assessing CLD students to be discussed are formative and summative assessment, baseline data, rubrics, and criterion-referenced instruments.

The trend toward more authentic assessment practices for CLD and other students tends to emphasize classroom-based assessments in more inclusive areas such as level of acculturation, language proficiency, and content-area learning. Informal assessments that are directly related to classroom practices and instruction are often essential to the trustworthy assessment of incremental gains in language proficiency and content knowledge among CLD students. The identification of these gains—and the sharing of them with CLD students—can provide students with powerful motivation and promote student-driven learning. One overarching purpose of the chapters to follow will be to explore and explain key issues of such

informal assessments in each of the four dimensions of the CLD student biography: the academic, the cognitive, the linguistic, and the sociocultural. As part of this discussion, key topics and issues of informal assessment (including authenticity in assessment, informal assessment conversations and home visits, discourse patterns across cultures, portfolio-based assessments, and the realistic evaluation of students' opportunities to learn) will be discussed.

This text has been designed specifically as a resource for classroom teachers of CLD students (PreK–12). The remaining chapters reflect the latest trends in appropriate and authentic assessment for the differential needs and assets that CLD students bring to the classroom. This book not only examines what is novel about differentiated practices, but also offers background information, details on assessments used in today's classrooms, examples of assessment in practice, and an exploration of concerns teachers must address in critical areas of assessment for CLD students.

KEY CONCEPTS

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| Assessment | Immigration patterns | Real-world applications in assessment |
| Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students | Nontraditional receiving communities | Schoolwide achievement testing practices |
| Differential learning needs and assets of CLD students | Poverty-related influences on academic success | |
| Educational reform initiatives | | |

PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATIONS ON PRACTICE

1. Defend the use of the term *culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student* versus alternative terms, including *minority student* and *LEP student*. Why is it important to consider such distinctions in serving the needs of CLD students and families?
2. Discuss the most significant implications of increased classroom diversity in nontraditional receiving communities. What are at least two implications of these increases for teachers' classroom assessment practices?
3. Discuss the practical realities of recent increases in the number of CLD students in secondary versus elementary classrooms. What are the implications for the assessment practices of secondary-level classroom teachers?
4. Discuss factors that might account for the limited access of classroom teachers to professional development specific to the dynamics of CLD students, especially students whose first language is not English. Given recent demographic trends, what are the implications of this pattern of teacher readiness to accommodate student diversity?
5. Reflect on factors that might account for the number of CLD students who receive much of their classroom instruction and assessments from classroom aides and bilingual paraprofessionals. Discuss in detail possible solutions to this dilemma of classroom practice.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

1. How would you define the term *assessment*?
2. In what ways are classroom teachers in the best position to appropriately create, adapt, modify, and accommodate classroom assessments for the differential learning needs and assets of CLD students?
3. Why should classroom teachers value the student's capacity to demonstrate real-world applications of knowledge?
4. What are five major trends in immigration discussed in this chapter?
5. What is a nontraditional receiving community? What should teachers know about such communities in relation to classroom diversity and assessment?
6. Increasingly, CLD students arrive at school from homes that are at or below the poverty line. What are at least three implications of this trend for classroom teachers and classroom assessment practices?
7. What relationships exist between students from poverty and the background knowledge they bring to school? What are at least two implications of these relationships for classroom teachers and classroom assessment practices?
8. What deterrents to student success in the classroom have been associated with poverty (list at least four)?
9. What are at least three patterns that have tended to accompany recent increases in the number of secondary-level CLD students?
10. What group of CLD students is more likely than others to be identified as LEP? What school factors may contribute to the challenges faced by students identified as LEP?
11. In what ways have school-wide achievement testing practices changed in today's classrooms? What are the implications of this pattern?
12. What are at least five problematic consequences of an increasing emphasis on standardized, norm-referenced high-stakes tests in recent educational reform initiatives? Briefly discuss each.
13. What are at least three issues that add to the complexity of formal assessment of CLD students using high-stakes assessments?