

# FRAMEWORK

## FOR THE 2004 FOREIGN LANGUAGE

### NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

PRE-PUBLICATION EDITION

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) has targeted the year 2003 for the first foreign language NAEP (FL NAEP). In May 1999, NAGB awarded a contract to the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) to conduct a national consensus building project. CAL worked in collaboration with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to develop recommendations for the Governing Board on the framework and specifications for the FL NAEP.

Focusing on the characteristics of foreign language education in the United States today, the consensus building committees propose a two-stage procedure for the FL NAEP. In the first stage, a language survey/background questionnaire will be administered to a representative national sample of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students to collect data on demographics, experiences with foreign language learning both in school and beyond, attitudes toward language study, and self reporting of language abilities. This sample will include both students who have studied a foreign language in school and those who have not. In the second stage, the Spanish NAEP will be administered to nationally representative samples of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, drawn from students in the first sample, who have learned Spanish in a variety of ways and for different lengths of time. The Spanish NAEP report will examine the achievement of students exposed to various lengths of Spanish language study, to show the connection between length of study and achievement. This issue is critical for foreign language education today, as determined by the consensus building committees and through a national review of the draft framework.

The Spanish NAEP is based on the consensus building committees' proposed general framework for assessing communicative ability in languages other than English. In this framework, listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills are assessed within three modes of communication: the *interpersonal* mode, which involves two-way, interactive communication; the *interpretive* mode, which relates to the understanding of spoken or written language; and the *presentational* mode, which involves creating spoken or written communication.

The framework states that communicative ability will be assessed through authentic communication tasks that are called for in daily life, school, and work. Assessment tasks will reflect four interrelated goals that provide the basis for communication. These goals include the following:

- gaining knowledge of other cultures;
- connecting with other academic subject areas to acquire knowledge;
- developing insights into the nature of language and culture through comparisons; and
- participating in multilingual communities at home and around the world.

Performances will be evaluated on how well the student understands (comprehension) and can be understood (comprehensibility). The criterion of comprehension/comprehensibility subsumes language knowledge, the appropriate use of communication strategies, and the application of cultural knowledge.

The consensus building committees recommend that the Spanish NAEP focus on assessing four of the six assessment areas in the general FL NAEP framework. The Spanish assessment will require demonstration of the following:

- listening and speaking in the interpersonal mode,
- listening in the interpretive mode,
- reading in the interpretive mode, and
- writing in the presentational mode.

The two assessment areas not assessed by the Spanish NAEP, due to practical considerations of time and expense, are reading and writing in the interpersonal mode and speaking in the presentational mode. The four assessment areas chosen are those most used in real-world communication by secondary school students. Each assessment area has different formats and specifications. The interpretive mode (both listening and reading) will be assessed using multiple-choice and short constructed-response type exercises; the presentational mode through short and extended constructed-response type exercises, and the interpersonal mode through a one-on-one conversation format. Although specifications vary across assessment areas, they are all based on and tied together by the framework. Each of the four assessment areas has its own preliminary achievement level descriptions.

Whereas the student background variables will be collected through the language survey/background questionnaire, other questionnaires will collect data on teachers, instructional practices, schools, and communities.

The consensus building committees have also proposed three small scale studies, placing highest priority on the assessment of foreign language achievement in a language other than Spanish and at a level other than secondary; namely, an assessment of the achievement of 4<sup>th</sup> grade learners of Japanese. Such a study will provide policy makers with information on the early stages of achievement of students who begin the study of a foreign language that shares few similarities with English in elementary school.

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **What is the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)?**

Often called the "Nation's Report Card," the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only nationally representative, continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. Administered in grades 4, 8, and 12, NAEP plays an essential role in evaluating the conditions and progress of U.S. education nationwide. Since 1969, NAEP has conducted assessments periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, history, geography, and other fields. Both public and private school students are sampled and assessed.

As the Nation's Report Card, NAEP provides the following:

- a state-of-the-art measure of the condition of education in our schools;
- thirty years of data showing patterns and trends of student achievement in core content areas;
- a valid, reliable, and objective measure of today's educational standards;
- an objective indicator for gauging the impact of national and state reform efforts; and
- a reliable source of student assessment data that is regularly used by Congress, professional organizations, national and state policymakers, and the media.

### **Who is responsible for NAEP?**

NAEP was established by Congress. The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), also created by Congress, sets the policies that determine who will be assessed, when they will be assessed, and how the results will be reported. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is responsible for overseeing the operations and implementation of the assessment. Specific tasks related to the NAEP are handled by outside contractors.

### **What information does NAEP provide to the public?**

NAEP provides a variety of information to the American public. Among the many reports are the *Report Card*, which gives detailed information on the results of each assessment for curriculum specialists, assessment specialists, and teachers, and the *Report Card Highlights*, a summary of assessment results addressed to the general public and policy makers. NAEP also releases to educators and others a number of tasks from each of its assessments, and data from NAEP studies are available for secondary analyses.

### **What kind of information does NAEP collect?**

Student performance is assessed through a wide variety of tasks. While some tasks are multiple choice, requiring students to select the best answer given, NAEP assessments also use constructed response items (open-ended questions) and performance type items (requiring students to produce extended complex performances) to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

In addition to the assessments, NAEP uses surveys and questionnaires to collect information from students, teachers, and administrators about instructional practices, materials and equipment, class size, curricula, and a host of other important variables related to educational achievement.

### **How does NAEP collect this information?**

Because of its unique design, NAEP can administer thousands of questionnaires and assessment items yet require only 50 minutes or so of student time. The random sample of students included in the assessment is representative of every type and size of school and community in the nation, from the largest urban districts to the smallest rural areas.

### **How are NAEP achievement results reported?**

Participation in NAEP is voluntary and by law no individual or school-level results are reported. Results are reported for representative *samples* of students.

NAEP achievement results are reported in terms of three levels: basic, proficient, and advanced.

**BASIC:** Students at this level demonstrate partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.

**PROFICIENT:** This level characterizes solid academic performance. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.

**ADVANCED:** Students at the advanced level demonstrate superior performance.

NAEP also reports the percentage of students who are “below basic”—those students whose performance does not yet demonstrate partial mastery of fundamental knowledge and skills.

In addition to achievement levels, NAEP results are also reported in terms of scale scores. NAEP scale score results provide information about the distribution of student achievement for groups and subgroups.

### **What is the 2003 NAEP Foreign Language Assessment?**

In 1994, the United States Congress recognized the importance of foreign language study, formalizing it in the Goals 2000 statement of the National Education Goals. That statement reads:

*By the year 2000, all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 1994).*

In 1997, as part of making *Goals 2000* a reality, the National Assessment Governing Board included a foreign language assessment in its 10-year schedule, targeting the year 2003 for the

first foreign language NAEP (FL NAEP). NAGB also specified two other dimensions of the assessment. The first stipulation was that the main assessment would be conducted in Spanish. The second specification was that the main assessment would be administered to secondary school students only.

Now, for the first time, the United States will have a comprehensive national source of information on what its students know and can do in a language other than English. Developing the framework for this national assessment is a critical task that presents an unprecedented opportunity to foster national discussion and to build national consensus—within the foreign language community and across government, business, industry, and the general public—on the role of foreign language education in America's future.

### **What is NAGB's role in the NAEP foreign language assessment?**

Congress established the National Assessment Governing Board in 1988 to set policy for NAEP. Among other things, the Board is responsible for selecting the subject areas to be assessed; developing assessment objectives and test specifications through a national consensus approach; designing the assessment methodology; developing guidelines for reporting and disseminating NAEP results; and taking actions to improve the form and use of the National Assessment.

### **What is the FL NAEP Consensus Building Project?**

In May 1999, NAGB awarded a contract to the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) to conduct a national consensus building project. CAL worked in collaboration with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to develop recommendations to NAGB for the 2003 foreign language assessment. Specifically, the Project Management Team directed the work of the Steering Committee, Planning Committee, and Technical Advisory Panel to make recommendations to the Governing Board on the following:

- a framework for the assessment;
- test and item specifications based on the framework;
- preliminary achievement level descriptions;
- a strategy for sampling students;
- background variables to be collected from students, teachers, and school administrators; and
- a strategy for reporting the NAEP results.

Members of the Project Management Team and each of the national consensus building project committees are listed in Appendix A. The timeline for the project follows:

- Spring 1999: Issues Paper prepared.
- Summer 1999: Consensus committee meetings held to consider the issues and to develop recommendations for the assessment framework and specifications. First draft of the framework and specifications prepared.

- Fall 1999: Period of national review of draft framework and specifications.
- Winter 1999: Full recommendations for the assessment framework, item specifications, background questions, and reporting strategies prepared and submitted to NAGB.
- Spring 2000: Final actions on recommendations taken by NAGB.

## CHAPTER 2: FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE U.S.

### The Importance of Foreign Language Education

As the national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* have noted:

“The businessperson, the poet, the emergency room nurse, the diplomat, the scientist, and the teenage computer buff are representative Americans who play diverse roles in life, yet each could present a convincing rationale for the importance of studying a foreign language. Their reasons might range from the realistic to the idealistic, but one simple truth would give substance to them all: to relate in a meaningful way to another human being, one must be able to *communicate*.” (Standards, 1996, p.11)

Competence in more than one language and culture, as the statement of philosophy of the K-12 Student Standards Task Force points out, enables individuals to do the following:

- communicate with other people in other cultures in a variety of settings;
- look beyond their customary borders;
- develop insight into their own language and culture;
- act with greater awareness of self, of other cultures, and their own relationship to those cultures;
- gain direct access to additional bodies of knowledge; and
- participate more fully in the global community and marketplace (Standards, 1996, p. 7).

By recognizing the importance of foreign language education to the educational mission of our schools, we will provide the citizen of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a greater opportunity to develop the tools for both academic and personal success.

### Types of Foreign Language Programs

A wide variety of foreign language programs currently exist in the United States.

- Elementary school programs that foster foreign language study for young children in small units of time or more intensively through immersion in the language are proliferating throughout the nation. These programs come in several models that establish a framework for extended sequences of foreign language study:

*total immersion programs* in which students learn the language by spending 60-100 percent of the school day studying the regular curriculum through the medium of the foreign language.

*partial-immersion programs* in which students typically spend half of their day learning some subjects in English and the other half of the day learning the remaining subjects in the foreign language.

*FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School) programs*, which are articulated programs that focus on teaching the foreign language for a specific amount of time each day or week. While less intensive than immersion programs, many

current FLES programs share some features with immersion programs, such as providing integrated thematic instruction that reinforces the elementary curriculum.

*FLEX (Foreign Language Experience or Exploratory) programs*, which offer an introduction to language learning and teach an awareness and appreciation of other cultures.

- Middle school programs that recognize the benefits of longer sequences of study are now more likely to offer foreign language courses. Models helping to make foreign language study more accessible to students at the middle school level include block scheduling of classes, alternate semester sequences, team teaching, and thematically-organized instruction. As more districts adopt elementary programs, middle schools are faced with the challenge of providing articulated sequences of study that build on the linguistic advantage of early opportunities for language study.
- High school programs that introduce foreign language study during the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and enroll students for 2-year sequences continue to be the most prevalent model. In recent years, several factors have had a positive impact on promoting the study of languages beyond the minimum requirement, such as students' recognition of the personal value of knowing another language and increased requirements for college admission and honors diplomas. Consequently, enrollments in elective and advanced placement courses are rising. Some of the more common models for extended language learning in high schools include the following:
  - Advanced Placement courses;
  - International Baccalaureate courses;
  - concurrent enrollments conducted in high schools in conjunction with local colleges or universities that grant college credit;
  - content-based advanced courses in a foreign language;
  - school-within-a-school models; and
  - academic or magnet schools emphasizing language development within a particular discipline.
- In addition, language courses designed specifically for heritage language speakers provide many students with opportunities to maintain or continue developing skills in languages they have been exposed to at home. As educators begin to recognize the tremendous language resources that already exist within the United States, there is growing interest in helping students expand competence in their home languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, Korean, and Spanish.
- Finally, opportunities that support the formal learning of languages and cultures also exist through summer camps, exchange programs, and study abroad programs.

## **Languages Taught**

American students currently study a much wider variety of languages than they have in the past. Although French, German, Latin, and Spanish continue to be the most commonly taught languages, students around the nation are learning other languages as well. Programs in Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Russian continue to attract students who have many different reasons for choosing to study a particular language. For example, they may recognize that some of these languages offer career potential, or they may have a special interest in the culture associated with the language. Some students choose to study a particular language

because of their ethnic heritage. For whatever reason, students continue to study these languages in American classrooms every year.

## **Types of Language Learners**

Not only are U.S. schools seeing a visible increase in the variety of foreign language programs being offered, they are also experiencing noticeable growth in the number of students from diverse language and cultural backgrounds who are participating in foreign language courses. Once viewed as the exclusive domain of college-bound students, foreign language study is achieving recognition as an important component of the core curriculum, a subject that *every* student should study. Educators acknowledge that the cognitive benefits to *all* students of foreign language study, such as fostering higher-order thinking skills and gaining insights into one's native language, go beyond the practical benefits of communication. The broadening of the offering of foreign language education means that there is a greater diversity of students in today's foreign language classrooms than ever before.

## **Instructional Practices**

The nature of foreign language instruction has shifted from an emphasis on grammar and vocabulary to a focus on communication. The goal of current foreign language instruction is to facilitate genuine interaction with others. Although grammar and vocabulary are still essential components of foreign language instruction, the new stress on communication emphasizes the need for students to know *how*, *when*, and *why* to "say" what to *whom*. This approach encompasses the linguistic as well as social and cultural aspects of effective communication.

Best practices continue to evolve in the foreign language teaching profession. It is recognized, however, that instructional approaches vary according to the learners' goals, motivations, and level of cognitive development. The context of the learning environment and available resources also play a major role in determining the most appropriate instructional approach. Effective curriculum design is informed by the fact that any language learner, regardless of age, must internalize (whether consciously or unconsciously) the sound system, a basic lexicon, basic grammatical structures, communication strategies, and rules about how the language is used appropriately in interaction.

Technology plays an increasingly important role in language education. Advances such as video players, electronic mail, computer-assisted instruction, and the World Wide Web are being used to help students reinforce their language skills, engage in communicative interactions with peers who speak the foreign language, and find out more about the culture and everyday life in the foreign country. Advances in technology provide opportunities to expose students to *authentic* sources of language and cultural input—at school and at home—at a level not possible 10 or 15 years ago.

## **Language Acquisition**

Language learning is unique in that children all over the world learn to speak their first language "naturally," without conscious effort and with or without schooling. Formal teaching of a foreign language in school does not change the unique features of language acquisition. In fact, these

features present certain challenges to treating language study as a sequentially mastered subject, such as math, science, or history. Foreign languages are not "acquired" by learning grammatical facts or memorizing vocabulary. Learning to use the foreign language for genuine communicative purposes is a central goal of foreign language instruction. Students need to be able to use the foreign language to carry out complex interactive processes that involve expressing meaning through oral communication, understanding what others are saying, reading and interpreting written materials, and being aware of the relationship between culture and communication. For some students, the language acquisition process takes place in a natural setting through interaction with people who speak the language, whether in the United States or abroad. For other students, the process takes place in the classroom, and for still others acquisition takes place through a combination of classroom learning and exposure to native speakers.

(Note: The above discussion is based on *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*, pages 11 to 25.)

## **Enrollment Patterns**

Historically, the percentage of high school students studying a foreign language reached an all-time high in 1910, when 49% were studying Latin and 34% modern foreign languages, for a combined total of 83% (Parker, 1957). While the percentage of students studying foreign languages was higher then, the number of students enrolled in foreign languages is now at an all-time high. The Center for Applied Linguistics recently reported the results of a national survey on foreign language instruction in elementary and secondary schools (Rhodes & Branaman, 1999). In 1997, over 4 million elementary school students (about 15% of the total) were enrolled in foreign language classes. At the middle school/junior high school level, the number was 3 million (or 37%), and at the high school level, it was 7 million (52%). These figures represent enrollment at one point in time. The percentage of students who have ever studied a foreign language during elementary or secondary school, but were not enrolled in a foreign language class in 1997, is likely much higher.

Spanish represents over half the total foreign language enrollment. In 1994, according to the ACTFL survey (Draper & Hicks, 1996), Spanish represented about 65% of secondary school enrollments in foreign languages (almost 4 million students), French about 22%, German about 6% and Latin about 4%. No other single language accounted for more than 1% of the total enrollments, although enrollments were recorded for Italian, Japanese, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, and Hebrew, among many other languages.

Of those for whom a high school level in Spanish was identified (about two-thirds of the Spanish enrollment), many more students were enrolled in lower level classes (869,271 in Level I and 228,109 in Level II) than in higher levels (17,440 in Level VI/AP [Advanced Placement]).

According to Center for Applied Linguistics survey (Rhodes and Branaman, 1999), foreign language instruction in elementary schools had increased by nearly 10% since 1987, when about 22% of elementary schools reported teaching foreign languages. By 1997, that figure was 31%. Between 1987 and 1997, the percentage of secondary schools offering foreign languages remained stable (87% in 1987 and 86% in 1997).

Spanish and French were the most common languages of instruction in elementary schools, with Spanish offered by 79% of the elementary schools in 1997, up from 68% in 1987. French was offered in 27% of the schools in 1997, down from 41% in 1987. In secondary schools, the percentage of schools offering Spanish increased from 86% to 93%, whereas French remained stable over the same period (66% in 1987 versus 64% in 1997.)

## **The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning**

The national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* first appeared in 1996 (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996). The *Standards* were the result of a national grass-roots collaborative effort supported by the four largest national associations for foreign language education: the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the American Association of Teachers of French, the American Association of Teachers of German, and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. They were endorsed by scores of other organizations related to language education, such as the American Association of Applied Linguistics, the Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools, the Modern Language Association, and state and regional associations of language teachers.

The impact of the *Standards* has been widespread, and in 1999 the generic standards were republished and complemented by nine language-specific standards for Chinese, Classical Languages, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999). The language-specific documents are aligned with and flow out of the generic standards but provide language-specific examples—within the standards themselves, for the learning scenarios that accompany the standards, for the progress indicators, and for classroom and bibliographic resources. With the exception of Chinese, Classical Languages, and Russian, the language-specific standards focus on foreign language education at levels K-16; i.e., an articulated sequence of language education extending beyond high school and into the post-secondary experience.

The influence of the national *Standards* on state standards has also been impressive. In a survey of state standards conducted by CAL for this project, 30 states either had their own foreign language standards that were significantly based on the national *Standards*, or reported that they use the national standards. This is especially significant when one considers that 7 states have no foreign language standards, and several states have not revised their standards since the national *Standards* appeared. Currently about 70% of the states have standards that reflect the national *Standards* entirely or to a great extent.

## **Related National Initiatives in Foreign Language Education and Assessment**

Several other initiatives spearheaded by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) have had a strong impact on the shape of foreign language education in the United States. In the early 1980s, ACTFL began training foreign language educators in the *Oral Proficiency Interview* (OPI), an assessment procedure initially developed in the U.S. government in the 1950s. As part of this training, ACTFL led the development of the ACTFL *Proficiency Guidelines*, which first appeared in 1982 in a provisional form, were revised in 1986, and are currently being revised yet again. Developed primarily for assessing language abilities in post-

secondary school students and adults, the ACTFL *Proficiency Guidelines* have become widely used in schools, colleges, teacher training institutions, and the private sector.

ACTFL's work with the *Guidelines* provided leadership in coordinating the development of the national *Standards*, which describe what foreign language students should know and be able to do in the foreign language. In 1998, ACTFL developed the ACTFL *Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners*, which describe the levels of competence students should obtain. These guidelines focus on second language use by students in elementary, middle, and high school foreign language programs, and are fully aligned with the national *Standards*. Whereas the *Standards* address *what* students can do in the foreign language, the *Performance Guidelines* address the question of *how well* they can do it.

Although the *Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners* are quite new, their influence is being felt as the *Standards* begin to be implemented. ACTFL continues to provide leadership in applying the *Standards* and *Performance Guidelines* through their current project on developing *Performance Assessment Units* that provide a means to assess competence across the *Standards*.

## **CHAPTER 3: ISSUES SURROUNDING THE ASSESSMENT**

### **A Limited Inclusion of All Foreign Languages**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) determined that the main foreign language NAEP would be administered to learners of Spanish. Although Spanish is clearly the most commonly taught foreign language in the United States, it is important to recognize that foreign language education does not equal Spanish language education. The broad scope of foreign language education in the United States today was discussed in Chapter 2. Indeed, each foreign language field has its unique characteristics. Some of the unique attributes of Spanish (as compared to Russian, Japanese, or Arabic) are the high number of words that are similar in both Spanish and English, the large numbers of people in the U.S. who speak Spanish as a native or heritage language, and the large and growing Hispanic population in the United States. In certain regions, Spanish is a first language rather than a foreign one for many students.

The consensus building committees recognize that the teaching and learning of all foreign languages is important. The inclusion of all foreign languages in the FL NAEP is being accomplished through two aspects of the project. The first is that the general framework being proposed here is applicable to all modern languages, not only Spanish. Although NAEP will use this framework for its Spanish language assessment, others may use the framework for developing additional language assessments in Spanish or in other foreign languages.

Second, the consensus building committees recommend a two-stage procedure for the NAEP:

- Stage 1 – Administration of the Student Language Survey/Background Questionnaire
- Stage 2 – Administration of the Spanish NAEP

The first stage will take place sufficiently ahead of the administration of the Spanish assessment (the second stage) to ensure that the data collected can be analyzed in time to inform the second stage of the sampling.

In the first stage, the FL NAEP language survey/background questionnaire will be administered to a nationally representative sample of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students who are administered the Spanish NAEP are thus a subset of this larger sample. The first stage sample, then, will include learners of Spanish; learners of other foreign languages; learners of no foreign language; heritage language learners (students who are learning a foreign language to which they have access through their home environment); and speakers of a foreign language as a native or heritage language who do not have U.S. school learning experiences in the language. All students will be asked questions about their experiences with foreign language learning as well as provide a self report of their communicative abilities in languages other than English. (See Chapter 9 for more information on the language survey/background questionnaire.) For Spanish students, this self reporting data may be compared to actual achievement on the Spanish NAEP. Such an analysis could be used to make predictions about the achievement on the FL NAEP of other students who

completed the self reporting for languages other than Spanish but were not administered an assessment in the foreign language they have learned.

The second stage will be the administration of the Spanish NAEP. Students participating in stage two will be drawn from the larger sample of stage one students. These students will form a sample representative of the national subpopulation of Spanish language learners in grade 12.

## **Variations in Length of Study**

Because of the current status of foreign language education in the United States, the critical issue to be examined by the FL NAEP is *how long*. How long does it take students to reach meaningful levels of achievement (or, as Goals 2000 puts it, *demonstrate competency over challenging subject matter*) in a foreign language? In other subject areas, NAEP generally assesses students at the 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Although students are studying foreign languages in each of these grades, an assessment of secondary school students was mandated by NAGB. Nevertheless, in foreign language education there is great variety in when students begin and end their study of one or more foreign languages. There are 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who have studied a single foreign language for between one and 12 years. Some 12<sup>th</sup> graders are currently enrolled in a foreign language, whereas other 12<sup>th</sup> graders completed their last formal academic course before their final year of high school.

To examine the relationship between length of study and foreign language achievement, it is necessary to include large enough representative samples of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who have studied Spanish for varying lengths of time. Student samples will also need to be classified by whether they are currently studying the language, or if there has been a lapse of time since they completed their last language course. Unlike other subjects studied throughout one's schooling, foreign language is often studied for a brief period of time (1 or 2 years). Loss of language skills is a critical issue when only students in 12<sup>th</sup> grade are sampled, particularly if more than 2 or 3 years have passed since students last participated in a language course. Indeed, the most common pattern of high school foreign language enrollments is 2 years of language study prior to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

In addition, there are students in the United States for whom a language other than English is a heritage language; that is, a language to which they have access outside of the school classroom. Heritage language students who participate in stage 2 of the FL NAEP (i.e., the Spanish NAEP assessment) may or may not have received formal academic instruction in Spanish. Those heritage language students who have learned Spanish in school may have studied it in courses tailored to non-heritage language speakers. Alternatively, such students may have participated in the growing number of courses titled "Spanish for Spanish Speakers." The consensus building committees recognize that it is difficult to categorize heritage language learners adequately by the number of years they have studied Spanish in school. Thus, the committees recommend reporting achievement levels for heritage language learners who have studied Spanish in a U.S. school as a separate group. (See Chapter 9 for a fuller discussion of defining and identifying heritage language learners). Finally, as with other foreign languages, there are students who have learned Spanish without formal U.S. academic training, due to Spanish being a heritage language or due to residence abroad. The consensus building committees recommend reporting the

achievement of these students as a group separate from both non-heritage and heritage learners who have had formal Spanish instruction in the United States.

Because Spanish is the most widely studied language in the United States, both in terms of the numbers of students learning Spanish and the levels at which it is taught, it is the ideal language in which to investigate achievement in foreign language learning over time. Nevertheless, the sampling of schools chosen to participate in the FL NAEP will need to be done very carefully so that each group for which results are reported are valid representations of the entire population. Table 1 shows the groups of students for whom achievement should be reported by length of study or other category. Representative samples of students will be required for each group.

Table 1: Categories of Students	
1. Non-Heritage Language Students With U.S. School Experience Learning Spanish, Currently Studying Spanish in 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
1A	5 or more year of continuous study (i.e., study was begun in 8 <sup>th</sup> grade or earlier)
1B	4 years of continuous study (i.e., study was begun in 9 <sup>th</sup> grade)
1C	3 years of continuous study (i.e., study was begun in 10 <sup>th</sup> grade)
1D	2 years of continuous study (i.e., study was begun in 11 <sup>th</sup> grade)
1E	1 year of study (i.e., study was begun in 12 <sup>th</sup> grade)
2. Non-Heritage Language Students With U.S. School Experience Learning Spanish, Who Have Completed Their Last Spanish Course Prior to Current Year	
2A	3 or more years of study
2B	2 years of study
2C	1 year of study
3. Spanish Heritage Language Speakers with U.S. School Spanish Learning Experience	
4. Spanish Speakers (Heritage and Non-Heritage) without U.S. School Spanish Learning Experience	

Representative samples of each of the ten groups identified in Table 1 will be assessed with the Spanish NAEP in stage 2 of the study. Results in terms of NAEP achievement levels will be reported for each, since the focus of the report will be on the connection between length of foreign language study and achievement (see Chapter 10). The need for representative samples means that students with 5 or more years of continuous study may need to be over sampled to ensure that valid and reliable observations can be made about them. If the numbers of students in 1A are large enough, data may be reported for subgroups, such as students with more than 6

years of continuous study (i.e., continuous study beginning prior to 7th grade) in order to provide more information about the relationship between length of study and achievement.

## **An Emphasis on Performance**

The emphasis for the FL NAEP is on performance; i.e., what students *can do* with their communicative language skills. This emphasis is in contrast to assessing what students simply *know* about the foreign language (i.e., knowledge of grammar rules) or their abilities in isolated skills, such as pronunciation or speaking ability. Assessment exercises for the FL NAEP will require demonstration of the accomplishment of communicative tasks.

## **Real-World Language Use**

Another emphasis for the FL NAEP is on *real-world* language use. This implies that students will use language in the assessment that reflects genuine communication in the world outside of the language assessment situation. Among other things, this emphasis means that stimuli used in assessment exercises should be *authentic* (i.e., texts and listening passages as found in the real world outside the language classroom). Likewise, tasks should be appropriate to the interests and age of the students.

## **Relationship to NAEP Reading and Writing Assessments**

Frameworks for NAEP exist in reading and writing, as NAEP has conducted assessments at grades 4, 8, and 12 in those subjects. These frameworks have informed the recommendations for the FL NAEP, but their influence must necessarily be limited. Whereas reading and writing in English are academic subjects that for most students begin with their first academic exposure and are reinforced daily both inside and outside of school, this is not the case for most students studying a foreign language. Although the most advanced learners of a foreign language may be able to perform at challenging levels in all types of reading and writing tasks, the time for learning and practicing these skills is attained only through long sequences of language study. Currently in the United States, most foreign language students are not in such long sequences of study. Whereas students may be asked to perform tasks on the FL NAEP that are similar to tasks on the NAEP reading and writing assessments, the descriptors of what they should be able to do in their foreign language cannot reflect the same level of sophistication and complexity as those in English.

In addition, with its emphasis on foreign language communication, the FL NAEP is more ambitious in scope than the individual NAEP reading or NAEP writing assessment. The Spanish NAEP will cover four assessment areas (see Chapter 4). In addition, because students will be performing tasks in a foreign language, more processing time may be required for them to complete Spanish NAEP exercises comparable to those found on the NAEP reading or NAEP writing assessment. For these reasons, the full coverage of the English language reading and writing frameworks cannot be reflected in the FL NAEP framework. Nevertheless, the influence of those frameworks on the FL NAEP framework, however limited, will be obvious.

## Making International Comparisons

While the consensus building committees recognized that FL NAEP data could be used for making international educational comparisons, they were also aware of the number of difficult issues involved in making such comparisons in foreign language education. This would be particularly true for the Spanish NAEP assessment. First, the committees recognized that in the countries with which they would most like comparisons to be made, English was the main foreign language being studied. The significance of English language education in countries such as Germany or Japan is difficult to compare to the situation of Spanish language education in the United States. Even among other English-speaking countries, the role of Spanish as a foreign language cannot be compared to the situation of Spanish in the United States.

Second, unlike a math or science exam, which may be validly translated from one language to another, a language exam that contains culturally rich authentic foreign language materials is not easily translated. For these two reasons, the idea of incorporating validated tasks from assessments used in other countries was not pursued further. The committees also recognized that, because NAEP is not a high stakes test and participation is voluntary at all levels, the outcomes could not be compared to outcomes on foreign language school-leaving exams in other countries, with which committee members had some familiarity.

Ultimately, the committees focused on developing a sound framework and comprehensible test specifications. The FL NAEP framework (Chapter 4) is applicable to all modern languages and may be useful for developing assessments for future international comparisons.

Nevertheless, the committees recognize that the information collected through the language survey/background questionnaire in stage one of the FL NAEP (see Chapter 9) does offer possibilities for collecting data for meaningful international comparisons. Among the topics that could provide meaningful data are the following:

- course-taking patterns (early start, immersion, sequential vs. non-sequential language study);
- information relating to travel and study abroad (both formal and informal);
- students' assessment of their own level of competence; and
- data related to the cultural milieu provided by students or inferred from demographic data on test takers.

Such information has proved useful in the past. For example, in 1995, information about language policies and foreign and second language education in school systems in 25 countries (including the United States) was gathered as part of Phase 1 of the Language Education Study conducted under the auspices of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. The report (Dickson & Cumming, 1996) presents a profile for countries such as Austria, England, France, Hong Kong, Iran, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, and the United States that includes a brief description of the following for each one:

- languages in society and national policies;
- organization of language teaching in schools;
- curriculum and assessment;
- teacher qualifications and support;

- resources for language teaching and learning; and
- current developments and innovative trends.

Although this study did not proceed to the phase of data collection from students in participating countries, two potential benefits were derived from Phase I.

- The project provided a rich and enormously useful body of contextual information that will provide a backdrop against which to examine and to interpret future quantitative and qualitative information about the process and product of language teaching programs in 25 countries around the world.
- The presence of between-country variability on a number of indicators should make possible the examination of a number of interesting hypotheses about differing language education practices (e.g., early vs. later start; benefits of multiple language study; transfer of literacy skills when orthographies vary, etc.).

School-level or national level assessments of students' foreign or second language proficiency are now conducted in a number of countries (cf., England, Latvia, Norway), albeit using somewhat disparate approaches (Dickson & Cumming, 1996). However, the continuing interest in conducting such assessments in additional countries raises the likelihood of using the NAEP foreign language data for future comparisons of the performance of students from the United States with selected cohorts of students from other settings.

## CHAPTER 4: THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

### Statement of Purpose

The foreign language NAEP will provide information to the nation on how well students in the United States can communicate in languages other than English. Specifically, results from the 2003 assessment will report on how well representative samples of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who have learned Spanish in a variety of ways and for different lengths of time can communicate in Spanish.

The foreign language NAEP is based on a general framework for assessing communicative ability in languages other than English. In this framework, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are assessed within three modes of communication: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. The interpersonal mode involves two-way, interactive communication, such as conversing face-to-face or exchanging e-mail messages. The interpretive mode relates to the understanding of spoken or written language, such as listening to a broadcast or reading a magazine. The presentational mode involves creating spoken or written communication, such as giving a speech or writing a story.

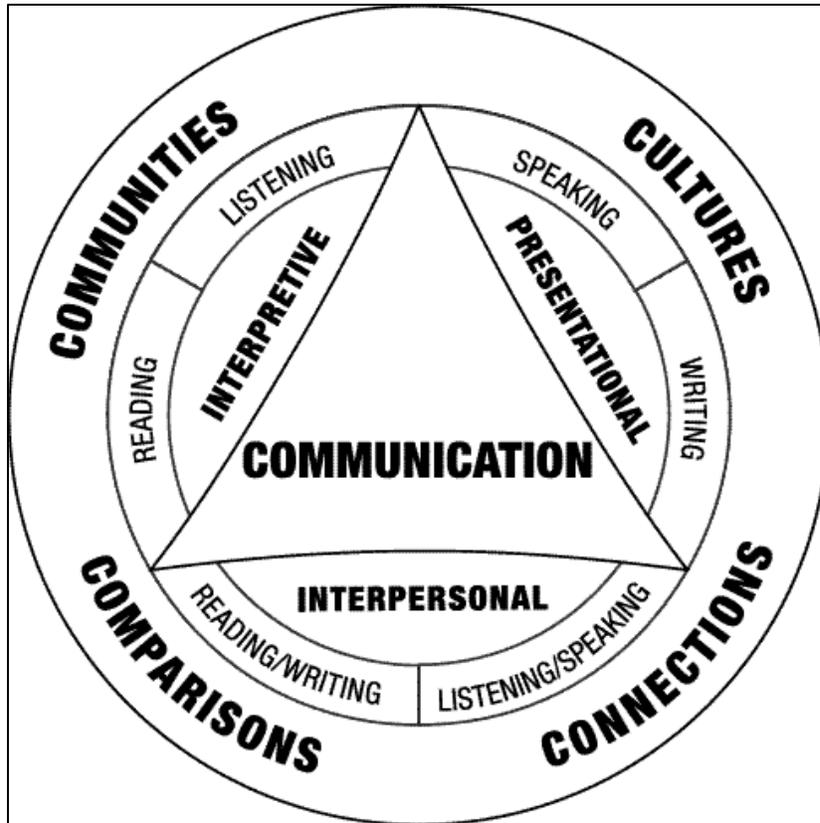
The framework for the foreign language NAEP calls for communicative ability to be assessed through authentic communication tasks that are called for in daily life, school, and work. The assessment tasks will reflect four interrelated goals that provide the basis for communication. These four goals include:

- gaining knowledge of other **cultures**;
- **connecting** with other academic subject areas to acquire knowledge;
- developing insights into the nature of language and culture through **comparisons**; and
- participating in multilingual **communities** at home and around the world.

Performances on assessment tasks will be evaluated on the criterion of how well the student understands (comprehension) and can be understood (comprehensibility). This criterion subsumes language knowledge, the appropriate use of communication strategies (such as asking for clarification or inferring the meaning of unknown words from context), and the application of cultural knowledge to enhance communication.

The FL NAEP framework is presented graphically in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. The Foreign Language NAEP Assessment Framework**



**Evaluation Criterion**

- Demonstration of Comprehension and Comprehensibility  
*(including the use of communication strategies and the application of cultural knowledge)*

**Contexts**

- Daily Life
- School
- Work

## **Definitions**

At the recommendation of the consensus building committees, the choice of the specialized terminology used in the FL NAEP framework was intentional. These terms are consistent with the widely adopted *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* and are meant to ensure that explanations are precise.

### **Communication**

The central focus of the assessment is to measure the ability of students to communicate in a language other than English. Essentially, communication is the ability to exchange information; that is, to convey and receive messages. These messages are of many different types and may be conveyed and received in many different ways. Although language is the primary vehicle for communicating messages, being able to communicate effectively means that the individual can combine knowledge of the language system with knowledge of cultural conventions, such as norms of politeness. Knowledge of language and culture combine to make successful communication.

### **Modes of Communication**

Although there are several ways communication can be characterized, the method here follows that of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*. This approach defines three modes of communication, based on the context and the purpose of the communicative interaction.

#### ***Interpersonal***

The *interpersonal* mode involves two-way, interactive communication, such as conversing face-to-face or exchanging e-mail messages. It is characterized by direct communication between individuals who are in personal contact, thus allowing the participants to clarify their meaning when misunderstandings occur. In this mode, participants in the interaction use both linguistic and non-linguistic feedback from others to ascertain the extent to which their message is being successfully communicated, and can make adjustments and clarifications accordingly. Necessary to achieving successful communication in this mode are the productive language abilities of speaking and writing as well as the receptive abilities of listening and reading, and the ability to use and interpret non-verbal behavior, including body language in face-to-face interactions.

#### ***Interpretive***

The *interpretive* mode relates to the understanding of spoken or written language, such as listening to a broadcast or reading a magazine. It involves having a culturally appropriate understanding of the meaning of oral or written messages sent via print and visual images. In this mode, the original author is not present to clarify misunderstandings. Necessary to achieving successful communication in this mode are the receptive language abilities of listening and reading, and the ability to use visual images to assist in comprehension.

## ***Presentational***

The *presentational* mode involves spoken or written communication, such as giving a speech or writing a story. It involves producing spoken or written messages for an audience with whom there is no immediate personal contact. Thus, there is no possibility to clarify intended meanings when misunderstandings occur. Such messages need to reflect awareness of cultural differences in order to be presented in a manner that will enable appropriate interpretation by persons from a cultural background where the foreign language is spoken. Necessary to achieving successful communication in this mode are the productive language abilities of speaking and writing and the ability to use visual images.

## **Goal Areas that Provide the Basis for Communication**

The *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* describe four interrelated goal areas for foreign language education that provide content, context, and purpose for meaningful communication. For the FL NAEP framework, these areas provide a basis for communicative assessment tasks. All tasks will be related to at least one, if not several, of these goal areas.

### ***Cultures***

The *cultures* goal relates to gaining knowledge and understanding of a different culture on its own terms. Culture is understood as the perspectives, practices, and products common to a society. The philosophical perspectives of a cultural group—the meanings, attitudes, values, and ideas that form its worldview—are the basis from which practices and products are derived. Practices are the patterns of social interaction accepted by the society, such as its rules for greeting and leave-taking, how space and gestures are used in personal interactions, and how status is determined. Products may be tangible (such as books, paintings, or buildings) or intangible (such as laws or a system of education). Understanding interrelationships among perspectives, practices, and products of the culture(s) studied in the foreign language classroom provides important content and purpose for participating in communication in the foreign language. This content and purpose should be found in many FL NAEP assessment tasks. The perspectives, practices, and products of cultures within the Spanish-speaking world will be a part of the Spanish NAEP.

### ***Connections***

The *connections* goal relates to using the foreign language to connect to other academic disciplines to acquire knowledge. This goal provides a clear purpose for communication in the foreign language, whether to reinforce and further one's knowledge of other academic disciplines, or to acquire information and recognize distinctive viewpoints only available through the foreign language and its cultures. Utilizing connections as a goal area for FL NAEP assessment tasks extends the content available for assessment tasks broadly.

### ***Comparisons***

The *comparisons* goal relates to developing insight into the nature of language and culture through comparisons between the native language and culture and a foreign language and culture. Making comparisons provides a clear purpose for communication in the foreign

language that may be embedded in tasks on the FL NAEP. The topic of linguistic and cultural comparisons also provides additional content area for assessment tasks.

### ***Communities***

The *communities* goal relates to participating in multilingual communities at home and around the world. This goal provides a context in which the foreign language is used purposefully for communication. Within the instructional setting, the context may extend beyond the school community through communication with speakers of the foreign language via e-mail or audiotapes, for example. Ideally, the context will involve using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment by interacting with materials and persons from the culture(s) where the language is spoken. These contexts provide situations for assessment tasks on the FL NAEP.

### **Evaluative Criterion**

The single comprehensive criterion by which performances on FL NAEP assessment tasks will be evaluated is the demonstration of how well the student understands the foreign language (comprehension) and can be understood using the foreign language (comprehensibility).

*Demonstration of comprehension and comprehensibility* includes language knowledge, and, to varying degrees depending on the assessment area, the use of communication strategies and the application of cultural knowledge. The consideration of these aspects of communicative performance is drawn from the ACTFL *Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners* and the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*.

Demonstration of comprehension and comprehensibility encompasses multiple aspects of the language system, such as knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and spelling. Beyond these elements of the traditional foreign language course, effective communication requires control of other features including sociolinguistic elements, such as sensitivity to the social context; pragmatic elements, such as sensitivity to the communicative goals; and textual elements, including knowledge of how written and oral texts are organized. Although the importance of particular elements of this criterion vary depending on the communicative mode and assessment task, all assessment tasks on the FL NAEP will allow students to demonstrate their control of these crucial elements of the foreign language.

The use of communication strategies, such as asking for clarification or inferring the meaning of unknown words from context, enables students to engage in and maintain successful communication. Students can use communication strategies to help them understand or be understood in unfamiliar contexts or with unfamiliar vocabulary and grammar, to avoid breakdowns in communication, and to correct misunderstandings. Such strategies provide students with the ability to maintain communication despite deficiencies in language skills and cultural knowledge. Communication strategies include the ability to do the following:

- use appropriate turn-taking behavior in a conversation;
- paraphrase (say things in different ways);
- make intelligent guesses to achieve greater comprehension;
- use context to help comprehension;

- make inferences, predictions, and generalizations; and
- draw conclusions.

For the Spanish NAEP, consideration of the use of communication strategies influences the evaluation of the comprehension and comprehensibility of student performances to different degrees and in different ways. These variations depend on the communicative mode being assessed and the specific assessment task. For more information, see Chapter 6.

Finally, awareness of differences between one's own culture and the culture of the people with whom one is communicating and the ability to bridge those differences facilitates clear communication between individuals. For example, in the interpersonal mode, perspectives from the culture where the foreign language is spoken govern patterns of interaction between participants in a conversation. Good foreign language communicators are aware of how the use of formal or informal registers (that is, the variety of language appropriate to the specific social setting) and gestures differ between cultures. In the presentational mode, a sensitive communicator who is aware of cultural differences may use that knowledge to present cross-cultural background information that may facilitate communication. In the interpretive mode, students must apply cultural knowledge to interpret accurately what they read and hear.

The application of cultural knowledge differs from the *cultures* goal, which has to do with gaining knowledge and understanding. As part of the evaluative criterion, how such knowledge is used to achieve successful communication is considered. For the Spanish NAEP, consideration of the application of cultural knowledge influences the evaluation of the comprehension and comprehensibility of performances in different ways, depending on the communicative mode being assessed and the specific assessment task. For more information, see Chapter 6.

## **Contexts**

Communication always takes place in a context, where it is used to achieve some goal or accomplish some task. Because communication occurs in a wide variety of contexts, foreign language educators are accustomed to simulating these contexts through role-plays and other methods in the classroom. Three broad context areas are appropriate for FL NAEP assessment tasks: daily life, school and work.

### ***Daily life***

Daily life refers to the use of the foreign language to participate in society outside of the school setting or to accomplish every-day social (i.e., non-academic) tasks. With the exception of some heritage language speakers and others who have had the opportunity to live or travel in a Spanish-speaking environment, students' actual use of the foreign language in daily life contexts outside the classroom may be very limited. However, through language study, students can imagine themselves in daily life contexts in which use of the foreign language may be necessary, such as shopping in a store in a foreign country, traveling abroad, or living with a host family.

### ***School***

The school context refers to the academic part of the student's life. School contexts in NAEP assessment tasks may refer to reading in the foreign language to complete an academic task or

conversing about a school-related topic or theme. School as a context may reflect actual classroom experiences in the United States, or experiences in an academic environment in a foreign country (for example, as an exchange student).

### ***Work***

The work context refers to using the foreign language on the job, in employment situations. Work-related contexts relate to paid or volunteer experiences with which 12<sup>th</sup> graders may have familiarity.

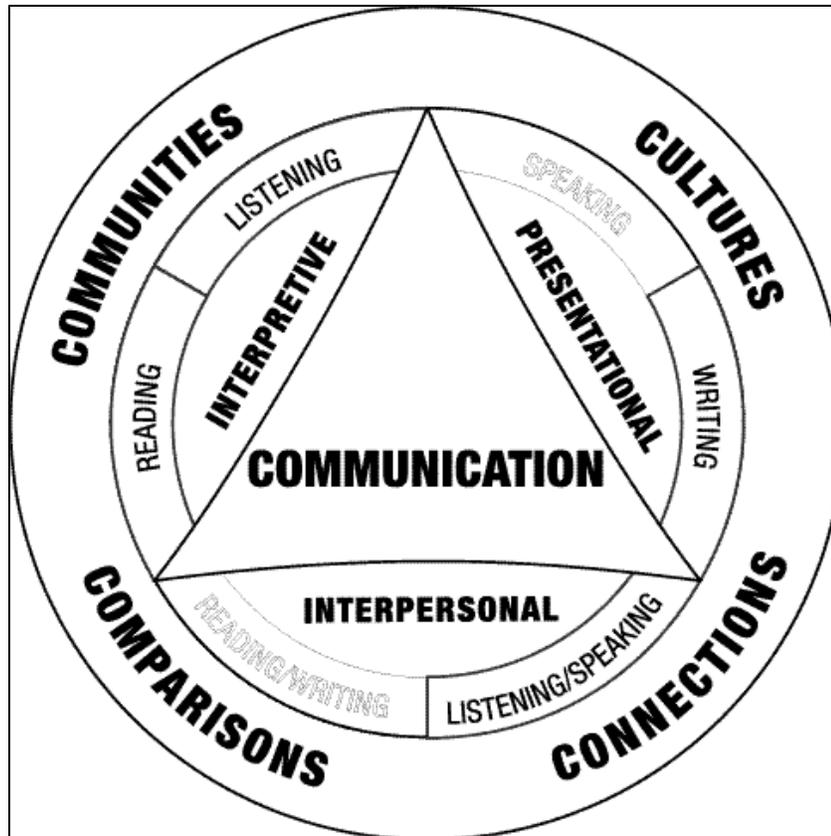
## **CHAPTER 5: ATTRIBUTES OF THE 2003 SPANISH ASSESSMENT**

The consensus building committees recommend that the Spanish NAEP focus on assessing four of the six assessment areas in the general FL NAEP framework. The Spanish assessment will require demonstration of the following:

- listening and speaking in the interpersonal mode,
- listening in the interpretive mode,
- reading in the interpretive mode, and
- writing in the presentational mode.

The two assessment areas not assessed by the Spanish NAEP, as shown in Figure 2, are reading and writing in the interpersonal mode and speaking in the presentational mode. There are several reasons for this. First, the consensus building committees felt that both assessment areas were used with less frequency in real-world communication situations that secondary school students might encounter than the four areas chosen. Second, reading and writing in the interpersonal mode is most effectively done through electronic correspondence. The committees felt that assessing interactive communication on-line may present logistical problems requiring a large amount of resources to solve. Finally, the committees felt that attempting to assess all six areas was potentially too costly, and it would be better to focus on assessing four areas well, particularly in light of the need to have large representative samples for the study. With the exception of its focus on four of six assessment areas, the 2003 Spanish NAEP reflects the foreign language NAEP framework described in Chapter 4.

**Figure 2. The 2003 Spanish NAEP Assessment Framework**



**Evaluation Criterion**

- Demonstration of Comprehension and Comprehensibility  
*(including the use of communication strategies and the application of cultural knowledge)*

**Contexts**

- Daily Life
- School
- Work

## Assessment Exercises

The Spanish NAEP will assess students' communicative ability in Spanish using a variety of oral and written stimulus materials, accompanied by other non-textual materials such as photos, artwork, graphics, and videos. Different response modes will be combined with the stimuli in developing items. The response modes will be single correct option multiple choice items; written constructed response (open-ended) exercises, both short answer and extended response; and oral performance exercises (conversation).

A variety of exercises will be included to assess students' proficiency in the three communication modes. The exercises assess students in the four areas identified—the interpersonal mode with conversation-based tasks (listening and speaking); the interpretive mode with listening-based tasks; the interpretive mode with reading-based tasks, and the presentational mode with writing-based tasks. These four assessment areas are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Areas of Communication to be Assessed

Interpersonal Mode	Interpretive Mode	Presentational Mode
A. listening/speaking (conversation-) based tasks	B. listening-based tasks C. reading-based tasks	D. writing-based tasks

All students (100% of the sample) will complete two of the three tasks in the assessment areas B, C, and D. Possible combinations for individual students include B-C, B-D, and C-D. The examination time for each student is 50 minutes, divided into two blocks of 25 minutes duration. Because of the costs of administering and scoring the conversation-based tasks, only a subset (20%) of the entire sample will be administered tasks in assessment area A. Those students being assessed on tasks in assessment area A have an additional 20-25 minutes of testing time.

## Distribution of Exercise and Response Formats

Specifications for distribution of exercise and response formats across the four areas of the Spanish assessment are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Specifications for Exercise and Response Formats

Assessment Area	Exercise Format	Student Response/Scoring
A. Interpersonal: Listening/Speaking (Conversation-) based Tasks	One-on-one conversation (test administrator and student)	Video taped  Conversation in Spanish (Spanish to Spanish)  Holistically scored on multiple dimensions
B. Interpretive: Listening-based Tasks	CD ROM (individual student) or video (large group)  Listening stimuli in Spanish  Questions in English	Multiple choice format (options in English)  Short answer format (Student Responds in English)  Computer-based or paper/pencil
C. Interpretive: Reading-based Tasks	Texts in Spanish  Presented in paper format  Questions in English	Multiple choice format  Short answer format (student responds in English)  Paper and pencil
D. Presentational: Writing-based Tasks	Directions for writing tasks in English  Presented in paper format	Short answer (student responds in Spanish)  Extended answer (student responds in Spanish)  Paper and pencil

To ensure that students understand what is expected of them, all test directions will be in English. As shown in the table above, for the conversation-based exercises, the interaction will be entirely in Spanish (though directions will be in English). The conversations will be captured on videotape. The stimuli for exercises in the interpretive mode will be in Spanish, but the questions and responses (multiple choice or short-answer format) will be in English, unless the task is to choose an appropriate text from among several options. The stimuli for the listening-based exercises will be presented on CD-ROM to individual students or by video to groups of students. The responses will be either computer-based or pencil and paper responses. Both the stimuli and responses for the reading-based exercises will be in paper format. The directions for

the writing-based exercises in the presentational mode will be in English, presented in paper format; the written responses will be given in Spanish, also in paper format.

Students administered the Spanish NAEP will need to have a command of English in order to demonstrate their achievement in Spanish on the test. Standard NAEP accommodations will be made for students with disabilities and for limited English proficient students, no matter what their language background. The FL NAEP is not intended as a test of bilingualism or of Spanish as a first or native language. It is intended to enable students in an English-language school setting to demonstrate achievement in a language other than English; in the case of the Spanish NAEP, the language is Spanish.

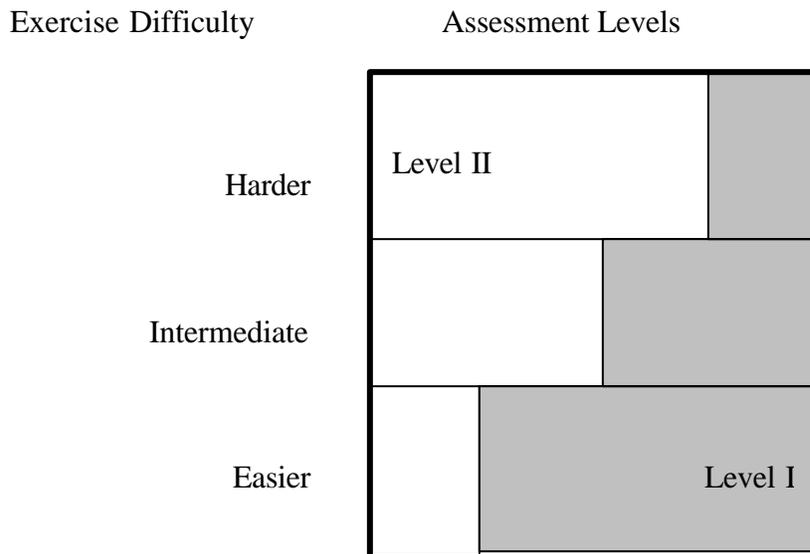
## **Distribution of Exercises Across the Assessment**

Targeted testing will be used for the FL NAEP. This means that a minimum of two levels of the assessment (i.e., two *sets* of test booklets for the purposes of matrix sampling) at a lower and higher level of difficulty will be developed to accommodate the wide range of experiences students have with foreign language study. Students will be routed into the more appropriate form through multiple sources of information—self reporting of language proficiency, self reporting of years of study (cross-validated by checking of school records), report of foreign language experiences, teacher or counselor recommendation, and a brief questionnaire on Spanish vocabulary knowledge, discussed in Chapter 9. We anticipate that students who have taken fewer years of academic study or who have had some limited exposure to Spanish learning outside of school will be given easier test booklets. Students who have taken more years of study, have engaged in foreign study or travel, or have been educated in Spanish abroad will be given more difficult test booklets.

If only two levels are administered, Level I test booklets will contain mostly easier items, whereas Level II test booklets will contain mostly more difficult ones. Exercises will be designed to differentiate between students across a wide range of achievement. At the low end, it must be possible to measure differences among students who are just beginning to study Spanish (1 year), those who are currently in their second year of study, and those who completed 1 or 2 years of study in the past; i.e., non-current language students. At the high end, the exercises should provide tasks of sufficient richness and depth to allow high achieving students and those who have pursued in-depth study to demonstrate the extent of their achievement.

Figure 3 presents how exercises may be distributed across two levels of test booklets, assuming three levels of exercise difficulty. Both levels of the assessment contain exercises at each level of difficulty. However, Level I test booklets contain a higher proportion of easier exercises, while Level II test booklets contains a higher proportion of the more difficult ones.

Figure 3. Distribution of Exercises Across Two Levels of the Assessment



## Response Formats

### Interpretive Mode

The response formats used for the exercises in the interpretive mode include multiple-choice and short written constructed response. Multiple-choice exercises will be of the conventional single correct option format with four options and will ask students to select the response that best answers the question. Constructed response exercises will be used to provide insights into students' understanding of Spanish. These exercises will require students to express their understanding and ideas in English. The short written constructed-response exercises will require students to respond in a few words or several sentences. The consensus building committees recommend that, for both listening- and reading-based tasks for the lower level of the assessment (Level I), 60% of the items are multiple choice and 40% are short answer. These percentages are reversed for upper level of the assessment (Level II). The proportion of response formats is thus 50% multiple choice and 50% short answer in each of the total item pools (listening and reading) in the interpretive mode.

### Presentational Mode

The response formats used for the exercises in the presentational mode include written constructed response, both short answer and extended response. Constructed response exercises will be used to assess student ability to make a written presentation in Spanish based on a stimulus presented in English. The written constructed-response exercises will require students to respond in words, phrases, or sentences to extended responses of a paragraph or more. Extended-response exercises in the presentational mode will ask students to write paragraph-length or longer responses that demonstrate their ability to communicate in Spanish. Students will be told

what will be scored (i.e., what will be expected) through directions that will help them think, plan and write for each task. These may be in the form of questions that help students focus on the task.

### **Interpersonal Mode**

For the conversation-based exercises in the interpersonal mode, the response format is a conversational interaction; i.e., an oral performance. Each exercise requires students to participate in multiple task-based conversations with a trained administrator using words, phrases, sentences, or paragraph-length discourse. Both the test administrator and the student will ask and answer questions as part of the conversations.

### **Evaluation Procedures**

Performances on assessment tasks will be evaluated on the demonstration of how well the student understands (comprehension) and can be understood (comprehensibility). As discussed in Chapter 4, in addition to language knowledge, this criterion includes considerations of the use of communication strategies and the application of cultural knowledge, to varying degrees and in different ways depending on the communicative mode and specific assessment task.

### **Scoring of Open-Ended Exercises**

Scoring student responses to open-ended questions will be consistent with previous practices in NAEP. Scoring guides (rubrics) will be used for scoring the constructed-response exercises (short and extended response) and for the conversation exercises.

Some short constructed-response exercises that appear on the assessment for the interpretive and presentational mode may call for responses that are dichotomously scored right/wrong (i.e., credit/no credit scoring). Other constructed-response exercises included in these modes are designed so varying amounts of credit can be awarded depending upon the quality of the student's response (e.g., partial credit scoring using a rubric that has several score points, each defining a level or category of performance). Rubrics for short constructed-response exercises designed to allow partial credit will consist of three levels, with specific criteria provided for responses at each level. Extended constructed-response exercises will be scored using four or five points in order to obtain more in-depth information from these longer, more complex student responses.

The conversation exercises will be scored on the multiple criteria defined in the framework. A scoring guide will be developed for *each task* in the interpersonal exercise using a three to five-point scale, with specific criteria provided for responses at each level, and a single score will be given for each task. The individual task scores will be aggregated to reach a single final score for the interpersonal mode exercise.

(Note: A more complete set of recommendations for the specifications of the assessment will be included in a separate report entitled *Assessment and Exercise Specifications for the Foreign Language NAEP*.)

## **CHAPTER 6: TASK ATTRIBUTES**

### **General Task Attributes**

#### **Authenticity**

Assessment tasks for the FL NAEP will be as authentic as possible. Although there are various interpretations of this term, for the Spanish NAEP authenticity means that the Spanish language used will be the language used by real people in Spanish-speaking communities and cultures, and not language that is tailored for teaching non-native speakers. For example, reading-based tasks assessing the interpretive mode will include texts written for real-world communicative purposes, such as newspapers and books. Such texts may be modified only to the extent required by their being taken out of their original context. Visuals that accompany original documents must be maintained. The communicative purposes of the assessment tasks will also represent those of real-world language use to the greatest degree possible.

#### **Engagement**

The assessment tasks on the FL NAEP will contain content and topics appropriate to the interests and experiences of 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Each assessment task will also have a communicative purpose that will engage the students to ensure that they are motivated to complete the task. The presentation of each task (for example, the use of visuals to accompany directions) will also serve to motivate and engage students.

#### **Language Variety of Assessment Stimuli**

Although there are many different varieties and distinct local dialects of Spanish, the Spanish used for the Spanish NAEP tasks will be the language most widely understood in the Spanish-speaking world. Language that is limited in usage to a certain local area or region will be avoided.

### **ASSESSMENT TASKS IN THE INTERPRETIVE MODE**

The *interpretive* mode refers to the understanding of spoken or written language, such as listening to a broadcast or film, or reading a magazine or short story. It involves understanding, in a culturally appropriate way, the meaning of oral or written messages presented via print, audio, and visual materials (such as video). In this mode, the originator of the message is not present. There is no “give and take” between participants, and misunderstandings cannot be clarified directly. Necessary for successful communication in this mode are the receptive language abilities of listening and reading.

For the purposes of the Spanish NAEP assessment, communicative ability in the interpretive mode will be assessed through two broad types of tasks: reading-based tasks and listening-based tasks.

## **The Interpretive Mode: Reading-Based Tasks**

### **Purpose**

In the NAEP Reading Framework, there are three purposes for reading. These include reading for literary experience, reading to perform a task, and reading for information (NAEP Reading Consensus Project, n.d.). For the Spanish NAEP, the main purpose for reading is to acquire information for understanding and application. This purpose views reading as a process by which the reader must understand the meaning of texts written in the Spanish language in a way that is appropriate to the culture in which the text was produced. This view of reading moves beyond simple literal comprehension of foreign language writing to the ability to interpret the text. An additional element in the Foreign Language NAEP Reading framework requires consideration of the ability to understand and apply cultural contexts and references from the text.

### **Context for Reading**

On the Spanish NAEP, all reading assessment tasks will be placed within one of three contexts: daily living, school, and work. Assessment tasks will provide students with contextual information about the purpose(s) for reading, for example, how the information gained from the text will be used. Assessment tasks will indicate the context in which the written text is found, such as an excerpt from a magazine article or a sign in a store.

### **Topics**

All content must be appropriate to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Topics relate to daily living, school, and work. Examples of daily living topics include leisure activities, routines, friendship, homes, community, and significant occasions. Examples of academic topics include geography, history, health, music, art, and the environment. Topics related to work include getting jobs, understanding work guidelines, and comparing work practices in other cultures. Note that topics concerning the test-taker's personal or family life (including home and living arrangements) are considered sensitive and will not be included.

### **Text Characteristics**

Appropriate written/visual texts will be typified by the following characteristics. They will:

- contain some cognates (i.e., words in English and Spanish that look similar and have the same meaning, for example the English word *science* and the Spanish word *ciencia*), redundancies, and high frequency idiomatic expressions;
- contain familiar vocabulary related to daily life, school, and work;
- be non-technical in nature;
- show simple, sentence-level and/or connected discourse;
- be in a familiar script if other than typed;
- display a high level of cohesion;
- in longer texts, be organized as description, narration, or expository text;

- display a functional use of language to express or exchange information about ideas, knowledge or feelings (such as descriptions and explanations) or to influence or affect the world (such as requests, commands, greetings, compliments);
- contain Spanish from Spain and Latin America as used in printed media, but avoid slang and language that is limited to a certain local area or region;
- contain register (i.e., the style of language appropriate to the specific social setting) that is formal or informal as related to the school, work or daily life situation;
- contain language that is natural;
- have imbedded cultural information about perspectives, practices, and products at times that lend themselves to student interpretation; and
- contain judicious use of figurative language, if at all.

Sources of appropriate texts include advertisements, surveys, newspapers and magazines geared toward teenagers (such as *Hola* and *Tiempo* [magazines from Spain], *El Nuevo Herald* [from Miami], and *Cambio 16*, *El Tribuno*, *El Pais*, and *ABC*), textbooks, brochures, travel books, Internet home pages and Web sites, film reviews, TV guides, biographies, and *People* magazine in Spanish.

### **Performance Dimensions**

Multiple choice and short constructed response items in English will allow students to meet the evaluative criterion of demonstrating comprehension of Spanish texts in this mode. Items that allow students to demonstrate comprehension include those that ask students to do the following:

- provide an initial impression or global understanding of the text;
- extend initial impressions to develop more complete understanding;
- link information across parts of a text as well as focus on specific information;
- use critical evaluation strategies to compare/contrast and understand the impact of cultural features (products, practices and perspectives) contained in the text.

Items that allow students to demonstrate the use of communication strategies include those that ask students to do the following:

- infer meaning of unfamiliar words and structures using multiple clues (i.e., contextual, linguistic, formatting, visuals);
- use graphics, titles, and visuals to assist with meaning.

Items that allow students to demonstrate application of cultural knowledge include those that ask students to do the following:

- use knowledge of their own culture and the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries and communities to interpret texts;
- identify relationships among perspectives, practices, and products of the cultures of the Hispanic world.

Differences between lower level and upper level tasks will be based on several dimensions. Lower level tasks will tend to have texts that are shorter in length. Lower level texts will not contain a high degree of abstraction (e.g., symbolic language and metaphors). In lower level

texts, structures alone will not convey the meaning. Finally, the nature of the task itself may determine whether it is suitable for the upper level or lower level form. In other words, at times the same text may be used for generating upper level and lower level tasks.

### **Integration with the Four Goal Areas**

Tasks integrated with the *cultures* goal are based on texts containing information related to practices, products, and/or perspectives of cultures of the Hispanic world such as traditions, holidays, school life, family life, housing, and sports. Content in such texts is culturally authentic; that is, it contains real language used by real Spanish-speaking people, not texts written for teaching non-native Spanish speakers.

Tasks integrated with the *connections* goal are based on texts related to academic topics such as health, geography, history, everyday science, environment, music, art and provide opportunities to learn new information through Spanish.

Tasks integrated with the *comparisons* goal are based on texts that present features of the language and/or cultures of Spanish-speaking countries and communities and ask students to reflect on how they compare to their own. Such texts should allow students to see similarities and differences between their own language and culture and those of Spanish speakers.

Tasks integrated with the *communities* goal are ones in which the students read a text that allows them to see the use of language outside the classroom (e.g., texts about community-based projects and exchange programs, or cultural events in the Hispanic community) or for which the purpose for reading the text exists outside the classroom, such as for personal enrichment or enjoyment.

### **The Interpretive Mode: Listening-Based Tasks**

#### **Purpose**

There are many purposes for listening. Although there is no framework for a NAEP in listening, at least three purposes for listening can be identified, parallel to those in the NAEP reading framework: listening for literary experience, listening to perform a task, and listening for information. For the Spanish NAEP assessment, the main purpose is listening for information, both to understand it and to know how to use it. This purpose views listening as a communicative interaction in which the listener must understand the meaning of the message within its cultural context. This view of listening moves beyond literal translation of foreign language speech.

#### **Context for Listening**

All listening assessment tasks will be placed within one of three contexts: daily living, school, and work. Assessment tasks will indicate the situational context for the audio/visual passage; for example, an excerpt from a television broadcast or a message on an answering machine. Tasks will inform students about the purpose(s) for listening, for example, how the information to be gained from the text will be used. In order to focus on the purpose of listening, students should see the exercise questions or tasks before the listening passage begins. How often the prompt is heard should be determined by the nature of the authentic listening task. For example, in real life

a message left on voice mail can be replayed, so voice mail messages on the NAEP, for example, should be heard at least two times. For weather reports, stories, television dramas, and interviews, the voices are not heard a second time; however, redundancy is a natural component of such situations. For passages of this type and for conversations, the listening passage should be heard only once, but paraphrasing and re-statement should be integrated into the passage. Note taking, as done in real life (for example, for phone messages) should be allowed for listening passages and tasks to which it is appropriate in real life.

## **Topics**

All content must be appropriate for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Topics relate to daily living, school, and work. Examples of daily living for the listening tasks include family, leisure activities such as hobbies and entertainment, home and community, weather, rituals such as meals and birthdays, and holiday celebrations. Examples of school topics include school life and activities, and academic themes such as geography, history, health, music, art, science, and language study. Examples of work include situations that 12<sup>th</sup> graders would encounter in the work place (office/clerical, service/repair, and ads/interviews).

## **Passage Characteristics**

Appropriate audio/visual passages will:

- be of a length that will not overtax memory (passages may be shorter for lower level forms and somewhat longer for upper level forms);
- be recorded at moderate conversational speed by native speakers whose speech is clearly articulated;
- consist of a series of short to medium-length sentences;
- contain minimal use of regional accents and vocabulary;
- be based on authentic language materials from Spanish-speaking cultures;
- be appropriate to the societal and cultural norms of Spanish-speaking countries/communities;
- express or exchange information about ideas, knowledge or feelings, such as descriptions, explanations, requests, commands, greetings, and compliments;
- contain formal and informal styles of language that are appropriate to the specific social setting of the passage;
- contain authentic cultural references; and
- use everyday language.

Sources of appropriate passages need to be authentic or based on an authentic purpose. From television, sources include documentaries, talk shows, news programs, and ads. From radio, sources include news, weather reports, and talk shows or interviews. Conversational passages for use as listening texts should be generated by giving a topic and situation to two or more native speakers and asking them to have a conversation on that topic. The speakers then create the listening passage using their natural conversation techniques, rather than reading from a script.

It is suggested that 50% of the Spanish stimuli passages be presented through audio and 50% be provided through video. These passages may best be presented through a computer-based format. In lower-level forms, audio may be used for announcements, phone conversations or messages, or radio weather reports. Video might be used for telling a story or other passages where visual

support would help set the context without giving away direct comprehension answers. At the higher level, audio might be used for radio clips, native speakers' conversations, and phone conversations. Video can be relied on for material that is more authentic, intended for native speakers, but still accessible to higher ability foreign language students.

### **Performance Dimensions**

Students will demonstrate listening comprehension through multiple choice and short constructed response items in English. Items assessing comprehension ask students to do the following:

- identify main ideas;
- identify specific information;
- understand basic idiomatic expressions and vocabulary used in daily life;
- draw appropriate inferences (at advanced levels).

Items that allow students to demonstrate use of communication strategies to aid comprehension ask students to do the following:

- use cognates (i.e., related words in English and Spanish that sound similar and have the same meaning, such as English word *science* and the Spanish word *ciencia*);
- use context clues (and rely on visuals to set the overarching context at the basic level);
- use basic structures within familiar contexts;
- use tone, pitch and emotion.

Items that allow students to demonstrate application of cultural knowledge ask students to do the following:

- use knowledge of their own culture and of those of Spanish-speaking countries and communities to interpret passages;
- identify relationships among perspectives, practices and products of cultures of Spanish-speaking countries and communities;
- demonstrate understanding of both formal and informal language usage;
- demonstrate understanding of use of emotion and tone in speech patterns.

### **Integration with the Four Goal Areas**

Tasks integrated with the *cultures* goal are based on passages containing information related to cultural practices, products, and/or perspectives whose content is authentic (i.e., real language used by native speakers, not contrived for pedagogical purposes of non-native speakers). Authentic passages may show use of both formal and informal language in appropriate contexts.

Tasks integrated with the *connections* goal are based on passages related to academic topics such as health, geography, environment, music, art, and provide opportunities to learn new information in Spanish.

Tasks integrated with the *comparisons* goal are based on passages that present features of the Spanish language and/or the culture of Spanish-speaking countries and communities and ask students to reflect on how they compare to their own. Such passages should allow students to see similarities and differences between their own language and culture and those of Spanish-

speaking countries and communities. Such passages may demonstrate cultural uses of both formal and informal language.

Tasks integrated with the *communities* goal are ones in which the students listen to a passage that allows them to see the language used outside the classroom (e.g., passages about community-based projects and exchange programs) or for which the purpose for listening to the passage exists outside the classroom, such as listening for personal enrichment or enjoyment. The setting for such a task may be from a Spanish-speaking community within the United States.

## **ASSESSMENT TASKS IN THE PRESENTATIONAL MODE**

The *presentational* mode involves spoken or written communication, such as giving a speech or writing a story. It involves producing spoken or written messages for an audience with whom there is no immediate personal contact. In this mode, there is no possibility to clarify one's intended meaning if the audience does not understand it. Such messages need to reflect awareness of cultural differences and an attempt to bridge those differences in order to enable appropriate interpretation by persons with a cultural background from a Spanish-speaking country or community. Necessary to achieving successful communication in this mode are the productive language abilities of speaking and writing and the ability to use visual images to add in making oneself understood.

For the purposes of the Spanish NAEP assessment, communicative ability in the presentational mode will be assessed through tasks that require the student to communicate in writing.

### **The Presentational Mode: Writing-Based Tasks**

#### **Purpose**

In the NAEP Writing Framework, there are three purposes for writing. These purposes are narrative writing (producing stories or personal essays), persuasive writing (writing to influence others to take some action or bring about change), and informative writing (writing to inform). For the Spanish NAEP assessment, the main purpose for writing is to provide a reader with information by sharing knowledge, descriptions, instructions, and ideas. For the Spanish NAEP, such communication will be based on content that is appropriate for 12<sup>th</sup> graders and familiar to a broad range of students from varied backgrounds. Nevertheless, writing in another language to persons from a different cultural background requires the author to be sensitive to that cultural background so that his or her writing may be properly understood.

#### **Context for Writing**

On the Spanish NAEP, all writing assessment tasks will be placed within one of three contexts: daily living, school, and work. Assessment tasks will inform students about the purpose(s) for writing the message, for example, why the information to be communicated is necessary. Assessment tasks will also provide the situational context in which the message is to be written, including a description of the audience that will be receiving the message.

## Topics

Content for task completion will be appropriate for 12<sup>th</sup> graders and familiar to a broad range of students from varied backgrounds. Topics relate to daily living, school, and work. Examples of personal themes include description of friends, important people, physical characteristics (city, countryside, school), free-time activities and interests, weather, foods, daily routine. Examples of cultural themes include holidays, celebrations, foods, traditions, daily schedules, shopping, and customs, including writing conventions. Examples of academic themes include course-taking patterns in high school/junior high, school schedules and subjects, extracurricular activities, relationships to teachers, and favorite subjects. Note that topics concerning the test-taker's personal or family life (including home and living arrangements) are considered sensitive and will not be used.

## Performance Dimensions

Presentational writing tasks range from preparing lists to one-sentence instructional messages to paragraphs reporting on experiences or providing descriptions. Messages will be written by the student to native Spanish-speakers from or in a country other than the United States. There will be a maximum of 25 minutes to complete all writing tasks.

Expectations for student performance shall be made clear to the students. As in the English writing NAEP, directions will be given to students to help them with planning and pre-writing activities. Such directions may include a checklist of questions to help them focus their response to the writing task.

To demonstrate comprehensibility, written messages will be evaluated on language usage, such as appropriateness of the language to the task, organization, use of detail, length and/or complexity of sentences, vocabulary (appropriate and varied), and use of connecting words. The use of communication strategies may be demonstrated by the use of cognates (i.e., words in English and Spanish that look and sound similar and have the same meaning, such as the English word *science* and the Spanish word *ciencia*), paraphrasing and self-correction. Application of cultural knowledge may be demonstrated through the use of appropriate register (i.e., the style of language appropriate to the specific social setting) and evidence of understanding differences between American culture and the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries and communities.

## Integration with the Four Goal Areas

Tasks integrated with the *cultures* goal provide opportunities for students to explicitly discuss cultural similarities/differences.

Tasks integrated with the *connections* goal relate to impersonal or academic topics such as the food pyramid, health, education, geography, habitat, weather, and distances.

Tasks integrated with the *comparisons* goal allow students to compare and contrast, for example, school, climate, daily schedule, and holiday customs with those in Spanish-speaking countries.

Tasks integrated with the *communities* goal allow students to use writing outside of the school setting and as part of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

## **ASSESSMENT TASKS IN THE INTERPERSONAL MODE**

The *interpersonal* mode involves two-way, interactive communication, such as conversing face-to-face or exchanging e-mail messages. It is characterized by direct communication between individuals who are in personal contact, thus allowing the participants to clarify meanings when misunderstandings occur. Participants in a communicative interaction can use both linguistic and non-linguistic feedback to ascertain the extent to which their message is being successfully communicated, and can make adjustments and clarifications accordingly. Successful communication in the interpersonal mode includes the productive language abilities of speaking and writing; the receptive abilities of listening and reading; and in face-to-face interactions, the ability to use and interpret body language.

For the purposes of the Spanish NAEP assessment, the interpersonal mode will be assessed through the administration of five conversation-based tasks to each student. Three tasks will be administered in the first phase of this part of the assessment and two in the second phase.

### **The Interpersonal Mode: Conversation-Based Tasks**

#### **Purpose**

There are many purposes for participating in conversations, such as exchanging information, establishing and maintaining social relationships, and accomplishing social transactions. In the Spanish NAEP assessment, examinees will participate in a conversation for two purposes: to establish rapport with an interviewer and to exchange information with the interviewer to accomplish tasks. One participant will be the student, the other a fluent speaker of Spanish, trained to conduct oral interviews in Spanish. The conversation will consist of two phases. In the first, the social conversation phase, a relationship between the participants will be established through a conversation on familiar topics. This phase of the assessment will consist of three tasks. In the second phase, the student and the interviewer will work together to accomplish two role-play tasks. The content for this communication must be appropriate for 12<sup>th</sup> graders and familiar to a broad range of students from varied backgrounds.

#### **Contexts for the Social Conversation and Role-Play Tasks**

On the Spanish NAEP, daily living, school, and work will provide the context for three social conversation tasks and for two role-play tasks. In the social conversation phase, instructions will indicate how the interviewer and the student are to establish rapport. For the role-play tasks, the instructions will provide all necessary details for the situational context in which the conversation takes place. In phase 1, the student and interviewer are themselves, as in this phase they establish rapport. In phase 2, the student and interviewer assume roles to carry out the role-play tasks.

## **Topics**

Content for task completion will be appropriate for 12<sup>th</sup> graders and familiar to a broad range of students from varied backgrounds. Topics should be related to daily living, school, and work, and be of a personal, cultural or academic nature. Technical topics should be avoided. Themes related to personal topics include daily activities/routines, leisure activities, interests and hobbies, community/town description, school as a social environment, shopping, friends, and work /jobs. Topics to be avoided are home environment, family, and dating. Themes related to cultural topics include celebrations, holidays, music and the arts in general, community and social activities, and family issues (e.g., roles and typical adolescent behavior). Themes related to academic topics include school subjects, career plans, academic interests, school projects/activities, description of school building, and the education system/structure. Note that topics concerning the test-taker's personal or family life (including home and living arrangements) are considered sensitive and will not be used.

## **Performance Dimensions**

For phase 1 tasks (social conversation tasks), the interviewer will draw from an established inventory of questions or prompts and encourage the student to talk about daily activities, school, and work to the best of the student's ability. In the phase 2 tasks (role-play tasks), the interviewer and the student will assume roles and will exchange information to produce a set of suggestions, arrive at a plan of action, make a decision, and so on. Although the task instructions may imply that the student and the interviewer are to participate equally in the interaction; however, the interviewer will encourage the student to do most of the talking.

In the both social conversation and role-play tasks, the interviewer will do the following:

- speak in Spanish only;
- participate in the interaction to elicit maximum student speech and when possible place the burden of maintaining the interaction on the student;
- promote interaction and negotiation between the interviewer and the student;
- make gestures when appropriate to the interaction;
- use vocabulary that is high-frequency and appropriate to the task;
- use vocabulary and pronunciation that would be universally understood by Spanish speakers and not specific to any particular region;
- adapt complexity of discourse within the task to the performance level of the student (i.e. tense, syntax, vocabulary);
- use formal or informal speech as appropriate to the conversation-based task; and
- use non-verbal behavior that is non-threatening and shows interest in what the student is saying.

Tasks should allow students to produce speech that is characterized by the following.

## ***Comprehension***

- Participation in the conversation in a way that indicates that the student understands the interviewer's utterances, and is able to request repetition or clarification when the interviewer's meaning is not fully understood.

- Appropriate response to requests for clarification and expansion by the interviewer; that is, response to these requests that indicates that the requests have been understood.
- Demonstration of appropriate turn-taking behavior (i.e., knowing when the interviewer has finished his or her turn).

### ***Comprehensibility***

- Use of Spanish language only; or effort expended in trying to maintain discourse in Spanish.
- Production of utterances that are of appropriate length in the context of the interaction.
- Control of high-frequency vocabulary.
- Ability to use vocabulary that is appropriate to the task.
- Control of the syntactic structures needed for face-to-face conversation on familiar topics (e.g., present tense, question formation, noun-adjective agreement); some use of more advanced structures.
- Use of Spanish sound system in a way that a native Spanish-speaking interviewer who has had prior contact with learners of Spanish can understand easily.
- Moderate control of functional language (i.e., speech acts) [see also Cultural Knowledge section below].
- Demonstration of knowing of when to speak and when to remain silent, when to pause and how to pause.

### ***Communication Strategies***

- Appropriate use of connectors and other function words that link utterances cohesively.
- Appropriate conversational turn-taking behavior.
- Ability to deal effectively with breakdowns in communication.
- Ability to paraphrase when specific words or vocabulary are lacking.
- Use clarification and verification to check appropriateness or comprehensibility of utterances.

### ***Cultural Knowledge***

- Selection of speech acts that are appropriate to the context (i.e., knowing when to make a request, offer an apology, make a compliment, open and close an interaction).
- Demonstration of ability to adjust the level of formality that is appropriate to the task (e.g., appropriate use of *tú* and *usted*).
- Demonstration of cultural knowledge by making explicit cultural references according to the task (e.g., asking about appropriate clothing for a trip to the capital city Caracas, Venezuela).
- Ability to ask appropriate questions to get cultural information.

### **Integration with the Four Goal Areas**

Tasks integrated with the *cultures* goal could include a role-play that involves doing a joint project on a cultural topic (e.g., Hispanic cultural practice, country, or person). Tasks integrated with the cultures goal provide opportunities for students to explicitly discuss cultural similarities and differences with the native Spanish speaker.

Tasks integrated with the *connections* goal can focus on a country or topics such as science, arts, or a famous person.

Tasks integrated with the *comparisons* goal involve those in which participants talk about their own culture versus that of others.

Tasks integrated with the *communities* goal allow students to participate in conversations outside of the school setting and, as part of becoming life-long learners, use the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

For illustrative purposes, Appendix C contains sample tasks for each of the four assessment areas. A more complete set of recommendations for the specifications of the FL NAEP exercises is included in a separate report entitled *Assessment and Exercise Specifications for the Foreign Language NAEP*.

## CHAPTER 7: PRELIMINARY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

### Issues

#### Relationship to Existing Performance Standards

NAEP has been reporting results based on performance standards since 1990. The NAEP performance levels are "Basic," "Proficient," and "Advanced." NAGB defines these levels as follows.

**BASIC:** Basic performance demonstrates partial mastery of the prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade

**PROFICIENT:** Proficient performance characterizes solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.

**ADVANCED:** This achievement level represents superior performance.

Performance that fails to reach the "Basic" level is categorized as "Below Basic."

As mentioned in Chapter 2, performance standards as defined by the ACTFL *Proficiency Guidelines* for foreign language skills are already widely disseminated and used as a standard in foreign language education in the United States. Describing general proficiency in each of the four skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), the ACTFL *Proficiency Guidelines* identify four main performance levels: "Novice," "Intermediate," "Advanced," and "Superior." Each of the three lower levels is divided into three sub-levels, designated "low," "mid," and "high." Each sublevel is accompanied by a description of the performance represented by the level.

Since their initial appearance in 1982, the ACTFL *Guidelines* have become widely used in schools, colleges, teacher training institutions, and the private sector, particularly in the post-secondary arena. In 1995, ACTFL initiated work on a project to refine the existing *Proficiency Guidelines* for speaking and to revise the listening, reading, and writing guidelines. The *Speaking Guidelines—Revised* were published in 1999, and the final versions for the other skills are expected in 2000.

More important to the FL NAEP, however, are the ACTFL *Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners*, which appeared in 1998 and are aligned with the national *Standards*. The ACTFL *Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners* focus on second language use by students in elementary, middle and high school foreign language programs. Organized by communicative mode (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) rather than language skill, the descriptors

are organized into six domains: comprehensibility, comprehension, language control, vocabulary, cultural awareness, and communication strategies. Unlike the *Proficiency Guidelines*, the *Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners* are only divided into three main levels (novice, intermediate, and pre-advanced), without further subdivisions.

Although the NAEP performance levels are specific to the tasks presented on the assessment (as opposed to the more generic descriptors of the ACTFL *Guidelines*), the preliminary recommendations for achievement level descriptions have been informed by the *Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners* in particular. More specifically, the descriptors for the intermediate learner have influenced those for the NAEP “proficient” level. It must be kept in mind that the intermediate learner descriptors are assumed to describe the performance of students completing either a 9-year articulated program in grades K-8, or a 6-year articulated program in grades 7-12. Although the number of students in such language programs remains small, only such students have had the opportunity to gain competency over challenging foreign language subject matter and to develop independent communicative skills in the foreign language. Students completing the most common 2-year sequence of study are assumed most likely to end up in the “novice learner range,” as described by the *Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners*. This range has informed the preliminary recommendations for the NAEP “basic” achievement level, whereas the descriptions for the “pre-advanced learner” have informed the preliminary recommendations for the “advanced” NAEP level. In this way, the ACTFL *Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners* have been related to the NAEP performance levels.

### **Separability Between Communicative Modes**

Although the assessment of how well students can communicate in a foreign language is the primary goal of the FL NAEP, it is recognized in practice that communication is a complex activity and that skills can develop disparately in the different modes. For example, pre-literate individuals may be able to participate in interpersonal conversations but may be unable to create or interpret written messages. In academic programs, development of communicative competencies may be a function of the varying emphases of different programs. For example, traditional language instruction has emphasized reading skills, whereas today many programs emphasize speaking. For some students, skills across the communicative modes may be highly correlated; for others, the relationships may be weaker.

Because of this differentiation, the preliminary recommendations for the Spanish NAEP achievement levels are separated by the three communicative modes, with the interpretive mode being further separated for reading-based tasks and listening-based tasks. Nevertheless, although results on the Spanish NAEP will be reported in terms of NAEP achievement levels for the four assessment areas separately, this does not preclude their being combined to provide a single composite communication score and the development of a set of more global descriptions for “Basic,” “Proficient,” and “Advanced.”

## Preliminary Recommendations for Achievement Levels

### Interpretive Mode: Reading-Based Tasks

Achievement Levels		
BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
<i>Students at this level demonstrate partial mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to comprehend ideas in written foreign language texts.</i>	<i>Students at this level demonstrate a solid mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to comprehend ideas in written foreign language texts.</i>	<i>Students at this level demonstrate superior performance in interpreting the ideas in written foreign language texts.</i>
Students functioning at the <i>basic</i> level should be able to:	Students functioning at the <i>proficient</i> level should be able to:	Students functioning at the <i>advanced</i> level should be able to:
Identify basic topic of the text	Identify main ideas and some specific details on familiar topics	Describe the more abstract themes and ideas of the overall text
Show some evidence of making inference and predicting	Make inferences and logical predictions, as well as identify the author's purpose	Evaluate effectiveness of how the text carries out the author's purpose
Draw some conclusions and occasionally support them with information from the text	Draw conclusions and support them with information from the text	Analyze and support their analyses with examples from the text
Use own culture to comprehend the text	Use knowledge of both own culture and cultures of the Hispanic world to interpret text	Use knowledge of both own culture and cultures of the Hispanic world to develop perspectives on the text
Identify some products and practices of the cultures of the Hispanic world	Identify the interrelationships among the perspectives, practices, and products of cultures of the Hispanic world	Explain interrelationships among the perspectives, practices, and products of cultures of the Hispanic world
Recognize some differences in the products and practices of the cultures of the Hispanic world and their own	Recognize differences and similarities in the perspectives of cultures of the Hispanic world and their own	Compare and contrast differences and similarities in the perspectives of the cultures of the Hispanic world and of their own

## Interpretive Mode: Listening-Based Tasks

Achievement Levels		
BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
<i>Students at this level demonstrate partial mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to comprehend ideas in spoken foreign language passages.</i>	<i>Students at this level demonstrate a solid mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to comprehend ideas in spoken foreign language passages.</i>	<i>Students at this level demonstrate superior performance in interpreting the ideas in spoken foreign language passages.</i>
Students functioning at the <i>basic</i> level should be able to:	Students functioning at the <i>proficient</i> level should be able to:	Students functioning at the <i>advanced</i> level should be able to:
Understand short, simple conversations and narratives, as well as recorded material in familiar contexts	Understand extended conversations and narratives as well as recorded material in familiar contexts	Understand extended conversations and narratives as well as recorded material in a variety of contexts
Identify main ideas on familiar topics found in TV, radio, video, or live and computer-generated presentations	Identify main ideas and some significant details on familiar topics found in TV, radio, video, or live and computer-generated presentations	Identify main ideas and some specific information on a variety of topics found in TV, radio, video, or live and computer-generated presentations
Understand basic idiomatic expressions used in daily life	Understand high-frequency idiomatic expressions in the context of the stimulus	Understand idiomatic expressions
Recognize vocabulary related to familiar topics	Understand a variety of vocabulary and expressions related to familiar topics	Comprehend a wide variety of vocabulary and draw appropriate inferences based on interpretation of the passage
Understand a short series of simple directions	Understand a series of directions	Understand a series of detailed steps to complete a task
Recognize differences between formal and informal language	Recognize differences between formal and informal language, plus specific expressions used for certain circumstances	Demonstrate some use of cultural context to deduce meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary

## Presentational Mode: Writing-Based Tasks

Achievement Levels		
BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
<i>Students at this level demonstrate partial mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to write simple messages in a foreign language.</i>	<i>Students at this level demonstrate a solid mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to write simple messages in a foreign language.</i>	<i>Students at this level demonstrate superior performance in writing in a foreign language.</i>
Students functioning at the <i>basic</i> level should be able to:	Students functioning at the <i>proficient</i> level should be able to:	Students functioning at the <i>advanced</i> level should be able to:
Use lists of words as well as short, memorized phrases and sentences on familiar topics	Use simple sentences and strings of related sentences	Compose one or more cohesive paragraphs with topic sentences and supporting sentences, varying sentence length and sentence structure (e.g., compound/complex)
Be understood by a reader very accustomed to interacting with language learners	Write about familiar topics with sufficient accuracy so that a reader with language learning experience may understand the message	Write with a fairly high degree of facility so that a native speaker will understand.
Demonstrate ability to use capitalization and punctuation conventions, although with frequent native language interference	Use capitalization and punctuation with fairly good accuracy	Use appropriate capitalization and punctuation
Express ideas using vocabulary limited to common objects and actions (many gender errors will be evident)	Select a variety of task-appropriate vocabulary and some idiomatic expressions (although may use occasional false cognates and make occasional gender errors)	Use an extensive vocabulary including a number of correctly used idiomatic expressions
Demonstrate some limited control of verb forms	Write in the present time accurately	Manipulate verbs (tense, voice) with no pattern of errors
	Use an occasional transitional word	Use connecting/transitional words to relate sentences
	Paraphrase to avoid difficult syntactic structures or unfamiliar vocabulary	Express ideas with sufficient clarity so that little or no paraphrasing is needed
	Use some culturally appropriate writing conventions	Demonstrate control of culturally authentic expression and writing conventions
	Demonstrate some awareness of target audience perspectives/practices	Demonstrate awareness of target audience perspectives/practices

## Interpersonal Mode: Conversation-Based Tasks

Achievement Levels		
BASIC	PROFICIENT	ADVANCED
<i>Students at this level demonstrate partial mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to participate in simple conversations in a foreign language.</i>	<i>Students at this level demonstrate a solid mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to participate in simple conversations in a foreign language.</i>	<i>Students at this level demonstrate superior performance in participating in many kinds of conversations in a foreign language.</i>
Students functioning at the <i>basic</i> level should be able to:	Students functioning at the <i>proficient</i> level should be able to:	Students functioning at the <i>advanced</i> level should be able to:
Understand very simple questions and comments on familiar topics; may need restatements or gestures in order to understand a message	Understand and respond to what others say to them on familiar topics, asking for clarification when necessary	Understand and respond to what others say to them on a range of topics
Express themselves in single words, short phrases, or a simple sentence	Express themselves in several consecutive sentences	Express themselves amply and comfortably, with elaboration as needed to make a point
Use words and phrases produced by the interviewer to express themselves	Make an effort, sometimes successful, to express something for which the needed vocabulary and/or structures are not known	Show resourcefulness to successfully express something they do not know how to say
	Use words, phrases, and structures (primarily present tense) that are appropriate to the topic and to the conversational situation	Show accuracy and fluency when narrating and describing in present time; show some accuracy in past and future times
	When asked to clarify something they have said, sometimes offer an alternative way of expressing the thought	Easily clarify and expand upon something they have said when asked to do so
	Ask questions to get information	Ask questions to get information and clarify something that has been not clearly understood

## CHAPTER 8: SUGGESTED SPECIAL STUDIES

As discussed in Chapter 2, foreign language education in the United States is a patchwork of different program models with various entry and exit points. For the first foreign language NAEP, the National Assessment Governing Board mandated an assessment in Spanish for secondary school learners. Recognizing the limitations of the main assessment in terms of the age of the learners and the language chosen, the Board requested the consensus building committees to propose options for a possible small-scale study. This study would gather additional data on students' foreign language achievement beyond the data collected in the main assessment. Because there are so many options for studying achievement in other languages and at other levels of study (elementary and middle school), the consensus building committees carefully weighed various alternatives. In the end, while recognizing that only one may be chosen, the FL NAEP consensus building committees identified and prioritized three important studies.

### 1. The Achievement of Early Language Learners in Japanese

NAEP has traditionally conducted benchmark testing of our nation's students at Grades 4, 8, and 12. For the foreign language assessment, the main study will be conducted only at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade level. However, more and more school systems are implementing K-12 programs and moving toward the vision of well-articulated, long sequences of language study as set forth by the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*. Thus, the decision to test at just the 12<sup>th</sup>-grade level does not reflect the reality of foreign language education in the country. By conducting a small-scale study at the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level, our nation's educational policymakers will have information on the early stages of achievement for students who begin the study of a foreign language in elementary school.

Professionals who have worked at the elementary level know that students who begin studying a foreign language in kindergarten or first grade can make enormous strides by fourth grade. Specifically, students who start early generally exhibit strong oral language skills, which are crucial in the interpersonal mode. Conversely, achievement in the interpersonal mode is often the weakest area for high school students.

A small scale study conducted at the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level would provide data for examining the specific advantages of an early start to learning a foreign language. The study could focus on the question of which program model (FLES, Partial Immersion, or Total Immersion—see Chapter 2) is most effective in developing second language proficiency. As more and more school systems begin to implement programs at the elementary level, the information gained from such a study would be valuable for providing guidance and direction for future programs.

Because the main NAEP is in Spanish, choosing a language other than Spanish for the small-scale study has certain merits. It is essential for policy makers to understand that there are tremendous benefits to be gained from the study of any foreign language. Because of the contrasts to Spanish, Japanese offers several advantages for the small scale study. Assessing

achievement in Japanese could help demonstrate what younger learners are capable of achieving in a language generally perceived as very difficult to learn. In particular, because Japanese has a different writing system, a Japanese study could shed light on the effects of early foreign language learning on the acquisition of a symbol system so different from English. In addition, Japanese culture is very different from U.S. culture. The role of culture in learning languages among young learners could also be investigated.

## **2. The Achievement of 12<sup>th</sup> Graders in Japanese**

The basic NAEP question is—what can our students do in foreign language by the time they graduate from school? A small-scale study of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students learning Japanese would strengthen the FL NAEP. Achievement in foreign language learning may vary depending on the language studied. This variation will only be evidenced if two languages are part of the FL NAEP. Assessing the achievement of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students not only gives us the outcomes of school language learning, but also provides information about the entry level of those who may continue language study at the post-secondary level.

Assessing the achievement of students who have studied Japanese would also offer insights about the level of accomplishment in a language that, unlike Spanish, has few similarities with English. Likewise, opportunities for exposure to Japanese outside of the language classroom are much more limited than for Spanish. In these respects, Japanese has more in common with other languages taught in the United States (such as Russian, Chinese, and Arabic) than does Spanish. The 12<sup>th</sup> grade Japanese assessment could be developed using the FL NAEP framework and thus be as comparable as possible to the Spanish NAEP. Further, a fair proportion of heritage speakers could be represented in the sample. Because Japanese has one of the largest enrollments of any of the less commonly taught languages, there are a reasonable number of high school programs available for testing. Finally, unless a language other than Spanish is also included in the FL NAEP, there is the possibility that the FL NAEP will have little influence in the language community at large.

## **3. The Achievement of Early Language Learners in Spanish**

A small scale study conducted at the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level in Spanish, similar to the one described in priority 1, is the third priority of the consensus building committees. While recognizing that Spanish language education does not equal foreign language education in the United States, a small scale study in Spanish has some merits. By conducting such a study in Spanish, it may be possible to compare, to some degree, the results of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students with those of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. In addition, the majority of immersion programs in this country are in Spanish, so sampling students would not be a problem. The information gained from the small-scale study for people involved in these programs would be valuable as they continue to refine and articulate the curricula of these programs.

## **CHAPTER 9: LANGUAGE SURVEY/BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Background to the LS/BQ**

Background questionnaires are a key part of the NAEP program. Generally NAEP has included three questionnaires: the student questionnaire, the teacher questionnaire, and the school questionnaire. Using the background questionnaires, NAEP has gathered information on instructional practices and school and classroom policies. This information has provided an important context for the reporting of achievement results. It also provides a description of school and teacher characteristics known to be associated with achievement, so the results may influence American education.

For the foreign language NAEP, useful information about American education could be gleaned from a few well-chosen, well-measured sets of variables related to important policy issues surrounding the teaching of foreign languages. To determine which sets of variables would be included, a subcommittee of the Planning Committee reviewed an issues paper developed initially for this project, a synthesis of information from the literature, and a conceptual framework developed for other NAEP questionnaires. The subcommittee used the conceptual framework to identify key issues of interest to include on the three background questionnaires (students, teacher, and school). In addition, information from the national review of the FL NAEP framework that related to background variables was used to revise the initial set of recommendations.

For this inaugural NAEP assessment of foreign language, it was important to clarify issues associated with foreign language teaching as well as variables associated with foreign language learning and achievement. In the initial discussions of the FL NAEP, the Steering and Planning Committees considered the development of a survey that would be administered to a larger sample of students than those who would participate in the assessment. This sample was to include heritage language speakers of Spanish and other languages. The purpose was to gather information about students' background experience with languages other than their primary language, including the role that Spanish or other heritage languages play in the home environment, travel outside the country, in other cultures, and so on. For this reason, the very first guideline the Steering Committee presented to the Planning Committee was that there be a general sample of 12<sup>th</sup> graders who would be asked background questions about their experiences, attitudes, and knowledge of language and culture (see Appendix B: Steering Committee Guidelines). This came to be known as the Language Survey/Background Questionnaire (LS/BQ). Reasons for developing the LS/BQ included the following:

- To optimize the opportunity to obtain data on a national level about a variety of factors that would contribute to a national description of second language acquisition;
- To gain information about instructional experiences with second languages other than Spanish;
- To assess student attitudes about foreign language instruction and experiences with second language acquisition;
- To collect information about use of technology in second language instruction;

- To determine perceptions of requirements for foreign language study; and
- To assess students' future plans for learning second language(s).

## **Administration of the LS/BQ**

To accomplish a two-stage sampling process, the LS/BQ is to be administered to a random sample of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in each of the NAEP-sampled schools. (Schools will be sampled such that a representative sample of students in each reporting group discussed in Chapter 3 will be included in the Spanish NAEP.) Each student will take the LS/BQ at a computer (either on-line or with a disk) sufficiently ahead of the actual administration of the Spanish NAEP to ensure that the data collected can be used to identify those students who will go on to take the Spanish assessment. Measures will be taken to ensure student and school anonymity in collecting these data on-line.

The data collected through the LS/BQ will also include sources of information to provide accurate placement of students into one of the two or more difficulty levels of the main NAEP assessment. Sources of information may include, for example, one or more of the following: a short questionnaire on Spanish vocabulary knowledge, self reporting results on items in which students indicate what they “can do” in Spanish, background questions (e.g., number of years of study, courses taken), school transcript information, and teacher ratings of proficiency. Questionnaires on vocabulary knowledge have been identified in the research as effective proxies for estimating a general level of proficiency in a foreign language.

## **Student Variables**

Background data that are collected on the student questionnaire of the FL NAEP include those related to the following variable topics:

- demographics;
- attitudes toward language study;
- academic study and experiences with foreign language learning; and
- beyond school experiences, including the use of a foreign language in the home.

Students who take the LS/BQ will represent a wide range of foreign language experiences. Some will have taken classes much earlier than 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Others will have had experiences with languages other than Spanish both inside and outside of school. Because of this range of experience, it is difficult to gather specific information on classroom experiences to present an accurate picture of foreign language teaching in the United States. The LS/BQ is designed carefully for analyses that will allow such a picture to emerge. In particular, it is desirable to learn how much classroom instruction is based on components of the FL NAEP framework; i.e., how instruction is distributed across the modes of the framework and in what ways all five “C’s”—communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities—are integrated in instruction. It is also of great interest to know how much emphasis is placed on the development of communicative proficiency.

An additional facet of the LS/BQ is the student self reporting of abilities in languages other than English. For Spanish students, this information may be used as part of the routing procedure. This self reporting data may be compared to actual achievement on the Spanish NAEP to make

predictions about the achievement of other students who completed the self reporting for languages other than Spanish and were not administered a FL NAEP in the foreign language they have learned.

## **Teacher and Instructional Variables**

The purpose of the teacher questionnaire for the FL NAEP is to gather data on instructional methods and other factors related to the teacher. Information on instructional methods can provide insight, for example, into the move toward communicative language teaching or the use of national or local foreign language standards to frame instruction. Other instructional practices that are of interest include the following:

- amount of instructional time focused on each of the three communicative modes in the framework;
- description of Spanish language programs designed for heritage speakers;
- teacher's classroom use of the language being taught;
- students' required use of the language being taught;
- technology, including distance learning;
- classroom assessment procedures; and
- use of curricular materials and resources.

In addition to information about teaching practices, it is recommended that the teacher questionnaires elicit information about teacher demographics (gender, race/ethnicity), preparation, (education, subject-area knowledge, language proficiency, credentials, foreign study), support for their teaching (administrative and community resources), professional development (membership in foreign language professional organizations, continuing education), and personal experience.

## **School and Community Variables**

The FL NAEP consensus building committees recommend giving this part of the background questionnaire to the foreign language department chair at each school where students participate in the FL NAEP, rather than the school principal. For the school questionnaires, school organizational variables can be explored, such as class size, availability and extent of bilingual education, whether decision-making is centralized or decentralized, and whether a district has adopted challenging content standards (despite a lack of a grammar focus) in foreign language. Current trends in foreign language teaching might lead to an inquiry of the use of block scheduling or other service delivery approaches (for example, intensive, immersion, or multilevel) in foreign language teaching.

School variables that are of particular interest for the FL NAEP include the following:

- school demographics (size, ethnic makeup, socio-economic status [SES] distribution, location);
- organization (public/private, length of school year, scheduling, average class or section size, governance);
- resources (financial, technology, personnel, facilities, social services);
- curriculum (standards, frameworks, course offerings);

- school culture (reform initiatives, leadership, accountability, professional development, teacher collaboration, parent involvement, orientation to foreign language instruction);
- school climate (mission, student mobility, attendance, community support); and
- school community factors (urbanicity/rurality, socio-economic status [SES] distribution, community resources).

(Note: A more complete set of recommendations on background variables will be included in a separate report entitled *The Foreign Language NAEP Background Variables Document*.)

## **CHAPTER 10: STRATEGIES FOR REPORTING RESULTS**

### **Emphasis**

The report on the main NAEP assessment will highlight the achievement of students exposed to various lengths of Spanish language study. The report should clearly show the connection between numbers of years of language study and language achievement. The results will be based on representative samples of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who have learned Spanish in a variety of ways and for different lengths of time. Small scale studies may report on the achievement of students in other languages.

Results on the Spanish NAEP will also be reported in terms of NAEP achievement levels for the four assessment areas separately. These may be combined to provide a single communication score.

### **Audiences**

For reporting purposes, audiences for various NAEP reports should include the American public, media, parents, educators, policy makers, and the business community. The various NAEP reports should be customized in appropriate ways for such audiences. This may include reports in Spanish and other languages. A special effort should be made to present the results in a clear and meaningful way to both the specialized media and the media in general.

Reports should take into consideration the relative lack of knowledge of the American public concerning the language learning process as well as the need for and benefits of knowing languages other than English. These topics should be highlighted in each report.

Creative, attractive, and innovative ways to report FL NAEP results should be explored, particularly for performance on the interpersonal tasks. Actual student responses on assessment tasks, including the conversation-based exercises, should be available for public disclosure, as they are for the NAEP Arts assessment. It should be clear to the public that the assessment emphasized *performance* rather than knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.

### **Dissemination**

Professional language associations, state education agencies, colleges and universities, and teacher training institutions should play an active role in disseminating results and using them in pre-service and in-service education.

(Note: A more complete set of recommendations for reporting strategies will be included in a separate report entitled *The Foreign Language NAEP Reporting Strategies Document*.)

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## **APPENDICES**

# **APPENDIX A: CONSENSUS BUILDING PROJECT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

## **The Consensus Steering Committee**

### **Government**

- Ray Clifford, Defense Language Institute, Monterey, CA
- Everette Jordan, U.S. Government Language School, Washington, DC

### **Business and Industry**

- William A. Fleig, Prentice Hall, Glenview, IL
- Armando Guzmán, Univision, Washington, DC
- Helen Hamlyn, Language Testing International, White Plains, NY
- Jeffrey Munks, Arista Knowledge Systems, Alameda, CA

### **Parents**

- Michele Anciaux, Washington State PTA, Tacoma, WA

### **Private School Representative**

- Sarah Donnelly, Association of Independent Maryland Schools (ret.), Glen Burnie, MD

### **Higher Education and Research**

- Beverly Harris-Schenz, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA (*corresponding member*)
- G. Richard Tucker, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA
- Guadalupe Valdés, Stanford University, Stanford, CA

### **Foreign Language and Policy Organizations**

- Richard Brecht, National Foreign Language Center, Washington, DC
- Hiroko Kataoka, Japan Foundation, Santa Monica, CA
- Elizabeth Welles, Modern Language Association, New York, NY

### **State and District Foreign Language Supervisors**

- Pat Barr-Harrison, Prince Georges County Public Schools, Upper Marlboro, MD
- Myriam (Mimi) Met, Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, MD
- Mario Nuñez, Florida Department of Education, Tallahassee, FL
- Pat Porter, Texas State Board for Educator Certification, Austin, TX (*corresponding member*)

### **Foreign Language Consultant**

- Protase Woodford, Educational Testing Service (ret.), Titusville, NJ

## **The Consensus Planning Committee**

### **Teachers**

- Donna Clementi, Appleton Public Schools, Appleton, WI
- Sandy Gutierrez, Fairfax County Public Schools, Falls Church, VA
- Deborah Lindsay, Greater Albany Public Schools, Albany, OR
- Maria Messina, Adrian C. Wilcox High School, Santa Clara, CA
- Jane Shuffelton, Brighton Central Schools, Rochester, NY

### **Higher Education Administration, Foreign Language Education and Research**

- Andrew Cohen, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
- Antony Kunnan, California State University, Los Angeles, CA
- Judith Liskin-Gasparro, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
- June K. Phillips, Weber State University, Ogden, UT
- Cecilia Pino, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM
- William Schafer (TAP liaison), University of Maryland, College Park, MD

### **Foreign Language Organizations and Consortia**

- Jayne Abrate, American Association of Teachers of French, Carbondale, IL
- Sylvia Jones, California Foreign Language Project, Pasadena, CA
- Lynn Sandstedt, American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, Greeley, CO
- Helene Zimmer-Loew, American Association of Teachers of German, Cherry Hill, NJ

### **State Foreign Language Supervisors**

- Elizabeth Hoffman, Nebraska Department of Education, Lincoln, NE
- Joan Patterson, Utah Department of Education, Salt Lake City, UT
- Paul Sandrock, Wisconsin Department of Education, Madison, WI

### **District Foreign Language Supervisors**

- Martha Abbott, Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, VA
- Yu-Lan Lin, Boston Public Schools, Boston, MA
- Martin Smith, Princeton Regional School District, Princeton, NJ

## **The Technical Advisory Panel**

- Frances A. Butler, University of California, Los Angeles, CA
- Dan Eignor, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ
- Kadriye Ercikan, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC
- Keiko Koda, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA
- William Schafer (Planning Committee liaison), University of Maryland, College Park, MD
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## **The Project Management Team**

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## **APPENDIX B: STEERING COMMITTEE GUIDELINES**

### **Regarding the Sample of Students to Be Assessed in the FL NAEP**

1. The entire foreign language NAEP sample should include a random sample of *all* 12<sup>th</sup> graders (whether they have studied Spanish or not) who will be asked background questions about their experiences and knowledge of language and culture. The sample will include limited English proficient students, special education students, and so on, who are included with appropriate, reasonable accommodations.
2. The main *language* assessment should include in its sample of 12<sup>th</sup> graders (1) those who are studying or have studied Spanish, and (2) those who have gained a knowledge of and/or proficiency in Spanish outside the formal academic setting.
3. Sampling for the *language* assessment should be stratified to ensure that relevant background variables for reporting results are represented in significant numbers.

### **Regarding Recommendations for Special Studies**

4. The recommended small-scale assessments should include an assessment of 12<sup>th</sup> graders who are studying a less-commonly-taught language that is culturally and linguistically distinct from Spanish and has a heritage community in the United States.
5. The recommended small-scale assessments should include an assessment of elementary school language students (including both students who have studied the language and those who have not) using the same sampling methodology as for 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **Regarding the Framework and Specifications of the Assessment Exercises**

6. The national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning (Standards)* and state standards should be used as resources for the assessment, even if current programs do not routinely or consistently attain these standards.
7. In addition to assessing communication, the main assessment should include questions that reveal all students' attainment of the goals of the national *Standards* of cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities.
8. The preliminary achievement level descriptions should be explicitly related to the national *Standards* and their performance indicators, and, to the extent possible, be made compatible with existing international language proficiency scales.
9. National trends in English reading and writing instruction and assessment should inform the development of test items.

10. The assessment should include communicative ability (using appropriate assessment techniques) in authentic situations (i.e., students performing real-world tasks). To achieve this goal, a table of specifications should be developed that includes the integrated skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing across the communication modes outlined in the *National Standards*: interpersonal, interpretative, and presentational. All three communication modes should be assessed, even if some modes present greater logistical and financial challenges than others.
11. The content of the assessment should sample language use from a wide range of formal and informal contexts.
12. Tasks for assessing receptive skills (reading and listening) should include a variety of difficulties and response modes appropriate for both second language and heritage learners.
13. The assessment should challenge both heritage learners and second language learners.
14. A wide variety of real-life stimuli should be included in the assessment of reading and listening.
15. Discrete-point testing of vocabulary and grammar should not be done. However, contextualized tasks may be included in a multiple-choice format.
16. The assessment should represent the diversity and richness of the Spanish language as used in the United States and the Spanish-speaking world. Listening stimuli should focus on commonalities across varieties of Spanish.
17. Production should also be allowed to reflect the diversity and richness of the language used in the United States and the Spanish-speaking world.

### **Regarding the Collection of Background Variables**

18. Student reporting data should include variables such as the following:
  - disaggregation of Spanish native and non-native students (see #2);
  - particular courses (Spanish for Spanish speakers, AP, IB, international studies, Spanish as a foreign language);
  - levels of Spanish (I, II, III, and so on);
  - duration and intensity of courses (how long, how much time, frequency of instruction, and so on);
  - access to technology in the foreign language classroom;
  - student self-report on proficiency;
  - heritage language experiences (such as heritage language learner not in a foreign language course, but a speaker of Spanish; heritage language learner, speaker of Spanish, in a bilingual program; or heritage language learner, speaker of language other than Spanish); and
  - foreign language experiences—formal and informal—such as courses outside school, travel, living and/or studying abroad, languages spoken at home.

19. Teacher reporting variables (in a profile of all Spanish teachers from the schools selected) should include variables such as these:

- language background—formal and informal;
- education (highest degree, certification or not/in foreign language or not);
- gender and age;
- number of years teaching;
- levels taught;
- self-assessment of foreign language proficiency;
- programmatic questions;
- awareness of foreign language standards;
- teaching to FL standards;
- technology use and proficiency.

20. School reporting variables should include the following:

- foreign language program variables (such as courses offered, courses required, percentage of students enrolled in foreign languages by grade, time blocks for each course, and duration, institutional resources, class size, and articulation among foreign language teachers for planning, scope, and sequence);
- student profiles (such as percentage on free and reduced lunch, percentage that drop out, percentage of racial, ethnic, and LEP, and number or percentage of students studying foreign languages who are in special education or gifted programs);
- community involvement and support of the foreign language program;
- community racial, ethnic makeup data;
- possibility for exposure to Spanish outside of school.

### **Regarding NAEP Reports**

21. For reporting purposes, audiences for various NAEP reports should include the following:

- the American public;
- institutions—schools, districts;
- media;
- parents;
- educators;
- policy makers; and
- the business community.

22. Reports should be customized in appropriate ways for those audiences listed in #21, including in Spanish and other languages.

23. Considering the sensitivity of public perceptions towards language issues, it should be understood that “foreign languages” refers to “languages other than English.”

24. Reports should take into consideration the American public’s relative lack of knowledge about the language learning process and the benefits of knowing a language other than English.

25. Creative, attractive, and innovative ways to report NAEP foreign language results should be explored.
26. A special effort should be made to present the results in a clear and meaningful way to both the specialized media and the media in general.
27. Professional language associations, state education agencies, and teacher training institutions should play an active role in disseminating results and using them in pre-service and in-service education.

## **APPENDIX C: SAMPLE TASKS**

Sample tasks for each assessment area are presented on the following pages. No single task can illustrate all the components of the task specifications or of the framework. These sample tasks are meant to illustrate the types of tasks that may appear on the Spanish NAEP. Although they embody specifications for the tasks, they do not, and cannot, contain all specifications for tasks in any assessment area.

## Interpretive Mode: Sample Listening-Based Task

For this assessment area, there are multiple choice and short answer tasks. Students will be asked to respond in English to demonstrate comprehension of a recorded text in Spanish. For example...

*Imagine you are visiting Miami. Your Spanish-speaking friend Marta, who lives in Miami, has left a phone message on your answering machine regarding plans for tonight. Click on the button to hear the message.*



When the button is clicked, the following message will be heard (but this text will not be seen).

*Hola. Habla Marta. Te acuerdas que esta noche vamos a ver la última película con Antonio Banderas. Empieza a las once en punto. ¿Por qué no nos encontramos a comer a las siete y media en la Carreta en la calle ocho? Llámame. Estaré en casa toda la tarde. Hasta luego.*

In order to focus their listening, students should read the questions in English prior to hearing the audio.

1. What are tonight's plans, according to Marta?

Scoring Guide:

2	Student writes that you are going to meet (or eat) at 7:30 and that you are going to the movie at 11:00.
1	Student gives one piece of information
0	None of the above information is identified.

2. What does Marta want you to do when you get this message?

Scoring Guide:

1	Call Marta.
0	Another answer or no answer

Note: The above task reflects the *communities* goal, because the setting is authentic (Miami) and reflects the use of the language outside the classroom setting.

## Interpretive Mode: Sample Reading-Based Tasks

For interpretive reading, there will also be multiple choice and short answer tasks. Students will again be asked to follow directions and/or respond in English to demonstrate comprehension of a written text in Spanish for various reading purposes. For example...

*Your friend Jorge wants to take some computer courses. He asks you to check ads and announcements on the Web for him. You see the following four ads. Which one would most interest him?*

A. *Instituto de computación: busca a instructores de las aplicaciones comerciales de más demanda. Interesados llamen al 550-8861.*

\* \* \* \* \*

B. *Ventas: computadoras: Toshiba 4000 y Compaq Desktop en excelentes condiciones. Más detalles al tel. 526-2960.*

\* \* \* \* \*

C. *Es Usted: técnico, programador, consultante, etc...Anúnciese en este periódico. Haga de sus habilidades un negocio. 988-6245.*

\* \* \* \* \*

\*D. *¡Visite nuestro centro hoy mismo! La matrícula para el verano empieza ahora. Se ofrecen seminarios en computación a todos niveles. Tel. 953-5692.*

\*indicates correct option

## Presentational Mode: Sample Writing-Based Task

For presentational writing, students will be asked to write in Spanish. Directions to the task will be given in English. For example, students may have 25 minutes to do the following...

*Your school will host an exchange student from Mexico next year. You have been assigned to write a letter of introduction so that the exchange student will be familiar with your school. You may include information on where the school is located, its size, the teachers, extracurricular activities, rules, dress, school lunch, testing and grades, annual and daily schedule, course offerings, and any other aspects you think important.*

*Be sure to write about any significant differences that the exchange student should know about.*

### Scoring Guide

<p><b>Excellent Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicates information clearly with an adequate number of well-chosen details</li><li>• Expresses ideas with appropriate word choices</li><li>• Is well organized, using transitions as appropriate</li><li>• Exhibits variety in sentence length and structure</li><li>• Contains few errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation, which do not interfere with a Spanish speaker's comprehension of the writing</li><li>• Demonstrates control of culturally authentic expressions and writing conventions in appropriate contexts</li><li>• Includes information that shows knowledge of cultural differences and similarities</li></ul>
<p><b>Sufficient Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicates information with some details</li><li>• May express ideas simplistically with some lack of variety in word choices</li><li>• Is organized with ideas that are generally related, but has few or no transitions</li><li>• Exhibits ability to write sentences, but sentence structure may be simple and unvaried</li><li>• Shows some use of culturally appropriate writing conventions</li><li>• Contains errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation such that a Spanish speaker without a knowledge of English may have some difficulty comprehending the writing</li><li>• Demonstrates some control of culturally authentic expressions and writing conventions</li><li>• Includes information that shows some awareness of cultural differences and similarities</li></ul>
<p><b>Uneven Response</b> (may be characterized by one or more of the following:)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicates some information clearly, but may be like a list, undeveloped, or repetitive OR offer no more than a well-written beginning</li><li>• Demonstrates inaccurate word choices, which interferes with expression of ideas</li><li>• Is unevenly organized OR disjointed</li><li>• Exhibits uneven ability to write sentences and little or no use of culturally appropriate writing conventions</li><li>• Contains errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation that make comprehension of the writing very difficult for any but those most used to reading such writing</li><li>• Demonstrates little control of culturally authentic expressions and writing conventions</li><li>• Includes little or no information showing awareness of cultural differences or similarities</li></ul>
<p><b>Insufficient Response</b> (may be characterized by one or more of the following:)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presents fragmented information OR may be very repetitive OR may be very undeveloped such that no communication takes place</li><li>• Demonstrates inaccurate word choice OR inability to find words to express ideas</li><li>• Lacks organization so that thoughts are tenuously connected OR the response is too brief to detect organization</li><li>• Demonstrates minimal, if any, ability to write sentences</li><li>• Contains errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage (such as missing words or incorrect word use or word order) such that much of the response is incomprehensible</li><li>• Demonstrates no control of culturally authentic expressions and writing conventions</li></ul>

## Interpersonal Mode: Sample Conversation-Based Tasks

This section of the assessment will have a total of five tasks. The first phase of the assessment—social conversation—consists of three tasks. The second phase consists of two role-play tasks. A student’s performance on each task will be evaluated using a holistic rubric and will receive a single score. The five scores will be combined to produce one final score for each student on this assessment block. The communicative performance will be recorded on videotape for later scoring by trained raters.

### Phase 1: Social conversation

The contexts for the three tasks in this phase are, respectively, daily living, school, and work. For each task, the interviewer will draw from a prepared inventory of initial and follow-up questions to conduct a brief conversation in which the student talks about himself or herself. Sample questions that could be used to initiate each task include the following:

#### Daily Living Task

- *Tell me about your daily routine during the week.*
- *What do you like to do in your free time?*

#### School Task

- *Tell me about your daily routine at school.*
- *Tell me something about your school.*
- *Tell me something about your favorite teacher.*

#### Work Task

- *Do you have a job? Tell me about it.*
- *What kinds of jobs do you and your friends have?*
- *Tell me about typical summer jobs for high school students around here.*

The development of each of the three tasks will take place through the use of follow-up questions, delivered by the interviewer as appropriate, drawn from a limited inventory of questions. These follow-up questions are intended to enable students to speak to the best of their ability. Through them, students will produce an oral performance to be videotaped for later evaluation.

The follow-up questions will serve the following purposes: simplification, expansion, elaboration, and clarification. Sample questions for each purpose follow.

#### Simplification (*ask a simpler, more directed question*)

Question 1: *Tell me about your daily routine during the week.*

Follow-up 1 to Q1: *What time do you get to school?*

Follow-up 2 to Q1: *What do you do there?*

Expansion (to elicit more detail, greater quantity, longer response)

*Tell me more.*

*Can you say more about this?*

*Can you describe . . . . . for me?*

Elaboration (to introduce a new linguistic function at a higher level, such as compare/contrast, narrate in past time)

*Tell me about a time when . . . . .*

*Has . . . . . always been that way?*

Clarification (to elicit paraphrase)

*What does . . . . . mean?*

*Can you explain . . . . . ?*

The oral performances produced by students will demonstrate their *comprehension* of the interviewer's questions and comments, the *comprehensibility* of their spoken Spanish in the context of the tasks, their ability to use *communication strategies* to enhance their comprehension and comprehensibility, and their *cultural awareness* and *cultural knowledge*. The interviewer's follow-up questions will provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in these areas.

The choice of the interviewer's follow-up questions will be influenced by two factors: the *content* of the student's previous utterances, and the *performance level* of the student's previous utterances. Following are examples of how the daily living task might proceed differently for students at two levels of ability. The type of follow-up question is indicated in parentheses.

Example 1: With a low-level student producing just words or phrases.

Interviewer Question 1: What is a typical school day like for you?

Interviewer Question 2: What time do you arrive at school? (*Simplification*)

Interviewer Question 3: What do you do first? (*Expansion*)

Interviewer Question 4: And then? (*Expansion*)

Example 2: With a higher-ability student providing some detail and content.

Interviewer Question 1: What is a typical school day like for you?

Interviewer Question 2: What do you mean by (word or phrase used in response)? (*Clarification*)

Interviewer Question 3: Has (condition mentioned in response) always been that way?

(*Elaboration*)

Interviewer Question 4: What happened at (event mentioned in response)? (*Expansion*)

<b>Draft Sample Rubric for Phase 1 (Social Conversation) Interpersonal Tasks</b>
<p><b>Excellent Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates comprehension of both simple and elaborate questions</li> <li>• Provides detailed answers to questions</li> <li>• When asked to expand on a response, is able to provide additional details and to produce longer utterances</li> <li>• Can elaborate on a response when asked to do so</li> <li>• Shows accuracy and fluency when narrating or describing in present time; shows some accuracy if asked to elaborate in past time</li> <li>• Produces vocabulary from a variety of topic areas</li> <li>• Uses pronunciation and intonation patterns that are understandable to the interviewer</li> <li>• Successfully uses a variety of communication strategies to sustain the interaction, such as asking questions to get information and showing resourcefulness to express ideas for which vocabulary is lacking</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sufficient Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates comprehension of simple questions, but comprehension may break down when attempting to understand more elaborate questions or questions not supported by the context</li> <li>• Provides simple personalized responses to questions or comments using sentences and short strings of sentences</li> <li>• When asked to expand on a response, is able to offer additional language only sporadically</li> <li>• Uses basic structures and simple sentences in the present tense; many inaccuracies occur when attempting more complex language</li> <li>• Produces vocabulary from familiar topic areas, though false cognates or English may be used when attempting to communicate beyond this scope</li> <li>• Uses pronunciation and intonation patterns that are understandable to an interviewer accustomed to interacting with language learners, though false starts and hesitancy may be frequent</li> <li>• Attempts to maintain the conversation by using communication strategies such as paraphrasing and question-asking</li> </ul>
<p><b>Insufficient Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates comprehension of high frequency vocabulary</li> <li>• Relies on the interviewer's use of simplification strategies to comprehend the interviewer's questions and to produce own responses</li> <li>• Demonstrates a reliance primarily on memorized words and phrases to answer highly predictable questions</li> <li>• Produces vocabulary from a limited number of familiar topic areas</li> <li>• Uses pronunciation and intonation patterns that are understandable to an interviewer accustomed to interacting with language learners, though false starts, pauses, and recourse to English may be frequent</li> <li>• Primarily uses facial expressions and gestures to indicate comprehension problems and may clarify meaning, or express own meaning, by repeating words and phrases used by the interviewer</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unsatisfactory Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No demonstration of comprehension of questions or statements</li> <li>• Unable to answer questions</li> <li>• Little or no language produced</li> <li>• No attempt to use communication strategies to sustain the interaction</li> </ul>

## Phase 2: Role-play tasks

Note that during Phase 1, the student and the interviewer have not assumed roles; the student is talking about himself or herself, and the interviewer is an interested stranger who is trying to get to know the student better. In Phase 2, the two participants assume roles to carry out two tasks. The context for these tasks will be intercultural: the interviewer will be a representative from an organization, company, or school in the Spanish-speaking world, and the student will be either an individual with a personal interest in the task, or a representative of his or her school, town, organization, and so on. The task will require that the two participants work together to devise a plan, create a set of suggestions, or come to a decision. The interviewer will be supplied with the appropriate cultural information to play his or her role, and will also receive instructions on how to conclude the task.

Example of a role-play task: Making arrangements for a school-to-school exchange.

The student will receive these instructions:

*Your school is initiating a partner-school exchange program with a school in (name of city/country). You are having a meeting with a representative from the school to make suggestions for the clothing that students from each school will need to take with them on the exchange. Work together to find out what clothing teenagers wear in each community, noting similarities and differences. Take into account climate, school policies, and social customs.*

The interviewer will receive these instructions:

*You are a representative from a school in (name of city/country) that is establishing a partner-school exchange program with the student's school. You are having a meeting with the student to make suggestions for the clothing that students from each school will need to take with them on the exchange. Work together to find out what clothing teenagers wear in each community, noting similarities and differences. Take into account climate, school policies, and social customs.*

The interviewer will also receive further instructions. Note the following:

1. The city and country will be predetermined and appropriate cultural information will be supplied.
2. The interviewer will also have a form that is formatted for both participants to take notes on. The interviewer will be trained to use the form to pace the task and to bring it to an end. The task should end when a list of suggestions of predetermined length has been compiled, or when a specific length of time has passed, whichever comes first.

### Sample Form

Clothing Suggestions for Venezuela-US Exchange Program	
U.S. Students Should Pack	Venezuelan Students Should Pack
School:	School:
Social Activities with Friends:	Social Activities with Friends:
Formal:	Formal:

3. Although the instructions imply that there will be an equal exchange of information, the interviewer will have been trained to draw the student out, so that the student will do most of the talking during the task, and to encourage the student to ask questions to complete the task.

## **Draft Sample Rubric for Phase 2 (Role Play) Interpersonal Tasks**

### **Excellent Performance**

- Accomplishes the task with ease and facility; no major breakdowns in communication appear
- Demonstrates comprehension of both simple and elaborate questions, as well as of more extended discourse, clarifying details by asking appropriate questions
- Provides detailed answers to questions
- Uses pronunciation and intonation patterns that are understandable to the interviewer
- Shows accuracy and fluency when narrating and describing in present time; shows some accuracy when asked to elaborate in past time
- Produces vocabulary from a variety of topic areas
- When asked to expand on a response, is able to provide additional details and to produce longer utterances
- Can elaborate on a response when asked to do so
- Successfully uses a variety of communication strategies to sustain the interaction, such as asking questions to get information and showing resourcefulness to express ideas for which vocabulary is lacking
- Demonstrates control of culturally authentic expressions in appropriate contexts
- Includes information that shows knowledge of cultural differences and similarities, as appropriate
- Asks knowledgeable questions to get cultural information when appropriate

### **Skillful Performance**

- Accomplishes the task with no major breakdowns in communication
- Demonstrates comprehension of both simple and elaborate questions, clarifying details by asking appropriate questions
- Provides personalized answers to questions, using strings of sentences and some details
- Uses pronunciation and intonation patterns that are understandable to the interviewer
- Uses basic structures and present tense with substantial accuracy; inaccuracies occur when asked to elaborate
- Produces vocabulary from familiar topic areas
- When asked to expand on a response, is able to offer additional details and produce longer utterances
- When asked to elaborate, is rarely able to do so
- Makes an effort to use communication strategies to sustain interaction, although not always successfully
- Demonstrates some use of culturally authentic expressions in appropriate contexts
- Includes some information that shows knowledge of cultural differences and similarities, as appropriate
- Asks knowledgeable questions to get cultural information when appropriate

### **Sufficient Performance**

- Accomplishes the task with support from interviewer when communication breaks down
- Demonstrates comprehension of both simple questions and simple discourse on familiar topics, but comprehension may break down when attempting to understand more elaborate messages or messages not supported by the context
- Provides simple personalized response to questions and comments using sentences and short strings of sentences
- Uses pronunciation and intonation patterns that are understandable to an interviewer accustomed to interacting with language learners, though false starts and hesitancy may be frequent
- Uses basic structures and simple sentences in the present tense; many inaccuracies occur when attempting more complex language
- Produces vocabulary from familiar topic areas, though false cognates or English may be used when attempting to communicate beyond this scope
- When asked to expand on a response, is able to offer additional language only sporadically
- Attempts to maintain the conversation by using communication strategies such as paraphrasing and question-asking
- May include some information that shows knowledge of cultural differences and similarities, as appropriate
- May ask simple questions to get cultural information when appropriate

**Uneven Performance**

- Accomplishes task with frequent support from the interviewer; some communication breakdowns are apparent
- Demonstrates comprehension of most simple questions and simple discourse on familiar topics; comprehension is not consistent
- Sometimes relies on the interviewer's use of simplification strategies to comprehend the interviewer's question or statements and to produce responses
- Provides simple responses to questions and comments, using a combination of memorized phrases and personalized sentences
- Uses pronunciation and intonation patterns that are understandable to an interviewer accustomed to interacting with language learners, though false starts and hesitancy may be frequent
- Uses basic structures and the present tense in simple sentences, although not consistently
- Produces vocabulary from familiar topic areas, though false cognates or English may be used when attempting to communicate beyond this scope
- Primarily uses facial expressions and gestures to indicate comprehension problems and may clarify meaning, or express own meaning, by repeating words and phrases used by the interviewer
- Provides limited evidence of knowledge of cultural differences and similarities

**Insufficient Performance**

- Accomplishes the task minimally with much support from the interviewer during frequent communication breakdowns
- Demonstrates comprehension of high frequency vocabulary
- Relies on the interviewer's use of simplification strategies to comprehend the interviewer's questions or statements and to produce own responses
- Demonstrates a reliance primarily on memorized words and phrases in highly predictable interactions
- Uses pronunciation and intonation patterns that are understandable to the interviewer, though false starts, pauses, and recourse to English may be frequent
- Produces vocabulary from a limited number of familiar topic areas
- Primarily uses facial expressions and gestures to indicate comprehension problems and may clarify meaning, or express own meaning, by repeating words and phrases used by the interviewer
- Limited or no ability to provide evidence of knowledge of cultural differences and similarities

**Unsatisfactory Performance**

- Unable to accomplish the task, despite help from the interviewer OR Unable to contribute to the accomplishment of the task
- No demonstration of comprehension of prompts, questions or statements
- Little or no language produced
- No attempt to use communication strategies to sustain the interaction
- No demonstration of cultural knowledge