PURPOSE OF THESE RUBRICS

These rubrics are designed to assess the productive use (speaking and writing) of English and Spanish in two-way bilingual immersion classrooms. The rubrics were developed by classroom teachers working in elementary Spanish partial-immersion programs (two-way immersion) in Arlington, Virginia. Classroom teachers from grades 1–5 worked in consultation with a special education teacher, a reading specialist, a middle school partial immersion teacher, and researchers from the Center for Applied Linguistics on the development project.

The project's goal was to design a scoring instrument that:

1) could be used in authentic classroom situations;

2) would generate information useful in assessing student progress throughout the year;

3) would provide data useful in directing subsequent teaching; and

4) would articulate target expectations for language competency, designed to parallel state and local goals.

These rubrics take into consideration the developmental nature of immersion programs; that is, language skills and abilities develop over time. Thus, second language learners are not expected to perform at native speaker levels in the early years, but are challenged to approximate these levels of performance toward the end of the elementary school years.

Remember that this scoring instrument is designed to be used as one of several assessment tools. It is not meant to replace teacher, textbook, or standardized tests. Rather, the intent is to provide teachers with a scoring instrument which, used with authentic tasks, assesses productive language and provides ongoing information to help teachers plan, adjust, and adapt their teaching accordingly.

UNDERLYING CONSIDERATIONS

These rubrics are designed to show student progress, whether or not the target language in the assessment activity is the first or second language of the students. For example, in assessing Spanish writing, the same Spanish language version of the writing rubric is used for **all** students in the class—Spanish-dominant and English-dominant. The design was chosen based on principles and practicality. First, the teachers who developed these rubrics desired to maintain high expectations of native-like proficiency for all students. Second, they realized that it would be easier to use only **two** rubrics (one for writing, one for speaking) **rather than** four separate ones (one *writing* rubric for Spanish-dominant students and another for English-dominant ones, one *speaking* rubric for Spanish-dominant students, and another for English-dominant ones). To make this possible, the teachers designed the descriptors in each component area of each rubric to demonstrate the full range of language ability that a teacher could reasonably expect to see at each grade level for both native speakers and second language learners. This range was chosen to show snapshots of ability levels as well as allow for progress made by both groups of students throughout the year. As a result, the rubrics should be expansive enough to show both changes in native language ability and second language development.

WHAT IS NOT ASSESSED IN THE RUBRICS

Speaking Rubrics. Many assessment instruments for speaking proficiency include a component for evaluating "pronunciation." This component was intentionally omitted from these rubrics for the following reasons:

1) the developmental nature of two-way immersion does not necessitate teaching pronunciation, since it develops naturally in young children;

2) in such programs, teachers rarely teach pronunciation explicitly, and therefore should not assess pronunciation formally;

3) little information is gained by assessing pronunciation; and

4) in many two-way immersion programs, the focus is on ability to communicate meaning rather than on form.

If a teacher wants to note observations about a student's pronunciation, these could be marked in the "Comments" area of the "Fluency" component section.

Writing Rubrics. In the area of writing, the "Style" component was intentionally omitted from the first grade rubric since it was felt students at that grade level should not reasonably be expected to incorporate style into their writing.

TASKS APPROPRIATE FOR THE RUBRICS

The rubrics are designed to be used in coordination with a set of language elicitation tasks. For writing, teachers may use the county writing assessment. Some teachers may choose to use the rubric on a quarterly or even monthly basis with appropriate writing samples. Suggested tasks for oral language elicitation are provided for each grade level. However, a teacher may choose to substitute similar tasks to better match classroom content. The following criteria are provided as general guidelines for selecting appropriate tasks:

• performance of the task should provide evidence for each category of the respective rubric (i.e., comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and grammar for speaking objectives; composing, style, sentence formation, usage, and mechanics for writing objectives);

• the task should be applicable in both English and Spanish;

• the task should accommodate English as a Second Language resource students who participate in the immersion program;

• whenever possible, tasks should incorporate grade level themes; and

• in order to be authentic, the task should occur naturally in the curriculum and/or routine of the classroom.

COMPOSITION OF THE RUBRICS

Mini-Glossary

Skills: writing and speaking

Components: composition, style, sentence formation, usage, mechanics (for writing); comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, grammar (for speaking)

Descriptors: statements that describe a student's ability in a given skill component (e.g., Has native-like flow of speech)

Skills Assessed. There is one rubric for assessing writing for each grade (1-5) and one rubric for assessing speaking for each grade level (1-5). Each rubric is provided in English and in Spanish. While the two language versions are almost exactly the same, it is recommended that the English language version be used when assessing ability in English and the Spanish language version be used when assessing ability in Spanish, since there are some minor differences in the versions to account for differences between the languages (especially in the area of grammar).

Component Areas. Once teachers have elicited the students' language, it is assessed using descriptors for each component of the skill (i.e., composition, style, etc.). The components were adopted and adapted from extant assessments used by Arlington County Public Schools. The speaking components were based upon those used in the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) and the writing components were taken from the Virginia Passport to Literacy, which all students in Virginia are expected to pass in order to graduate from high school.

Descriptors. The descriptors were crafted over time by the teachers and researchers involved in this development project. To the extent possible, descriptors from existing rubrics that showed developmentally-appropriate abilities were used. Teachers then made additions and adaptations to those descriptors, based on their own classroom teaching experience and awareness. Finally, the rubrics were piloted with writing and speech samples from students in one two-way program to see if they were realistic and usable. More adaptations were made as a result of the piloting.

The descriptors assume a progression in skill level within each component. These are presented in ascending order, starting at the bottom with the lowest skill level that may be seen at the grade level and moving upward to the highest skill level that may be demonstrated by a student in this grade. It should be understood that each descriptor, even if not explicitly stated, assumes the student has already developed the abilities—or overcome the limitations—represented in all of the descriptors below it. For example, in the third grade speaking rubric "Fluency" component, checking "Speech is connected but frequently disrupted by search for correct form of expression" implies that the student is able to perform the skills noted in the descriptors below it; that is, the student "Uses simple sentences" and "Uses phrases and 'chunks'."

Boldface Descriptors. For each skill component, the descriptor in boldface print represents what a second language learner ***should be striving toward*** as an end-of-year goal, and the performance level at which a student should reasonably or easily be able to operate in his/her dominant language.

No evidence/Not applicable. Some descriptors will offer "no evidence" or "not applicable" as options. Select "no evidence" if the student did not provide any evidence that s/he possesses or does not possess the skill being evaluated. For instance, if while assessing mechanics in writing no proper nouns are found in the writing sample, no evidence was available as to assess the student in the category "Uses capital letters with proper nouns" (grade 1).

Select "not applicable" if the nature of the assessment task did not present an opportunity to demonstrate a particular skill.

Comments. The "Comments" section of each component area can be used to make any comments or observations that would provide helpful supplementary information to your assessment, or to note significant information about a specific aspect of a student's performance. For example, comments might relate to the student's entry status in the class (late-entry), language acquisition stage (silent period), register usage (social or academic language), or assessment conditions (student unusually nervous during task).

HOW TO USE THE RUBRICS

The rating and scoring procedures were designed to accommodate individual preferences. To this end, rating and scoring can be done in at least two ways:

1) Based on the student language elicited (either spoken or written), the teacher checks the descriptor that best represents the student's performance on each skill component. These checked descriptors can be compared over time for more detailed information about student progress in each skill area; and/or

2) After checking the appropriate descriptors for each skill component, the teacher circles a number (1-5) for each skill component that best matches the student's performance level (see "Guide to Scoring the Rubrics" that accompanies each rubric). Numbered scores for each component can then be totaled (optional) and placed at the bottom of the sheet. These totals can be used for quick comparison of change over time and multiple assessment periods for each student.

When rating student performance, keep in mind that the boldface objectives reflect performance levels desired by the *end* of the school year. In other words, a teacher should be satisfied if a student has a 3 (target) level rating at the end of the year and should not be unsettled by lower ratings earlier in the year.

In cases where the grade-level goal (3 level) is described as "consistent" demonstration of a skill (as in Grade 4 Writing--Mechanics), higher levels of skill (4 and 5 levels) would be noted if the student demonstrated either superior command or usage of the component skill (e.g., comfortable, creative usage of language for "Fluency") or demonstrated ability to use other component skills not mentioned (e.g., use of semicolons, dashes, bulleted lists in "Mechanics").

Remember that the scores resulting from the use of these rubrics are not meant to replace the regular grading procedure used by the school. These rubrics were designed to provide teachers with an **alternative** means of assessing student progress in these skill areas on an **ongoing** basis, with the expectation that having periodic information on the development of these language skills would help improve and fine-tune classroom teaching and student learning.

A caveat must be issued here, as well, when using the numeric scale. To ensure rating on the scale of 1-5 is reliable, rater training should be done to condition multiple raters to both the instrument and the rating scale so that all raters have the same understanding of what each number means.

SCORING GUIDE FOR USE WITH THE NUMERIC SCALE

1 — Does not approximate the end-of-year expectation at this grade level

2 — Approximates the end-of-year expectation for this grade level

3 — **Meets the end-of-year expectation for this grade level**

4 — Exceeds the end-of-year expectation for this grade level

5 — Far exceeds the end-of-year expectation for this grade level

WHEN TO USE THE RUBRICS

The rubrics can be used at any time throughout the school year. Teachers are encouraged to use them *at least* twice a year, as a pre- and post-measure of student progress. End of the year expectations for each grade level are clearly indicated in boldface print for each skill component. This is meant to facilitate 1) instructional planning when used as a pre-test, and 2) instructional and student assessment when used as a post-test.

GLOSSARY

This glossary is provided to clarify terms used in the rubrics:

academic language: vocabulary (terms and expressions) introduced and used in the context of content area instruction (e.g., odd and even, *par e impar*)

complex structures (grammar): compound verb forms (e.g., I <u>will have been teaching</u> for 42 years by the time I retire.)

complex sentence: a sentence with one independent clause and at least one dependent clause (e.g., After coming home from my friend's house, I went to bed.)

component: a part of a skill (e.g., comprehension, fluency)

compound sentence: a sentence with two or more independent clauses usually joined by a conjunction (e.g., We went to the circus and some clowns made us laugh.)

compound-complex sentence: a sentence with at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause (e.g., After breakfast, we went to the circus and some clowns made us laugh.)

descriptor: a statement that decries a student's ability in a skill component (e.g., Uses isolated words)

fluent, fluency: speech that is fluid, unbroken, free of unnatural pauses or hesitations (i.e., those that might occur as the speaker searches for the appropriate word or expression due to language processing rather than to ordinary thinking processes)

idioms/idiomatic expressions: words or groups of words having a special meaning that is not inherent to or determinable from its component parts (e.g., take a bath, take a bus, *tener años, tener frío*); or an expression peculiar to a language that conveys a distinct meaning other than the literal meaning (e.g., to pull one's leg, *tomar el pelo*)

non-verbal cues: facial expressions, gestures, and so forth that enhance the verbal message (e.g., smiling, shaking one's head)

rubric: a scoring scale for assessing a set of skill components

sentence structures: simple, compound, complex, compound-complex

sentence types: declarative (i.e., statements), interrogative (i.e., questions), imperative (i.e., commands), exclamatory (i.e., exclamations)

social language: vocabulary and expressions necessary in daily communication that might not naturally occur in a content area class (e.g., I have a sore throat, *Me duele la garganta*)

transitions (writing): words that enhance the flow of ideas in writing, and signal the relationship between ideas and/or information presented (e.g., however, additionally, *sin embargo, con tal de que*)