



CLOCK

Classroom Language Observation Checklist Kit

Component 1

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES, SET-UP, AND COMPLETION

CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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This component includes sample classroom activities and three sample scenarios that describe different steps when using the CLOCK, from preparation to implementation to reporting. Planning for assessment of speaking and listening comprehension involves identifying instructional or assessment activities in which students’ performance can be observed. Below is a list of sample activities teachers can use in their classrooms to elicit student language. The chart serves as an overview of activities and is followed by resources and references for teachers who are interested in finding out more about them.

Sample Instructional/Assessment Activities

Instructional/ Assessment Activity	Format	Mode of Communication	Level of Language Proficiency	Description
Oral Interview⁴	Individual and pairs	Interpersonal Speaking and Interpretive Listening	All levels	Oral interviews can be conducted with individuals or pairs. In a classroom setting, interviews can take the form of discussions or conversations with the teacher or a teaching assistant. A list of guiding questions or tasks should be prepared beforehand to guide the interviews.
Picture Cues or Story Retelling⁴	Individual	Presentational Speaking	All levels	Picture cues and story books can be used to elicit individual student’s presentational speaking.
Paired Conversation²	Pairs	Interpersonal Speaking and Interpretive Listening	All levels, especially Intermediate and Advanced	Two students talk with each other and exchange information about a given topic. Teachers provide guidelines and topics for the pair to discuss.
Information Gap¹	Pairs	Interpersonal Speaking/Interpretive Listening	All levels	Two students are each provided with slightly different information. They must then work collaboratively to “fill in the gaps” in the information that each of them has. This information may involve text, pictures, maps, or manipulative materials.
Oral Reports⁴	Individual	Presentational Speaking	All levels	Students speak on a topic in front of others. Students may or may not refer to notes or cue cards that they have created. The content of the report

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				may be related to a topic students are researching or a topic of personal interest.
Four Corners ^{1,2,3}	Groups	Interpersonal/ Presentational Speaking and Interpretive Listening	All levels	This activity stimulates student learning through presentation and discussion, and it can also be used as a formative assessment. Students are presented with a statement or question meant to elicit different opinions. In each of the four corners of the classroom, an opinion or response is posted. Students express their opinion or response by standing in front of one of four statements, and then talking to others about why they have chosen their corner. Four Corners promotes listening, verbal communication, critical thinking, and decision-making. This activity can also be adapted by teachers. For example, instead of opinions on a specific statement, teachers can post different topics on the four corners and students can engage in conversations about the topic in each corner.
Debates ⁴	Groups	Interpersonal/ Presentational Speaking and Interpretive Listening	Intermediate and Advanced	Students take sides on an issue and defend their positions. Teachers ensure that students have been given necessary preparation time, resources, and information to defend their opinions. This activity is generally used with upper elementary school students and above.
Inside/Outside Circles ^{1,2}	Groups	Interpersonal Speaking and Interpretive Listening	All levels	Inside and outside circles of students face each other. Each pair of facing students exchange information with each other by asking and answering questions that the teacher or students have chosen. Outside circles move to create new pairs. Repeat the activity until all students have had

				a chance to practice asking and answering a variety of questions.
Cubing ²	Groups	Interpersonal and Presentational Speaking	All levels	Teachers display six numbered questions or topics from the lesson and place students in groups of a certain number. The teacher gives each group one dice. Each student rolls the dice and answers the question or talks about the topic with the corresponding number. If a number is rolled more than once, the student may elaborate on the previous response or roll again. This activity ensures that each student gets a chance to talk.
Numbered Heads Together ^{1,2,3}	Groups	Interpersonal/ Presentational Speaking and Interpretive Listening	Intermediate and Advanced Levels	Students sit in groups and each group member is given a number (for example, one to four). The teacher poses a problem and all four students discuss. The teacher calls a number and the students with that number in each group share their opinions with the whole class.

1. Himmel, J., & Mazrum J. (2011). *Using the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) to plan and implement effective instruction for English learners*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
2. Lambert, K. (2012). Tools for formative assessment; Techniques to check for understanding; Processing activities. Retrieved from http://www.levy.k12.fl.us/instruction/Instructional_Tools/60FormativeAssessment.pdf
3. Kagan, S. (1994). *Cooperative learning*. San Clemente, CA: Resources for Teachers.
4. O'Malley, J. M., & Pierce, L. V. (1996). *Authentic assessment for English language learners: Practical approaches for teachers*. Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Sample Scenarios and Language Samples

This section provides illustrations of how some instructional/assessment activities described in the chart above can be implemented in a language classroom. Each sample scenario includes a context, along with implementation steps: preparation, implementation, CLOCK checklist completion, and next steps.

Scenario 1: Inside/Outside Circles

Context: Mrs. Cui is a Chinese instructor in a three-week STARTALK summer program for 20 students who will be in grade 5 in the fall. The program meets six hours per day. One topic covered in the program is family. The instructional objective for this topic is for students to exchange information about family members. Students bring in a family picture or draw a picture of an imaginary family and then practice exchanging information using the family pictures at the beginning of the day. At the end of the day, Mrs. Cui wants to know whether her students have achieved her instructional objective. She decides to use the Inside/Outside Circle activity to help her find out how much her students can say about their families.

Steps:

Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mrs. Cui ensures that each student has a picture to talk about during the activity. Because she is going to participate in the inside circle, she brings a picture of her own family. Mrs. Cui will assess all of the students in the outside circle. 2. Mrs. Cui prepares copies of the CLOCK Novice checklists. She chooses Novice because her students can produce only memorized phrases and sentences based on her observation of their class performance. 3. Mrs. Cui gives students instructions on how to form inside/outside circles and what types of information to exchange with each other.
Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. All students stand in the classroom forming two circles, one inside and one outside. The inside circle students face the outside circle students. Mrs. Cui joins the inside circle. Each student will face a new partner each time they rotate, and so will Mrs. Cui. (If Mrs. Cui has a teaching assistant, the teaching assistant can join the outside circle so that all students can be observed.) 5. Mrs. Cui signals when students can start to talk to their partners. Each pair then exchanges information about their family members using the language they have learned and maintains the conversation for 30 seconds.

<p>Implementation (cont'd)</p>	<p>6. After 30 seconds, Mrs. Cui gives the command to change partners. The inside circle students remain in position and the outside circle students all move clockwise to face the next student and wait for Mrs. Cui's command to start a conversation with the new partner. Mrs. Cui remains in the inside circle so she can assess the rest of her students who are in the outside circle.</p> <p>7. Each time Mrs. Cui exchanges information with a student, she completes a checklist and takes notes. This activity ends when Mrs. Cui has had a chance to interact with all of the students in the outside circle. If she has time, Mrs. Cui will ask the inside circle students to trade places with the outside circle students so she can assess all of the students.</p>
<p>Completing checklists</p>	<p>8. After the activity, Mrs. Cui reviews and finalizes the checklists and adds any additional observations for each student she interacted with.</p> <p>9. She also notes where each student's performance tends to fall on the checklists for this activity. For example, if she checks off most or all of the descriptors in the Novice Mid level for a student, she can note that for this activity, the student's performance was consistent with the Novice Mid level.</p>
<p>Next steps</p>	<p>10. These results will help Mrs. Cui decide whether her instructional objective has been met and her students are ready to learn new material. Mrs. Cui will continue to use the checklists periodically with these students in conjunction with other activities.</p> <p>11. Mrs. Cui will conduct a similar activity on another day to assess the rest of students in her class.</p>

Scenario 2: Four Corners

Context: Mrs. Liang is a Chinese instructor in a four-week STARTALK summer program for 16 students who will be in grade 3 in the fall. The students have no other prior experiences learning Chinese except that they attended the same summer program the previous year. The program meets four hours per day. One topic covered in the program is on activities during the four seasons. The instructional objective for this topic is for students to exchange information about seasonal activities. At the end of the day, Mrs. Liang wants to know whether her students are able to exchange information about seasonal activities. She decides to use the Four Corners activity to determine if her instructional objective has been met.

Steps:

Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mrs. Liang posts pictures of the four seasons and relevant seasonal activities in the four corners of the classroom. 2. Mrs. Liang pairs up the students and explains that they will play a question/answer game with their partner about the pictures in the four corners of the room. 3. Mrs. Liang prepares copies of the CLOCK Novice checklists, which also include the can-do statements for the unit. She will complete the checklists as she observes the interaction of each pair. 4. Mrs. Liang designs an art project related to the four seasons that her teaching assistant can oversee with the rest of the students while Mrs. Liang conducts the four corners activity with one pair of students at a time.
Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Each time, Mrs. Liang takes one pair of students to a corner and directs them to take turns asking and answering questions related to the pictures in that corner. She notes what each student says and checks off relevant descriptors. 6. If possible, Mrs. Liang also records the conversations so that she can review the recordings if her notes are not comprehensive enough to determine the performance levels of her students. 7. After the pair finishes one corner, they move with Mrs. Liang to the next corner until they finish all of the four corners. 8. She repeats this activity with the rest of the students in pairs.

<p>Completing checklists</p>	<p>9. After the activity, Mrs. Liang reviews and finalizes the checklists and adds any additional observations for each student.</p> <p>10. She also notes where each student’s performance tends to fall on the checklists for this activity. For example, if for one student she checks off most or all of the descriptors in the Novice Mid level, she can note that for this activity, her student’s performance was consistent with the Novice Mid level.</p>
<p>Next steps</p>	<p>11. After the Four Corners activity, Mrs. Liang finalizes the CLOCK for each student based on her notes or recordings. These results will help her determine the quality and quantity of the language students produce or understand related to the topic of the four seasons during this activity.</p> <p>12. Mrs. Liang also included the can-do statements for the unit related to the four seasons on the checklists so that she is able to indicate if her students have met the can-dos based on what she observed during the activity.</p> <p>13. Mrs. Liang uses the information gathered to plan or modify activities for the next class session.</p>

Scenario 3: Paired Conversation

Context: Mr. Chung is a Chinese instructor in a four-week STARTALK summer program for 22 students who will be in grade 4 in the fall. The program meets four hours each day. Mr. Chung uses the CLOCK with his students each week and sends a copy of the completed checklist home. Below is a description of the activity he uses in the fourth week of the program. Mr. Chung wants to know how well his students can communicate in Chinese with a partner on the topics covered during the program. He decides to use the Paired Conversation activity and the CLOCK to assess his students' Interpersonal Speaking and Listening Comprehension. Rather than conducting this activity in the language class, Mr. Chung will pull pairs of students from the calligraphy class so that he can focus on interviewing one pair of students at a time.

Steps:

Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Chung plans to assess students during the calligraphy class period, and arranges with the calligraphy teacher to pull out one pair of students at a time. 2. Mr. Chung pairs students based on previously observed performance levels. 3. Mr. Chung finds a vacant and quiet classroom for the students to engage in conversations. 4. Mr. Chung prepares pictures of topics covered in the program for his students to use as the basis of their conversations. 5. Mr. Chung prints out copies of CLOCK Novice checklists. 6. Mr. Chung explains to students what he expects them to do and that this activity will help him know if his teaching has been effective.
Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Two students at a time are directed to the vacant classroom and asked to engage in a conversation based on the series of pictures. 8. Mr. Chung observes their conversation and takes thorough notes about the language each student produces. He checks off all descriptors on the checklists that apply to each student, across the different sublevels. 9. In some cases Mr. Chung may watch the video of the conversation afterwards to finalize his notes and check off the descriptors on the checklists.

<p>Completing checklists</p>	<p>10. After the activity, Mr. Chung reviews and finalizes the checklists and adds any additional observations for each student.</p> <p>11. He also notes where each student’s performance tends to fall on the checklists for this activity.</p> <p>12. He then compares all four checklists for each student to determine the student’s overall progress and reflect on the overall effectiveness of his instruction.</p>
<p>Next steps</p>	<p>13. Mr. Chung saves the video recordings to student portfolios and he also shares the CLOCK results with parents and the program director. Below is a letter he sends to parents together with the completed checklist for their child:</p> <p>Dear Parents,</p> <p>I cannot believe that this is the end of the four-week program! It has been a pleasure having your child in our program. Thank you for your positive feedback on the checklists I have been sending home each week. During this last week of the program, we set up a “Paired Conversation” activity.</p> <p>Attached with this letter is the final completed CLOCK checklist for your child during the activity. The highlighted descriptors show what he/she was able to do in Chinese during a paired conversation at the end of our four-week program. Please take a moment to look at the checklists from previous weeks and you will see how much progress your child has made!</p> <p>Please congratulate your child on what he/she has learned during his/her language learning journey so far! We hope that your child will continue this journey in the future!</p> <p>Best regards, Mr. Chung</p>

More resources

1. Three commonly used tools to assess students' oral language are checklists, rubrics, and observations. More information about these three tools can be found in "World languages; Oral languages; Steps in creating authentic and performance-based assessment tasks" retrieved from <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/worldlanguages/resources/orallanguages/05tools>
2. McKay, P. (2006). *Assessing young language learners*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.