

APPENDIX II

INFORMATION ON PROFICIENCY TESTING

Information on Proficiency Tests

The **individual assessment tasks** contained in this project allow us, as educators, to track our students' progress towards proficiency at the various stages of language development. Tasks tie to the benchmarks for each expectation and become ever more sophisticated in terms of cognitive skills and language structures as we move through the stages and levels. The purpose of assessing through these tasks is to ensure that students have a certain level of control over structures and vocabulary as we progress through the curriculum (achievement). If so, we continue on, recycling the material as needed; if not, we provide remediation.

Proficiency tests, on the other hand, allow us to make more global judgments about the overall communicative abilities of our learners. Often, these assessments are administered at the end of some period of instruction (a year, a sequence of courses, etc.) and permit us to make decisions about placement, moving to the next level, or attainment to date.

The purpose of using both assessments tied to classroom instruction and assessments that yield information about overall linguistic abilities is to provide teachers with a complete picture of language proficiency. As a department, or across departments in a large district, you can develop both types of assessments for your learners. More uniform assessment allows you to determine the achievement of specific linguistic features and gives you a more accurate picture of overall proficiency for the purposes of placing students.

We recommend that you look at the following web sites to learn more about proficiency tests and to get copies of the tests.

The first site, <http://caap.flc.ohio-state.edu>, is the homepage for the Collaborative Articulation and Assessment Project. CAAP's proficiency assessments have been used in Ohio since 1994. The CAAP Early Assessment Measures are an integral part of the Model Assessment Project because they serve as the *only* statewide proficiency tests in foreign languages. While the Model Assessment Project focuses on ongoing assessments that you can use to assess your students' performance regularly in class, the CAAP tests evaluate students' abilities at specific benchmarks in the language learning sequence. The CAAP assessments give educators comparative data on their students in relation to other high school and university students in the state who have completed three levels of instruction. The results indicate a student's overall ability in the language and/or where s/he would place at the postsecondary level.

By going to the CAAP web site, you can view the assessments and hear the listening test. If you would like to use the assessments in class, they can be easily printed from this site. Beginning in Autumn 2001, the tests will be available on-line. To join the project, please contact the OSU Foreign Language Center at 614-292-4361.

The second site, <http://carla.acad.umn.edu>, is the homepage for the Minnesota Language Proficiency Assessments. The assessments were developed by the Assessment Team at

the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition and the Minnesota Articulation Project. The assessments are modeled on instruments and procedures used at the University of Minnesota and target incoming students who have studied a foreign language for two years at the secondary level and would like to continue their postsecondary language study.

On the web site, you will find a description of the project and sample assessments. The MLPA assessments may also be obtained through CARLA in booklet or CD format.