

**Standard Setting Study for English Language Proficiency
Examinations**

Spring 2003

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Table of Contents	1
Executive Summary	2
Background	4
Design of the Cut Score Study	5
Panelists and Panel Procedures	7
Results of the Panel Meetings	9
◆ Proficiency descriptions	
◆ Grades 2-3	
◆ Grades 4-5	
◆ Grades 9-13	
Determining the Final Cut Scores	14
Final Cut Scores	16
◆ MAC II	
◆ IPT	
◆ LAS	
Appendices	
I. List of Panel Participants	21
II. Panel Agenda	27
III. Five Language Proficiency Levels	28

Executive Summary

Standard Setting Study for English Language Proficiency Examinations

Spring, 2003

In the spring of 2003, three standard setting studies were conducted in New Jersey to identify test scores that correspond to the five levels of English proficiency defined by the state to indicate progress in learning English. This work was completed in order for New Jersey to comply with Title III, Part A, Section 3122.

New Jersey has approved the use of three language proficiency tests to identify LEP students, measure their progress, and determine whether they can be mainstreamed. These three tests are:

1. Maculates II Test of English Language Proficiency (MAC II)
2. IDEA Test (IPT)
3. Language Assessment Scales (LAS)

While these three test measure speaking, listening, reading, writing, and comprehension, they measure these skills in very different ways and are scored differently. In order to most consistently measure progress in learning English for No Child Left Behind (NCLB), New Jersey would like to have a single ESL assessment and has joined the consortium of states in the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to develop such an examination. Until that test is available, it is necessary to identify comparable proficiency levels on the three current tests.

In order to obtain as much comparability as possible on the two tests most commonly used in New Jersey (MAC II and IPT), New Jersey teachers participated in a standard setting study. Three panels of teachers were convened (one for grades 2 – 3, a second for grades 4 – 5, and a third for grades 9 – 12). Each panel contained some teachers who used MAC II and others who had used IPT.

The test publishers were actively involved in helping conduct the studies. The bookmark procedure was chosen, based on recommendations of the publishers. Each publisher created a booklet for panel review with the test questions in order of difficulty from easiest to hardest within test section. Publishers provided normative information on the scores and advice on interpreting the results.

Each panel met for two days. The meeting began with training on the book mark procedures and a brief description of the levels of proficiency. The levels of proficiency were taken from proposed levels for the CCSSO examination, in order to make the cut scores on these tests as comparable as possible to the future statewide assessment. Panelists then reviewed the draft proficiency standards for speaking and made recommendations for revisions and then proceeded to set the first round of cut points for MAC II speaking. The same procedure was used for MAC II Listening, Writing, and

Reading. The facilitator summarized the decisions on overhead transparencies while the panelists worked on the next section. The panel then discussed the results of the first round of standard setting and revised their decisions. They were again presented with results combined with normative information about the difficulty of the items at various cut points. Panelists were given the opportunity to change their decisions a third time.

The review of the IPT began next. Since the panelists were familiar with the proficiency descriptors, they were not discussed again. Panelists were asked to consider a combination of the proficiency descriptors for speaking and listening when they considered the oral portion of the IPT. As with MAC II, all sections of the test were rated before scores were summarized and discussed. Again, three rounds of decision making were used.

The recommendations of the panels were shared with the publishers. Psychometricians provided normative information and recommendations based on their experience. One of the panels tended to set relatively lower cut score decisions than the other two panels. Based on the normative information and advice from the publishers' psychometricians, cut score recommendations were extrapolated across all grade levels. Normative data on the LAS was reviewed and cut scores proposed for this examination.

The resulting cut scores were again reviewed by Department of Education ESL staff and the ESL Advisory Committee. Conversion tables were then posted on the state web site.

The proficiency level scores will be used in reporting progress of students in learning English in New Jersey. Schools are advised to continue to use multiple criteria in determining whether a student should be exited from a program. Continued research is required to determine the validity of these proficiency levels and the levels should be used cautiously for making educational decisions about students.

Background

The purpose of this report is to document the procedure used by the state of New Jersey to identify the test scores that correspond to the five levels of English proficiency defined by the state to indicate progress in learning English. This work was completed in order for New Jersey to comply with Title III, Part A, Section 3122.

New Jersey has approved the use of three language proficiency tests to identify LEP students, measure their progress and determine when they can be mainstreamed. These three tests are:

1. Maculaitis II Test of English Language Proficiency (MAC II)
2. IDEA Test (IPT)
3. Language Assessment Scales (LAS).

The selection of these tests, used in New Jersey since 2001, is the result of a process that included the issuance of an RFP to test publishers to submit their language proficiency tests to the New Jersey Department of Education for review. The steps of the selection process were:

- A review of the tests submitted by a committee composed of bilingual/ESL program teachers and administrators, New Jersey Department of Education assessment staff and psychometric consultants; and
- The piloting of the selected tests in a school district in order to provide the New Jersey Department of Education with practical and psychometric information on the three tests.

While these three tests measure speaking, listening, reading, writing, and comprehension, they measure these skills in very different ways and are scored differently. In order to most consistently measure progress in learning English in all schools in New Jersey as required by the No Child Left Behind Legislation, New Jersey would like to have a single ESL assessment.

For this reason, the New Jersey Department of Education has joined the consortium of states in the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) working to develop a process of English language assessment that meets the provision of NCLB and that can be used to uniformly measure annual progress. New Jersey participated in the piloting of this test in May 2003 and will participate in the large-scale field testing in the spring of 2004.

In the interim, in order to identify comparable proficiency levels on the three current tests, a cut score study was conducted, resulting in a conversion tables to identify students as either: Beginner, Low Intermediate, High Intermediate, Advanced, and Proficient. The procedures used to determine this cut scores are documented in the following sections of this report.

Design of the Cut Score Study

After discussion with the test publishers and review of the use of the tests in the state, it was determined that a cut score study would be conducted on the two most widely used tests in the state, the Maculaitis II Test of English Language Proficiency (MAC II) and the IDEA Test (IPT). The Language Assessment Scales (LAS) is used by a very small number of schools and the additional time required to include LAS in the study was not warranted. (Procedures used to set cut scores on the LAS are discussed later in this report.)

In order to obtain as much comparability as possible between the cut scores on the two different tests, we decided to use the same panel of teachers to review and determine cut scores at specific grade levels. The panel consisted of some teachers from schools that used the MAC II and some schools that used the IPT.

A second technique for maintaining as much comparability as possible between the cut scores on the two different tests and to facilitate comparability with cut scores on the future CCSSO English language proficiency test is to use the same descriptors for the levels of proficiency on the two tests. A panel of consortium members met and drafted a design of five levels of proficiency (Beginner, Low Intermediate, High Intermediate, Advanced, and Proficient) for listening, speaking, reading, and writing assessments. Since the current plan is for New Jersey to transition to the CCSSO assessment, New Jersey decided to use these descriptors as a starting point and to identify the four cut scores on each of the three ELP assessments that corresponded to the transition between levels (e.g., the cut score corresponding to the transition between beginner and low intermediate).

There are numerous methodologies for conducting cut score studies. After discussion with the publishers, the bookmark procedure was chosen. This methodology has the advantage of being appropriate for multiple choice questions and for tests with constructed responses or questions scored by rubrics awarding a range of scores (like 0 to 3). It also has the advantage of being more efficient in the use of time when you are setting multiple cut points. The test publisher's each created a test booklet for panel review, with the test questions in order of difficulty from easiest to hardest within each test section.

Another consideration was how many panels to convene. These panels were to be held in April and May, toward the end of the school year. They required teachers to be out of the classroom for two days. We determined that three panels would be sufficient and that standards at other grades could be extrapolated from the information obtained from the three panels and from normative and historical data available from the test publishers. The three panels, the grade levels, and the test forms covered are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Grade Levels, Test Forms, Number of Teachers and Dates of Cut Score Panels

Grade Levels	Test Forms		Date: 2003	Number of Teachers
	IPT	MAC II		
2 - 3	IPT I—Oral Test, Form E IPT 1—Reading and Writing Tests, Form 1B	Blue Level MAC II—B2	April 29-30	14
4 - 5	IPT I—Oral Test, Form E IPT 2—Reading and Writing Tests, Form 2B	Orange Level MAC II—B3	May 1-2	6
9 - 12	IPT II—Oral Test, Form C IPT 3— Reading and Writing Tests, Form 3B	Tan Level MAC II—B5	May 5-6	9

Panelists and Panel Meetings

During early April, the Department of Education in New Jersey conducted six Awareness Sessions to inform school districts about the plans for Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives for English language learners. Teachers were told about the upcoming panel meetings and invited to volunteer to participate in the panels. On the form they completed to participate in the sessions, teachers indicated in what grade levels they had expertise and whether they used the IPT or MAC II. Volunteers were contacted by the Department of Education and invited to participate. All panel participants were ESL teachers or administrators and had experience in using either the IPT, the MAC II, or both. A list of panel participants is included in Appendix I.

Each panel met for two days. A typical agenda is provided in Appendix II. Panel meetings started with introductions and with Raquel Sinai conducting a kick-off presentation on the importance of the study to New Jersey. Next, Dr. Cheryl Wild, the panel facilitator, explained the procedures we were going to follow for the next two days. This included a description of the Bookmark procedures, a brief outline of the five levels of proficiency, and the order of the review of the test sections.

The Bookmark procedure was described along with hints for panelists on how to make decisions. Panelists were told that test items were in order of difficulty for the test takers. Panelists were told to review each item and consider the content being assessed. Beginning with the “beginner level”, decide whether the threshold student – the student who would be just barely a low intermediate student - could answer this question. If yes, the teacher should go on. If no, the teacher should bookmark the preceding item. Then the instructions suggested the teacher would move on to the next proficiency level.

Panelists reviewed and discussed the draft proficiency descriptions for speaking and made recommendations for revisions. Raquel Sinai incorporated the suggestions into the revised descriptors, which are included in Appendix III. Panelists were provided copies of the MAC II test and the Speaking section was described. *Technical Manuals* were available for review if the teachers requested. Panelists were reminded of the bookmark procedures and then proceeded to set the first round of cut points for MAC II Speaking.

The same procedure was used for each of the sections of the MAC II (review, discuss, and revise the proficiency level descriptions and then panelists apply the benchmark procedures to the corresponding MAC II section) in the following order:

1. Speaking
2. Listening
3. Writing
4. Reading

Panelists gave their cut score decisions to the facilitator who summarized their decisions on overhead transparencies while the panelists were working.

The panel was then presented the results from their first round of setting cut scores, level by level (i.e., 1/2 cut, 2/3 cut, 3/4 cut, and 4/5 cut) one section at a time. Panelists who were asked to say why they believed that this was the appropriate point to set the bench mark and to relate that to the proficiency level descriptors and experience with ESL students. After discussion, panelists were given the opportunity to revisit their decisions and cut scores turned into the facilitator. The first day of review typically ended at this point.

Day two began with a summary of the results of round two of decision making. At this point results were combined with normative information and information about the difficulty of items at the various cut points. Panelists were given one more opportunity to revise their cut scores.

The review of the IPT began next. Since the panel was familiar with the proficiency descriptors, they were not discussed again. Panelists were asked to consider a combination of the proficiency descriptors for speaking and listening when they considered the oral portion of the IPT. As for the MAC II, panelists were asked to make their preliminary decisions on cut scores without discussion. All three sections were reviewed before any discussion occurred. Panelists' first estimates of the cut scores were summarized on overheads and discussed. Revisions were made and summarized on overheads along with any available normative data. Discussion and a third round of revision followed.

The results of this process are presented in the next section.

Panel Results

Table 1 provides a summary of the section cut scores provided by the Grade 2 to 3 panel on MAC II. The section raw scores are added together to obtain a recommended total cut score. This is a compensatory model, a model where a high score on one section can compensate for a lower score on another section. This model was discussed with each panel, and each agreed that it would be appropriate for purposes of No Child Left Behind. Tables 2 and 3 provide the same information for the Grade 4 to 5 panel and the Grade 9 to 12 panel respectively.

Table 1
Panel Results for Grades 2-3 on the MAC II
(14 Panelists)

	Cut Scores between Proficiency Levels			
	1/2	2/3	3/4	4/5
Speaking				
Mean	10	20	27	33
Median	10	20	27	33
Minimum	6	13	22	31
Maximum	13	25	29	33
Listening				
Mean	6	12	16	21
Median	6	12	16	21
Minimum	3	8	15	19
Maximum	10	16	19	23
Writing				
Mean	5	14	23	30
Median	5	14	23	30
Minimum	1	11	19	27
Maximum	6	16	26	33
Reading				
Mean	4	15	24	30
Median	4	15	25	31
Minimum	1	11	19	28
Maximum	7	17	28	32
Total				
Median Raw Score	25	62	90	113
Scale Score	390	471	525	592

Table 2
Panel Results for Grades 4 -5 the MAC II
(6 Panelists)

	Cut Scores between Proficiency Levels			
	1/2	2/3	3/4	4/5
Speaking				
Mean	5	13	20	31
Median	6	13	20	31
Minimum	3	9	15	31
Maximum	6	14	26	32
Listening				
Mean	2	5	12	20
Median	2	5	12	20
Minimum	1	4	12	20
Maximum	3	5	12	20
Writing				
Mean	2	15	34	52
Median	2	15	37	52
Minimum	1	15	20	50
Maximum	3	14	41	52
Reading				
Mean	2	13	26	40
Median	1	12	27	41
Minimum	0	8	18	31
Maximum	3	20	34	42
Total				
Median Raw Score	10	45	96	144
Scale Score	324	414	485	580

Table 3
Panel Results for Grades 9-12 on the MAC II
(9 Panelists)

	Cut Scores between Proficiency Levels			
	1/2	2/3	3/4	4/5
Speaking				
Mean	7	18	25	31
Median	7	19	25	31
Minimum	4	12	22	31
Maximum	7	19	25	33
Listening				
Mean	6	12	18	22
Median	6	12	18	22
Minimum	5	10	16	20
Maximum	6	15	21	23
Writing				
Mean	10	22	31	44
Median	10	22	31	44
Minimum	9	22	31	39
Maximum	10	23	32	45
Reading				
Mean	7	19	37	48
Median	7	18	41	47
Minimum	7	18	22	44
Maximum	7	24	46	51
Total				
Median Raw Score	30	72	109	144
Scale Score	399	469	527	609

After a panel completed the bookmark procedure on the MAC II exam, they went on and applied the procedure to the IPT. Results of the procedure for Grades 2-3, 4-5, and 9-12 are reported in Tables 4 to 6 respectively. Because the IPT is scored differently than the MAC II, the application was somewhat modified. For example, no student takes the total oral exam. Scores are reported as levels and students take only the items appropriate to determining the level. Panelists were asked to review the total set of items. Items were placed in item difficulty order by level. It may be that an item in a lower level is more difficult than the easier items in the next higher level (for example, an item in level A might be more difficult than an item in level B). Panelists were asked to recognize that and set the cut score based on their best estimate given the way the test was administered.

IPT is not designed to obtain a total score. Adding the raw scores would result in an unequal weighting of the parts. For this reason, no total score is reported in the following tables.

Table 4
Panel Results for Grades 2-3 on the IPT
(14 Panelists)

	Cut Scores between Proficiency Levels			
Oral¹	1/2	2/3	3/4	4/5
Mean	10	31	58	69
Median	10	31	58	69
Minimum	7	25	50	67
Maximum	14	34	64	72
Writing				
Mean	3	10	15	17
Median	4	10	15	17
Minimum	1	7	13	16
Maximum	6	13	16	19
Reading				
Mean	5	17	30	40
Median	5	16	29	40
Minimum	4	13	28	35
Maximum	10	23	39	44

Table 5
Panel Results for Grades 4-5 on the IPT
(6 Panelists)

	Cut Scores between Proficiency Levels			
Oral²	1/2	2/3	3/4	4/5
Mean	9	29	43	77
Median	9	30	43	77
Minimum	8	26	39	76
Maximum	9	30	44	77
Writing				
Mean	4	8	15	17
Median	4	8	15	17
Minimum	3	8	15	17
Maximum	4	8	15	17
Reading				
Mean	3	13	28	38
Median	3	14	28	36
Minimum	2	6	28	35
Maximum	6	14	28	46

¹ The IPT I Oral consists of 86 questions, although no student is likely to take all questions. Scores are actually reported by level (A, B, C, D, E, and F).

² The IPT I Oral consists of 86 questions, although no student is likely to take all questions. Scores are actually reported by level (A, B, C, D, E, and F).

Table 6
Panel Results for Grades 9-12 on the IPT
(9 Panelists)

	Cut Scores between Proficiency Levels			
Oral³	1/2	2/3	3/4	4/5
Mean	21	37	57	80
Median	22	37	57	80
Minimum	20	35	57	78
Maximum	22	39	60	81
Writing				
Mean	5	9	13	17
Median	5	9	13	17
Minimum	3	8	12	17
Maximum	6	10	15	17
Reading				
Mean	10	18	32	40
Median	10	17	31	40
Minimum	8	17	30	38
Maximum	10	21	38	46

³ The IPT I Oral consists of 86 questions, although no student is likely to take all questions. Scores are actually reported by level (A, B, C, D, E, and F).

Determining the Final Cut Scores

The process for determining the final cut scores for MAC II and IPT for all grade levels was as follows. First the results of the cut score studies were sent to the test publisher. The publishers provided additional information based on normative data or special studies they were conducting. This information was reviewed by New Jersey Department of Education ESL and psychometric experts, and recommended cut scores were prepared. These were reviewed by the ESL Advisory Committee. After final review and approval, conversion tables were posted on the web site for use in reporting data for No Child Left Behind. Additional information on the MAC II and IPT and the logic for the decision on setting the cut scores will be provided in this section of the report.

MAC II. The results of the panel reviews of the MAC II were sent to Dr. Leon Dreyfus, psychometrician for Touchstone Applied Science Associates, Inc. (TASA), publisher of the MAC II. Dr. Dreyfus prepared Table 7, a comparison of the cut scores suggested by the three panels and normative information available from the test publisher. Since the No Child Left Behind testing will be in the spring of the year, spring normative data was provided.

TASA provides standard scores that correspond to basic beginner, beginner, low intermediate, high intermediate and advanced competency levels for each of the four areas measured (speaking, listening, reading and writing). For each proficiency level, you can obtain a cut score on the total by adding the cut scores on the four levels. For example, on the Red Level Test the cut score between the Basic Beginner and the Beginner proficiency levels on the total score is 148 and 3 percent of the students are below this level. At the Kindergarten level, TASA recommends a score of 220 as the cut point for proficiency and 80 percent of the normative sample were below that cut point. This information is provided for each grade level in Table 7, along with the cut scores recommended by the panels (1/2, 2/3, 3/4, 4/5).

What does this comparison tell us? The panel members were asked to review the descriptors for the TASA proficiency levels and to compare them to the New Jersey proficiency descriptors. The descriptors of the five proficiency levels in New Jersey were generally believed by the teachers to be slightly higher than the five English Competency Levels described in the MAC II descriptive materials. At the highest level, many teachers thought the two descriptors were very close.

In two out of the three standard setting studies, teachers identified cut scores slightly higher than the proficiency level scores provided by the publisher. The standard setting study with the lower cut scores was based on the smallest sample of teachers and is less dependable for that reason. It is desirable to have cut scores as comparable as possible across grades. For these reasons, the cut scores identified by the panels for the MAC II for grades 2 and 3 and grades 9 to 12 were used for the final cut scores, with one exception. At the high school level, the State of New Jersey determined a cut score of 530 as the minimal English proficiency for a student to graduate from high school. Sixteen

teachers were involved in this standard setting, while only nine were involved in the current high school standard setting study. The 3/4 cut on the study with the smaller sample would set the cut score as 527. The 3/4 cut was set at 530, representing the involvement of more teachers in the decision making and allowing a consistent cut for high school graduation and the difference between advanced beginner and advanced on the English language proficiency test.

The publisher provided data that was very useful in extrapolating cut scores to the grades not covered by the panels. By looking at the percentiles at the cut scores provided by the publisher, we compared the percentile ranks at the cut scores in grades 2, 3, 9, 10, 11 and 12 with the percentile ranks for the proficiency level cuts provided by the publisher at the other grades. The percentile ranks of these cut scores were within the range of percentile rank of the cuts determined by the New Jersey panel. Based on review and discussion, the publisher cut scores were determined to be appropriate.

Table 7 contains the final conversions (after the various advisory committee reviews) between proficiency level and scores for the Mac II.

Table 7

Conversion Tables for MAC II
Total Standard Scores Corresponding to Proficiency Levels by Grade

	Standard Scores Corresponding to Proficiency Levels				
	1	2	3	4	5
Red Level Kindergarten (Only Speaking & Listening)	90-147	148-177	178-195	196-223	224 and above
Red Level Grade One	201-384	385-464	465-526	527-596	597 and above
Blue Level Grades Two and Three	177-389	390-470	471-524	525-591	592 and above
Orange Level Grades Four and Five	204-380	381-445	446-506	507-581	582 and above
Ivory Level Grades Six, Seven and Eight	216-397	398-455	456-503	504-574	575 and above
Tan Level Grades Nine through Twelve	191-398	399-468	469-529	530-608	609 and above

IPT. The results of the standard setting study were sent to Dr. Gary Buck and Dr. George Seretis, psychometricians for Ballard& Tighe publishers. Dr. Buck and Dr.

Seretis conducted special analyses on which to base the standard setting study. To make the cut score process as comparable as possible for IPT and MAC II, we proposed using total raw scores for each the oral score, the reading score, and the writing score.

What did the comparison of the normative data with the panelist results tell us? Based on the special analyses provided by Ballard & Tighe, it appeared that the panelists had set the writing cut scores very high. Dr. Seretis produced additional analyses that indicated the scores on IPT writing that correspond to the percentile ranks of the writing cut scores for the MAC II standard setting. Based on a comparison with these scores and discussions with Dr. Seretis, writing cut scores were revised to be more similar to the MAC II results.

The fourth and fifth grade standard setting group seemed to set “lower” cuts than the other groups on the MAC II. They continued to do so for the Oral and Reading IPT. Since the oral test is the same as the test used in the second and third grade panel, the same cut score as proposed for grades two and three were used. Cut scores were extrapolated based on data provided by the publisher and discussions with the publisher.

Table 8 contains the final conversions (after the various advisory committee reviews) between proficiency level and scores for IPT.

Table 8

Conversion Tables for IPT

The proficiency levels for the IPT are determined at the Kindergarten and first grade by obtaining a proficiency level on the Oral Proficiency Test. At all other grades it is determined by getting a proficiency level for the Reading, Writing, and Oral sections of the test and summing them up to obtain a total proficiency level. The proficiency levels are labeled as follows:

- 5 = Full English Proficiency
- 4 = Advanced
- 3 = Upper Intermediate
- 2 = Lower Intermediate
- 1 = Beginner

Proficiency Level:	1	2	3	4	5
Oral Score: Kindergarten and First Grade	A	B	C	D	E & F

For each student, identify the proficiency score for each section of the IPT based on the following table:

IPT Test:	Oral Score = Proficiency Level	Reading Score = Proficiency Level	Writing Score = Proficiency Level
Grade 2-3	A = Proficiency 1 B = Proficiency 2 C = Proficiency 2 D = Proficiency 3 E = Proficiency 4 F = Proficiency 5	0 to 4 = Proficiency 1 5 to 16 = Proficiency 2 17 to 30 = Proficiency 3 31 to 38 = Proficiency 4 39 and above = Proficiency 5	0 to 4 = Proficiency 1 5 to 7 = Proficiency 2 8 to 10 = Proficiency 3 11 to 14 = Proficiency 4 15 to 19 = Proficiency 5
Grades 4-6	A = Proficiency 1 B = Proficiency 2 C = Proficiency 2 D = Proficiency 3 E = Proficiency 4 F = Proficiency 5	0 to 4 = Proficiency 1 5 to 16 = Proficiency 2 17 to 30 = Proficiency 3 31 to 38 = Proficiency 4 39 and above = Proficiency 5	0 to 4 = Proficiency 1 5 to 7 = Proficiency 2 8 to 10 = Proficiency 3 11 to 14 = Proficiency 4 15 to 19 = Proficiency 5
Grades 7-12	A = Proficiency 1 B = Proficiency 2 C = Proficiency 3 D = Proficiency 4 E = Proficiency 4 F = Proficiency 5	0 to 9 = Proficiency 1 10 to 17 = Proficiency 2 18 to 31 = Proficiency 3 32 to 39 = Proficiency 4 40 and above = Proficiency 5	0 to 4 = Proficiency 1 5 to 7 = Proficiency 2 8 to 10 = Proficiency 3 11 to 14 = Proficiency 4 15 to 19 = Proficiency 5

Add the three proficiencies to get a total proficiency level:

Oral Proficiency + Reading Proficiency + Writing Proficiency = Total Proficiency Score

If the total of the proficiency scores is:	Then report the following total proficiency score to the state:
3 to 5	Proficiency Level = 1
6 to 8	Proficiency Level = 2
9 to 11	Proficiency Level = 3
12 to 14	Proficiency Level = 4
15	Proficiency Level = 5

LAS. Very few schools in New Jersey are currently using LAS, which wasn't included in the standard setting study. The cut scores that were proposed for LAS were done by reviewing the published normative information and comparing it to the information on the MAC II and IPT exams. Table 9 contains the final conversions (after the various advisory committee reviews).

Table 9

LAS Conversion Tables

The five levels of English language proficiency used in New Jersey (5 = Full English Proficiency, 4 = Advanced, 3 = Upper Intermediate, 2 = Lower Intermediate, 1 = Beginners) can be defined based on the Language Proficiency Index box J in the Student Profile Sheet. On page 22 of the *Technical Report Validity and Reliability of the Language Assessment Scales Reading/Writing Forms 1, 2, & 3* Sharon Duncan and Edward DeVila describe a combined Oral Language Proficiency score called the LPI.

Grades 1 to 12 using LAS -0

New Jersey Proficiency Level	LPI (RW/LAS-O)
5	3/4;3/5
4	2/4;3/2;3/3
3	1/4;1/5;2/2;2/3
2	1/2;1/3;2/1;3/1
1	1/1

Grades K to 1 using PRE-LAS Forms A & B

New Jersey Proficiency Level	Pre-Literacy Component/Oral Language Component
5	3/4;3/5
4	2/4;3/2;3/3
3	1/4;1/5;2/2;2/3
2	1/2;1/3;2/1;3/1
1	1/1

Summary

The standard setting study provided a way of using professional judgment of teachers to estimate comparable cut scores for MAC II and IPT. Normative data was used to try to estimate comparable cuts for the LAS examination. There is no perfect way of determining precisely comparable scores for the three tests used in New Jersey, because the tests are not designed to be exactly comparable. It is recommended that the results of this study be monitored and evaluated as they are used in the state. It is also recommended that an additional standard setting study be conducted when the new statewide test for English language proficiency is adopted.

Appendix 1

List of Panel Participants

New Jersey Department of Education Office of Specialized Populations

Standard Setting Study for IPT and MAC II Tests Grades 2 & 3 April 29, 2003

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Roberta Diamond	East Orange
Linda Walters	Mt. Holly
Francine Scocozza	Clifton
Tracy Engle	Clifton
Marianne Kurnath	Passaic
Josefina Nagelberg	Camden City Schools
Maria Hofmann	Manchester Twp
Amy Stemhagen	Florence
Elaine Sertway	Pine Hill
Barbara Blackman	Moorestown
Eileen Henry	Lacey Township
Kathleen Fernandez	Lumberton Twp
Bev Blackmann	Woodbridge
Kathleen Natalino	Piscataway

**New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Specialized Populations**

**Standard Setting –MAC II and IPT TEST
Grades 2 & 3
April 30, 2003**

NAME	ORGANIZATION
R. Diamond	East Orange
R. Natlizio	Piscataway
M. Kurnath	Passaic
J. Nagelberg	Camden City Schools
M. Hofmann	Manchester Twp
A. Stemhagen	Florence Twp
Barbara Blackman	Moorestown Twp
Elaine Sertway	Pine Hill
Bev Blackmann	Woodbridge
Eileen Henry	Lacey Township
Kathleen Fernandez	Lumberton
Linda Walters	Mt. Holly
Francine Scocozzo	Clifton
Tracey Engle	Clifton
Cheryl Wild	Wild & Associates
Raquel Sinai	NJDOE
Louis D'Amato	NJDOE

**New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Specialized Populations**

**Standard Setting Study for IPT and MAC II
Grades 4 & 5
May 1, 2003**

NAME	ORGANIZATION
J. Boski	Bilingual Lakewood Bd. Of Ed.
Evelyn Browne	Berlin Com. School
Bruce Rapsher	Glassboro Schools
Linda Bender	Camden Bd. Of Ed.
Doree Feldman	Clifton Bd. Of Ed.
Jory Oulhiad	Clifton Bd. Of Ed.
Jose Diaz	Hammonton BOE

**New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Specialized Populations**

**Standard Setting Study for IPT and MAC II
Grades 4 & 5
May 2, 2003**

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Liliana Habedank	Clifton BOE –Bilingual
Jory Oulhiad	Clifton BOE
Linda Bender	Camden BOE
Evelyn Browne	Berlin School District
Evelyn Gonzalez	Lakewood BOE
Janice Barri	Lakewood BOE
Jose Diaz	Hammonton BOE
Bruce Rapsher	Glassboro BOE

**New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Specialized Populations**

**Standard Setting Study for IPT and MAC II
Grades 9-12
May 5, 2003**

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Linda M. Esposito	Hammonton High
Loretta Spangler	Mon. Reg. H.S.
Mayra Aventi	Essex County Vo-Tech.
Marie Iylo	Passaic High
Kathy Safai	Passaic County Technical
Lisa B. Dold	Burlington City High School
Joseph G. Walsh	Lakewood High School
Louise Chaker	Ridgefield High School
Barbara Yekenchik	Southern Regional

**New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Specialized Populations**

**Standard Setting Study for IPT and MAC II
Grades 9-12
May 6, 2003**

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Joseph Walsh	Lakewood
Louise Chaker	Ridgefield Park
Lisa Dold	Burlington City High School
Marie Iulo	Passaic High School
Loretta Spangler	Monmouth Regional
M. Aventi	Essex Vo-Tech.
Linda M. Esposito	Hammonton
Barbara Yekenchik	Southern Regional
Kathy Safai	Passaic County Tech.

Appendix 2

Sample Agenda

Agenda Standard Setting Study

8:30 – 3:00, Kazenbach School

Day 1*

Time	Topic
8:30 – 8:45	Introductions & Goals
8:45 – 9:00	Overview of Standard Setting Process
9:00 – 9:15	Overview of Mac II
9:15 – 10:00	Speaking
10:00 – 11:00	Listening
11:00 – 12:15	Reading
12:15 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 1:45	Writing
1:45 – 2:00	Break
2:00 – 2:45	Total Score
2:45 – 3:00	Summary and Next Steps

Day 2*

8:30 – 9:00	Overview of the Agenda & IPT
9:00 – 10:00	Oral Test
10:00 – 11:15	Reading
11:15 – 12:15	Writing
12:15 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 1:15	Continue Writing
1:15 – 1:30	Break
1:30 – 2:30	Total Cut Scores
2:30 – 3:00	Feedback and Debriefing

Appendix 3

FIVE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS

The New Jersey Department of Education has taken a number of steps to implement Title III of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). One very important step has been taken to align the test scores of each of the language proficiency tests currently used by New Jersey schools to five proficiency categories: beginner, lower intermediate, upper intermediate, advanced and fully English proficient. The goal of this alignment is to enable schools to convert their students' test scores into language proficiency categories and to report to the Department of Education the number of students scoring at each of the five levels. It will also enable the department to develop a statewide report that uniformly shows the number of students scoring at each of the language proficiency levels. This data will constitute the "baseline data" against which next year's student scores will be compared to determine growth. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Specialized Populations at lep@doe.state.nj.us.

PROFICIENCY LEVELS

- 1-Beginners**
- 2-Lower Intermediate**
- 3-Upper Intermediate**
- 4-Advanced**
- 5-Full English Proficient**

Beginners

	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
1	<p>Students at the beginner level may be able to occasionally identify isolated words and/or major phrases when strongly supported by context. As students develop skills, they may be able to recognize and say the alphabet. They can identify an increasing number of highly contextualized words and/or phrases including cognates. Material understood rarely exceeds a single phrase at a time and rereading may be required.</p> <p><i>At the K-3 level, may be able to recognize and name alphabet letters and some words and sounds in isolation.</i></p> <p><i>May be able to recognize numbers.</i></p> <p><i>May recognize left-to-right reading conventions.</i></p> <p><i>At the upper elementary and middle school level, students will know that pictures help provide context clues. They understand the message-bearing properties of sentences.</i></p> <p><i>At the high school level, they know survival vocabulary and can read simple sentences.</i></p>	<p>Students at the beginner level may be able to form some letters in the alphabet system. They may be able to copy or transcribe familiar words or phrases and reproduce some from memory. There are no practical communicative writing skills. As students develop skills, they may become able to write simple fixed expressions and limited memorized material and some recombination thereof. They may be able to write names, numbers, dates, nationality and other simple autobiographical information as well as some short phrases and simple lists.</p> <p><i>Grades K-3 can write name, copy words, letters, and numbers, and use left-to-right progression.</i></p> <p><i>Understands basic spatial relationship between lines and words.</i></p> <p><i>At the high school level students may be able to write simple sentences or a guided paragraph.</i></p>	<p>Students at the beginner level have a very limited understanding and rely almost entirely on visual cues for understanding. Understanding is limited to occasional isolated words such as cognates, borrowed words, and high frequency social conventions. Essentially no ability to comprehend even short utterances. As students at this level develop listening comprehension skills, they may become able to: Understand some short, learned utterances, particularly where context strongly supports understanding and speech is clearly audible; Comprehend some words or phrases from simple questions, statements, high frequency words, commands and courtesy formulae about topics that refer to basic personal information on the immediate physical setting. The listener requires long pauses for assimilation and periodically requests repetition and/or a slower rate of speech.</p>	<p>Speakers at the beginner level may have no real functional ability and, because of their pronunciation, they may be unintelligible. Given time and familiar cues, they may be able to exchange greetings, give their name, and name a number of familiar objects from their immediate environment. They can in time imitate others' English and rely on formulaic phrases. Students at the beginner level may use strategies to respond to and/or initiate simple statements or requests. As students at this level develop speaking skills they may exhibit an ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate minimally and with difficulty by using a number of isolated words and memorized phrases; - Response to direct questions, students by uttering only two or three words at a time or an occasional stock answer; - Pause frequently as they search for simple vocabulary or attempt to recycle their own or interlocutors' words. <p><i>Able to use speaking to clarify ideas and concepts, distinguish, and summarize in a concrete and familiar context on familiar topics.</i></p> <p><i>Retell with more details.</i></p> <p><i>Prepare and deliver short oral presentations.</i></p> <p><i>Use some idiomatic phrases appropriately.</i></p> <p><i>Uses pronunciation patterns that show moderate evidence of another language in effective communication. Has a distinct accent.</i></p> <p><i>Able to give instructions on concrete day-to-day tasks with appropriate sequencing.</i></p>

Lower Intermediate

	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Writing</i>	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Speaking</i>
2	<p>Students at this level can understand simple material for informative or social purposes. They can understand the essential content of short, general, public statements, life skills texts, and formulaic messages. They can comprehend the main ideas of simple informative and simple narrative materials written for native English speakers, especially when these materials contain simple language structures and syntax, and rely heavily on visual cues and some prior knowledge or experience with the topic. Understanding is limited to simple language containing mostly high frequency vocabulary items and grammatical patterns. Students can often guess the meaning of unfamiliar words through use of cognates and text context. They may have to read the material several times in order to more fully capture meaning, and they may be misled by false cognates.</p> <p><i>Has some understanding of the purpose of the text.</i></p> <p><i>Can distinguish between formal and informal texts.</i></p> <p><i>Can read simple materials and comprehend and decode.</i></p>	<p>Students at this level can express basic personal needs and compose short informal passages and texts on very familiar topics based on personal experience. Writing consists of a limited set of vocabulary and structures in simple sentences and phrases. Errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics are frequent and characteristic and expected of language production at this stage.</p> <p><i>Limited use of conventional organizational structures, cohesive devices, and protocols.</i></p> <p><i>Use of simple present tense.</i></p> <p><i>Use of some words and verbs (high school).</i></p> <p><i>Can begin to use dictionaries (high school).</i></p>	<p>Students at this level can comprehend simple statements, directions, and questions. They usually understand the main idea of extended but simple messages and conversations with some unfamiliar vocabulary and structures as well as cognates from their native language. Limited vocabulary range necessitates repetition and/or circumlocutions for understanding. Students can comprehend language consisting of simple vocabulary, narratives, and structures, in short face-to-face interactions with peers and familiar adults. Students are able to perform auditory discrimination of some major phonological elements in English. They can understand basic everyday vocabulary of the school environment, and common everyday activities. They can listen for and understand common and/or strategic information in the classroom. They can begin to understand and derive meaning from context. They can begin to understand content.</p> <p><i>Can recognize audience needs.</i></p>	<p>Students at the lower intermediate level can use level appropriate strategies to initiate and respond to simple statements and engage in simple face-to-face conversations with more fluent speakers of the same age group. Students at this level frequently make themselves understood by using repetition and circumlocution.</p> <p><i>Reliance on gestures and other nonverbal cues.</i></p> <p><i>Starting to explore stress and intonation.</i></p> <p><i>Reliance on survival vocabulary (vocab.) of basic needs and wants.</i></p> <p><i>Predominance of use of formulaic patterns and heavy reliance on memorized phrases.</i></p> <p><i>Tendency to omit auxiliary verbs, tendency to rely on one form of a verb.</i></p> <p><i>Tendency to pick up words and phrases from interlocutors and incorporate into their own production.</i></p> <p><i>Able to make simple requests for information (for clarification, for expansion). Able to provide information in response to simple requests for information.</i></p> <p><i>Can make them understood in instructional activities in a basic level.</i></p> <p><i>Can express themselves at a basic level, with errors, in the content area.</i></p> <p><i>Can create speech not based on formulaic patterns but with errors.</i></p>

				<p><i>Reliance on schemata on LI (syntactic, grammatical, lexical, cultural...).</i></p> <p><i>Provide a simple logically structured narration or summary of what has just been learned or has just happened.</i></p>
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Upper Intermediate

	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
3	<p>Students can understand more complex narrative and descriptive authentic materials and edited texts with a familiar context. They can use contextual and visual clues to derive meaning from texts that contain unfamiliar words, expressions, and structures. They comprehend selected passages when written in familiar sentence patterns, but frequently have to guess at meanings of longer or more complex materials. They are able to read short texts or trade/pattern books independently. They can follow essential points and some details of expository texts and summaries when dealing with areas of special interest, and begin to separate main ideas from supporting ideas. They can understand main ideas and some supporting ideas. They are able to make informed guesses about meaning from context. Can use cohesive devices to figure out text structure and meaning. Can understand how words, morphemes, and word order convey meaning. Can understand inference, word connotations, and word collocations. Can read a broader range of genres.</p> <p><i>Has broader understanding of purpose text.</i></p> <p><i>Able to distinguish between formal and informal texts.</i></p>	<p>Students at the upper intermediate level of proficiency can write simple texts, uncomplicated personal and business letters, and short reports using everyday, high frequency, grade appropriate vocabulary and common language structures. They can write brief and informed analyses of more complex content, including academic content, when given the opportunity for organization and advance preparation, though errors may occur frequently. They can produce written expressions of opinions and reactions to information from a variety of media. They can express present, future, and past ideas comprehensibly. Errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts. They can attempt to use basic reference tools such as dictionaries. They can perform basic revision and editing functions. They can successfully fulfill the writing task with the use of everyday vocabulary and transitional phrases in more complex sentences. They can begin to use a variety of genres as well as produce writing for different audiences conveying increased levels of register variation, voice, and tone.</p> <p><i>Expanded use of conventional and organizational and cohesive devices, and protocols.</i></p> <p><i>Use graphic organizers for pre-writing.</i></p> <p><i>Can begin to use past and future perfect tenses.</i></p> <p><i>Can use capitalization, indentation,</i></p>	<p>Students at the upper intermediate level can comprehend short conversations on topics in everyday situations, when listening to peers, familiar adults, and selected other adults (e.g., teachers, providers of public services) either in face-to-face interactions or on the phone. Students rely less on repetition, rephrasing, and non-verbal cues for comprehension. Students can understand frequently used verb tenses and word-order patterns in simple sentences. They frequently demonstrate both a general and detailed understanding of short, discrete expressions but have only a general understanding of longer conversations and messages within familiar communicative situations and in academic content areas. They can sustain comprehension through contextual inferences in short communications on familiar topics and in the academic content areas, through paraphrases, slower speaking pace, and visual supports. They can demonstrate phonological discrimination of many auditory elements in English. They can follow multi-step directions, and they can comprehend more linguistically complex and longer conversations and narratives.</p>	<p>Students at the upper intermediate level can initiate and sustain a conversation, face-to-face or on the phone, with fluent speakers of English or more fluent individuals, often with hesitation and circumlocution regarding low-frequency vocabulary. They tend to use the more common verb tense forms (present, past, and future time frames) but still make many errors in formation and selection. They can express details and nuances by using appropriate modifiers. They can use word order accurately in simple sentences, but are not familiar with complex patterns, especially when speaking about academic or other issues. They can sustain coherent structures in short and familiar communicative situations, selectively employing basic features such as pronouns and inflections. Extended communication is largely a series of short, discrete, utterances. Students at the intermediate level often have to repeat themselves to be understood by the general English monolingual public. While they may exhibit flexibility (spontaneity) in their interactions in instructional activities, particularly when the topic is unfamiliar, they often rely on familiar utterances. They use repetition as well as gestures and other nonverbal cues to clarify meaning and sustain conversation.</p> <p><i>Able to respond to novel questions using familiar vocabulary.</i></p>

		<p><i>and punctuation.</i></p> <p><i>Uses more complex sentence structure and unity in paragraph development.</i></p>		<p><i>Able to generate simple questions with the appropriate form and structure</i></p> <p><i>Able to generate /create independently an appropriate contribution to the ongoing discourse.</i></p> <p><i>Can, within limits, edit and correct them.</i></p>
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Advanced

	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
4	<p>Students at the advanced level can comprehend the content of most texts of interest to students at their grade level, and, with support, most appropriate academic content area texts. They can understand most factual information in non-technical prose. They can understand texts with less dependence on context, background knowledge, and familiarity with the topic, and more dependence on language features. Students understand more sophisticated cohesive devices and greater accuracy in interpreting. They can read literature for pleasure. They are able to separate main ideas from supporting ones and thus begin to analyze material that is written for the general public. They are able to use linguistic context and prior knowledge to increase comprehension. They can begin to detect the overall tone and intent of both expository and literary texts.</p> <p><i>Student has an ability to interpret text based on an understanding of the purpose of the text.</i></p>	<p>Students at this level can write multi-paragraph essays, journals, personal, and business letters, and creative texts in which their thoughts are unified and presented in an organized fashion. They can compose unified and organized texts on everyday topics with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions. They are able to show good control of English word structure and of the most frequently used grammatical structures, but errors may still occur, particularly when the students are writing about complex themes or issues requiring the expression of opinion, when the topic is outside their realm of experience, or when the content is rich in technical academic vocabulary. They can express complex ideas sequentially with simple language and draw on a broad range of learned vocabulary, idioms, and structures, including the full range of time frames. They can express more sophisticated extended ideas in more complex structures. They can begin to detect and edit for grammar, structure, and diction.</p> <p><i>Able to use simple reference tools.</i></p> <p><i>Expanded, varied, and appropriate, use of conventional organizational and cohesive devices, and protocols.</i></p> <p><i>Uses more complex sentences and</i></p>	<p>Students can understand standard speech delivered in most authentic settings with some repetition and rewording. They can understand the main ideas and significant relevant details of extended discussions or presentations on familiar and relevant academic topics, feature programs on radio and television, movies and other media designed for a native speaking audience. They comprehend a wide range of language forms, vocabulary, idioms, and structures learned in and outside of language classes and content area classes. Students at this stage can often detect affective undertones and understand inferences in spoken language with some repetition and rephrasing. They can understand a variety of speech samples from diverse forms of English. They can demonstrate phonological discrimination of most auditory elements in English.</p>	<p>Students at the advanced stage can handle most communicative situations with confidence but may need help with any complication or difficulty they encounter in language productions, especially in academic subjects. They can engage in extended discussions with fluent speakers on a broad range of topics that extend beyond their daily lives and are of general interest to the target cultures. Their vocabulary, with some circumlocutions, is sufficient to communicate precisely at the appropriate level. They demonstrate mastery of elementary constructions.</p> <p><i>Vocabulary is sufficiently broad that speaker has choices and can be precise.</i></p> <p><i>Greater precision in the choice of prepositions, of modal verbs.</i></p> <p><i>Broader range and greater accuracy in use of idiomatic phrases appropriately.</i></p> <p><i>Narrating sequence of events with appropriate temporal markers, tense and modality forms.</i></p> <p><i>Able to speak appropriately to a variety of audiences.</i></p> <p><i>Presentation that follows a process of organization and uses a</i></p>

		<p>language.</p> <p>Can research a topic.</p> <p>Able to use more sophisticated vocabulary.</p>		<p>variety of sources.</p> <p>Uses pronunciation patterns that have some interference with effective communication.</p> <p>Able to generate more complex questions with the appropriate form and structure.</p> <p>Beginning to give instructions on abstract tasks with appropriate sequencing.</p>
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Full English Proficient

	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Writing</i>	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Speaking</i>
5	<p>Students at the full English proficient stage understand and obtain meaning from a wide range of texts available to native English speakers. They can read extended academic texts at the appropriate level containing multiple perspectives; they can critique and evaluate perspectives and weigh counter arguments. Students can understand a variety of the literary genres. They can read and comprehend complex grammar and rhetorical features, including the meaning of varied text structures. They have mastered the strategies of reading, approach native English-speaking students at their grade level, and are approaching grade-level mastery of the language structures and vocabulary that are characteristic of texts in the academic content areas. Students can understand vocabulary that is academic and also be able to figure out technical vocabulary.</p> <p><i>Student has an ability to interpret text based on an understanding of the purpose of the text.</i></p> <p><i>Ability to handle word problems, to extract precise and detailed information from a text and set up problems (in math, science, etc.)</i></p> <p><i>Ability to visualize meaning as</i></p>	<p>Students at this stage are approaching fluency in academic writing within the content areas, using the language structures, technical vocabulary, and appropriate writing conventions with some circumlocutions. They begin to use alternative and nuanced meanings of words in their written communications. They demonstrate an increasing ability to successfully employ the subtleties of written language for different audiences and purposes. They can use more accurate complex writing structures. They can demonstrate effective use of rhetorical and cohesive devices.</p> <p><i>They can edit for word use, mechanics, and structure, and revise for content, organization, and vocabulary.</i></p> <p><i>Able to use a more varied range of reference tools.</i></p>	<p>Students at this level can understand most standard speech. They understand and identify the main ideas and relevant details of extended discussions or presentations on a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar topics in a number of modalities. Students at this level apply their linguistic skills and knowledge, including vocabulary, idioms, and complex grammatical structures, to the leaning of academic content. These students are able to use paralinguistic features of the language, such as stress, intonation, pace, and rhythm, to understand spoken language. They can comprehend subtle, nuanced details of meaning.</p>	<p>Students at the full proficiency stage can engage in most social communicative situations with confidence and mastery of complex language structures. Speaking in the academic content areas is characterized by fluency and accuracy in language production, with some circumlocution regarding technical content area vocabulary within academic content areas and some language forms.</p> <p><i>Uses pronunciation patterns that do not interfere with effective communication.</i></p> <p><i>Can use spoken language of academic content areas to persuade, clarify, evaluate critique, hypothesize, synthesize, and/or summarize at the appropriate level.</i></p> <p><i>Able to speak appropriately to a variety of audiences with fluency, rhythm, and pace.</i></p> <p><i>Presentation that follows a process of organization and uses a variety of sources on an unfamiliar topic.</i></p> <p><i>Broader range and greater accuracy in use of idiomatic</i></p>

	<p><i>intended by the writer.</i></p>			<p><i>phrases appropriately.</i></p> <p><i>More accurately provide temporal relations between elements in the topic of discourse using idiomatic phrases, and tense and modality.</i></p> <p><i>Asks questions or challenges statements about academic topics or tasks.</i></p> <p><i>Able to give more complex instructions on abstract tasks with appropriate sequencing taking the listener's perspective into account.</i></p>
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