



State of Israel
Ministry of Education
The Pedagogical Secretariat
Languages Department
Inspectorate for English Language Education

ORAL PROFICIENCY: IN THE ISRAELI ENGLISH CLASSROOM

WORK IN PROGRESS

Tziona Levi, Phd.

**WHY PROFICIENCY? WHY
SPOKEN INTERACTION?**

LEARN TO SPEAK



TOP DESIRABLE SKILLS



Team Work



Communication



IT Skills



Problem Solving



Time Management



Customer Awareness

The value of soft skills in the labor market has increased.

(NBER reporter 2017:4)

The labor market rewards social skills and requires high level of social interaction. STEM occupations shrank by 3.3%

So?

Bridgewater Group



www.bridgewateruk.com



WHAT WILL WE TALK ABOUT?

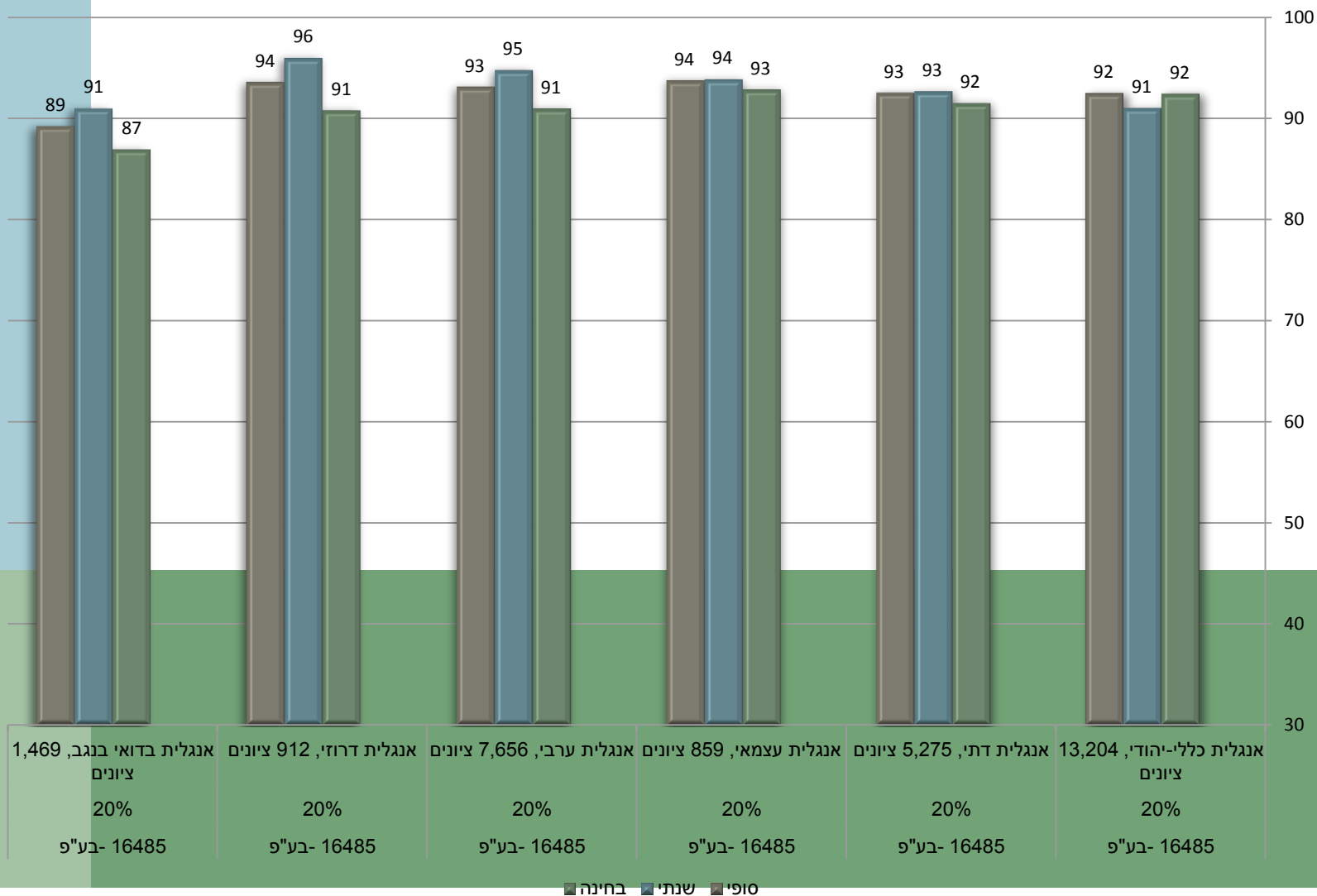
RATIONALE

**SPEAKING
TEST**

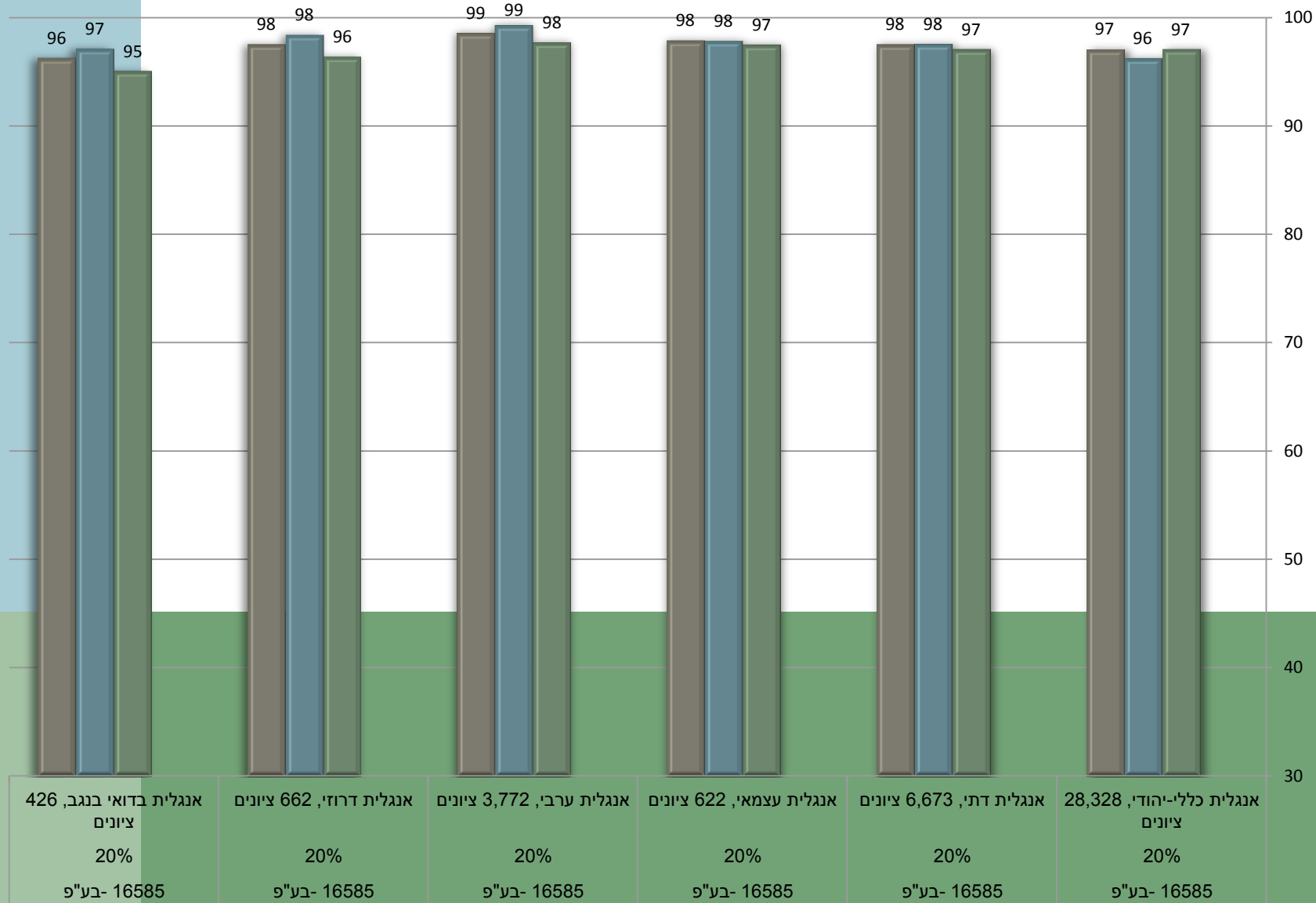
**SPEAKING
PROGRAMS**

**TEACHERS
AND
TEACHING**

4 points results 2017



5 points results 2017



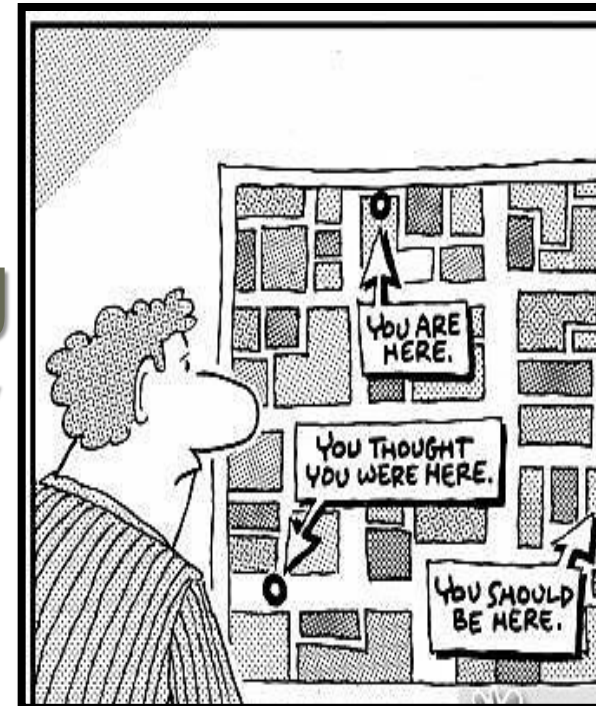
Can

you speak
English?



CHANGE THE FAMILIAR AND KNOWN

- ✓ **Test reliability**
- ✓ **Test validity**
- ✓ **Dissatisfied teacher-testers**
- ✓ **Match international standards**
- ✓ **Open global learning opportunities also by aligning to CEFR**



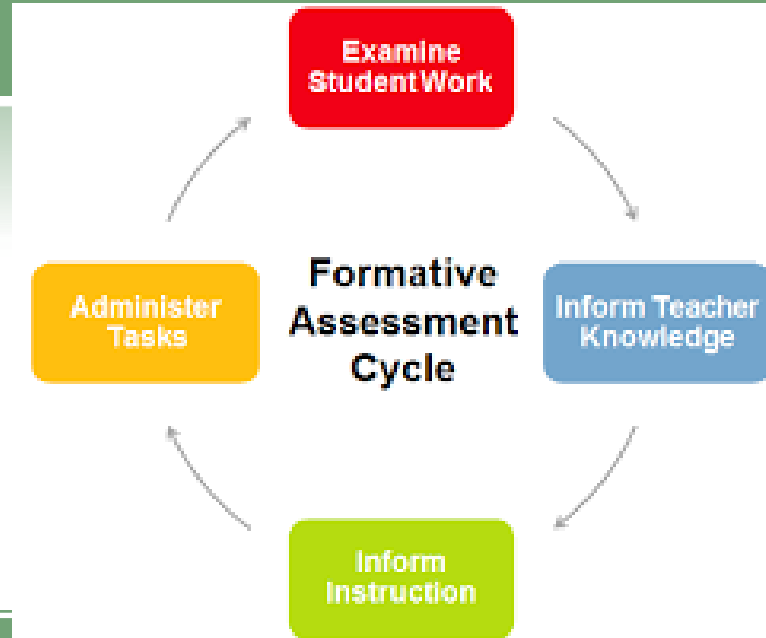
Carol S. Dweck,
Mindset: The
New Psychology
of Success




**“NO MATTER WHAT YOUR
ABILITY IS, EFFORT IS
WHAT IGNITES THAT
ABILITY AND TURNS IT INTO
ACCOMPLISHMENT”**



Planned agenda to influence the teaching-learning-assessment cycle of OLP



- **Formative Assessment**
- **Learning-Oriented Assessment**

- 
- **“The collection and interpretation of evidence about performance so that judgment can be made about further language development”**

(Purpura, 2004: 236)

- **Centrality of L2 processing and L2 learning outcomes.**

- **A variety of learning and assessment contexts.**

- **With scaffolding and learning within assessment.**

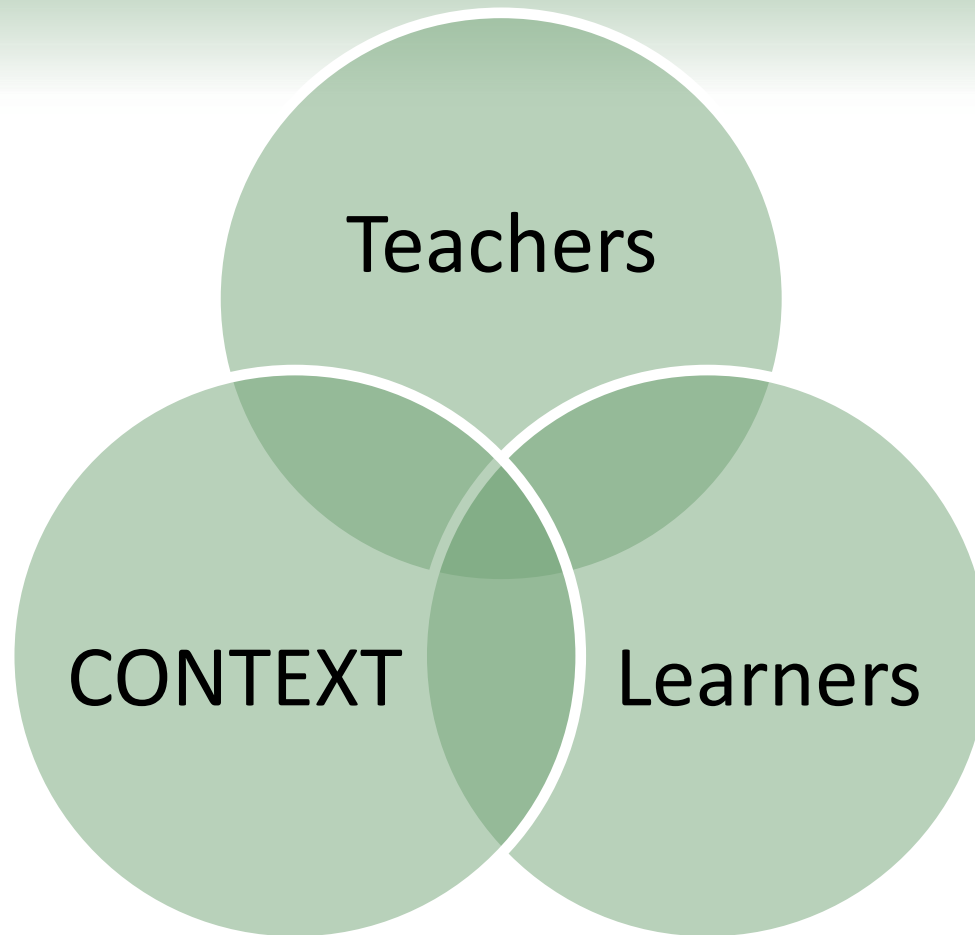
(Purpura & Turner, 2013)

Learning-Oriented Assessment



| | Large-scale testing |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Learning-focused tasks | •Judgment-focused tests |
| Scaffolded task completion | •Support not permitted |
| Interactive questioning | •Assessor questioning |
| Learner-involved assessment | •Learner-excluded assessment |
| Self-evaluation | •Authority assessment |
| Peer evaluation | •Authority assessment |
| Learner-focused feedback | •Judgment-focused feedback |
| Assessor (teacher) scaffolding | •Summary decision reporting |
| Immediate feedback | •Delayed or no feedback |
| Focus on feed-forward | - - - - - |
| Assessment is contingent | Assessment is absolute |
| inherently interactive | Large-scale testing inevitably under-represents the constructs of language |

The main players (Norris, 2014)





A ROLE for TASK-BASED TEACHING and ASSESSMENT

In TBLT tasks are essential pedagogic constructs that drive classroom activity

(Samuda & Bygate, 2008)

“Ultimately, language learning does not depend on a few ‘super moments’ but on thousands of interactional moments”

(Van den Branden, 2010: 296)



Or.... A lot of

-Assessment tasks as learning tasks

(Carless, 2007)

-Learning Tasks as assessment tasks

(Coplin & Van Gorp, 2007)

-Washback

(Norris, 2009)




MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Seek a coherent analytic framework for task-based classroom assessment to promote speaking that will:

- **set task characteristics & specifications**
- **interpret task performance (strategies)**
- **track learner development** (Norris, 2009)
- **be integrated in syllabus design, curriculum development and curricular thinking** (Byrnes, 2013)

SO.....



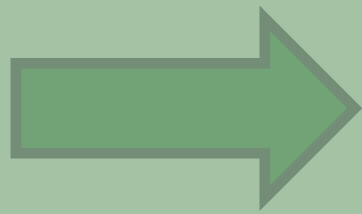
Framing questions re development of OLP performance in a large-scale English setting:

- 1. What do we do?**
- 2. What do we look for?**
- 3. What theories and standards do we rely on?**
- 4. Do teachers and learners share the same understandings?**
- 5. How does our context and beliefs shape practice?**





- **STUDENTS ARE THINKERS**
- **TEACHERS ARE INTELLECTUALS**
- **CULTURE MATTERS**
- **TECHNOLOGY AS AMPLIFIER**



4 principles of test washback that feeds into the design of the speaking program

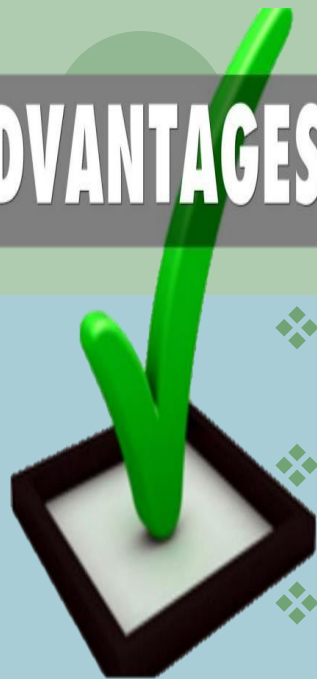
TWO VERSIONS:



- 1) An innovative **computerized test**: stimuli in the form of clips and questions to which students respond.
- 2) **a skype version** identical to the current test interview and oral test questioning with a distant tester under **uniform conditions to** ensure test reliability.

ADVANTAGES

PILOT OLP MATRICULATION TEST (BAGRUT)



- ❖ 286 students from all sectors in summer 2017
- ❖ voluntary basis
- ❖ test items correspond with the CEFR.
- ❖ rating scales: existing rubrics aligned with CEFR
- ❖ responses are recorded
- ❖ Creative test items but not entirely interactive
- ❖ No need for teacher-testers to travel to schools
- ❖ User-friendly test

THE COMPUTERIZED ORAL BAGRUT EXAM

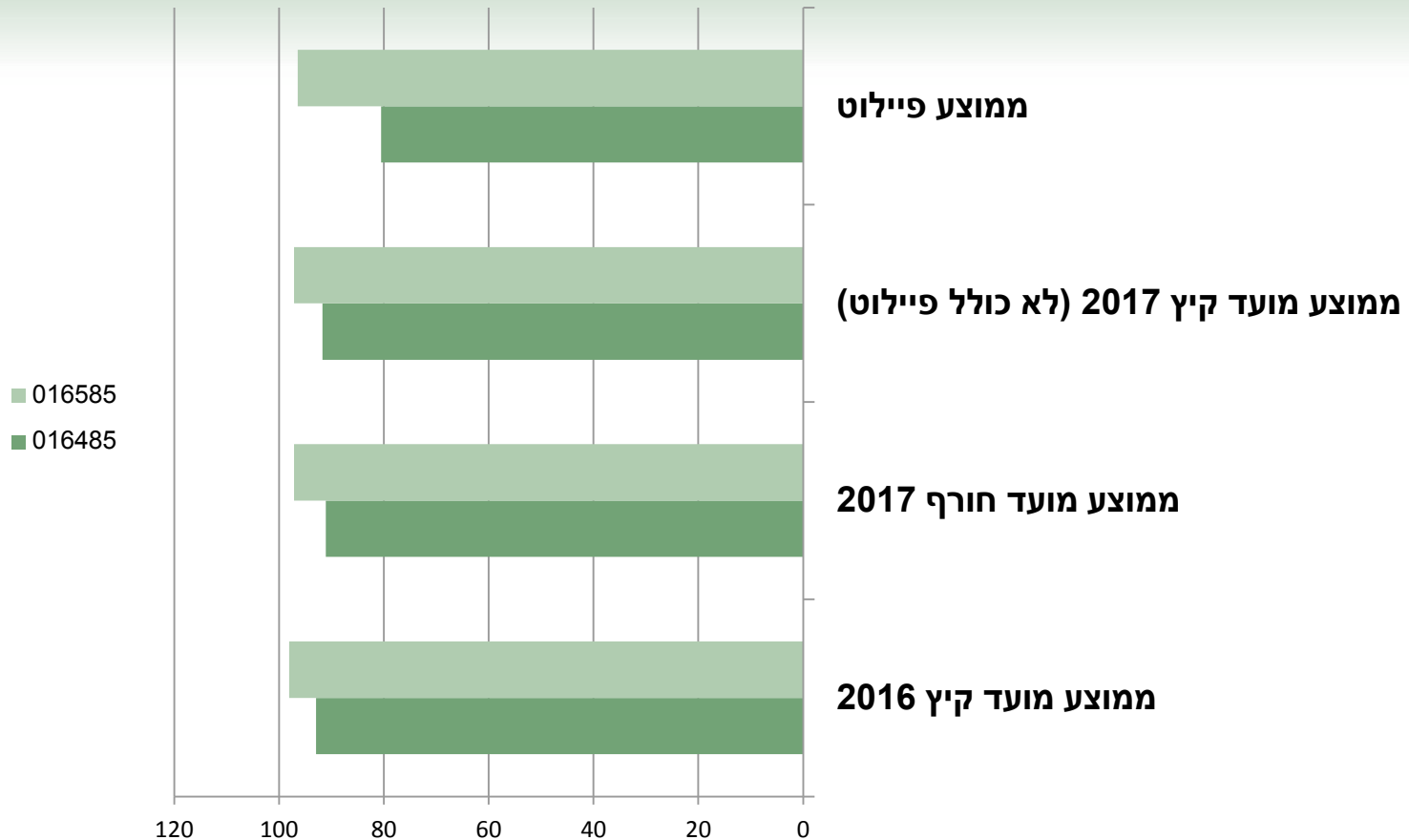
- 1. Interview**
- 2. Project presentation**
- 3. Audiovisual prompt**



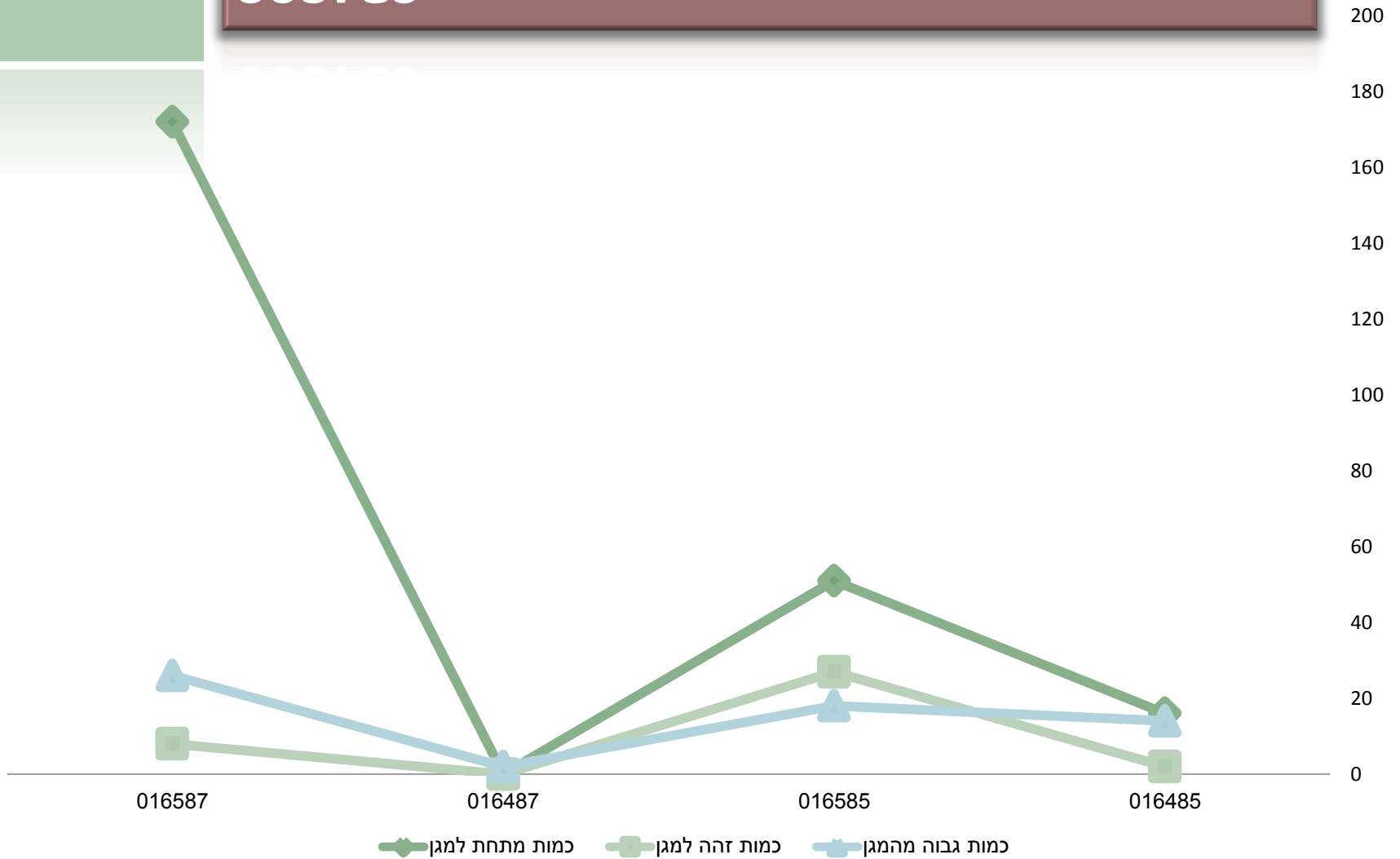


- ⦿ **Is a likeable and friendly avatar**
- ⦿ **accompanies the students throughout the exam**
- ⦿ **explains what has to be done at each stage**
- ⦿ **asks questions the students are required to answer**
- ⦿ **reminds the students to record their answers**
- ⦿ **and what has to be done next at each stage**
- ⦿ **gives words of encouragement to the students throughout the exam**

COMPARISON OF SCORES 2016-2017



Annual scores compared to test scores



Construct/ CEFR definition

Spoken Interaction

Students can express themselves fluently and spontaneously. They can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes and can formulate ideas and opinions appropriately and relate contributions skilfully to those of other speakers.

Spoken Production

At the C1 level, students can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.

A working definition

Oral fluency can be defined as the ability to express oneself intelligibly, reasonably accurately and without too much hesitation.

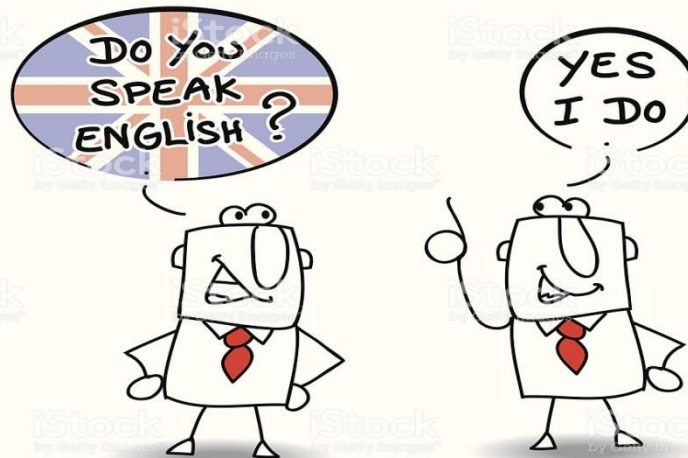


WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF FLUENCY, EXPRESSION & PROFICIENCY (ALSO IN RUBRICS)

- Specific lexis**
- Grammatical range**
- Complexity**
- Awareness of the other speaker(s)**
- Pragmatics, register, intercultural awareness**
- Pronunciation features**



HOW CAN SPEAKING FLUENCY BE ACHIEVED ON A LARGE SCALE?





SPEAKING PROGRAMS

1. Let's Talk-7th grade
2. Debate clubs-9th grade
3. Keep Talking-10th grade
4. Out of this world: Space content interaction b/w Arab and Jewish students

Emphasis on Elementary School:

- English libraries
- Speak up via WhatsApp
- **Online live interactive lesson: 8/3**

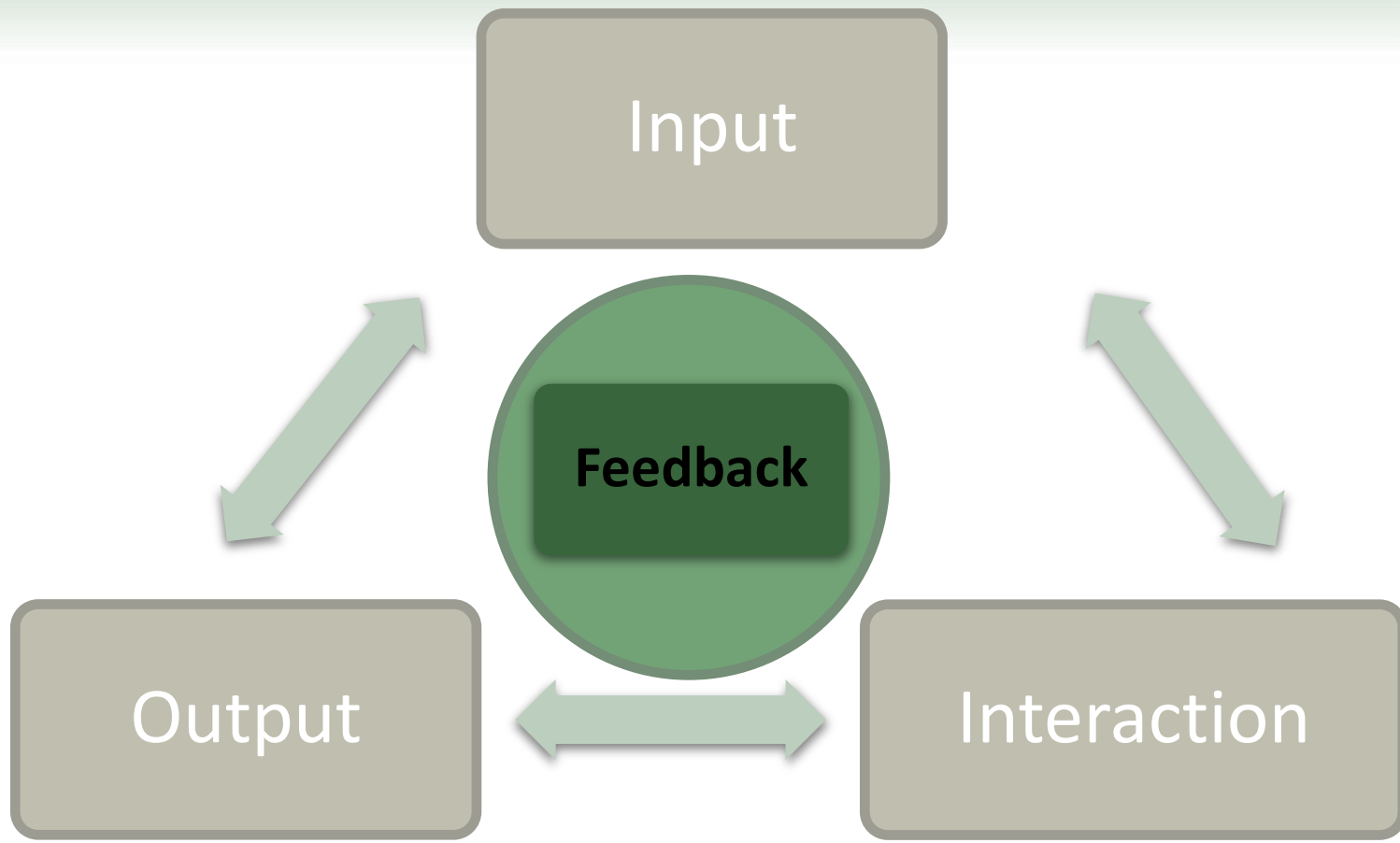


ALL PROGRAMS CONSIDER

- ◎ **How speaking in English happens**
- ◎ **Characteristics of an English classroom**
- ◎ **How can speaking becomes effective/efficient**
- ◎ **How to ensure a safe environment that enables speaking**
- ◎ **How can feedback be given to students on their speaking**



HOW DOES SLA/FL WORK?



Class make up & format



- Engaging
- Requires immediate feedback
- Provides support
- Encourages learner responsibility
- To request support
- Requires better discipline
- Reduces anxiety levels



KEEP TALKING.... (:

Please keep talking...



I always yawn when I'm interested.

ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- **Teacher development**
- **Preparation of teaching materials**
- **Dissemination of materials**
- **Support assessment for feedback and modelling**
- **Support (counselors)**

Example: -30 hours per homeroom
-25 shekels per student per approved book





To make assessment more effective and efficient:

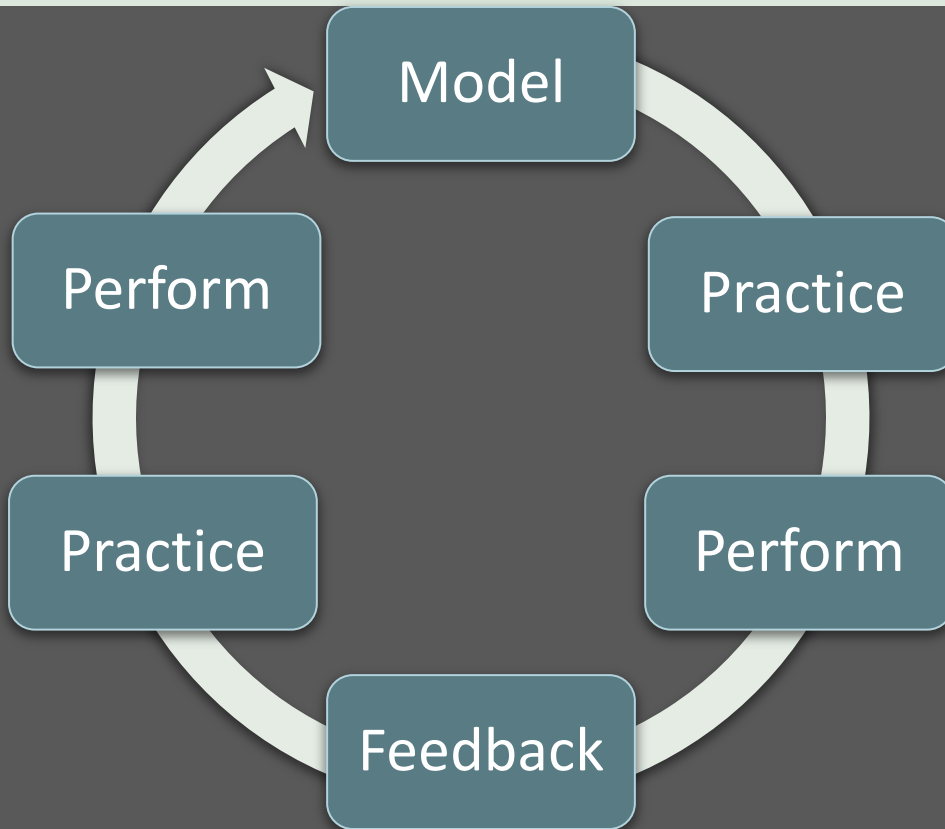
◎ Good models

◎ **Good rubrics:** transactional functions (Brown & Yule, 1983), interactional functions (Richards, 2008) **talk as interaction, talk as transaction, talk as performance.**

Orality as opposed to literacy (Morrow, Roskos, & Gambrel, 2016)

◎ **Lots of feedback**

A CYCLICAL APPROACH: LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT



Adapted from Wiggins, G. (1998)

1. Create user-friendly rubrics.
2. Give your students models of the performance that you expect and how to apply your rubric to them.
3. Give them the opportunity to practice applying the rubric.
4. Have them perform.
5. Have them apply the rubrics to their own and their peers performance and provide feedback.
6. Repeat the process.



MODELING

This is an example of intermediate-level performance. Here is where you can see evidence of meeting the criteria

| | |
|--|---|
| Maintains and closes conversations in a culturally appropriate manner most of the time | ✓ |
| Uses a variety of simple and compound sentences, and some complex sentences | ✓ |
| Uses a variety of communication strategies as necessary to maintain communication (e.g. circumlocution, paraphrasing, requesting clarification and/or information). | ✓ |
| Pronunciation and intonation patterns, pacing, and delivery are comprehensible to an audience unaccustomed to interacting with language learners; their pronunciation is consistent, with few errors that do not impede comprehensibility. | ✓ |
| Is able to ask a variety of simple questions. | ✓ |



PRACTICE

This is an example of a role play. Identify evidence of the following:

| | |
|--|---|
| Maintains and closes conversations in a culturally appropriate manner most of the time | ✓ |
| Uses a variety of simple and compound sentences, and some complex sentences | ✗ |
| Uses a variety of communication strategies as necessary to maintain communication (e.g. circumlocution, paraphrasing, requesting clarification and/or information). | ✓ |
| Pronunciation and intonation patterns, pacing, and delivery are comprehensible to an audience unaccustomed to interacting with language learners; their pronunciation is consistent, with few errors that do not impede comprehensibility. | ✓ |
| Is able to ask a variety of simple questions. | ✗ |



PERFORM

1. Working with a partner, complete the following information-gap activity and record your interaction.
2. Watch your performance and rate yourself using the attached rubric.
3. Watch two other role-plays and rate your peers using the rubric.

| | |
|--|---|
| Maintains and closes conversations in a culturally appropriate manner most of the time | ✓ |
| Uses a variety of simple and compound sentences, and some complex sentences | ✗ |
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| Is able to ask a variety of simple questions. | ✗ |



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Special Announcements

QUANDARIES



- ⊙ **Should we define can-do proficiency statements per grade/ per level?**
- ⊙ **How can implementation in pre-service teacher education be supported?**

- ⊙ **How should the Israeli program correspond with international exams?**

THANK YOU

