Examples for the three domains of test items

First we would like to provide an example of a self-assessment test. As a first step to gauge learner's signed language abilities, *self-assessment* might provide insights in how learners themselves evaluate their comprehension, production and/or interactive skills in their signed language as a second language (SL2). The results also provide feedback on what are weaknesses or strong points in the learner's signed language skills, and could be a starting point for further learning.

Self-assessment is a form of self-diagnostic for a language learner – as compared to formal assessment which may lead to certification of a learner's language proficiency. An example of a large scale self-assessment is DIALANG which „is the first large-scale language assessment system that aims at diagnosing rather than certifying language proficiency" (Alderson & Huhta, 2005, p. 302). A language learner can take the test whenever he or she wants to. The feedback on the test is reported back only to the learner (Alderson & Huhta, 2005).

This self-assessment version is used in the Netherlands at Royal Kentalis and was developed by Arie Terpstra (2009)[1]. The translation into English is (partly) based on Leeson and Dunne (2009). Please note that this is just one example, and other can-do statements could be chosen from the checklist for production. It is also possible to record your assessment on separate checklists for production and interaction.

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[1] Translated into English by the authors. We would like to express our gratitude to Arie Terpstra, Project leader Learning & Development, from Kentalis Academy, section Education, for granting us permission to use this part of their self-assessment document (2009).

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NGT Self-Assessment Checklist

Name: …………………………………………

[department or function or student id, etc.]…….………………

Please fill out the checklist on the following pages. Subsequently you can indicate below which level is achieved, according to the relevant checklists.

A1 – Understanding NGT   ☐   date:……………………………

A1 – NGT Production/interaction   ☐   date:……………………………

A2 – Understanding NGT   ☐   date:……………………………

A2 – NGT Production/interaction   ☐   date:……………………………

B1 – Understanding NGT   ☐   date:……………………………

B1 – NGT Production/interaction   ☐   date:……………………………

B2 – Understanding NGT   ☐   date:……………………………

B2 – NGT Production/interaction   ☐   date:……………………………

B2 – Understanding NGT

1   I can understand live or recorded standard signed discourse (and/or in my own variant) about familiar and less familiar topics and about specific topics in my own field of expertise.
2   I can follow a lecture or presentation in my own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation is straightforward and clearly structured
3   I can with some effort, follow conversations between adult signers and deaf children/youngsters when I know the topic of conversation
4   I can follow the essentials of lectures, talks and reports and other forms of academic/professional presentation, which are propositionally and linguistically complex
5   I can quickly grasp the essence of short instructions, announcements or instructions, signed live or recorded.
6   I can understand announcement and messages on concrete and abstract topics delivered in standard NGT at normal speed.
7   I can understand most TV shows or signed video programs, e.g. instructions, local news, interviews, talk shows, and stories in standard NGT.
8   I can quickly determine important details in long and complex recorded signed discourse.
9   I can determine quickly whether different sorts of video-messages, articles or reports are worth further study.

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10 I can understand signed texts on video on topical issues and identify signers' viewpoints

11 I can follow literary and non-fiction texts to a reasonable degree, understanding the general trend and details.

12 I can understand longer complex recorded instructions, provided I can review difficult parts more than once.

13 I can make use of sign dictionaries or databases to look up less frequently used signs, on the basis of (a) parameter(s) of the signs.

14 I can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including identification of main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.

When you can tick off 11 of the 14 can-do statements you can assume that you have achieved B2 – Understanding B2 for NGT, and you can tick off the B2 Understanding NGT box on the front page of the Portfolio (see above).

Here are some examples for the three domains of comprehension, production and interaction.

Example for (a) Signed Language Comprehension

The following example for *one item* in a comprehension test is provided for an A2 test at the end of a module (the second module in first year of a four-year BA course in Utrecht). However, the instructions as displayed below are given for the test as a whole (e.g. 'this test consists of 8 parts'). Instructions like 'click on the little hand' should be ignored in this example.

Please also note that the use of L1 (i.e., the spoken language, in most cases) is acceptable for levels A1 and A2, but for level B1 and higher, test instructions should be in the target L2. In this test, the lexicon that has been practised in the module is used, and the item is linked to the following A2 descriptor and can-do statement:

Comprehension: Descriptor NGT module 2 (A2)

C3.
    The student understands short, simple directions and can follow these.
- I can understand directions to fetch something or put something away.
- I can show that I have understood directions by my actions, in the right order.

Example 1: NGT comprehension test (one item!)

Test level: A2
Skill: Receptive live

This test consists of eight (8) parts. For each part, you first read the description of the situation, and the questions and answers. Then go to the next page (click on the little hand). There you will find clips of the NGT texts and the questions.

Related to what is being signed, you should choose one (1) answer out of a number of possible answers. Please tick the right answer (not more than one (1)).

In each fragment is indicated how much time you have to choose your answers is indicated. In total this test lasts 25 minutes.

Test level: A2
Skill: Receptive live

Part 7

Click here to view the clip on the ProSign website:

You are going to work in a commune for deaf youngsters. You are starting with a simple job in the kitchen. Your deaf colleague explains what you have to do. Please look at the clip (it will be shown once) and then answer the two questions. You will get two (2) minutes to do so.

Questions

a. You are to put the fresh milk in the refrigerator. How should you do that?

☐ The old and fresh milk together in the refrigerator.

☐ The fresh milk in the refrigerator and the old milk is to be thrown away.

☐ The old milk should go on the bottom shelf, and the fresh milk on the top shelf.

b. What does your colleague say about the yoghurt?

☐   The same rules apply to the yoghurt as for the milk.

☐   There is no yoghurt today.

☐   Your colleague will explain later how that works.

☞

Example for (b) Sign Language Production

In this example we present the developmental steps to make a (formative) assessment production task on level B1, as an assignment during a sign language course.

- Step 1 (rationale): The teacher wants to monitor the progress of the students in the production of a monologue on a familiar topic; this has been practised during the course.

- Step 2 (constraints) Time: Test development by teacher: one and a half hour. There are many students, so teacher must be able to evaluate the assignments quickly (15 minutes per student). For this reason, there is a strict time limit for the students' production (3 minutes); handed in electronically (in video).

- Step 3 (purpose): Evaluation of monologue signing skills at B1 level and feedback.

- Step 4 (content): Signed language production, level B1, monologues. Relevant here:

  o   Global descriptor for production
      B1: Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest.

  o   Overall Production and Can-Do statement:
      B1: I can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within my field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.

  o   Sustained monologue; the descriptions in bold are the ones relevant for this assessment.

B1	Can give straightforward descriptions on a variety of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest.
	Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a linear sequence of points.
	Can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions.
	Can relate details of unpredictable occurrences, e.g. an accident.

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	Can relate the plot of a book or film and describe his/her reactions.
	Can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions.
	Can describe events, real or imagined
	Can narrate a story.

- Step 5 (Test specification): Provide students electronically with picture of an animal, about which they have to talk for 3 minutes: what does the animal look like, where does it live and what does it eat?

- Step 6 (rating/scoring):
  The following aspects belong to a monologue on B2 level:

  1. Vocabulary range: Has a sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to his/her everyday life, such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events.

  2. Vocabulary control: Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts when handling unfamiliar topics and situations.

  3. Phonological control: Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a "foreign accent" is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.

  4. Grammatical accuracy: Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes, for example, tends to mix up the marking of time and forget to mark agreement; it is usually clear what he/she is trying to say.

  5. Coherence and cohesion: Can use the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points.

  6. Sign fluency: Can keep going comprehensively, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.

  7. Propositional precision: Can convey simple, straightforward information of immediate relevance, getting across which point he/she feels is most important. Can express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensively.

- Step 7 (score reporting and interpretation): Described in student handbook and embedded in university scoring system. Not further discussed here.

- Step 8 (pilot and main study): Not done here.

- Step 9 (training of testers): Not relevant here.

Now the main point is: what exactly does the teacher want to provide feedback on, for this assignment? It is too much to assess all aspects, so a choice must be made. Here is a short description of the teacher's choice:

a. Does the student provide an introduction of the topic, is there a clear structure, and is the story interesting? (**B1 sustained monologues** descriptors in bold above)
b. Is there phonological control (in this case: correct use of mouthings/mouth gestures)? (**point 3 above)**
c. Is there grammatical accuracy (in this case: use of localization via INDEX, enumerating via hooked hand in a downward movement, rhetorical questions, is correct sign order maintained? (**point 4 above**)
d. Does the student use connectors (e.g. *and, but, also*) and describe a simple list (e.g. use buoys) (**point 5 above**)
e. Is the information provided correct? (additional point).
f. Fluency: pauses, hesitations, self-corrections, unnecessary fillers (**point 7 above**).

These choices would result in the following scoring form (step 7).

Criteria	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	Total
1. Sustained monologue **- introduction to the topic** **- structure of story[2]** **- end of story** **- pleasant style**	1 part adequately performed	2 parts adequately performed	3 parts adequately performed	All parts adequately performed	x 2
2. Phonological control **- mouthings** **- mouth gestures**	Overuse of mouthings, no use of mouth gestures	Correct use of mouthings, incorrect (or lack of) use of mouth gestures	Mouthings not always correct, correct use of mouth gestures	Mouthings and mouth gestures are correct	
3. Grammatical accuracy, e.g. **- use of localisation** **- enumeration** **- rhetorical questions** **-correct sign order**	Systematic and frequent mistakes in basic grammar. Use of separate signs, no conjugations	Systematic mistakes in the basic grammar, that do not really interfere with the intelligibility of the story	Fairly correct use of simple constructions, but elementary mistakes do occur occasionally.	Fairly correct use of aspects. Correct sign order. No mistakes that interfere with intelligibility	

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[2] Structure in story: In the body of the story (after introduction and before conclusion) the structure should follow a clear storyline, and thus be logical, clear, concise etc. These criteria need to be described in the handbook of the module.

Criteria	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	Total
4. Cohesion and Coherence **- use of connectors** **- use of buoys** **- use of hooked handshapes to enumerate** **- use of rhetorical questions**	1 part adequately performed	2 parts adequately performed	3 parts adequately performed	All parts adequately performed	
5. Information correct **- factual** **- looks like…** **- eats….** **- lives so….**	1 part adequately performed	2 parts adequately performed	3 parts adequately performed	All parts adequately performed	
6. Fluency **- pauses** **- hesitations** **- self corrections** **- fillers**	Overuse of pauses, hesitations, self-corrections, and fillers	Correct use of pauses, still too many hesitations, self-correction attempts and fillers	Correct use of pauses, partly appropriate use of hesitations, self-corrections and fillers	Correct use of pauses, appropriate use of hesitations, self-corrections and fillers	
Remarks					

Total number of points: 48. Minimum (this can vary of course) 55%, so 26 points is a pass.

Example for (c) Sign Language Interaction

For an A2 test at the end of a module (second module in first year of a four year BA course) the following example for *one item* (part 1. A dinner) in an interaction test is provided below. In this test, the lexicon that has been practised in the module is used, and the item is linked to the following A2 descriptors and can-do statements:

Interaction: A2 Descriptors NGT module 2 (ISL&D, 2012)

NB: These are selected descriptors for this example

I1.   The student can introduce him/herself, can greet somebody and say goodbye, appropriate for Deaf Culture.

- I can assume the correct listening attitude
- I can greet someone and say goodbye.
- I can introduce myself in a simple manner and tell something about myself.
- I can inquire after somebody's wellbeing, and react to news.
- I can pose and answer questions about myself and others, where we live, whom we know.

I3.   The student can ask for clarification if s/he does not understand something.

- I can indicate that I do not understand something.
- I can ask for a repetition.
- I can indicate that I do not know a sign.

I4.
        The student can clarify when somebody else does not understand something.

- When somebody does not understand me, I can try and rephrase my message.

        The student can indicate that s/he is misunderstood.
I5.
- I can show by my posture, facial expression or otherwise that I can see that somebody did not understand me.

        The student can pose questions.
I8.
- I can ask people for something, make a request or pose questions in an appropriate way..
- I can pose simple questions, and provide answers to questions about familiar topics/issues.

I9.   The student understands questions.

- I can show that I understand the question, when something is asked of me.
- I can answer simple question by pointing to something or someone.

I10.   The student can offer something to people.

- I can ask people something and offer them something.

I11.   The student understands when something is offered.

- I can show, by 'listening posture' or body language, that I understand when something is offered to me.

        The student can thank someone for something.
I12.
- I can thank someone when something is offered to me.
- I can thank someone for an offer of help.

I14.   The student can react to simple statements about primary needs or very familiar subjects.

- I can make an appointment.

Example 3: NGT interaction test (one item)

Instruction sheet for candidate

Test Level: A2

Skill: Interaction

This test consists of three (3) parts:

1. **A dinner**
2. Meeting a friend in a sign bar
3. Conversation with the new practice supervisor of the programme

The instructions for each part are on separate sheet. Before each part you are given the opportunity to read the instructions and to prepare.

Part 1: A dinner

A new colleague whom you really like has come to work in your department/company. It so happens you both like to cook, and enjoy good food. You invite your colleague to have dinner with you at home. The following aspects should be addressed in the conversation:

- Ask if s/he would like to come over for dinner
- Make an appointment / fix a date
- Ask what s/he would like to eat
- Discuss whether there are things that s/he does not like or is not allowed to eat
- Please indicate that you have a big dog, and ask whether s/he objects to there being a dog around when s/he comes.

This conversation lasts about 3 minutes; then finish the conversation.

Please click here to view the conversation. Note: the teacher also follows instructions to enable the student to perform at his/her best ability.

Example 2: Please click here to view one conversation, which is provided with full agreement of the student and the teacher.