

# ASSESSMENT TOOL RESEARCH REPORT SUMMARY



JUNE 2025 | NETOLNEW RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP | UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

## ABOUT

The NETOLNEW Language Learning Assessment Tool was developed in 2016 as part of the original NETOLNEW Research Partnership, which focused on the mentor-apprentice program. In the second phase of the NETOLNEW Assessment Project (2023-2025), we sought to understand how assessment tools can support language learning, how this tool has been used, and how it could be improved.

Our research partnership undertook a three-part research study as part of our commitment to understanding how the AT supports Indigenous language learning and how it could be improved.



## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF LITERATURE

#### FINDINGS

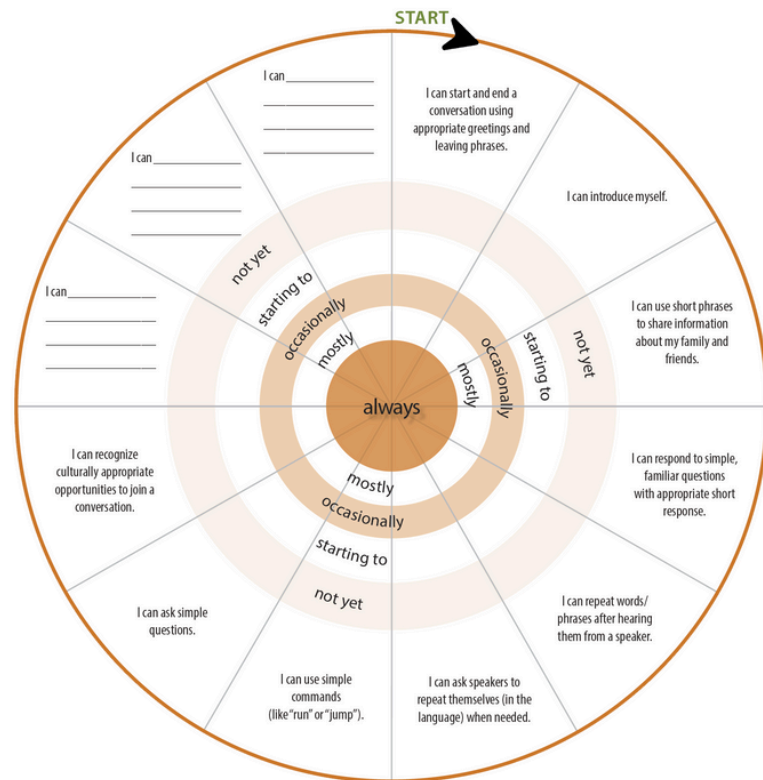
- 45 language learning assessment tools identified – not all specific to Indigenous languages
- Most assessments were geared towards children

#### POPULAR FRAMEWORKS

- The Common European Framework for Reference for Languages (CEFR) and American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) were popular assessment frameworks adapted to Indigenous language learning environments
- Major categories of assessment were: 1) proficiency scales/benchmarks; 2) self-assessments; and 3) language proficiency tests

#### CULTURE & SPIRITUALITY

- Culture was incorporated into assessment tools in four main ways: 1) Intercultural communication; 2) Presenting a cultural worldview; 3) Using culturally relevant examples/topics; and 4) Measurement of cultural pride
- Almost every assessment tool reviewed did not include spiritual components or components addressing language trauma and/or healing



## SURVEY & FOCUS GROUPS RESEARCH

### SURVEY & FOCUS GROUP DEMOGRAPHICS

- Most survey respondents were language learners
- About two-thirds of survey respondents were women
- Many survey respondents came from British Columbia (i.e., Hul'q'umi'num', nuučaanuł, Secwepemctsin), but many others came from across Canada (i.e., nehiyawin, Anishnaabe, and Inuktitut), the United States (i.e., Denaakk'e, Chikashshanompa') and some Indigenous communities outside of North America (i.e., Ẽdo, Krenak, Maori)

### USE OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL

- AT is most often used for mentor-apprentice programs, but also frequently for post-secondary language programs, home language learning, and adult immersion programs
- Used more frequently for Speaking than Understanding assessments, and more for the Beginner level than Intermediate
- Most commonly used annually

### STRENGTHS OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL

- Its focus on Speaking and Listening (as opposed to literacy skills)
- The use of "Can-Do" statements
- The opportunity to reflect on one's language learning
- The circular design (according to the focus groups)

### SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT TOOL IMPROVEMENTS

- Expansion of domains, including literacy and culture
- Recommended to address language healing and trauma within the AT
- Changes to address challenges with tracking progress over time
- Concerns of the rating scale being not specific enough
- A more refined digital version of the AT
- Opportunity to reflect more deeply on language learning journeys

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Develop a web-based version of the AT to be able to track progress more easily
- ▶ Maintain the paper-based option of the Assessment Tool (some prefer)
- ▶ Maintain the circular design and the "Can-Do" statements
- ▶ Incorporate more aspects of culture, spirituality, and healing
- ▶ Rework the rating scale to greater assessment precision
- ▶ Strengthen or expand sections for language learning reflection
- ▶ Develop a framework to develop additional domains and levels, such as an advanced levels, literacy and cultural domains

### TO CITE REPORT:

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### LEARN MORE AT: [www.netolnew.ca](http://www.netolnew.ca)

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