

# Clarifications of Internally Assessed Standards in Japanese

The Conversation standards: 90104, 90486, 90572

## General

- Students are required to *convey and seek* (at level 2), or *exchange and support* (at level 3) *relevant information, ideas and /or opinions*.

The conversation standard involves interaction between the participants. For this reason an interview where the teacher asks a set of questions and the student replies does not adequately cover this criterion.

*For example, a conversation about a famous person may deteriorate into a talk punctuated with questions. There is no opportunity to converse. A conversation about an issue may, however, provide opportunities for an exchange of opinion which exemplifies the aspects which make a spoken text conversational. (Assessment Guidelines for NCEA Learning Languages, 2006).*

- Cue cards are not allowed.
- Students should not have a pre-learned and/or pre-marked script or set of questions.
- Students need to communicate appropriate achievement objectives. For level 1 this is up to and including **level 6** of Japanese in the New Zealand Curriculum.

For example, a conversation about a party that took place may allow students to talk about what happened at the party and therefore allow students to communicate the curriculum function 6.5 describe activities and events, using complex sentences ーたりーたりする。

- The best conversations happen where the assessor is listening and sensitive to what the student has said and interacted with that, not simply moving to the next question on the list, whatever the answer given.
- Success happens where the assessor shows appropriate wait time, giving students time to collect their thoughts. In real conversation, sometimes there are pauses and this is the same in this assessment.
- Good assessments show that students are well prepared for the unexpected, and/or things they cannot understand, with enough formulaic language to ask for further clarification e.g. すみません、もう一度言ってください。ーは何ですか。

## Terminology

"*Development*" and "*variety*" in a conversational setting are not the same as in writing text where students have access to resources and are able to craft and redraft their work. In conversations, where there is a level of spontaneity, "development" and "variety" are slightly different to written text. Features of a conversation which contribute to development and variety are such things as:

- interaction
- referring back to things that have been already said
- clarifying
- negotiating meaning
- using appropriate colloquial expressions and language for the context.

**Communication** in a conversation is achieved when the meaning is successfully negotiated and where the pronunciation, intonation and pausing help the communication to be effective. **Any errors do not hinder communication** (Excellence) means that the meaning is ultimately clear and successfully negotiated, not that there are no errors. (Assessment Guidelines for NCEA Learning Languages, 2006).

As students are interacting spontaneously there will be more errors than in the writing or presentation standard where they have been able to check their work before presenting it. Errors only alter a grade dependent on the level to which they hinder communication; it is not dependent on the number of errors.

## Tasks

The task has a high bearing on the success in assessing the standard. Tasks which allow students to successfully interact show one or more of the following:

- The task gives control of the conversation to the student.

For example, students are expected to initiate parts of the conversation. Examples of this are situations where the task asks students to *find out...*, *get details ...*, or *comment on what is said*.

- The context is one which allows for a reasonably natural exchange of ideas/opinions/information in a reasonably realistic context.
- Gives students choice.