

Section 2

HOW to Frame Evaluation Questions

What Questions Do You Need to Investigate?

- What to evaluate
 - How to develop goals and objectives
 - SUGGESTIONS & EXAMPLES: Goals and Objectives
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What to Evaluate

One of the most important concerns in evaluation is determining what to evaluate. Most evaluation and research questions in dual language fall into three broad categories:

1. Outcome questions

- What kind of progress have students in the different groups made in their oral and written proficiency in each language?
- What are the academic achievement outcomes for students from the different language groups at different points in time?
- Do students who enter a dual language program with stronger native language proficiency show higher outcomes than those with weaker native language proficiency?
- What attitudes do students and their parents demonstrate toward their participation in the program?
- What attitudes do students and their parents demonstrate toward bilingualism and biculturalism?
- What are teachers' perceptions of the effects and benefits of the program?

2. Implementation questions

- Is the program implemented as intended?
- In what ways does the implementation differ from the plan?
- Does the program as implemented provide equality to all students, or does it meet the needs of one group more effectively than another?

3. Participation questions

- Who are the students who participate?
- Are the language groups represented in the intended ratios?
- Are there significant demographic differences among the language groups, e.g., ethnicity, socio-economic status (SES)?
- How proficient are the students in their native or second languages when they enroll?
- What is the attrition rate? Does it differ by language, ethnicity, or SES category?

While the above questions and many others are important research and evaluation questions, most evaluation questions tend to be outcome-oriented, and based on the goals at the school site.

Variations in community and administrative needs mean that schools have different goals for implementing dual language programs. However, three major goals in many dual language programs include variations of the following:

- Students will become bilingual and biliterate.
- Students will achieve at grade level in the content areas measured in both languages.
- Students will develop positive cross-cultural attitudes.

Some programs also embrace goals of school restructuring, professional development, curriculum development, and parent education.

How to Develop Goals and Objectives

Once the goals have been determined, it is important to establish objectives. An objective is a precise definition of the goal so that the goal can be measured. This objective is specific in stating the outcome: what score is expected, what instrument will be used, in what language, and at what point in the program.

For example, the goal for a student to become bilingual does not specify the level of bilingualism, at what grade level the student should be expected to demonstrate that s/he is bilingual, or how bilingualism will be measured.

Objectives

Objectives must be stated in a very precise way. Let's use as an example the goal that students will become proficient in their second language. Some individuals might write an objective that states something like "Students will score high on the XYZ Test in the second language."

While this objective is helpful in that it has been determined that language proficiency will be measured in the second language with the XYZ Test and that high scores are expected, it is not clear what "high" means. A more specific objective would be: "Students will score at least 25 on the XYZ Test in their second language after four years in the program."

Accountability and state-level requirements specify that students reach grade-level expectations. While goals and objectives should reflect high expectations, they should also be reasonable and attainable—for the students who are participating in your program. Thus, the goal for students to achieve at (or above) grade-level in the content areas is a goal that is attainable according to research. However, the research shows that students reach grade level at different points in their L1 and L2, and depending on their language and socio-economic background (actually, level of parental education and literacy in the home). Some outcomes from research on two-way programs are presented in the Appendix to help you set reasonable goals and objectives.

Some examples of goals and objectives are presented in the SUGGESTIONS & EXAMPLES section below.

In the process of determining what the objectives should be, there are a few other important issues that need to be considered as well:

- How much individualized assessment and group testing can be conducted?
- What instruments are available in the appropriate languages?
- Which audiences need to know what information?
- Who is available to help interpret the evaluation data?

The answers to these questions will help in establishing the objectives, what instruments will be used, and timelines for testing. We will address these questions in Section 3 of this Toolkit.

SUGGESTIONS & EXAMPLES:

Goals and Objectives

If you have not developed goals for your problem or you are unclear of your goals, now is a good time to develop or even re-examine them. Put this information in your Evaluation Notebook.

- Look at the EXAMPLE of a Program's Goals & Objectives below and see how others have written their goals and objectives.
- In the next few pages, you will see some tables and questions that will help you develop goals and objectives for your program.

EXAMPLE of a Program’s Goals & Objectives

This is an example of a set of goals and objectives at one 90:10 two-way immersion school that have been revised by the authors. This will give you an idea of how to write specific objectives for goals that are common at various sites. We will follow this up with measurement instruments you could use in Section 3, which describes the data to be collected. The instruments described in these examples are discussed in Section 3.

1. **GOAL:** Students will develop high levels of oral proficiency in the two languages.

Objectives:

- By fourth grade, ELL students who have participated for at least four years will develop sufficient oral language skills in English to score as Early Advanced on the CELDT¹.
- By fifth grade, ELLs and English speakers will demonstrate proficiency (scores of at least 4 on comprehension, pronunciation, and vocabulary) on the FLOSEM² measured in Spanish.

2. **GOAL:** Students will achieve at or above grade level in literacy and the content areas.

Objectives:

- By fifth grade, most ELL students, who have participated for at least four years, will score as Proficient or Advanced on the criterion-referenced California Standards Test. Students who have not met this criterion will show an increase in levels over time.³
- By fourth grade, English speakers who have participated for at least three years will score as Proficient or Advanced on the criterion-referenced California Standards Test. Students who have not met this criterion will show an increase in levels over time.⁴

3. **GOAL:** Students will develop positive cross cultural attitudes.

Objectives:

- By grades 4-6, students will demonstrate positive cross cultural attitudes as indicated by Agreement with cultural items on the Cross-Cultural Attitude Scale⁵.

¹ CELDT = California English Language Development Test

² FLOSEM = Stanford Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix, developed by the California Foreign Language Project, Stanford, CA – see Toolkit section 3 on What Data to Collect

³ In a 90:10 program, third grade is when students add on English reading.

⁴ In a 90:10 program, third grade is when students add on English reading. If YOUR English speakers are from homes with lower parental education and literacy, you might want to consider the appropriate objective attainment.

⁵ This scale ranges from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. See WHAT Data to Collect for various attitude scales.

4. **GOAL:** The program structure and curriculum will be enhanced.

Objectives:

- Using the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Programs, a leadership team⁶ will be established to develop/improve the program by ____ (time period).
- Using the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Programs, the leadership team will rate the current program structure and determine a planning process to improve the program structure by ____ (time period).
- The leadership team will rate the current program structure and determine a planning process to improve the program structure by ____ (time period).
- The leadership team will develop a horizontally and vertically articulated curriculum in both languages by ____ (time period).

5. **GOAL:** Teachers will be trained in dual language theory and instructional strategies.

Objectives:

- A professional development plan based on the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Programs will be developed by ____ (time period).
- Each year, teachers will be trained in at least one core area outlined in the professional development plan. This training will include at least one follow-up meeting to discuss implementation issues and concerns.

6. **GOAL:** Home/School collaboration will be a priority.

Objectives:

- A needs assessment for parent workshops/training will be developed by ____ (time period).
- Parents will be provided two workshops each year on topics suggested by the needs assessment.
- Parents of all backgrounds will feel equally valued at the school as determined by responses to a Parent survey.

⁶ Typically composed of administrative staff and teaching staff representing appropriate grade levels.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES FOR OUR DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM (Evaluation Notebook)

II. Goals (It is not necessary to include all these goals. Select those that are most important for your program at your level of development or refinement). Write your goals next to the appropriate topic area and then write out one or more objectives you think you could meet. Don't take on too many goals and objectives right away. And, be realistic in what you can actually attain. You may want to establish separate objectives for ELLs and EPs. Once you are done writing these out, enter them into a word processing file, then print them out and put them in your Evaluation Notebook.

1. Bilingualism

- Goal:

- Objective(s):

- Objective(s):

2. Biliteracy:

- Goal:

- Objective(s):

- Objective(s):

3. Academic Achievement:

- Goal:
 - Objective(s):

 - Objective(s):

4. Multiculturalism:

- Goal:
 - Objective(s):

 - Objective(s):

5. Program Improvement:

- Goal:
 - Objective(s):

 - Objective(s):

6. Staff Development:

- Goal:
 - Objective(s):

 - Objective(s):

7. Parent Education:

- Goal:
 - Objective(s):

 - Objective(s):