

## Rationale: Why an Evaluator’s Toolkit?

The document [Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education](#)<sup>1</sup> is a tool to help schools develop high quality programs. One of the strands in that document is titled Assessment and Accountability. That section of the document provides excellent guidance in indicating that programs should:

- create and maintain an infrastructure that supports an accountability process (e.g., develop a data management system);
- align student assessment with state content and language standards as well as program goals;
- collect a variety of data using multiple measures; and,
- analyze and interpret their data appropriately.

While these guidelines are helpful, most school staff have no idea how to adhere to these principles.

The purpose of this digital Toolkit is to assist staff in programs that serve ELL students (with a particular reference to two-way/dual language programs) to understand how to meet assessment and accountability guidelines. This Toolkit assumes no prior knowledge of data collection, data management or data analysis on the part of the user. It is truly "A Beginner's Toolkit." It speaks to personnel in local dual language programs who want and need to conduct a program evaluation but may not have access to an evaluation department or other expert resources who can advise them on what data to collect, how to maintain it, how to analyze it, and how to present it—this describes many projects in large and small districts. Small districts may not have the resources. Large districts may have the resources, but the technical expertise is dedicated to priorities that do not include the dual language program.

### **Dual Language vs. Two-Way Immersion vs. Developmental Bilingual**

In this Toolkit, we use the term "dual language" to encompass both two-way immersion programs and late-exit maintenance, or developmental bilingual programs. Both of these programs serve ELL students with the purpose of developing full bilingual proficiency. However, while most of this Toolkit can serve developmental bilingual programs, it focuses more on two-way immersion programs (both 90/10 and 50/50), in that it also discusses evaluation of and data on native English-speaking students.

### **What This Toolkit DOES**

This Toolkit contains:

- Specific guidelines on developing an appropriate evaluation plan, with goals and objectives for the type of dual language program being implemented

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<sup>1</sup> [www.cal.org/twi/guidingprinciples.htm](http://www.cal.org/twi/guidingprinciples.htm)

- A discussion of data collection instruments, with an examination of multiple measures—with links to various instruments that have been developed or used in dual language programs
- Information about how to set up a data management system, with simple-to-follow instructions, and downloadable Excel spreadsheets and codebooks
- Information about how to analyze, interpret, and present data, including step-by-step instructions for typical analyses using the statistical software SPSS and for setting up common graphs in PowerPoint
- A glossary of terms and acronyms used in the Toolkit (and which are common in language education)
- Resources for program evaluation activities:
  - Examples of a program description, goals and objectives, and data collection plan and timeline
  - Sample questionnaires, spreadsheets, and codebooks
  - Research data from various research projects on two-way programs to allow schools to make comparisons with larger datasets

## **What This Toolkit DOES NOT Do**

This Toolkit does not provide the spreadsheet or statistical *software* needed to maintain or analyze data. The user will need to acquire separate software for that. Many school computers come with spreadsheet software such as Excel already installed. Many project personnel and/or their support staff know how to use these. This Toolkit merely gives guidance in how to use them in preparation for appropriate data analysis, and we do provide sample spreadsheet layouts in Excel.

Users may find it necessary to obtain a statistical software program. Many are available, and this Toolkit does not recommend any particular one. It uses the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for its examples because it is widely used among educational evaluators and researchers. The best program is the one that is easiest for you. Any statistical program will do the simple kinds of analysis most commonly needed for program evaluation as described in Section 6.

## **How to Use This Toolkit**

This Toolkit has been developed to be as user-friendly as possible. The process of evaluation will be best understood if the user progresses through the Toolkit sequentially, from Section 1 (Why Evaluate) through Section 9 (Step-By-Step Guide to Data Analysis and Presentation). It will also be most useful if you complete the assignments as you go through it, so that you understand how to use this information.

If you are reading this in a hard copy, you already downloaded and printed it. However, the Toolkit contains several links to other documents, which of course have to be accessed online and then printed if hard copy is available. Section 9 can be read, but it can only be helpful if you are at the computer and following the instructions for using Excel and PowerPoint.

A glossary of terms and acronyms is provided for the common terminology and the acronyms used in this Toolkit and in language education in general. When you need to use it, go to the Glossary at the end of the book. You might want to take a quick look at it now to see what kinds of terms it contains.

## **A FINAL Note**

Educators of English language learners (ELLs) know how to achieve much in little time with few resources. That's true at the classroom teachers' level, and it's true for professional program evaluators such as the authors of this Toolkit. We made this Toolkit happen in a very short time frame, relying on our own knowledge and experience and, for the pilot version, our homegrown skills in Web design, with a little help from a graphic designer. But that's in the spirit of the Toolkit, which intends to help projects with their own homegrown evaluation skills.

The project could not have happened at all without the financial support of the California Department of Education. We thank Veronica Aguila and Judy Lambert in the Language Policy and Leadership Office of the Department of Education, who proofed the Toolkit and helped to get the business end of things done. We also thank 2-Way CABE for giving us the opportunity to preview the Toolkit at the July 2006 conference in Long Beach, where we got helpful feedback from practitioners in the field.

Thanks also to the projects and individuals who spent time field-testing the Toolkit and gave us feedback on their experience, enabling us to make the Toolkit as user-friendly as it can possibly be.