

## Program Evaluation

Ongoing measures of effectiveness will allow programs to adapt and improve services in a timely manner. Sometimes so much effort is put into designing and implementing an effective ESOL program that a means for determining just how effective it is gets neglected. The best evaluations come from evidence automatically generated by the program itself through process indicators. These can be built into the program so that by its very functioning, those working in the program as well as those who supervise or administer it can readily assess progress towards the stated goals.

### Program Effectiveness

The best way to maintain a finger on a program's pulse is to ensure an understanding of the program's goals by all of its participants. This means involving the teachers, support staff, and administrators in the development of the program itself. By doing so, both formative (measures of program progress) and summative (measures of program outcomes) indicators of success can inform evaluation and improvement.

In addition to evaluation plans that work with educational programs in general, some characteristics of programs for ELs are unique and should be taken into account in determining program effectiveness. For example, while it is the ultimate goal of any ESOL program to help students reach the state standards for academic achievement, basing a decision of program effectiveness solely on the results of large scale, standardized tests would be misleading.

In order to provide a balanced picture of program effectiveness, the following areas need to be evaluated:

- Student progress (achievement) - How far has the student come since entering the program?
- Program accuracy - How well does the program correlate with and prepare students for grade-level work?
- Program content - How well do students access the curriculum?
- Program context - How well do the instruction and setting contribute to student progress?
- Professional development - How well does the program allow for the continued growth of its staff?
- Parental involvement - How well are students' parents apprised of the program and involved in their students' education?

The US Department of education has compiled guidance and resources to assist districts in conducting program evaluations and can be found at the following link: [EL Toolkit](#).

If desired, it is possible to hire an outside program evaluator. Recommendations can be obtained through most of the regional and state agencies listed at the end of this document, and from districts that have used them.

## Yearly Evaluation

Districts that receive Title III funds must have in place a yearly evaluation report including the following information:

- a description of the programs and activities conducted during the two immediately preceding fiscal years
- a description of the progress made by ELs in learning English and meeting challenging state academic content and student achievement standards
- the number and percentage of children attaining English proficiency at the end of each school year
- a description of the progress made by students in meeting challenging state academic content and student achievement standards for each of the two years after students are no longer receiving services
- the percentage of children that:
  - 1) are making progress in attaining English language proficiency
  - 2) have transitioned into classrooms not tailored to ELs
  - 3) are meeting the same challenging state academic content and student achievement standards as all other children
  - 4) are not receiving waivers for reading or language arts assessments.