



Using *Teaching Strategies GOLD®* to Assess Children who are English-Language Learners

English- and dual-language learners are students who are developing the ability to understand and speak more than one language. When assessing students who are English language learners in the areas of social-emotional development, physical development, cognitive development and mathematics, it is ideal to assess students by documenting their knowledge and skills when they respond in their preferred languages, the languages they choose at particular times to show what they know and can do. For example, if a child can count to ten in Spanish and counts five objects accurately, using one number name for each object, then he or she is considered as being at a level 4 of Objective 20a, “Counts”, even if he or she would be at a lower level when counting in English.

Teachers may gather data about many objectives by observing, even if they do not speak the child’s home language. Such objectives are considered *language-neutral* because they do not require children to comprehend or produce English to demonstrate what they know or can do. For example, you may gather information about Objective 1b, “Follows limits and expectations” when a student arrives at school, hangs up her coat and sits at her seat without reminders. Even some math objectives are language –neutral. When a student creates or extends a simple repeating pattern, a teacher can collect information on “Demonstrates knowledge of patterns.”

English Language and Literacy Objectives

The language objectives (9-10) and literacy objectives (15-19) are measured from an English language perspective. For example, does the child use an expanding, expressive vocabulary in English? How many letters of the alphabet can the child name in English?

A student who is an English language learner may demonstrate receptive and expressive English language skills below the purple colored bands on Objs. 8-10. However, it is likely the student will still fall somewhere along the progression. For example, on 9a “uses an expanding expressive vocabulary”, if a student cannot yet speak English, but is using gestures to communicate, he/she would be on level 2 “vocalizes and gestures to communicate”.

“Not yet” would only be used if the student does not yet demonstrate any knowledge, skills or behaviors along the progression, even at level 1. This would be used only in rare instances.

“Not observed” is used if the teacher has not had the opportunity to observe the student’s knowledge, skills and behaviors in relation to an item. “Not observed” should not be used to indicate that a student is not yet demonstrating a level along the progression for an item.

All students will be assessed on the English language and literacy objectives with only the following exceptions allowed.

- 1) If students are in a 100% Spanish immersion classroom and Spanish is the only language used for classroom instruction and literacy, it is not appropriate to assess student's English language and literacy acquisition. In this scenario, teachers would use the Spanish language and literacy objectives in place of the English language and literacy objectives. There may be immersion programs in other languages such as Russian or Mandarin. However, GOLD does not include language and literacy objectives in those languages. Thus, teachers would use the English language and literacy objectives in those scenarios.
- 2) If students are in a classroom where both English and Spanish are used for instruction, but literacy is only taught in Spanish, the teacher would still assess students using the English language objectives and would use the Spanish literacy objectives instead of the English literacy objectives. Information on English language objectives can be gathered during other parts of the day such as arrival, math and transitions.

Spanish Language and Literacy Objectives

For all other scenarios other than the two mentioned above, using the Spanish language and literacy objectives would be in addition to, not instead of, the English language and literacy objectives. The Spanish language and literacy objectives are very similar to the English version of the language and literacy objectives, but adaptations were made to reflect patterns of development unique to Spanish language and literacy.

If a teacher is proficient in Spanish and has students whose home language is Spanish, even though the main language of instruction in the classroom is English, he/she may also use the Spanish language and literacy objectives to indicate the progression of development in Spanish. This is optional and not a requirement of WaKIDS.