

## Using *Teaching Strategies™ GOLD* to Assess English- and Dual-Language Learners

English- and dual-language learners are children who are developing the ability to understand and speak more than one language. The Home Language Survey (or your school system's information document) helps teachers gather and record useful information about the language(s) children have been exposed to in the home environment and the language(s) children use at home and at school. This will assist teachers in supporting children's language and literacy acquisition.

- 1. If the language of instruction is English and some children speak Spanish:** The following instructions apply to children who have been identified as English-language learners as part of the Home Language Survey or other instrument.

Objectives 37 and 38 – Once you have determined that a child is an English-language learner use these objectives to assess the child's acquisition of English.

Language and Literacy Objectives (8–10 and 15–19) – If you are able, you may use the objectives in **Spanish** to indicate the progression of **Spanish** language development. Remember that Spanish-speaking ELLs may not be ready to be assessed on language and literacy objectives in **English** until they have made significant progress in English language acquisition as measured by objectives 37 and 38.

For all other objectives – Most physical, cognitive, and mathematics objectives are language neutral. For example, with objective 20, the goal is to assess the child's understanding of counting and quantity, not the language he or she may use to count. For objectives that are language dependent, assess the child's skills and behavior using his or her preferred language, if possible. This ensures that the child will demonstrate the greatest level of proficiency. Remember, family members can be a resource for helping to provide information about children's development and learning.

- 2. If the language of instruction is English and some children speak a language other than Spanish:** The following instructions apply to children who have been identified as English-language learners as part of the Home Language Survey or other instrument.

Objectives 37 and 38 – These objectives are appropriate to assess a child's skills in acquiring any **second** language. Remember that ELLs may not be ready to be assessed on language and literacy objectives in **English** until they have made significant progress in English language acquisition as measured by objectives 37 and 38.

- 3. If it is a Dual Language Classroom:** This assumes instruction in two languages; children may have different first and second languages. The tool is appropriate for classrooms where children are learning English and Spanish.

Language and Literacy Objectives (8–10 and 15–19) – Use the objectives in both Spanish and English. The objectives in Spanish indicate the progression of Spanish language and literacy development.

For all other objectives – Most physical, cognitive, and mathematics objectives are language neutral. For example, with objective 20, the goal is to assess the child's understanding of counting and quantity, not the language he or she may use to count. For objectives that are language dependent, assess the child's skills and behavior using his or her preferred language. This ensures that the child will demonstrate the greatest level of proficiency.

Objectives 37 and 38 – Use these objectives to assess the child’s acquisition of a second language. For some children that may be English; for others Spanish. These objectives can help you to assess progress in acquiring any second language. You may need to modify the language in the examples to reflect the new language the child is learning if it is not English. Using objectives 37 and 38 will provide guidance about how to consider the child’s growth related to the language and literacy objectives in that second language.

**4. If it is a Spanish Immersion Classroom:** This assumes that the language of instruction is Spanish and that children are English speakers.

Language and Literacy Objectives (8–10 and 15–19) – Use the objectives in both Spanish and English.

For all other objectives – Most physical, cognitive, and mathematics objectives are language neutral. For example, with objective 20, the goal is to assess the child’s understanding of counting and quantity, not the language he or she may use to count. For objectives that are language dependent, assess the child’s skills and behavior using his or her preferred language. This ensures that the child will demonstrate the greatest level of proficiency. If the teacher is more comfortable *reading* the objectives in Spanish, she should do so, but not penalize a child because he can’t demonstrate the skill in Spanish. So, for example, the teacher may read the mathematics objectives in Spanish, but assess the child’s counting skills in English. The goal is to assess the child’s understanding of counting, not whether he can recite the numbers in Spanish.

Objectives 37 and 38 – Use these objectives to look at the child’s acquisition of Spanish as a second language. You will need to modify the language in the examples to reflect the new language the child is learning, in this case, Spanish. This will provide important guidance, e.g., if the child is at a “beginning” or “progressing” level on these objectives, it should explain why the child is scoring below widely held expectations on the Spanish language and literacy objectives. (Please note that we will be including Spanish immersion classrooms in an upcoming *Teaching Strategies GOLD™* field test.)

## 5. Frequently Asked Questions:

- **Why would you use the Spanish Language and Literacy Objectives?** You use these objectives if you want to assess a child’s skills in learning Spanish.
- **Who could use the Spanish Language and Literacy Objectives to assess children’s skills?** You use these objectives to assess a child’s skills in learning Spanish so dual language programs, Spanish immersion programs, and programs in Spanish-speaking countries could use them.
- **What if the language of instruction is English but a teacher assistant speaks Spanish and is more comfortable reading *Teaching Strategies™ GOLD* in Spanish?** The teacher may read the assessment tools in Spanish or English, whatever is most comfortable.
- **What if the family speaks Spanish but the teacher is most comfortable using English to observe and record?** The teacher may enter information in English. The system is able to generate family reports using either English or Spanish in order to make them accessible to families. The system WILL NOT translate teacher observations or any anecdotal information a teacher inputs into the system. It can however, generate information about the child’s current developmental levels, and include suggested activities for families to use with their children in Spanish if desired.
- **What if a program wants to use the objectives (other than the Language and Literacy objectives) in both English and Spanish at the same time?** The system is not designed for this use. Most objectives are intentionally crafted to be language neutral. The online system cannot be used in this way.