



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

### Language-neutral Indicators

Many *GOLD*® Objectives have indicators that are *language-neutral*, which means that they do not require children to comprehend or produce English (or any language) to demonstrate what they know and can do. For example, in the progression for Objective 1b, “*Follows limits and expectations*” all of the indicators are *language-neutral* because they can be observed without requiring students to produce language to demonstrate that they meet the indicator.

***Teacher guidance: Objectives with language-neutral indicators at all levels of the progression will allow you to assess students’ skills even if they do not speak English.***

### Language-dependent Indicators

Most Objectives have a mix of *language-neutral* and *language-dependent* indicators. For instance Objective 3b, “*Solves social problems*” is *language-neutral* at level 4: “*Seeks adult to help resolve social problems*” because it can be observed without requiring the child to speak (goes to adult crying when someone takes the princess dress she wanted to wear). Level 6, “*Suggests solutions to social problems*” is *language-dependent* since it would be necessary to understand that the child was specifically suggesting solutions. Indicators that require that children “*describe*”, “*respond*” or “*tell about*” are usually *language-dependent*.

### Preferred Language

With the exception of Language Objectives 9b, 10a and Literacy Objectives 15-19, which must be assessed from an English-language perspective, it is ideal to assess in the child’s *preferred language* - the language they choose at particular times to show what they know and can do. For example, if the child can count to only 10 in English but can count to 30 in Spanish then the child can count to 30. By allowing for the use of *preferred language*, we can gain better understanding of our students’ strengths and needs.

If teachers don’t have the capacity to assess students in their preferred language, either because they don’t speak that language or don’t have support from someone who is proficient in that language, they will need to select the highest level that they can assure the child is able to demonstrate.

“*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. For instance, if a child has had excessive absences.

***Teacher guidance: Review the Objectives and Dimensions at the indicator level to determine those for which you can gather data without speaking the child’s language. This will also help you identify the language-dependent objectives for which you need assistance from family members or trained volunteers.***

**English Language and Literacy Objectives:**

Language Objectives 9b, 10a and Literacy Objectives 15-19, which are measured from an English-language perspective. These objectives must be assessed based on what the child demonstrates in English for all indicators.

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 and teachers must still assess all other objectives.